



A Multimodal Pragmatic Analysis of 2024 American Presidential elections

Abdullah A. Abdullah Ibrahim

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Damietta University,
Egypt.

abdullahatef81@du.edu.eg

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Abstract

By examining selected cartoons, the study attempts to investigate the impact of the multimodal pragmatic approach on the analysis of candidate prospects in the 24 American Presidential elections. In addition, such cartoons and clusters within cartoons are intended to be employed as an inference tool to predict presidential candidates' highest probability of winning and highest percentage of losing. There is a proposed multimodal pragmatic model that is detailed and simplified by the researcher constituting major components: type of data, clusters, a meta-information, contradictions and implicated conclusion. Such a suggested multimodal pragmatic model is derived from Barthes's (1977) and Pastra's (2008) models. Both Barthes's (1977) and Pastra's (2008) models are redundant, superfluous and sometimes confusing. In accordance with the clusters including verbal and visual content under study both Harris (the winner) and Trump (the loser) have the same percentage of clusters. To conclude, Harris, that has the lowest ratio of losing, is more fortunate than both Trump having the lowest percentage of winning and Biden having the highest percentage of losing in presidential race. Thus, the study has scrutinized the impact of the multimodal pragmatic approach on the analysis of candidate prospects in the 24 American Presidential elections. The researcher has also demonstrated that such cartoons and clusters within cartoons can be used as an inference tool to predict the likelihood of presidential candidates winning and losing.

Key words: Pragmatic multimodality, American Presidential elections, Pastra's (2008) model.

المستخلص:

تحليل تداولي متعدد الوسائط للانتخابات الرئاسية الأمريكية (2024)

تناولت الدراسة مدى نجاعة المدخل التداولي (المُقترح) متعدد الوسائط في الرسوم الكاريكاتورية التي تتعلق بمرشحي الانتخابات الرئاسية الأمريكية (2024). والهدف من استخدام هذه الرسوم – قيد الدراسة- القدرة على التنبؤ بنتائج هذه الانتخابات وفرص المرشحين في الفوز أو الخسارة. اقترح الباحث مدخلا لغويا يسيرا ومُفصلا يشتمل على: نوع العينة ألا وهي الرسوم الكاريكاتورية هنا- زوايا الصورة (يمين- يسار- وسط- أعلى- أسفل): كلمات منطوقة ومكتوبة- مرئية: بما فيها من تحليل للصورة ولغة الجسد وما إلى ذلك مع التركيز على الأمور اللفظية والبصرية- المعلومات الإضافية التي تتضمن الخط وأسلوب الكتابة بجانب أمور أخرى قد تراها العين في تلك الرسومات محل الدراسة- التناقضات (إن وُجدت)- وأخيرا الاستنتاج المتضمن. ينبغي على الباحث هنا أن يُنوه أن مدخله التداولي متعدد الوسائط مبني على منهجي كل من بارث (1977) و باسترا (2008). ويظهر جليا أن هذين المدخلين يغلب عليهما الإسهاب والتكرار وأحيانا الالتباس والخلط. وخُصت الدراسة إلى نجاعة المدخل اللغوي المُقترح في الآتي: هاريس أكثر حظا من ترامب في الفوز بالانتخابات الأمريكية.

//الكلمات المفتاحية: تعدد الوسائط التداولية- الانتخابات الرئاسية الأمريكية- مدخل باسترا (2008)

Introduction

A person's use of language, images, sounds, and body movements to convey meaning in a particular situation is called multimodality. Based on Kress and Leeuwen (2001), Gee (2003), Jewitt (2009), multimodality includes two components. First, modes of communication including verbal language, sign language, images, sounds, or body movements can be used to convey meaning. Second, message interpretation is influenced by a recipient's context, experience, and knowledge.

Badriyah and Antono (2022) argue that messages in communication can be conveyed between the speaker and the hearer. Such communication through pragmatics constitutes a variety of linguistic, visual and audiovisual aspects. To conclude, multimodal pragmatics encompasses a wide variety of aspects of communication, including writing, font choice, color, images, speech, facial expressions, as well as body language including eye gaze and gestures (Oviatt, 2003, Haryanti, et al., 2023).

In accordance with Kress (2010), multimodal pragmatics is a way of communication that constitutes more than just words urging speakers and interlocutors to consider the interplay between different modes of communication to create meaning in various contexts. However, multimodal pragmatics consists of modes of communication: verbal, visual, spatial and aural language, body movements and facial expressions to convey and create shared meaning in human interactions (Anstey and Bull, 2010, Smith and Johnson, 2018). Therefore, Forceville (2014) and Braun (2016) affirm that multimodal phenomena can be investigated from a pragmatic perspective to explain multimodal meaning or create a pragmatic model for analyzing multimodal communication. Thus, multimodal pragmatics is a theory employed by people to communicate with each other and to express themselves.

Haryanti, et al. (2023), based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) and Norris (2004) provide an exhaustive approach of multimodal pragmatics: (1) Multimodality involves various ways of communication, such as verbal (words), visuals (image analysis, graphic design, layout), and how visual elements contribute to conveying a message, audio (sound), kinesthetics (body movements). (2) The role of technology in understanding media messages in specific ways, as well as their impact on audiences. Williams and Brown (2021) further point out that technology

can be adopted to illustrate how humans communicate and convey messages. (3) Social and cultural context. It is pivotal in the formation of meaning, which influences the interpretation of messages in multimodal communication. However, context is fundamental to multimodal communication because it provides the social, cultural, and environmental background that can assist in interpreting meaning with greater accuracy (Garcia & Lee, 2019). (4) Analysis of social interactions investigates how hierarchy, power, and social interaction roles are reflected in multimodal communication. (5) Semiotic analysis. It uses signs, symbols and contained meaning to analyze multimodal communication. (6) Case studies provide a deeper understanding of how meaning is formed in specific situations and contexts. In addition, Chen et al. (2020) demonstrate that case studies can lead to different interpretations of meaning by individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Review of the Literature

A number of researchers, such as Mubenga (2009) and Zhang (2021), have investigated multimodal pragmatic analysis in translation studies. Based on Searle's speech acts (1969) or Halliday's speech functions (2004), Mubenga uses a multimodal pragmatic analysis (MPA) to translate film discourse into audiovisual form. On the other hand, Zhang (2021) has explored pragmatic translation of politeness and humor using both relevance theory and multimodal transcription.

Others like Kinyua (2014) and Abdel Fattah (2024) have highlighted conventional pragmatic analysis focusing on Grice's speech acts theory. The former has tackled the explicatures and implicatures in the editorial cartoon written/verbal texts in Kenya. The latter has demonstrated that characters, in Bernard Shaw's play: *Arms and the Man*, have exploited implicature and violated the maxims to convey their messages.

Betti and Khalaf (2021) have analyzed Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night* in terms of generalized and particularized conversational and conventional implicature. The model used in the analysis is coined from a variety of pragmatic theories, implicature, Grice's maxims, irony, indirect speech acts, context, and hedges.

Both Kruk (2024) and Castaldi (2021) concentrate on semiotics in their studies. As Kruk (2024) examines the semiotics of images and attempts to discern how specific visual features and design choices can elicit specific emotions, thoughts and beliefs. Regarding Castaldi's (2021)

study, the focus is on critical multimodal analysis of the programs and how social actors and events are analyzed in terms of social semiotics (Kress and van Leeuwen) as well as the cognitive-pragmatic model of Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995). Moreover, Dowling (2022) has only analysed shrugs as one of the earliest pragmatic gestures in early communication among American English-learning children. In accordance with Halliday's (1985, 1994) and Barthes' approaches (1977a[1961], 1977b[1964]), Martinec and Salway (2005) have analyzed image–text relations in different genres of multimodal discourse from a semantic perspective in which images and texts co-exist.

Omosebi (2021) has adopted Multimodality including implicature in six political cartoons to tackle how agents, ideologies and concepts are employed in America's 2020 presidential elections (Biden and Trump). Such study is based on Grice's cooperative principle and Sperber and Wilson's (1986) relevance theory and Kress and Van Leeuwen's theory (1996).

Wambui (2011) has studied some notions of Relevance theory namely explicatures (reference assignment, disambiguation, ellipsis as well as semantically incomplete propositional forms.) and implicatures (proverbs or metaphors, use of euphemisms, rhetorical questions and connotations of words) in advertising discourse. Such analysis is conducted through Halliday's (1985, 1994) logico–semantic relations and Barthes' (1977 a [1961], 1977 b [1964]) foundational classification of image–text relations.

Objectives of the Study

- 1- The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the multimodal pragmatic approach on the analysis of candidate prospects in the 24 American Presidential elections.
- 2- As part of this study, cartoons and clusters within cartoons are intended to be used as an inference tool to predict presidential candidates' highest probability of winning and highest percentage of losing.

Research Questions

- 1- What contribution has the multimodal pragmatic approach under study made to the analysis of candidate prospects in the 24 American Presidential elections?
- 2- How does the use of cartoons and clusters in cartoons under study lead to inferences about presidential candidates' highest percentage of winning and highest probability of losing?

- 3- Which candidates having no cluster that implicated his/her loss?

Methodology

There is a proposed multimodal pragmatic model that is detailed and simplified by the researcher. Cartoons depicting the 2024 American Presidential elections can be analyzed according to such a multimodal pragmatic model. Major components are included in the model in question:

- 1- Type of Data; i.e. Cartoons
- 2- Clusters: constitute both verbal (oral and written words) and visual (image analysis, graphic design, layout, body language etc) content. Cartoon can be divided into clusters: right, left, middle, top or bottom highlighting both verbal and visual aspects.
- 3- A meta-information: includes additional information such as fonts or styles of visual decoration.
- 4- Contradictions: are present either visually or verbally between clusters if they are found.
- 5- Implicated conclusion: The intended messages implied in both visual and verbal content.

Such a proposed multimodal pragmatic model is derived from Barthes's (1977) and Pastra's (2008) models. Both Barthes's (1977) and Pastra's (2008) models are redundant, superfluous and sometimes confusing i.e. (1) Barthes's relay/ Pastra's Equivalence: Both visual and verbal might have equal status. (2) Barthes's illustration / Pastra's type-token: The visual content supports the verbal content (i.e. the verbal content mentions churches and the image shows St Peter's Basilica. (3) Barthes's anchorage / Pastra's token-token: The verbal content supports the visual content (i.e. the image shows St Peter's Basilica and the verbal content reads 'St Peter's Basilica')

Practical Framework

Cartoon (1)

SHENEMAN THE STAR-LEDGER



"JUST WON THIS AWARD. IT'S A MAJOR AWARD, BETTER THAN THE NOBEL OR EVEN THE DORAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP. EVERYBODY'S SAYING IT."

Multimodal text conveys the sender's meaning. Specifically, explicatures and implicatures are retrieved based on the verbal content (*Oldest candidate ever. Trump vs. Biden*)

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(×)... *Just won this award. It's a major award, better than the Nobel or even the Doral club championship. Everybody's saying it*). According the visual message in terms of implicatures, Trump is the worst candidate for president of the USA since he is the oldest candidate compared to Biden. There is no doubt that Trump's age-related characteristics including furrows and limpness, are clearly apparent.

Indeed, the ultimate purpose of a multimodal message recipient is to recognise the implicit meaning (the sender's intention) and explicit meaning. Explicitly, Trump is an aged presidential candidate, whereas implicitly, Trump will lose presidential elections as he is too old compared to another candidate (Biden). Thus, such multimodal meaning has contributed to leading the recipient towards the recognition of the sender's intention that Trump is unlikely to succeed as a presidential candidate.

Recipients reveal the sender's intentions through explicatures and implicatures, namely, inferential meanings brought about by the use of language in a certain context "*Oldest candidate ever... Everybody's saying it*". Due to the fact that Trump is the oldest candidate, the recipient infers that all American voters (*Everybody's saying it*) are in a unanimous agreement that he is unlikely to win the support of the electorate. Readers are lead to the conclusion that the author's message to Americans is the offensive gesture shown by the image (explicature). Based on their contextual knowledge of the real content of the writer's message and the explicature, recipients can infer that the author's intention was to convey a level of similarity between the author's message and an offensive gesture (implicated conclusion).

In the cartoon, two clusters are depicted, the first representing both the visual contribution and the right part of the verbal content, and the second reflecting the bottom part of the verbal content. As for the first cluster: Trump's aged facial features (the visual content) are used to bolster the verbal content stated on the trophy that he is older than Biden (implicated conclusion). In regard to the second cluster: the writer has sought to mock Trump by saying that the award of the oldest candidate is more significant than the more prestigious prizes like "Nobel prize and the Doral club championship" (implicated conclusion).

As for the contradiction: the author intended to humorously criticise Trump's decision to run for a president by drawing a parallelism with an offensive gesture. In addition, the humorous

aspect of the multimodal text including specific social conventions is based upon some kind of incongruity. More precisely, Trump carrying a trophy is expected to be a winner, but he is a loser. Based upon the author's intention, the full implicated conclusion of both clusters is that Trump should not have run for president since he has no achievements other than the appearance of an aged person.

Cartoon (2)



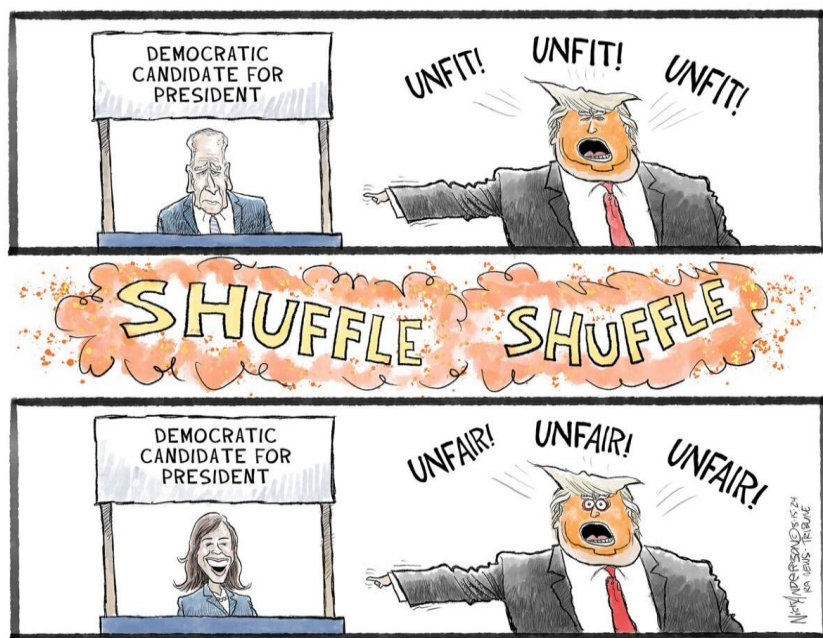
The retrieval of explicatures and implicatures is based on verbal "*Game changer... Harris... Hey! Can he do that?!?*" and visual content (visual signs other than linguistic symbols). According to the verbal message, the ex-presidential candidate, Biden has inserted Harris' name instead of his own as a possible candidate to compete with Trump for the presidency.

The multimodal message recipient is expected to comprehend both the implicit meaning, namely the sender's intention as well as explicit meaning. As for the explicit meaning, Trump is disappointed that Biden placed Harris ahead of him as a presidential candidate. As far as implicit meaning is concerned, Harris' smile and Trump's crying are likely to mirror the former's confidence of winning whereas the latter's feeling of defeat. Readers have grasped the sender's intention, which is to state inferential meanings in a specific situational context "*Game Changer... Harris... Hey! Can he do that?!?*" Trump, thus, emphasizes through his exclamation and shock his loss of the presidential race following the replacement of his old opponent Biden with a younger lady, Harris.

In the image, Biden is seen carrying a moving wooden ladder after placing Harris' name instead of his own, Harris is shown smiling and Trump is noted crying while referring to both Biden and Harris. The verbal content does not mention Trump's name, but instead states Biden, a former presidential candidate and Harris, a recent presidential candidate (meta-function). The verbal content further states that Biden, the former presidential candidate, has decided to support Harris in the presidential election, and Trump's tears indicate his certainty of defeat in the image (the visual content).

The cartoon consists of three clusters, each of which constitutes visual and verbal components. First, the left cluster: the verbal content "Game Changer" and the visual content whereby Biden is carrying a ladder after altering the rules of game, namely the presidential election, by stating Harris' name rather than his own as a more qualified presidential candidate (implicated conclusion). Second, the middle cluster: the verbal content "Harris" and the visual component that reveals that the smiling presidential candidate, Harris is more confident (implicated conclusion). Third, the right cluster: the verbal element "*Hey! Can he do that?!* " and the visual aspect reflecting Trump who is crying as he feels that he will lose the presidential election (implicated conclusion). To conclude, Biden's support of Harris, Harris' smile and Trump's tears are employed to emphasize that the presidential race has already been decided for Harris.

Cartoon (3)



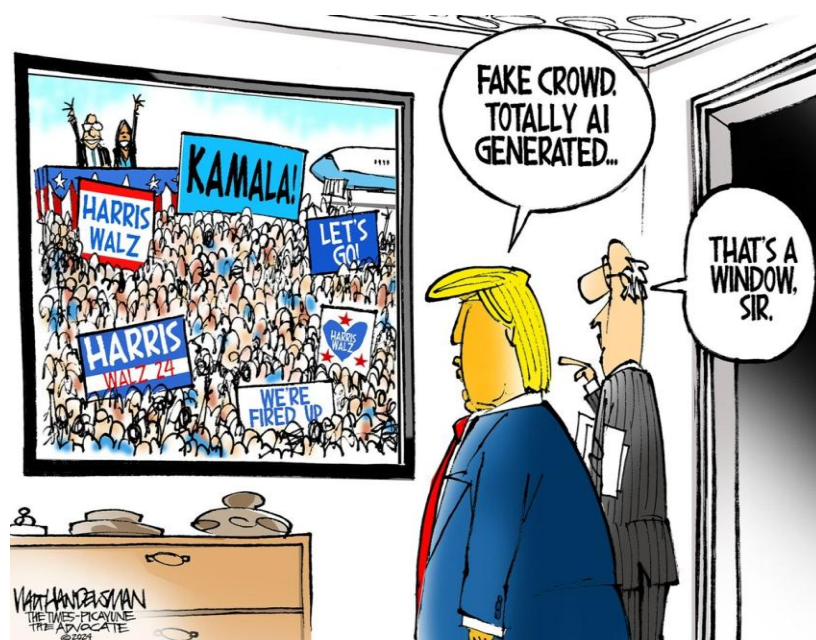
Both explicatures and implicatures are closely related to verbal "*Democratic Candidate for President... Unfit... Unfit...Unfit... Democratic Candidate for President ...Unfair... Unfair...Unfair*" and visual content (*Biden's sadness, Harris' delight, Trump's anger and shock*). As stated in the verbal message, Trump affirms that he is a highly qualified presidential candidate, but Biden is disqualified. In contrast, Trump implicitly asserts that Harris, the presidential candidate, will win the presidential election as she is more qualified than him.

The multimodal message recipient is likely to grasp both the explicit meaning and implicit meaning, namely the sender's intention. In terms of explicit meaning, Trump is angry over Biden's ineligibility to be a preliminary candidate for the presidency. In addition, Trump feels shocked since he asserts that it is unfair to compete with Harris for the presidency. As for the implicit meaning, Trump claims that he would win the presidency because of Biden's ineligibility, the other presidential candidate. Moreover, the presidential elections will be clinched for the democratic presidential candidate, Harris as she is highly qualified. Readers have got inferential meanings buttressed in a specific situational context "*Democratic Candidate for ...*" In other words; readers conclude that Harris will become the next American President in the near future. Trump appears upset when referring to Biden who appears disappointed in the first image. Unlike the first image Trump looks shocked and amazed when referring to Harris who is laughing in the second image.

It is stated throughout the verbal content that Trump is facing unfit and unfair competition, in relation to the position of presidential candidate, with Biden and Harris respectively. Moreover, Trump's facial features are likely to enhance such argument in the image. On the other hand, the image shows Trump's anger and shock (visual content).

The cartoon consists of two clusters, each of which constitutes visual and verbal components. First, the top cluster: the verbal content "*Democratic Candidate for President... Unfit... Unfit...Unfit*" and the visual content whereby a shout is heard from Trump in which he declares that the elderly man, Biden, does not deserve to run for election (implicated conclusion). Second, the bottom cluster: the verbal content "*Democratic Candidate for President ...Unfair... Unfair... Unfair*". As the astonished man, Trump, states in the visual element, such a presidential race would be inequitable since Harris, the smiling presidential candidate, has more qualifications than he does (implicated conclusion). The gist of it is that Trump would clinch the presidential election when faced with Biden whereas Trump would lose it when confronted with Harris.

Cartoon (4)



The explicatures and implicatures revolve around verbal "*Harris ...Walz... Harris ... Walz 24... Kamala... Let's Go... Harris... Walz... We're Fired Up... Fake Crowd. Totally AI Gendered... That's a window, sir*" and visual content (*Air Force One (US Presidential Plane)... Harris' and Walz' advocates' delight, Trump's arrogance and anger and his assistant's shock*). In contrast to Trump's votes, the number of Harris' votes is increasing as indicated in the visual message. As a result, Harris' publicity will enable her to win, while Trump's arrogance will cause him to lose the presidential election. In this case, both explicit and implicit meanings are evident to the recipient of the multimodal message. In the explicit sense, Trump is upset about Harris' fake publicity as a presidential candidate for the presidency, even though his assistant strongly disagrees with his assessment because Harris has gained legitimate publicity. However, Trump implicitly believes that Harris does not have the final word regarding the election campaign as he has already determined the ballot. Readers are provided with certain inferential meanings based on this context of the situation. Thus, readers realize that Trump is in a schizophrenic state. Thus, the megalomania of Trump can be seen in his denial of a large number of Harris' advocates as well as his claim that it was a fake publicity campaign. Hence, Harris is likely to decide such election campaign.

There is some discrepancy of the verbal content between Trump's illusion that he is certainly the most qualified presidential candidate and Harris' absolute publicity in which she has gained lots of advocates. Moreover, Trump's facial features in terms of visual content, are likely to reinforce such argument in the image.

The cartoon consists of two clusters, each of which constitutes visual and verbal components. First, the right cluster: the verbal content "*Fake Crowd. Totally AI Gendered... That's a window, sir*" and there is a contrast in the visual content between Trump's arrogance and his assistant's disappointment. Harris cannot have such publicity, according to the former, but she can have it, according to the latter (implicated conclusion). Second, the left cluster: the verbal content "*Harris ...Walz... Harris ... Walz 24... Kamala... Let's Go... Harris... Walz... We're Fired Up...*". It is clear from Harris' facial expression that she has many supporters as shown in the visual element. The US plane and Harris' many advocates also implicate that American presidential elections are clinched for Harris (implicated conclusion).

Cartoon (5)



The explicatures and implicatures are strongly associated with verbal "*Don't go, Joe... We need you, Joe... I still have a lot of support... Those are Trump campaign advisors, sir.*" and visual content (*While Biden's facial features include debility and poor eyesight, his secretary is stunned!*)... In contrast to Biden's misconception that those people are his advocates, his assistant asserts that they are not. Unlike Biden's votes, the number of Trump's votes is increasing as indicated in the visual message. As a result, Trump's publicity will enable him to win, while Biden's arrogance and frailty will cause him to lose the presidential election. Moreover, the recipient of the multimodal message will be able to grasp both explicit and implicit meanings in this situational context.

Biden's assistant explicitly informs him that Trump's campaign advisors want him to continue running in presidential elections whereas Biden himself incorrectly believes that such people are his own campaign advocates. On the other hand, Biden's secretary implicitly wants to stress that even Trump's campaign advisors argue that Biden's continuity of running in presidential elections certainly reinforces Trump's chance of success. Biden's frailty has also prevented him from distinguishing between his own advocates and those of his opponent. As Biden's assistant was astonished, Trump's campaign advocates themselves were delighted that Biden had been nominated to run for president. Accordingly, American presidential elections will be clinched for their candidate, Trump.

It is important for readers to comprehend the context of situation *"Don't go..., sir"* to make particular inferences. There is discrepancy of verbal and visual meanings concerning Biden. As far as verbal meaning is concerned, Biden seems optimistic that he has some kind of publicity; however he is unable to differentiate, from a visual perspective, between his own advocates and those of the other party due to his senility including impaired vision. In other words, the verbal content indicates a contradiction between Biden's delusion that he is the luckiest presidential candidate and Trump's advocates' uncanny appeals to keep Biden on the ballot. Furthermore, Biden's facial features including debility and poor eyesight are likely to support such argument in the image and the verbal content reads *"Don't go ..., sir"*.

There are right and left clusters in the cartoon, one verbal and one visual. The right cluster can be employed to refer to opposition between Biden and his secretary. While the former incorrectly states that he *"still has lots of support"*, the latter indirectly draws attention to the fact that he does not *"Those are Trump campaign advisors, sir"* (implicated conclusion). As for the left cluster: the peculiar visual and verbal content *"Don't go, Joe... We need you, Joe..."* are adopted by Trump's electors to encourage Biden to continue in presidential elections. Eventually, all indications such as Biden's frailty and low vision, along with Trump's voters' persistent urging Biden to run for president can be exploited to demonstrate that Trump is more fortunate as a presidential candidate in casting of ballots than Biden (implicated conclusion).

Cartoon (6)



The explicatures and implicatures are based upon verbal *"I like Biden's policies. He wants to do good for all Americans... But I worry about his frailty... So, I'm voting for the lying, narcissistic felon who's a threat to democracy!"* and visual content *(As a constituent, he is the servant of two masters who must choose between two less qualified presidential candidates; the former is frail while the latter is a liar and narcissistic)*. Accordingly, the recipient of the multimodal message will likely realize that the voter is explicitly a monkey in the middle as he is obliged to choose between an elderly man and a prevaricator and arrogant one. Both presidential candidates are further disqualified to stand for presidential election, as implied by the constituent.

The context of situation *"I like Biden's policies. He wants to do good for all Americans... But I worry about his frailty... So, I'm voting for the lying, narcissistic felon who's a threat to democracy!"* is pivotal for readers to get specific inferences. It is evident that this is an imbecile man, since he has chosen to vote for Trump instead of Biden, who is elderly, even though the same constituent has stated that Trump is perjurer and overweening.

The verbal component can be used to refer to a fatuous elector that has not realized that the frailty man (Biden) cannot "do good for Americans" on the one hand and the liar and haughty man (Trump) is "a threat to democracy". In addition, the voter's bizarre facial features in terms of visual content reflecting bewilderment are indicative of a fatuous attitude towards voting for Trump, a liar and a conceited man, who resists democracy.

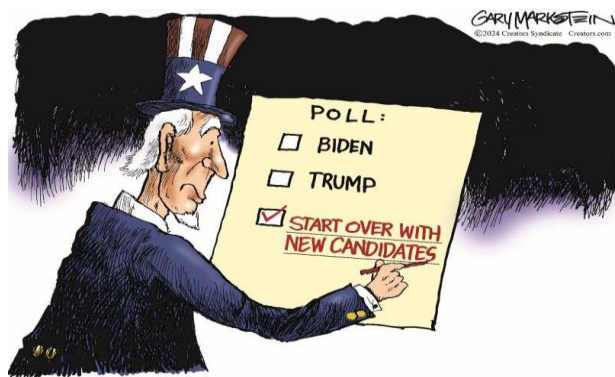
There are three clusters in the cartoon referring to verbal and visual meanings. The constituent on the left cluster looks confident and persistent when declaring his intention to vote for Biden as a presidential candidate affirming that this candidate can "do well for all Americans"(implicated conclusion). Unlike the left cluster, the elector in the middle cluster sounds distracted, deciding not to support Biden because of his feebleness (implicated conclusion). As for the right cluster: the constituent is imbecile as he contradicts himself. This voter has made a decision whereby he will support Trump in elections though he emphasized that he is prevaricator and overweening and democracy will be in turn at a stake (implicated conclusion). However, the voter's wobbly and stupid situations pertaining to ballot in the three clusters are employed to demonstrate that he does not know to make the right decision. To put it simply, he does not have to choose one of them.

a presidential candidate, but Biden does not. As for the implicit meaning, both husband and wife's scowl mirrors their dissatisfaction of both Biden and Trump as presidential candidates. The former is changed while the latter is a great liar. Readers can infer that both Biden and Trump do not deserve to be presidential nominees. In this case "*Lies, Lies, Lies ... Biden has changed... Trump never will*", Harris has replaced the first, whereas the second candidate, who is a prevaricator, still remains in the race for the presidency.

The verbal content includes specific political messages in which Trump is a great liar, Biden has gone with the wind, and Trump is continuous in elections. However, Trump, husband and wife's facial features are likely to reinforce such argument in the image. As shown in the image Trump has repeated a large number of lies and the husband and wife are sulking over the names of presidential candidates beside the verbal content reads "*Lies ... Trump never will*".

The cartoon consists of two clusters, each of which constitutes visual and verbal components. First, the right cluster: the verbal content "*Biden has changed... Trump never will*" and the visual content whereby the husband and wife are morose when talking about the latest updates of presidential elections (implicated conclusion). Second, the left cluster: the verbal content "*Lies, Lies, Lies etc*". There are Biden and Trump in the visual component where Biden is unhappy and a large number of lies arising from Trump's mouth (implicated conclusion). In a nutshell, this multimodal cartoon as a whole constitutes many remarkable implications. First, Biden's sad facial features can implicate that he has been obliged to be replaced by Harris. Second, Trump has always told lies in his life rather than telling truth. Third, the couple's frown, pertaining to the latest updates of elections, implies that both of them are dissatisfied concerning both Trump and Biden as presidential candidates. To conclude, unqualified candidates are unlikely to receive the couple's vote.

Cartoon (8)

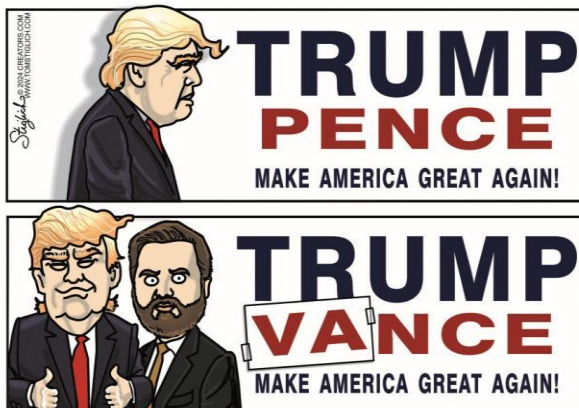


With the multimodal message, both the explicit meaning and the implicit meaning can be understood. Both explicatures and implicatures are related to verbal *"Poll: Biden ... Trump... Start over with new candidates"* and visual content *"Using a red pen, an old citizen in a formal suit and hat, with an American flag, adds an additional option in which he would like other candidates to be considered"*. The American elector has explicitly added himself a third option in which he would like other candidates to be considered. As for the implicit meaning, the elector has neither cast a vote for Biden nor Trump, but has offered a third option asking for *new candidates* in the sense that both candidates have been rejected by American constituents. Readers can accordingly infer that the American elector has become more knowledgeable and intelligent about the process of polls.

The multimodal cartoon involves verbal content *"Poll: Biden ... new candidates"*. As shown in the visual component the voter has stated a third choice of polls *"start over new candidates"*. Moreover, this is a picture that paints a thousand words. Not only has the American elector raised a political issue, but he has also attempted to find a solution through presenting other presidential candidates. This constituent has not abstained from voting, but he provided a political solution helping him to cast his ballot. The American voter has thus chosen to operate under the radar.

The cartoon consists only one cluster comprising a certain visual content *"Poll: Biden ... Trump... Start over with new candidates"* in which the American citizen has not cast his ballot for either Biden or Trump, but has opted to his own option. Therefore, the constituent has deliberately written his own option in a red pen to draw judges' attention. In brief, both Biden and Trump are not qualified to be nominated for the position of president (implicated conclusion).

Cartoon (9)



The multimodal message is shaped through both the explicit meaning and implicit meaning already found in both verbal content "*Trump...Pence... Make American Great Again... Trump ... Vance ... Make America Great again*" and visual content "*the former vice-president, Pence written in red font colour is accompanied by the sulky, Trump in the first cartoon; Trump is happy with the current vice-president in the second cartoon also written in red font colour*".

The multimodal cartoon involves verbal (written) content "*Trump...Pence... Make American Great Again... Trump ... Vance ... Make America Great again*". As shown in the visual content Pence, Trump's former vice-president, has not supported his recent election campaign. Therefore, Trump appears to be implicitly sullen in the first cartoon. In contrast to Pence in the first cartoon, Trump's recent vice-president, Vance has buttressed Trump. It is for this reason that Trump appears to be delighted implicitly in the second cartoon. Consequently, readers infer that Pence, Trump's former vice-president can be expected to oppose Trump's election whereas Vance, Trump's recent vice-president cannot be anticipated to support Trump's election.

The cartoon consists two clusters encompassing a visual and verbal content. The top cluster "*Trump...Pence... Make American Great Again*" shows Trump, the frowning president with Pence, the former vice-president. This cluster does not constitute Pence's photo as it is no longer Trump's vice president in the current elections. On the contrary, the bottom cluster "*Trump ... Vance ... Make America Great again*" comprises Trump, the winner with Vance, the recent vice-president. Due to Trump's distinct facial features in both clusters, different conclusions can be drawn. Since Pence has not supported Trump's election campaign, Trump is upset in the top

cluster. As opposed to the top cluster, Trump has been pleased as Vance has of course enhanced his own electoral campaign on the bottom cluster (implicated conclusion).

Cartoon (10)



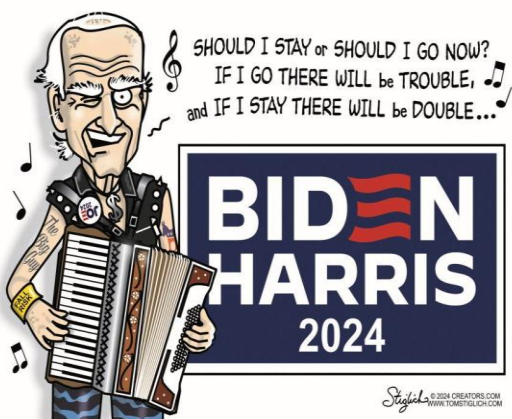
With the use of verbal "*Candidates ... Harris ... Nomination*" and visual content "*candidates are running whereas Harris is walking steadily to be nominated on the one hand, but Biden is leaving the process of nomination without even mentioning his name in the cartoon on the other*", both explicit and implicit meanings are evident in this multimodal message. First, the explicit meaning of visual content constitutes an old man, Harris, the presidential nominee and other candidates. Second, the implicit meaning is that Biden looks glum as he has been substituted by Harris as a recent presidential nominee who is luckier than other candidates. As Harris is closer to the top of the nomination ladder than other candidates, she is walking confidently. In contrast to Harris, other candidates are running desperately in an attempt to overtake her. Furthermore, the

cartoon's writer does not explicitly mention Biden's name, implying that he has withdrawn from the race for president and is no longer relevant.

The multimodal cartoon involves a visual content (*As candidates run, Harris walks steadily to be nominated on the one hand, and Biden leaves the nomination process without even mentioning his name in the cartoon on the other*). As shown in the verbal content, Biden, who has been an ineligible presidential candidate, descends the ladder of nomination because he is replaced by Harris who is steadily ascending. Consequently, readers are led to conclude that Harris has been chosen by the Democratic Party as its candidate for the presidency rather than Biden.

The cartoon consists two clusters including a certain visual and verbal content. Without even mentioning his name (verbal), there is an elderly man (visual) in the right cluster that has left the nomination ladder. Thus, mentioning Biden's name is unimportant. However, such a frail man is Biden who is no longer the Democratic Party's nominee in the presidential race (implied conclusion). The left cluster "*Harris ... Candidates*" shows the Democratic Party's candidates including Harris (implied conclusion). Unlike other candidates running for president, Harris is walking confidently and slowly, as she has been selected as a nominee by the Democratic Party.

Cartoon (11)



The regaining of explicatures and implicatures is closely related to verbal "*The Big guy... Fall Risk... Should I stay or should I go now? ... If I go there will be trouble, and If I stay there will be double*" and visual aspects (*a man is playing an accordion and singing along with a placard marked "Biden... Harris... 2024"*). According to the verbal message included in this song, Biden

explicitly emphasizes that while his withdrawal from presidential contest could cause a problem on the one hand, his continuity would cause a much greater problem on the other. As for the visual message: Biden explicitly sings happily beside a banner including Biden's and Harris' names as well. Biden's forearm labeled "*The Big Guy*". He further wears a bracelet marked "*Fall Risk*". Therefore, the explicit meaning through such multimodal message is discerned.

As for the implicit meaning, Biden is visually delighted and confident. Biden has verbally conveyed a variety of implicit messages. First, Biden's forearm labeled "*The Big Guy*" indicates that he is not elderly, but an eligible candidate for the office of President of the United States. Second, Biden affirms that if he is replaced by Harris, Trump, the other nominee will have difficulties winning the election. Third, if Biden continues to run for president and Trump receives the majority of the votes, the entire country will be at stake. Hence, it can be concluded that either Biden or Harris, the Democratic Party's nominees, would be the best choice for the constituents and the country as a whole. The verbal content "*The Big guy... Fall Risk... Should I stay or should I go now? ... If I go there will be trouble, and If I stay there will be double*" can be adopted to assert that Biden has still taken the initiative on the one hand and possesses the threads of the electoral process on the other hand. As for the image in terms of visual aspect: in spite of senescence: white hair and facial wrinkles, Biden's facial features explicitly refer to a happy young controller.

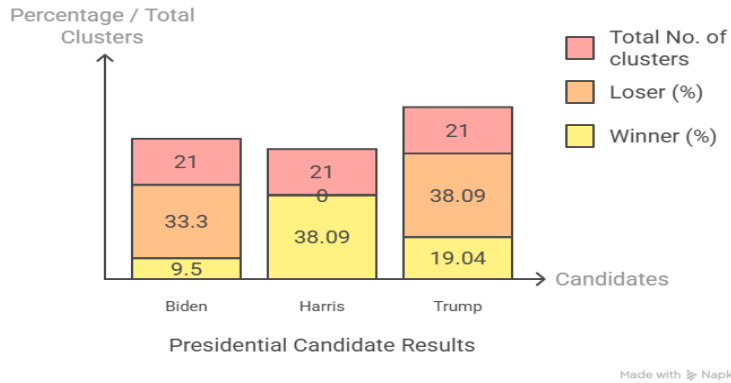
The cartoon consists of one cluster comprising visual and verbal components. First, the verbal content "*Should I stay or should I go now? ... If I go there will be trouble, and If I stay there will be double*" and the visual content where Biden happily plays an accordion and sings and places an upside down badge labeled "*Joe 2024*". A combination of verbal and visual content suggests that Biden definitely supports Harris in her election campaign. To conclude, Biden implicates that Trump is an ineligible nominee and the American constituent should vote for the Democratic Party's candidate either Biden or Harris (implicated conclusion).

Conclusion

Presidential Candidate	Winner	(%)	Loser	(%)	Total No. of clusters
Biden	2	9.5	7	33.3	21
Harris	8	38.09	Zero	0	21

Trump	4	19.04	8	38.09	21
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Table (1)



In accordance with the clusters including verbal and visual content under study shown in table (1), both Harris (the winner) and Trump (the loser) have the same percentage (38.09%) of clusters. In contrast to the highest ratio (33.3%) attributed to the loser, Biden, no cluster is implicated in Harris' loss (0%). It is evident that in comparison to both Trump and Biden, Harris has the highest probability of winning (38.09%) and the lowest probability of losing (0%) during

Presidential Candidate Cluster Performance



the presidential election.

Presidential Candidate	Winner	(%)	Loser	(%)	Total No. of cartoons
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Biden	3	27.2	5	45.4	11
Harris	3	27.2	Zero	0	11
Trump	Zero	0	3	27.2	11

Table (2)

Cartoon Representation of Presidential Candidates

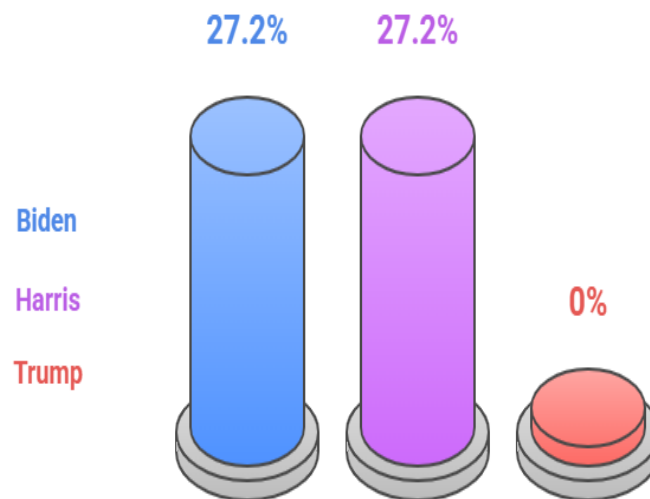


Table (2) indicates that the chances of winning in cartoons encompassing right, middle, left, top, bottom and central clusters (27.2 %) are equal between Biden and Harris, but the chances of losing are completely different between Biden (45.4 %) and Harris (0 %). Furthermore, Biden (27.2 %) has a higher probability of winning than Trump (0 %), and Biden (45.4 %) has a higher probability of losing than Trump (27.2 %). To conclude, table (2) implicates that Harris, that has the lowest ratio (0 %) of losing, is more fortunate than both Trump having the lowest percentage (0 %) of winning and Biden having the highest percentage (45.4) of losing in presidential race. As a result of table (2), it appears that Harris, who has the lowest percentage (0 %) of losing, is more fortunate than both Trump (27.2%) and Biden, who have the highest percentage (45.4%) of losing in this election.

Thus, the study has scrutinized the impact of the multimodal pragmatic approach on the analysis of candidate prospects in the 24 American Presidential elections. The researcher has also demonstrated that such cartoons and clusters within cartoons can be used as an inference tool to predict the likelihood of presidential candidates winning and losing. To gain more fruitful findings in the field of multimodal pragmatic analysis, such a proposed multimodal pragmatic approach should ultimately be applied to distinct contexts such as talk show programs and movies.

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