بحوث قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها

A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Figurative Tropes in Political Cartoons on Russia–Ukraine War

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المستخلص:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى استخدام التحليل متعدد الوسائط لدراسة المعاني المجازية–على المستويين اللغوي والمرئي– المستخدمة في الكارتون السياسي عن الحرب الروسية الأوكرانية 2022، ودورها في توصيل المعنى وعكس آراء صانعيها، والأيدولوجيات المختلفة. ويستخدم البحث المنهج الوصفي والتحليل الكيفي لعينة عشوائية طبقية لست من الرسومات الكاريكاتورية المنشورة باللغة الإنجليزية عبر الانترنت في بعض الصحف وعلى موقع Cagle Cartoons لرسامين كاريكاتور من جنسيات مختلفة. ويعتمد التحليل على نظريتي كريس وفان ليوين (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) حول الوسائط المتعددة، وكذلك على المعاني المجازية الأربعة الرئيسية التي قدمها تشاندلر (Chandler, 2007): الاستعارة (metaphor)، والكناية (metonym)، والمجاز المرسل (synecdoche)، والتهكم (irony). ويخلص البحث إلى استخدام عدد من المعاني المجازية على المستويين المرئي واللغوى، بالإضافة إلى وجودها بسبب التداخل بين الوسائط اللغوية والمرئية في كثير من الأحيان في الكاريكاتيور السياسي المختار محل الدراسة، ووجد أنها تلعب دورا هاما في إيصال المعاني، وعكس رأي صانعيها، والأيدولوجيات المتضمنة ونقلها إلى الجمهور.

Abstract

This research is a multimodal analysis of four figurative tropes (metaphor, metonym, synecdoche, and irony) in political cartoons concerned with the Russia-Ukraine war 2022. It investigates them

and how they could communicate different meanings, perspectives, and ideologies. It is a descriptive qualitative research using the stratified random sampling technique to select six international cartoons published in English in different newspapers online, and the Cagle cartoon website. The study adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) multimodal discourse theory, and Chandler's (2007) major four figurative tropes: metaphor, metonym, synecdoche, and irony. Finally, it has been found that there is a variety of multimodal figurative tropes employed in the selected cartoons; and there is interaction between the verbal and visual resources contributing to arising the tropes. Moreover, they reflect different meanings, viewpoints of the cartoonists, and ideologies on the Russia-Ukraine war that are communicated to the viewers.

Keywords: *Multimodality; Semiotics; Figurative Tropes; Metaphor, Metonym; Synecdoche; Irony; Russia-Ukraine War; Political Cartoon*

1. Introduction

The Russia-Ukraine war is a major event that took place at the beginning of 2022. The war erupted on February 24th with Russia invading Ukraine. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine goes back to 2014, when the first war between them occurred, due to a dispute on the Crimea peninsula that falls between Russia and Ukraine (Bebler, 2015; Fisher, 2014). There are different viewpoints discussed regarding this war whether it is Russia's main responsibility; or instigated by other parties, such as the U.S.A, the NATO, or the EU. This was introduced via various political cartoons addressing this event.

Caricatures and cartoons are two words used interchangeably. Through cartoons, certain ideas, events, or individuals could be

represented to influence people or communities (Robingah, 2020). ALjrah et al. (2021) mentions that the word caricature is borrowed from the Italian word "carcase" that means to "exaggerate". He adds that using exaggeration in cartoons can contribute to highlighting suffering of individuals or groups, supporting the vulnerable, and discussing or criticizing significant issues or events.

Cartoons could be drawn to express and communicate implicit meanings and messages, concepts, perspectives, beliefs, social practices, and ideologies to the viewers. Multimodal cartoon is a form of discourse that includes both verbal and non-verbal semiotic resources. There are various elements that cartoonists could use in political cartoons to communicate meanings and deliver messages, besides exaggeration, such as metaphor, metonymy, irony, humor, symbolism, juxtaposition, and verbal captions and labelling that illustrate, support, or oppose the accompanying visuals.

2. Purpose of the Study

This research aims to investigate multimodal figurative tropes (verbal and visual) and the relationship between them in a number of selected political cartoons published online by different nationalities on the Russia-Ukraine war. This is also to find out how they are employed to contribute to communicating messages, intended implicit meanings, attitudes, and ideologies related to the Russia-Ukraine war.

3. Research Questions

1. What are the multimodal figurative tropes detected in the selected cartoons on the Russia-Ukraine war?

2. How do these multimodal figurative tropes reflect specific meanings, perspectives, and ideologies?

4. Review of the Literature

Alousque (2013) has examined visual metaphors and metonyms in political caricatures by Plantu, the French cartoonist. She has distinguished between pictorial visual metaphors and multimodal metaphors containing visual and verbal elements. Her analysis is based on the theories of cognitive semantic concerned with pictorial and conceptual metaphor and metonym. She has reported the importance of metaphors and metonyms and the relationship between them for the interpretation of political cartoons; and that political cartoons express the viewpoints of their producers. She has also found that visual metaphors are more universal and powerful than the verbal ones.

Moreover, Sani (2014) has examined multimodal metaphors employed in political cartoons published in two Nigerian newspapers. He has been concerned with identifying the "satirical tones" in these cartoons based on Manning and Phiddian's (2004) theory, semiotics, and cognitive metaphor. He has concluded that multimodal metaphors lead to efficient communication. Additionally, visual metaphors communicate meanings concisely, and produce satire that contributes to social repair.

Semotiuk (2019) has studied humor in political cartoons on the Russian-Ukrainian war visually and verbally. The cartoons were published in 2014 and 2015 by different-nationality artists. They used MDA and computer-based analysis (MAXQDA 2018). They have found that the cartoons are characterized by multimodality, topicality, critical attitude, satire, humor, partiality, and alienation.

In addition, Alahmadi (2022) has examined pictorial and multimodal metaphors in Saudi editorial cartoons by Abdullah

Jaber on social media. He has reported that multimodal metaphors were used more than the pictorial ones. They supported Jabr regarding communicating his intended educational messages and values to the viewers. Moreover, in order to lessen the criticism effect, he employed humor.

Chu (2022) adopted Forceville's (1996) theory of multimodal metaphor to investigate cartoons published on COVID-19 in online newspapers. He has found that linguistic, visual, and multimodal resources are common to be employed for "multimodal metaphorical presentations", with focus on the socio-cultural aspect.

Moreover, Mowafy (2022) has investigated political cartoons addressing the U.S.A foreign policy by Trump published in Al-Ahram Weekly in English. Her analysis is based on O'Halloran (2011), van Dijk (2008), Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), van Leeuwen (2008), Mullen (2007), and Machin (2007). She has concluded that verbal and visual humor and exaggeration are employed to express major political events, responses to them, and certain ideologies.

Asenjo and Gil (2023) has also examined metaphors discussing COVID-19 in Spanish and Brazilian newspapers published online. They have conducted their analysis of pictorial and linguistic resources based on critical, conceptual and multimodal metaphor approaches. They have reported a persuasive function by metaphors that have also shown satire, humor and ideologies.

As clarified, most of this multimodal research on cartoons is concerned with investigating metaphors from a cognitive and conceptual perspective, with focus on humor. Less research has

addressed multimodal metonyms. Therefore, further attention needs to be paid to examining verbal and visual metaphors and metonyms and the interaction between them to produces meanings and communicate perspectives and ideologies in political cartoons addressing wars. Moreover, there is a gap in research on investigating other figurative tropes, such as synecdoche and irony, in political cartoons on the Russia-Ukraine war 2022. As a result, the researcher adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's theory of multimodal discourse (2001), and Chandler's (2007) four major tropes of the figurative language to investigate multimodal figurative tropes in political cartoons on the Russia-Ukraine 2022, and analyze their communicative functions regarding meaning, attitudes, and ideologies.

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1 Multimodal Discourse

Multimodal discourse includes both verbal and non-verbal elements. Language and image could be combined together to communicate meanings and messages in a multimodal text (Kress& van Leeuwen 2006). Moreover, Cope and Kalantzis (2009) mention that a multimodal text could have two semiotic resources or more, such as language, visuals, gestures, audio, etc.

A discourse represents common concepts and beliefs of a group of individuals or a specific society; and varied semiotic modes are employed in it to introduce certain meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Multimodal texts include movies, advertisements, and newspapers (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Cartoons are also considered multimodal discourse since they could include verbal and non-verbal modes. Kress and van

Leeuwen (2001) state that multimodal communication should be investigated according to the two concepts of "articulation and interpretation", which refer to the producers' perspective and the viewer's perception, respectively.

Moreover, Chandler (2007) mentions the social codes related to interpreting the sign. He clarifies that they include verbal (e.g. lexis, syntax, phonology); non-verbal (e.g. facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, body language, postures); and commodity (e.g. fashion, clothing, hair style) codes.

5.2 Semiotics and the Figurative Meaning: Chandler's Tropes

Semiotics is "the study of signs"; it concentrates on signification and examining "anything which 'stands for' something else"; and signs could include words, images, gestures, objects, practices; or procedures (Chandler, 2007; Martin & Ringham, 2000). Moreover, according to semiotics, the sign consists of a signifier and a signified.

The figurative language is regarded as a code of a sign (Chandler, 2007). It is important to distinguish between the literal denotative language that means what it says, and the figurative connotative language or the tropes that carry implicit and multiple interpretations. Chandler (2007) presents four main tropes of the figurative language: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony, as shown in Fig. 1.
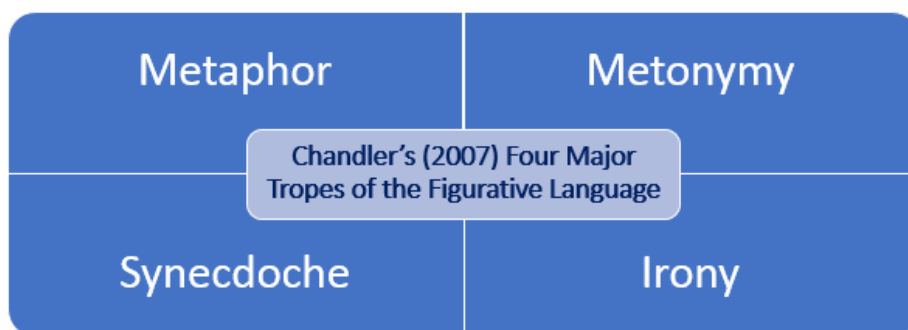
Fig.1 Chandler's Four Tropes of the Figurative Language

5.2.1 Metaphor

Chandler (2007) states that the metaphor in semiotics is described as a new sign formed from the signifier of one sign and the signified of another. He adds that it could include other figures of speech, such as similes. Moreover, metaphors are employed to strengthen and confirm meaning (Colston, 2015) For example, a metaphor such as 'time is money' affirms the significance of time.

In addition, metaphors can be non-verbal, visual, or multimodal. There are multimodal metaphors that utilizes language and other semiotic resources. They are commonly employed in political cartoons. For instance, some cartoons represent politicians as animals or half-animals to attribute certain qualities to them (van Leeuwen, 2005). Furthermore, Colston (2015) reveals that "gestures or other multimodal activities create figurative expressions out of language that otherwise would be nonfigurative".

5.2.2 Metonymy

Chandler (2007) clarifies that semiotically, metonymy is built on substitution; it is reflected via a signified that represents another one, with a relationship between them. There are different forms of metonymy, such as "object for user", "place for event", or "place

for person"; and they could influence people's opinions, beliefs, and reactions (Chandler, 2007)

Sobrino (2017) states that metonymy and metaphor are perceived as conceptual and representational operations associated directly with the process the human mind adopts for constructing, interpreting, and questioning the existing world symbolically. They also say that linguistic and visual metaphors and metonymies exist; and they may be employed in monomodal or multimodal discourse. They are also employed in movies and advertisements (Chandler, 2007).

5.2.3 Synecdoche

Chandler (2007) defines synecdoche as "one element" that is "physically part of the other". He adds that synecdoche has varied forms including "part of the whole", which is represented via close-up shots, or "the formal frame" in visuals, which are considered synecdoche representing a "'slice-of-life'" or representation of reality; "whole for part"; and "species for genus" or vice versa. Moreover, Chandler (2007) mentions that synecdoche could be realized as one of the four tropes or under the umbrella of metonymy.

5.2.4 Irony

Chandler (2007) argues that all tropes include "double signs"; but irony has "double coding". He adds that the "signifier of the ironic sign" seems to "signify one thing"; however, it is understood based on "another signifier" contradicting it. Irony refers to the opposite of what is presented. Moreover, irony "foregrounds the signifier"; consequently, it could be by some means complicated to realize it (Chandler, 2007). Irony could be presented implicitly through language, image, or a multimodal mode. It can be also

utilized to reflect humor. Additionally, Chandler (2007) considers exaggeration a form of irony.

6. Methodology

This is a descriptive non-experimental qualitative research. The analysis of the selected political cartoons is using an eclectic model based on Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal discourse (2001), and Chandler's (2007) four major tropes of the semiotic figurative language. The purpose is to identify the multimodal tropes in theses cartoons and the meanings, perspectives and ideologies reflected through them.

The study uses a stratified random sampling. The cartoons chosen are multimodal, including both verbal and non-verbal semiotic modes. They are published during the first year (from February to October) of the Russia Ukraine war that took place on February 24, 2022. They are categorized into political cartoons against Russia and its invasion of Ukraine; and cartoons depict the major role played by the U.S.A, NATO, or EU in this war. They are international cartoons published on cartoon websites or online newspapers in English. Next, a random sampling is chosen from each category.

7. Data Analysis and Findings

Two categories of political cartoons in English on the Russia-Ukraine war are selected for analysis. First, there are cartoons against Russia and its invasion of Ukraine. Second, there are cartoons showing the U.S.A, the NATO, or the EU as participants and the main cause behind this war.

7.1 Cartoons Against Russia and Russian Invasion of Ukraine in 2022

Fig. 2 *"Hard bite". Cagle Cartoons, (2022, March 1)*

The cartoon in Fig. 2 is by the Slovakian cartoonist, Martin Sutovec; and it is published on the Cagle Cartoons website. It is a multimodal political cartoon. It includes three verbal elements: the title, question mark, and "Z" letter. Moreover, it contains numerous visual elements: the bear, the brick painted with colors of the Ukrainian flag, helmet, red star, flying broken teeth, drops of sweat, flies, and facial expressions. This cartoon is highly symbolic.

The brown bear is a visual metaphorical representation of Russia in this image. The bear is a common "metaphor for Russia" that is depicted in political cartoons to symbolize Russia, whether in a positive or negative manner (Lazari et al., 2019). In this cartoon, it represents a negative representation of Russia and its attack on Ukraine.

Additionally, the title of the cartoon, "Hard bite" is a verbal metaphor that Ukraine has not been an easy target; and it has shown resistance to the Russian invasion. Such meaning is also confirmed by the accompanying visual metaphor in the cartoon. The whole

image of the bear and its broken teeth attempting to eat the brick painted with the colors of the Ukrainian flag is a metaphorical representation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian resistance that Russia encountered.

Moreover, the colors of the Ukrainian flag that the brick is painted with is a metonym since the flag is symbolizes Ukraine. The "Z" letter is also a sign related to Russia's war in Ukraine. It is found on Russian tanks and other military equipment; however, there are various suggestions and interpretations of its meaning, such as: Zapad: west, a Russian troops' location, Zelenskyy: the Ukrainian President, targeted by the Russia; *Za pobedu*: "for victory"; or a sign to identify Russian forces and "avoid friendly fire", (Mackintosh, 2022; Sauer, 2022). Thus, it could be a multimodal metonym representing Russia's imperialistic ideology towards Ukraine in this cartoon. Additionally, the five-pointed red star is found on the top of the Spasskaya Tower, one of the Kremlin's towers. Thus, it is a metonym of Russia, the Kremlin, and their policies. Mite (2002) has stated that the "red five-point star" was a symbol of the Red Army in the old Soviet Union; and he had concerns that attempts to restore it indicates a "nostalgia for Soviet imperial might". Thus, the "Hard bite" cartoon seems to shed light on the imperialism ideology represented in Russia's attempts to expand its power to the old Soviet countries, such as Ukraine.

The helmet is also associated with wars and it is a metonym of soldiers. Moreover, the close-up shot of the bear and its facial expressions is a visual synecdoche reflecting Russia's surprise, shock, and suffering because of the Ukrainian resistance. In addition, multimodal irony arises from accompanying the image to the question mark. There is a juxtaposition that despite the bear's big size, compared to the small size of the brick, the brick was able

to cause it shock, suffering, and pain. This ironically refers to Russia's astonishment because it has not expected Ukraine to have the ability to fight back its almighty army, and cause it losses.

The "Hard bite" cartoon was published at the beginning of March, a few days after the Russia-Ukraine war burst in 2022. It could be regarded as a prediction of what happened later when, according to Kagan et al. (2022), the Russian tropes have withdrawn from Kyiv, and Ukraine restored it.

Fig. 3 *"In like a liar". Mississippi Today, (2022, March 10)*

The cartoon in Fig. 3 is published online in the Mississippi Today newspaper by the American cartoonist, Marshall Ramsey. It is a multimodal cartoon where both verbal and visual resources are significant for its interpretation. It shows the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, standing in a cemetery, blood dropping from his hands, and saying a statement. There are also multiple grave stones labelled with the verb phrase "rest in peace". There is also a gloomy

background where the grey and black colors are combined and dominant.

In fact, the whole image, verbally and visually is a metaphorical representation of death. Putin is metaphorically represented as a grave digger, who is responsible for burying the death. This assumes Putin's responsibility for the causalities caused by the Russia-Ukraine war. The black crows in the image are metaphors of death. Furthermore, blood is a metonymy of war and death. There is also contradiction between the dominating gloomy colors of the image and the bright color of the fresh red blood on Putin's hands, pants, shoes, and the ground metaphorically indicating that the killing is continuing.

In addition, there is a multimodal irony on multiple levels that arises from juxtaposition. First, verbal irony arises from the contradiction between the two phrases "I'M A Peace Keeper" and the repetition of the phrase "rest in peace", which is capitalized in different forms. "Rest in peace", is a prayer for the dead; and Putin in the image says that he is a "peacekeeper", which ironically refers to him as the one who caused the victims' death.

Additionally, the statement "I'M A Peace Keeper" by Putin contradicts the whole image indicating death. The peacekeeper exerts efforts to stop wars. However, in the cartoon, Putin is shown as responsible for the war and its tremendous causalities. Obviously, there is a multimodal irony arising from combining the visual cemetery scene, tombstones, and the blood on Putin's hands, and on the ground below him with the verbal repetition of the word peace, and the word "peacekeeper" in the cartoon. Additionally, the tittle "In like a liar" supports this interpretation through analyzing the combination between the verbal and non-verbal elements in the

cartoon. The cartoon emphasizes that Putin is a liar regarding his statement since the existing consequences oppose what he says.
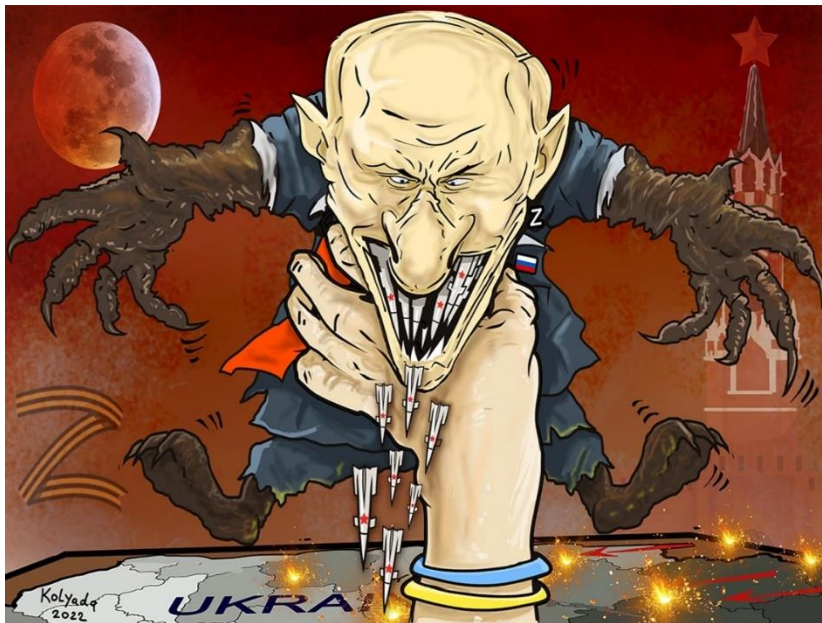
Fig. 3 *"Stop the rashsist demon raining down death!" Kyiv Post,*

(2022, October 11)

The cartoon in Fig. 3 is by the Ukrainian cartoonist, Serhiy Kolyada; and it is published in the Kyiv Post, an online Ukrainian Newspaper in English,. This cartoon represents Putin as a "demon" attacking Russia and causing destruction, while a hand is trying to stop him. Besides, there are multiple details at the background. There are both verbal and visual semiotic resources used in the cartoon. The verbal elements include the title, half the word Ukraine on the map and the two "Z" letters. On the contrary, the visual ones are dominant in the cartoon.

There are both visual and verbal metaphors presented. The visual metaphor of Putin as a demon depicts him with the face of a vampire, sharp teeth as rockets falling on Ukraine, and a wolverine body. Non-human features are attached to him. Besides, there is exaggeration in drawing the pointed ears, big mouth, and long face. Such representation would depict his violent and aggressive attack against Russia. The complete moon at the background is a metaphor of the full power the wolverine gets by this time, when it transforms.

Furthermore, the verbal metaphor is shown via comparing Putin to a "demon raining down death" in the title. This emphasizes Putin's bruteness in the Russia-Ukraine war. Moreover, a pun exists between the word "rashsist" in the title and the word "racist" in general referring to the same ideology based on dehumanizing the other.

The half word "UKRAI" on the map is a metonym of Ukraine (part of a whole). It is also a visual metaphor of the destruction caused to many parts of Ukraine due to the war, since the other half of it is covered by explosions. Moreover, the "Z" letters are signs function as metonyms of the Russian war in Ukraine.

The hand trying to stop Putin is a visual metaphor of the Ukrainian resistance. Besides, the bracelets with the colors of the Ukrainian flag (blue and yellow) in its arm is a visual metonym of Ukraine. Additionally, there is a visual irony arising from the contradiction between the image of Putin, represented as a powerful destructive creature, in big size, and the small size hand, representing Ukraine, catching him form the neck trying to stop him in the air. Despite Russia is more powerful in comparison to Ukraine, Ukraine has been able to resist and withstand. A multimodal similar irony arises from the interaction between this

image and the verbal title of the cartoon based on comparison of powers.

Additionally, the Russian flag pinned to Putin's jacket and the red star on the top of the Kremlin's tower are metonyms of Russia. Moreover, the orange and black Z ribbon is a metonym. The orange and black ribbon is called St. George's Ribbon and is a symbol of the Soviet red army victory over Germany in World War Two; and recently, it has been shaped as a Z letter by supporters Russia during the Russia-Ukraine in 2022, and associated with Russian military victory (Schechter, 2023). On the other hand, it appears that the cartoonist, as opponent of this war, seems to view it as a symbol of the Russian imperialistic ideology in Ukraine

7.2 Cartoons referring to the U.S.A, NATO, or EU as triggers of the war

Fig. 4 *"Security or instability?" Global Times, (2022, February 27)*

The cartoon in Fig. 4 is by the Chinese cartoonist, Liu Rui; and it is published in the Global Times online. The Global Times is a Chinese national Newspaper in English. The cartoon

demonstrates Uncle Sam throwing the NATO-Expansion- lighter on the Russia-Ukraine conflicts igniting the war between both countries. This is a multimodal cartoon with two verbal phrases and three main visual figures. Thus, the visual semiotic resources are more dominant.

Uncle Sam is a visual metaphorical representation of the U.S.A and its ideology regarding the Russia-Ukraine war. Xin & Yelu (2022) has reported that the US thinks of containing Russia through engaging it in this war. Uncle Sam is carelessly lightening his cigarette, and then throwing the lighter causing the explosion of the Russian-Ukrainian situation and the eruption of the war. There is also an irony arising here since he is portrayed acting in nonchalant manner and going back inside the shadows, while he seems to be the main cause behind the crisis. The lighter is a metaphor of the NATO expansion as the spark that has ignited the war. Moreover, the bomb is a metaphor of the conflicts between Russia and Ukraine. The lighter is also metaphor referring to the NATO's expansion imperialistic ideology. Zhouxiang (2022) and Korybko (2022) have mentioned that the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, has considered the NATO's expansionist attitude, and installation of "strike weapons" and "anti-missile systems" near the Russian-Ukrainian borders a threat to Russia that needs to be faced.

The whole image and the interaction between the visual elements and the verbal elements supporting and illustrating them is a metaphor that the NATO, led by the U.S.A, are the instigators of the Russia-Ukraine war 2022. There is also irony that Uncle Sam is throwing the lighter carelessly and seems unconcerned about the consequences despite the fact that his action is the main stimulator of the war, according to the cartoon, and he has gained benefits

because of it. The bomb is a visual metaphor of the tense situation that was between Russia and Ukraine.

Fig. 5 *"Incurable disease". China Daily, (2022, March 28)*

The cartoon in Fig. 5 is by Cai Meng, a Chinese cartoonist; and it is published online in the China Daily, a Chinese newspaper in English. It represents an ill man supplied with blood in a hospital. The visual resources are combined with the verbal ones.

The ill man is a visual metaphorical representation of the NATO. The five blood bags, each labelled with the word "WAR" are multimodal metaphors of the wars the NATO participated in or instigated. The full blood bag is a multimodal metaphor of the current ongoing 2022-Russia-Ukraine war. The wilted flowers are visual metaphors of the destruction and death caused by the wars.

Moreover, Uncle Sam in the photo frame is a visual metaphor of the U.S.A and its ideologies. The close-up shot of him is a

synecdoche. The logo of the NATO on the man's shoulder is a metonym of the NATO. The Kremlin in the photo is a metonym of Russia. The two photo frames next to each other may be referring to the old cold war between the U.S.A and the Soviet Union. Additionally, their placement next to the ill man's bed may relate them to the NATO's expansion movements after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The NATO consists of 31 member countries, including the U.S.A; it was formed during the cold war prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union to protect the West (Korybko, 2022; Masters, 2012). However, Korybko (2022) says that the NATO is led by the US that is misleading people that the "Ukrainian crisis is purely Russia's fault".

In addition, the interaction between the visual and verbal elements in the image results in multimodal irony that that the ill NATO-man is in need for the blood shed by wars and death to survive. This could be considered an expression of the NATO's imperialistic attitude and ambitions. The whole image is illustrated by the title "incurable disease" metaphorically referring to the NATO and its expansion through wars that seems to be continuous.
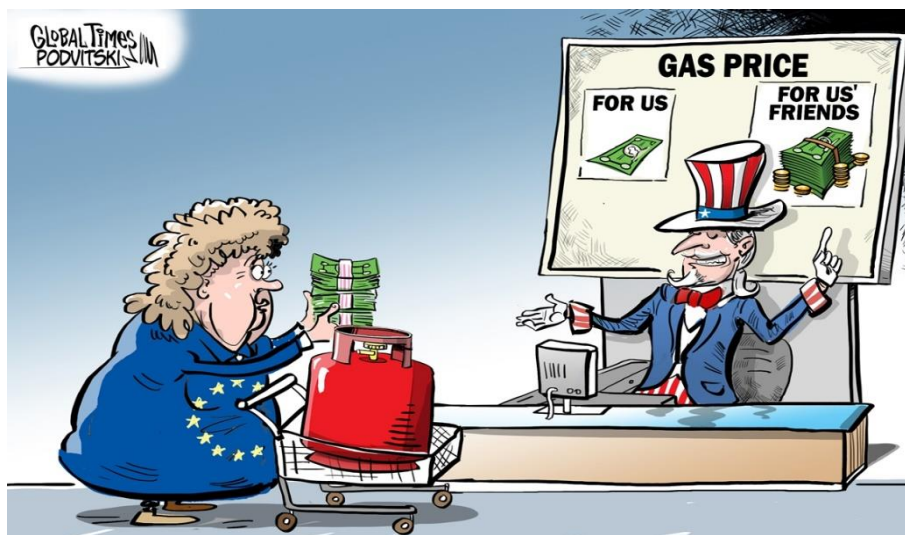
Fig. 6 *"Grand hypocrisy". Global Times, (2022, October 12)*

The cartoon in Fig. 6 is by Vitaly Podvitski, a Russian cartoonist; and it is published in the Global Times. It depicts an exhausted lady wearing a dress with the EU logo approaching Uncle Sam to buy gas.

Uncle Sam is again employed as a visual metaphor of the U.S.A and its ideology related to the Russia-Ukraine war and its results. In the mage, he also shows an exploiting attitude even with the EU, an ally of the U.S.A. Moreover, the exhausted helpless lady is a visual metaphor of the EU; and the logo on its dress is a metonym of the EU. The gas cylinder is also a visual metaphor of the gas shortage problem occurred as a consequence of the Russia-Ukraine war.

In addition, there is a multimodal irony arising from the combination and interaction between the image and the verbal irony via phrases indicating the comparison between the low gas price for the US, the expensive one for its friends, and the title "grand hypocrisy". The EU is forced to buy the gas at high prices because its countries are in desperate need for it after the sanctions imposed

on Russian oil as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war. Russia is one of the world's main "oil exporters"; thus, gas prices have dramatically risen after the sanctions imposed on it due to the Russia-Ukraine war (Chapman, 2022; Isidore, 2023). Seemingly, the US is making use and profits of the situation.

Additionally, a visual irony results from comparing the woman's status and position to that of Uncle Sam in the image. She stands up in fatigue in front of the cashier where Uncle Sam sits down confident and comfortably. Both the U.S.A and the EU support Ukraine financially and militarily in the Russia-Ukraine war (Xin & Yelu, 2022). However, the US is utilizing the situation, controlling the gas prices, and gaining profits, while the EU is suffering.

8. Conclusion

Regarding answering the research questions "what are the multimodal figurative tropes detected in the selected cartoons on the Russia-Ukraine war? and how do these multimodal figurative tropes reflect specific meanings, perspectives, and ideologies?", in the first three cartoons investigated (Figures 2, 3, and 4) there are multimodal metaphors, metonyms, and irony. The synecdoche is visual and represented via the close-up shot in Figure 2. The visual tropes are dominant in Figures 2 and 4. Moreover, multimodal metaphors and irony arises from the interaction and contradiction between the verbal and visual elements. The multimodal figurative tropes contribute to decoding and interpreting the meanings of the cartoons. Moreover, they reflected ideologies such as the Russian imperialistic ideology reflected in its invasion of Ukraine. Additionally, they contribute to communicating the cartoonists' attitudes and viewpoints regarding the Russia-Ukraine war 2022 to the audience. It is worth mentioning that these cartoons are by a

Slovakian and American artist, whose countries are members of the NATO, and a Ukrainian cartoonist.

On the other hand, in Figures 5, 6, and 7, there are multimodal metaphors, metonyms, and irony. No visual or verbal synecdoche is detected. Both verbal and visual resources are significant. The examined figurative tropes communicate meanings and the cartoonists' perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine war 2022 to the viewers. Additionally, they reflect the imperialistic ideology, whether related to expansion by the NATO or containing Russia and making profits of increasing the gas prices as a consequence of the war by the U.S.A. The three cartoons published in Chinese newspapers by two Chinese and one Russian cartoonists. They reflect such attitude that they do not accuse or blame Russia for the Russia-Ukraine war, rather they focus on the role played to instigate the war by the U.S.A. and the NATO, with reference to the EU. It is also noteworthy that there is a strong relationship between Russia and China. China supports Russia financially in response to the international sanctions imposed on it after the Russia-Ukraine war (Chiou, 2022).

Finally, the results of this study align with Alousque (2013) who has reported the significance of visual metaphors and metonyms and the relationship between them for the decoding of political cartoons, and that cartoonists communicate their points of view through them to the audience. They also agree with Chu (2022) who concluded that verbal, visual, and multimodal elements are commonly used for "multimodal metaphorical presentations"; and Alahmadi (2022) who stated that multimodal metaphors are used to communicate messages. Moreover, they are consistent with Asenjo and Gil (2023) who reported that multimodal metaphors have reflected ideologies.

9. Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher suggests a further analysis of political cartoons on the Russia Ukraine war 2022 adopting a cognitive approach. This analysis could focus on investigating how the viewers of the cartoon perceive different multimodal figurative tropes employed in them. Furthermore, the persuasive impact of these tropes on the audience that might drive them change their mind and attitudes to a specific event could be examined.

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