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# We move: a journey metaphor in selected Ghanaian political cartoons

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**Abstract:** The research examines how Ghanaian political cartoonists employ journey imagery to explicate economic, socio-political, and topical/trendy issues. The effective communication of social issues requires the utilisation of compelling devices, such as metaphorical and metonymical representations, and symbolism. Cartoonists employ these devices to convey their messages about the aforementioned issues. For this study, thirteen political cartoons involving journey metaphors were retrieved from Tilapia of 3 News and Akosua of the Daily Guide. The data analysis utilised both Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and Forceville’s Multimodal Metaphor. In accordance with the tenets of CMT, several conceptual metaphors were identified through the examination of the comprehensive data which included, but was not limited to, ‘GOVERNMENT IS A DRIVER’, ‘MANAGING A COUNTRY IS DRIVING A CAR’, ‘LEADING A GROUP IS DRIVING A CAR’ and ‘NATION IS A BOAT’. The relatability of journey metaphors makes it easier for readers and viewers to understand the cartoons’ implicit meaning. Finally, the utilisation of the source-path-goal element in journey metaphors provides a comprehensive perspective to the message, which in turn facilitates the comprehension of the cartoonist’s intended meaning by a global audience.

**Keywords:** journey metaphors; political cartoons; conceptual metaphor theory; Ghana; multimodal metaphor; multimodality

## 1 Introduction

The ability to communicate effectively is of paramount importance for journalists and politicians alike. It is of the utmost importance that they are able to communicate a message, which is clear, concise, and to the point. The messages conveyed by journalists are intended for the general public, whereas those of politicians are

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designed to persuade voters to accept their messages and vote for them. It is evident that communication can be conducted in a variety of ways, either verbally or in writing. The choice of communication method is dependent upon a number of issues, including the objective of the communication, the intended audience and the context in which the message is conveyed. The aforementioned factors are also considered in the transmission of messages through both electronic and print media. As posited by Bell (1995: 23), the media can be regarded as a significant linguistic and social institution, with the responsibility of presenting culture, politics and social life to the public. The media are widely acknowledged to play a significant role in the development and dissemination of these ideas. One method of conveying these ideas is through the medium of cartoons. The use of cartoons is a common practice among journalists, as it has been demonstrated that cartoons offer a number of advantages over verbally expressed text. As Green and Myers (2010) confirm, the use of cartoons in the dissemination of information has been demonstrated to be more effective than the use of text alone. The effectiveness of cartoons as a communication tool is contingent upon the intended message. Cartoons may be classified into various categories, including political, comic, animated, and educational. The purpose of this research is to investigate political cartoons as a research subject, with the intention of maintaining a neutral stance on the political aspects of the cartoons in question. As the term 'political cartoon' suggests, this type of cartoon is specifically concerned with political figures and elected officials who are responsible for governing a particular country. EL Refaie (2009: 175) asserts that the use of verbo-visual multimodal metaphors is typical in the field of political cartoons. Aspects of social, cultural or political life are represented by these metaphors, which are distinguished by the condensing of reality and how it transforms into an eye-catching, unique format that is further enriched by a sense of humour. According to a 2012 study by Sani et al., political cartoons are single visual frames with graphic imagery and sometimes text or a dialogue-like thought bubble. In contrast, Josh (2002: 182) asserts that political cartoons have a significant impact due to their capacity to use both linguistic and non-linguistic cues to convey their messages. Cartoonists employ this genre to convey their opinions and ideas about contemporary political and socioeconomic issues, which can have an impact on societal agendas. Josh (2002: 185) posits that cartoonists employ a plethora of journalistic conventions, including figures of speech such as visual metaphors, visual metonyms, irony, symbolism and exaggeration, to effectively convey their message. The deployment of visual metaphors serves as a medium to prompt insights and shape public perceptions, thereby influencing their opinion and outlook. Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2020) argues that cartoons serve as an allegorical form of expression, utilising the representation of places, characters

and events to elucidate and reason about real-life occurrences. Metaphor, from a linguistic perspective, is described as a tool that permeates our thoughts and everyday lives. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 5), metaphor is about experiencing one entity in terms of a different entity. The authors contend that metaphors are found not only in language but also in cartoons, ads, pictures, graffiti, artwork, and music, among other forms of communication. Cartoonists frequently use metaphors to convey their message, drawing inspiration from various familiar sources. ‘Metaphors can be realised in obvious imaginative products such as cartoons, literary works, dreams, visions, and myths’, according to Lakoff (1993: 241), lends credence to this. One of the most commonly used familiar source domains is the journey metaphor due to its familiarity with the general population. Charteris-Black (2004: 13) posits that politicians employ the travel metaphor to conceptualise their objectives as the destination of travellers and the achievement of worthwhile goals. According to Forceville (1996: 23), the concept of a journey is highly structured and is made up of several components that can be mapped onto the target domain. These include the trajectory, fellow travellers, delays, stops, costs, unexpected barriers and hazards. In his 2016 work, Forceville (8–9) posits that each mode of transportation, including automobiles, trains, boats and aircraft, has its own trajectory and specific obstacles, such as roadblocks, rivers, train derailments and sinking. A journey is typically constituted of three elements: the starting point (source), the route taken (path) and the destination (goal). The employment of the journey metaphor as a rhetorical device within the domain of political multimodal discourse has proven to be an efficacious means of facilitating a more profound comprehension of the intricate interrelationships that exist between image and text, as well as the socio-political context. This study aims to investigate how two Ghanaian cartoonists deploy journey metaphors to communicate socio-economic, political, and contemporary issues. A paucity of research has been conducted in this new field of inquiry, particularly in Africa, and more specifically in Ghana. The present study aims to contribute substantially to the extant literature by examining the use of both verbal and visual metaphorical methods by cartoonists. These cartoonists use metaphorical devices to articulate prevailing socio-political themes in Ghanaian media discourse, with a particular emphasis on the travel/journey metaphor. These cartoons have the capacity to influence their audience by acting as a persuasive medium.

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

To show how socio-political issues in Ghana can be simplified and made easier to understand through the use of journey metaphors.

To illustrate how the various elements in the cartoons complement each other in bringing out message.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Data

This study focuses on a textual analysis of cartoons using the journey and travel metaphor by cartoonists in Ghana. The study did not involve direct contact with individuals; hence, no ethical clearance was needed. Permissions for the use of the cartoons drawn by two artists were sought and granted. A total of 13 political cartoons featuring cars, ships, and buses related to the concept of travel/journey were downloaded from the cartoonists' websites. In qualitative research, the size of the data is not an issue because it is not a question of volume, but of understanding a phenomenon. The period during which the relevant data were collected spans from 2019 to 2024. The data were obtained from two cartoonists, Tilapia of TV3 News and Akosua of the Daily Guide. It should be noted that both of these media outlets are privately owned. The rationale behind the selection of these cartoonists is elucidated in the following paragraphs. Firstly, Tilapia, a cartoonist for 3 News, is renowned for his impartiality in addressing issues, which lends credibility to his work. Additionally, Tilapia is affiliated with a television station, which serves to extend the scope of its influence. Secondly, Akosua from the Daily Guide was selected on the grounds of its purported affiliation with the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP), which may result in a bias towards NPP-related topics. These are the only cartoonists currently active and publishing cartoons in Ghana.

### 2.2 Selection criteria

To conduct a rigorous analysis of the data, it is essential to establish a set of criteria that a cartoon must satisfy in order to be considered. It is recommended that the content of the cartoon must relate to travel or related concepts. In the aforementioned theme, the assumption was that, in the context of political cartoons, travel-related content was used metaphorically, not literally. Indeed, this turned out to be the case. Furthermore, the cartoon under consideration must have been produced within the specified study period of 2019–2024. Moreover, it is imperative that additional semiotic tools, including participants, colour effects, setting and font size, are incorporated into the data to enhance analysis.

## 2.3 Procedure of data analysis

First, the conceptual metaphor and primary metaphors underlying the chosen cartoons were identified and written in upper case. In the process of mapping features from the source domain to the target domain, the author employed the CMT as the principal analytical framework. This approach was presented in tabular form beneath each cartoon. In order to decipher the data and explain why certain prominent features from the source domain to the target domain have been transferred, Forceville's concept of multimodal metaphor was utilised in addition to CMT. This was due to the fact that it encompasses two modes: written language and visuals in the creation of meaning. A detailed analysis was also conducted to elucidate the manner in which the cartoonist employed the visual aspect of metonymy, with a particular focus on its function in the effective conveyance of the cartoonist's message. Finally, the analysis was deemed essential to broaden the scope of the investigation to encompass the linguistic components of the cartoons, specifically the speech bubbles and captions. These elements are crucial for accurately conveying and understanding the cartoonist's intended message.

## 2.4 Theoretical framework

The present study has two conceptual underpinnings that will assist in the analysis of the visual metaphors in question. The first of these is Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), and the second is Forceville's Multimodal Metaphor Theory. The proponents of CMT posit that metaphor constitutes a distinct form of mental experience, rather than being merely a linguistic phenomenon (1980). In cognitive linguistics, metaphor is viewed as a mapping in which the source domain partially transforms the target domain. Kövecses (2015: 2) explains that the source domain is usually more physical, directly experienced and well-known, while the target domain is typically more abstract, less directly experienced and less familiar. Both domains are linked by a set of similarities or mappings between the two conceptual frames. According to Forceville (1996), who analyzes metaphors from a cognitive theory perspective, metaphors can be examined from linguistic, multimodal and pictorial (visual) viewpoints. Forceville's position is that the pictorial (visual) mode of metaphor is the most frequently examined non-verbal mode. Additionally, he proposes a visual (pictorial) metaphor model based on Max Black's (1979) interaction theory to cater the visual perspective of metaphor. He further mentions that pictorial metaphors are monomodal: their target and source are exclusively presented in visual terms. In view of this, for anything to be a metaphor, pictorial or otherwise, the following three questions

should be answered: (1) What are its two domains? (2) What is its target domain, and what is its source domain? (3) Which salient feature or (structured) cluster of features can or must be mapped from source to target? (Forceville 1996: 108, cf. Black's 1979 interaction theory). The author identifies the following types of pictorial (visual) metaphor: the contextual metaphor, hybrid metaphor, pictorial simile and integrated metaphor (1996). Given the prevalence of multimodal nature in visual manifestation, Forceville proposes the utilisation of visual and multimodal metaphors to elucidate non-verbal manifestations of metaphors, such exemplified by advertisements, political cartoons and imagery. The expansion of metaphor studies to encompass visual and multimodal varieties has been precipitated by Forceville's substantial contributions (1994–2024) and that of Forceville and Urios-Aparisi's (2009) volume. This renewed interest is based on the concept of multimodality, defined by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 20) as the integration of multiple semiotic resources or modes in a sociocultural context to create a semiotic event or end product. In Forceville's opinion, multimodal metaphors are defined as metaphors that primarily or solely represent the source and the target in two distinct modes. If both the source and the target are articulated through images, this is designated as a monomodal metaphor of the visual type (2006: 384, 2009: 24). El Refaie (2003: 75) contributes to the discourse on the utilisation of 'visual metaphor' as a means of expressing metaphorical thinking through the use of images or symbols. This entails the creation of a visual representation that bears a specific resemblance to an idea or concept. Similar views are expressed by Kaplan (2005), who defines visual metaphors as the depiction of a specific event, person or location in an image form that suggests a connection to a specific entity through semblance or similarity. As posited by Forceville (2009) on the nature of visual and multimodal metaphors, the foundational domains of these metaphors are embedded within cultural settings and bodily experiences (p. 28). In his 1996 paper, Forceville (p. 109) posits the observation that both domains can be represented in the following format: VISUAL A IS VERBAL B or VERBAL A IS VISUAL B. This suggests that, in visual (multimodal) metaphor, the source can be presented verbally while the target is visual, and vice versa. Given these considerations, a thorough understanding of the social and political environment in which the genre originated is necessary for the reader to arrive at a meaningful appreciation of the visual metaphors utilised. Forceville was the first to suggest a strategy for identifying visual metaphors (1996, 2002, 2008). This foundation has been expanded upon by later scholars, such as Kaplan (2005), who offered techniques for identifying and analysing pictorial metaphors in advertisements. This methodology involves the following steps: first, note the presence of the metaphor; second, name the two terms of the metaphor; and third, identify the properties transferred from source

to target. It should be mentioned, nevertheless, that Kaplan's study was primarily concerned with the advertisement. For this investigation, the visual metaphor technique developed by Forceville (1996) will be applied. These are as follows: (i) an identity relation should be established between two phenomena from different categories in a given context; (ii) the phenomena are to be understood as target (domain) and source (domain), respectively; and (iii) the target and source are not reversible, and at least one salient characteristic of the source can be mapped onto the target. As noted regarding multimodal metaphors and the function of linguistic elements, El Refaie (2009) asserts that the language component complements the pictorial metaphor by providing crucial information that helps viewers identify the source and target concepts. By acting as a conduit, the cartoons' verbal aspect creates a connection between conceptual scenarios and visual elements. Cartoons' complex nature can be interpreted in ways that go beyond their visual components. But in order to deliver the desired message, editorial cartooning relies on combining verbal and graphic elements. According to Mohsen (2021), speech and language are pivotal components of editorial cartoons, serving to complement images and provide textual support to aid understanding. These linguistic elements are frequently employed to facilitate interpretation of the metaphors realised through pictorial means. Barthes (1977) posits the notion that the intrinsic nature of images is 'polysemous', suggesting that they embody a series of signifiers that are inherently unstable and subject to interpretation. Recognizing and understanding the image's message requires language to establish both denoted and connoted meanings. Barthes identifies two relationships between text and image. These are as follows: (1) a relay is a device that either expands the meaning of an image or, conversely, creates a new meaning that completes the message; (2) elaboration is the process of defining and specifying meanings in a more definitive and precise manner. Barthes identifies two distinct forms of elaboration: firstly, the image illustrates the text, and secondly, the image (anchorage) is restated in a more specific manner. In view of the aforementioned benefits, the analyst will pay particular attention to the verbal aspects of the data, as these either provide a summary or elaboration of the message for the reader.

### 3 Reviewed works

This section of the study discusses and includes a selection of influential papers that are related to the current work and have been published during the last five years. In his study from a Cameroonian perspective, Echitchi (2024) undertook a rigorous analysis of cartoons that employed the journey metaphor, a trope that frequently

involves a variety of vehicles, such as automobiles and boats. Some of the conceptual metaphors found in the author's work include the following: 'CAMEROON IS A BROKEN CAR' and 'CAMEROON IS A SINKING SHIP', among others. The researcher concluded that the application of the journey metaphor by cartoonists has the potential to facilitate more effective communication of economic issues. This is because improperly managed potholes can become impediments that keep drivers from getting to their destination. In their 2019 study, Silaški and Đurović especially used metaphorical travel representations to examine political cartoons regarding Brexit. Applying Forceville's multimodal metaphor framework and Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor approach, the analysis encompassed 48 political cartoons with 'Brexit' themes. The research analysis demonstrated how journey metaphors deliver both effectiveness and importance for multimodal political communication. Yang Dongying's (2020) examination of cartoons from *The Economist* provides a noteworthy viewpoint on the same Brexit topic. The cartoons successfully engage the audience by using a travel metaphor as a rhetorical device, which is consistent with the findings of Silaški and Đurović's study. This earlier study highlights the journey metaphor's effectiveness in political communication and its ability to connect with the public. In addition to its effectiveness in matching consumer goals with mobile devices, Jia's (2024) investigation revealed that the journey metaphor's embodied quality contributes to the advertisements' universal appeal and understanding. Jia's research supports the journey metaphor findings of Đurović and Silaški. Abdel-Raheem (2014) used Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory and Forceville's multimodal metaphor to study thirty political cartoons related to the Euro Crisis. According to the study's findings, using a journey metaphor can help readers develop particular cognitive frames that affect how they approach a particular subject. Additionally, the author asserts that the textual commentary that is usually included with the cartoons complements the visual portrayal by clarifying the cartoonist's intended meaning. In his 2012 quantitative analysis of speeches by Ghanaian politicians, Opoku Mensah employed the Yutong bus as a conceptual metaphor for the country's sociopolitical circumstances (Opoku Mensah 2012). He builds on this research in his work by using conceptual metaphor theory to analyse political talk programs, radio talks and small-scale political demonstrations from a Ghanaian perspective. The study discovered that when politicians employ journey metaphors, people may comprehend the point they are attempting to make. He claimed that the bus metaphor demonstrates that metaphors have functions beyond aesthetics and the concise expression of political ideas. Moragas-Fernández et al. (2018) analysed television campaign advertisements from three elections to the Catalan Parliament using journey metaphors. The findings of the analysis showed that the journey metaphor is widely used by Catalan politicians as a rallying cry. By using this metaphor, the speaker presents themselves in a positive manner and supports their

moral position. Even though the current study's data are different from the existing data, this does not make the former unnecessary.

The journey metaphor's application in Lithuanian national development politics was studied by Cibulskienė (2012). The journey metaphor is the primary metaphor for national development, according to the author. The researcher came to the conclusion that conservatives in Lithuania use the travel metaphor to communicate the ideas that they are the chosen ones, that they have the blueprint for successful governance and that their rivals are incapable of running the country. Zhang and Forceville's (2020) study investigated the effectiveness of metonymy and metaphor as analytical tools in the study of political cartoons with regard to the use of metonymy in the context of the subject matter. Focusing on the Sino-US trade conflict, the researchers used a sample of 60 political cartoons from America and 69 from China. The researchers concluded that a methodical examination of metonymies and visual metaphors sheds light on the cultural and ideological aspects of political cartoons. Additionally, they proposed that all of the meaning-making processes associated with cartoons must be considered in order to fully explain their interpretation. The methodology employed by the various authors of the reviewed works to arrive at their respective findings is not significantly different from the current work, as the majority of them are qualitative in nature. The evaluation of these works is beneficial as they underscore the importance of travel/journey metaphors in political discourse, particularly in the context of political cartoons, as is evidenced by extant literature on the subject. The present article aims to address this lacuna in research by offering insights into the use of journey metaphors in Ghanaian political discourse as employed by cartoonists in Ghana.

## 4 Data analysis and discussion

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the cartoonist employs the medium of the boat/ship as a means of conveying his message concerning the NPP presidential primaries and its



6 September 2023

Figure 1: The ship scenario.

**Table 1:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Drivers of the boat/passengers	Candidates
Journey <sup>a</sup>	NPP Presidential primaries
Ship	The whole of Ghana
Captain of the ship	Dr Bawumia, vice president and a contestant
Man overboard	Mr Alan Kyerematen

<sup>a</sup><https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=765365455596342&set=pb.100063686824366.-2207520000&type=3>.

associated issues. The primary metaphor that can be construed from Figure 1 is RESIGNING FROM THE NPP PRESIDENTIAL RACE IS JUMPING OFF THE SHIP. The conceptual mappings that can be inferred from the source domain to the target domain are shown in Table 1 above.

Figure 1 was released immediately following the special delegates' conference of the NPP. The purpose of the conference was to reduce the number of individuals competing for the NPP flag from ten to five. The cartoonist employs a recognised source domain to convey his message, thereby facilitating viewer comprehension of the intended meaning behind the data presented in Figure 1. The cartoonist depicts the NPP presidential candidate as a man who abandons a vessel in motion, in consideration of the aforementioned factors. The Honourable Alan Kyeremanten, a prominent presidential contender and former Minister for Trade and Industry, relinquished his party membership for personal reasons, as revealed in a press conference held on 25 September 2023, as reported by CitiNews.com. It is possible to establish a parallel between the Hon. Alan Kyeremanten's decision to withdraw from the flagbearership race, and indeed the party as a whole, and the notion of a traveller setting out on a voyage. During the voyage, one of the passengers chooses to disembark before the ship reaches its destination. The cartoonist employs five characters, which represent the five NPP presidential candidates, to convey his message. The contenders are Afriyie Akoto Osei, Alan Kyeremanten, Kennedy Ohene Agyapong, Francis Addai Nimo and Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia. The artist draws parallels between these presidential contenders and ship passengers.

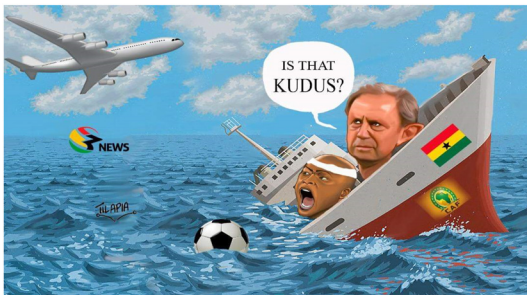
As demonstrated in Figure 1, the caption 'Showdown' is a comment from one of the candidates, Hon. Ken Agyapong, regarding behaviour he believed to compromise his prospects of securing the flagbearership. The statement regarding the impending showdown was directed towards the incumbent President, Nana Addo, and his Vice President, Dr Bawumia, with the latter also being a candidate in the election. The cartoonist has chosen to utilise the term 'showdown' in the title of the cartoon to provide a contextual framework for the intended message and to draw the reader's attention to it. Given the fact that it reinforces the cartoonist's intended message, the

analysis was expanded to include the cartoon’s speech elements. According to the resigning candidate’s balloon speech that reads: ‘Intimidation, beatings, violence, and collusion! Damaging eyesight! Awaay...before they finish me’. It has been suggested that the candidate, who is believed to have withdrawn from the flag-bearership race, lists the above-mentioned problems as the primary reasons for his decision.

Furthermore, the artist employs the use of a colossal vessel, deliberately positioning the head of an elephant – an NPP symbol – at the forefront of the ship. This is metonymic, whereby an entity is represented by a component (PART-FOR-WHOLE). In this case, the elephant’s head is a representation of the entire animal. Given his position, it is reasonable to presume that Hon. Alan Kyeremanten’s decision to drop out of the race may have been influenced by Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, a presidential candidate and vice president. When seen in the context of his position, Dr. Bawumia’s clothing and headgear resemble those of a pirate captain guiding the ship. One interpretation of this phenomenon is that it played a role in Hon. Kyeremanten’s decision to leave the ship.

The conceptual metaphor that can be identified in Figure 2 is ‘NATION IS A BOAT’, which can be visually represented as BLACK STARS’ ELIMINATION FROM THE 2021 AFCON IS A SINKING SHIP.

Table 2 below shows the conceptual mapping for Figure 2.



14 January 2022

**Figure 2:** The ship scenario. <https://www.facebook.com/TilapiaCartoons/photos/pb.100063686824366.-2207520000/687268002629453/?type=3>.

**Table 2:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Captain of the ship	Black star coach, Milovan Rajevac
Journey	African Cup of Nations Tournament
Boat	Black star of Ghana
Passengers	Black star players
Sea	The field

According to the principle of understanding the abstract or the unknown, which is upheld by CMT, the cartoonist depicts the Ghana Black Stars' failure, which led to the team's early exit from AFCON 2021, as a sinking ship. The cartoonist employs two different figures to express his view. Milovan Rajevac, the tactician who led the Black Stars to the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), is clearly one of the characters. By depicting Milovan as the ship's captain, the cartoon's visual narrative indicates that the ship is travelling to its final destination – the AFCON. Due to his negligence, which caused the ship to sink, Milovan is portrayed as having made no progress during the journey. The coach's and the players' subpar tactics are to blame for the Black Star team's early elimination.

The artist portrays Andre Dede Ayew, the captain of Black Star, as a passenger on a ship that has been sunk by coach Milovan and his crew because of their careless driving in the cartoon under review.

The data make it clear that the coach of the Ghana Black Star team needs help given the team's dwindling chances of winning and the possibility of their elimination from the competition. In the cartoon, an aeroplane is depicted in the background, and the captain of the ship (Coach Milovan) poses the question of whether Kudus is on board the aforementioned aircraft. The coach has voiced optimism about the team's future and credited Ghanaian player Mohammed Kudus, who is currently with Ajax Amsterdam, with their ability to grow. It is noteworthy that Kudus was absent for the initial two matches of the AFCON tournament. The coach has identified him as a pivotal figure in the team's future performance, particularly in the context of averting potential setbacks. It has been reported that Kudus is scheduled to travel from Amsterdam to join his colleagues at the team's training camp. This information has prompted the coach to ask whether Kudus is on the flight depicted in the cartoon and prepared to join the team. The coach's aspiration to incorporate Kudus into the squad is driven by the expectation that it will enhance the team's prospects in forthcoming matches.

There are some metonymy components that are worth talking about, as seen in Figure 2. The cartoon's use of Ayew's face can be seen as a metonym, signifying the whole group of players who were involved in the team's unfortunate performance. As posited by Knowles and Moon (2006: 112), flags represent the most prevalent manifestation of visual metaphor. Zhang and Forceville's (2020) work also draws attention to the fact that flags are conventional metonyms for countries. As Zhang and Forceville have previously observed in their study of national emblems, the cartoonist's depiction of the Ghanaian flag on the vessel and the CAF logo serve as metonyms for the nation and the organisation, respectively. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) is the governing body responsible for the organisation of the AFCON tournament in which Ghana participated and was subsequently eliminated in the group stage. Clearly, the flag and logo are meant to support the cartoonist's



21 January 2021

**Figure 3:** The Bedford scenario.  
<https://www.facebook.com/TilapiaCartoons/photos/pb.100063686824366.-2207520000/446614596694796/?type=3>.

**Table 3:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Suitcase	Handover notes
Journey	Going to parliament house
Vehicle	Exiting parliament house
Passengers	Defeated MPs

underlying point, which the reader is supposed to understand. The employment of an image depicting a football suspended above the ocean instigates a cognitive association with the African Cup of Nations football tournament.

The conceptual metaphor that can be identified in Figure 3 is **ACHIEVING A PURPOSE IS REACHING A DESTINATION**. This can be interpreted as **EXITING PARLIAMENT HOUSE IS TRAVELING MPS**. Table 3 above provides the conceptual mapping for the cartoon.

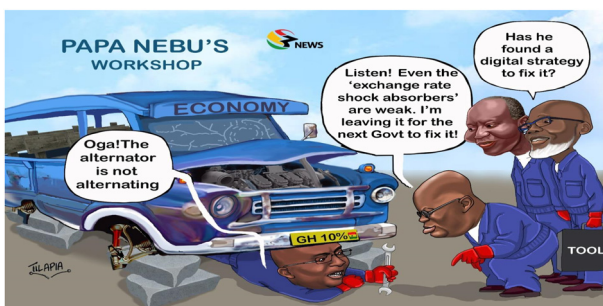
In order to illustrate his point regarding the Members of Parliament and Ministers of State who lost the general election in December 2020, the cartoonist employs a locally manufactured car that was previously utilised as a means of transportation. In consideration of the aforementioned circumstances, the cartoonist presents New Patriotic Party MPs who have relinquished their parliamentary seats as travellers taking a leave of absence. This journey may be interpreted as a metaphor for the conclusion of the four-year term of the Ghanaian parliament. The bubbles on the side of the cartoons that hold information about the constituencies show that the representation of these MPs is based on the constituencies to which they belong. The following Members of Parliament represent the following constituencies: Ledzokuku by Honourable Okoe Boye, Tema East by Honourable Titus Glover, Krowor by Honourable Elizabeth Afoley Quaye, Lawra by Honourable Anthony Karbo, Nalerigu/Gambaga by Honourable Hajia Alima Mahama and Awutu Senya by Honourable

George Andah. The selection of these MPs was predicated on the assumption that a significant proportion of the NPP base and the general Ghanaian public perceived their electoral defeats as humiliating.

It may be hypothesised that the suitcases located in the upper portion of the truck contain the handover notes that are required to be submitted by defeated MPs and state ministers to their elected successors, as indicated by the available data. The data analysis reveals the presence of two additional buses, each transporting passengers, is visible in the background of the cartoon and proceeding towards a structure that bears a resemblance to the Ghanaian parliament. One possible explanation is that these buses are transporting the newly elected MPs as they begin their four-year term. The cartoonist's emphasis on the message is demonstrated by the size and positioning of the defeated MP's vehicle in the middle of the image, which draws the viewer's attention to it.

Since the data under evaluation contains a metonymy component, the cartoonist's portrayal of MPs as passengers can be read as a metonym for the larger political context, utilising the 'PART-FOR-WHOLE' or 'FEW-FOR-MANY' principles. In consideration of the diminution of parliamentary seats experienced by NPP MPs and Ministers of State, this metonymy signifies the collective of defeated MPs. An additional illustration of metonymy can be observed in the utilisation of luggage as a metaphor for travel. Thus, SUITCASE STANDS FOR TRAVEL and, consequently, the part-whole relationship are metonyms for the suitcase.

Figure 4 offers an illustrative example of employing a locally produced vehicle constructed from timber, which was a primary mode of transportation in Ghana, to represent the current state of the country's economy. The conceptual metaphor that can be construed from Figure 4 is **FIXING A BROKEN ECONOMY IS FIXING A FAULTY/BROKEN CAR**. This metaphor can also be interpreted as **IMPEDIMENT TO ACTION IS PHYSICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO MOTION**. Table 4 below provides a cross mapping of the metaphorical connections in Figure 4.



29 August 2023

**Figure 4:** The Bedford scenario. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=760042956128592&set=pb.100063686824366.-2207520000&type=3>.

**Table 4:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Road	Ghana
Journey	Governance
Broken vehicle	Broken economy
Mechanics	The president, vice president, minister of finance
Tools	Government policies and programmes to fix the broken economy

The utilisation of the metaphorical framework of a journey by the cartoonist serves to facilitate viewer comprehension of Ghana's prevailing economic circumstances. The socioeconomic infrastructure, symbolised by the broken-down truck on the road, is a prime example of the economy's dysfunction. In consideration of the aforementioned account pertaining to a damaged vehicle, the services of mechanics will be required to restore the vehicle to its functional state. Within the context of the cartoon, government officials are metaphorically depicted as mechanics. The visual characteristics exhibited by the individuals in question, particularly their attire, which is commonly observed in the professions of engineers and mechanics, serve as the fundamental basis for the notion that establishes a connection between government officials and mechanics. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, Vice-President Dr. Bawumiah, Finance Minister Hon. Ken Ofori-Atta, and Gabby Asare Otchere-Darko, Executive Member of the Danquah Institute, who is connected to the NPP research and policy think-tank, are among the officials (mechanics) in question.

The comparison between the two organisations is indeed accurate, since both government representatives and automotive repair professionals are charged with the crucial responsibilities of directing economic policies and repairing mechanical systems, respectively.

As the leader of the government's economic management team, Dr. Bawumia can thus be regarded as the main driver. In addition, Gabby Otchere-Darko has given the government economic input and strategy about the economy's revitalisation, and Honourable Ofori Atta is part of the economic team. The President, Nana Addo, oversees all government activities; therefore, his conceptualisation is deemed appropriate. The discourse should also encompass the narration that is occasionally articulated in the accompanying bubble speeches of the cartoons, as it serves to convey or augment the message of the cartoonist. The bubbles appear to emanate from the characters themselves, as evidenced by the example of the chief mechanic, Dr Bawumia, who is seen saying, 'Oga! The alternator is not alternating'. According to the Dictionary of African Politics ([www.oxfordreference.com](http://www.oxfordreference.com)), the term 'Oga' is

employed in Nigeria to address an individual who wields considerable power and influence. This phrase has also gained traction in Ghanaian discourse. In the context of the cartoon, 'Oga' is employed to refer to President Nana Akufo-Addo, the head of government, as defined by cultural perception, and someone with a political power. The statement within the bubble speech ascribed to Dr Bawumia posits that the strategies employed to address the economic downturn are ineffectual. President Nana Akuffo-Addo offers a response through his 'bubble speech', which can be summarised as follows: 'Listen! Even the exchange rate shock absorbers are weak, I'm leaving it for the next Govt to fix!' The President's assertion is that, in the event that he is unable to rectify the current economic situation, the subsequent administration should consider implementing a plan to address the underlying issues. The two other individuals, Hon Ken Ofori-Atta and Mr Gabby Otchere-Darko, have posed a question to the chief mechanic: 'Has he found a digital strategy to fix it?' The Vice President has established himself as the proponent of a vision for the digitisation of the nation, proposing that the digitalisation criteria have the capacity to address the challenges confronting Ghana. This perspective provides insight into the other mechanics' question posed to the chief mechanic.

The political cartoonist has employed an analogy, comparing the economic management team's policies and programmes to a mechanic's toolbox, which contains all the necessary equipment to repair a broken truck. One such measure is the amendment to the Income Tax Act 2023 (ACT1094), which has been identified as a potential means of addressing the challenges currently facing the economy. Furthermore, the act stipulates a 10 percent withholding tax on all winnings, regardless of the source, whether derived from betting, lottery, or gambling. The 10 % tax is represented in the form of an offender's vehicle registration number, displayed on the damaged vehicle.

According to the claims made by Knowles and Moon (2006: 111), the use of colour is a crucial element in visual metaphor, helping to effectively communicate meaning to the general audience. Thus, the cartoonist uses this method to express a variety of meanings. The artist employs these colours blue, white, and red, which are representative of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), which was in power at the time the truck was vandalised. This is significant. The cartoonist's use of these colours supports the image's underlying message on the party these mechanics stand for.

Figure 5 demonstrates the use of a locally manufactured vehicle as a means of conveying a message pertaining to the state of the Ghanaian economy. The conceptual metaphor behind Figure 5 can be interpreted as LEADING A GROUP IS DRIVING A CAR, which in turn evokes the primary metaphor of MANAGING A COUNTRY IS DRIVING A CAR. Table 5 below shows the structural mappings from the source domain to the target domain.



August 3, 2023

**Figure 5:** The Bedford scenario.  
<https://dailyguidenetwork.com/signs-of-recovery/>.

**Table 5:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Driver	Honourable Ken Ofori-Atta
Journey	Governance
Vehicle	Ghanaian Economy
Passengers	Citizens

The political cartoon offers a visual representation of the national economy of Ghana as a vehicle being operated by an individual who is the Minister of Finance, Ken Ofori-Atta. This depiction is appropriate given that the Minister of Finance is a leading figure of the government's economic team and responsible for how government's purse is spent.

As indicated by the title, 'Signs of Recovery', this cartoon is intended to convey a message of economic revival for Ghana. It portrays a shift from a state of crisis, suggesting a gradual recovery process. Furthermore, the inscription 'GH ECONS' on the vehicle's exterior is intended to symbolise the progress of the Ghanaian economy in achieving its desired outcome. The inscription signifies the Ghanaian Economy. The cartoonist has chosen to emphasise this point by rendering the inscription on the vehicle in a manner that is both large and attention-grabbing. This serves to direct the reader's attention towards the implied meaning. The message conveyed by the cartoonist is further reinforced by the second verbal component displayed on the vehicle's windscreen, which reads 'AAYALOLO'. The term 'Aayalolo' is a dialect from the Ga language spoken in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. When translated, it signifies the idea of 'we are still rolling'. This phrase is employed when one has not yet reached their intended destination. As posited by the aforementioned interpretation, the economy is still in a recovery phase and has not yet achieved full recovery, which is the objective of the driver (Finance Minister).

From the data under consideration, another physical object depicted in the cartoon is potholes in the road. When subjected to critical scrutiny, these potholes can be interpreted as impediments or obstacles to the driver, thereby slowing down the journey and preventing the driver from reaching his intended destination. Additionally, the vehicle's ascent up a hill, as depicted in the cartoon, can be interpreted as another potential impediment to its progress.

The employment of metonymy by the cartoonist as a cognitive device merits discussion. The concept of metonymy, which involves the use of the term 'few' to represent a larger quantity, represents a further cognitive phenomenon that can be identified within the data under review.

This can be illustrated by the phrase 'FEW FOR MANY'. The passengers on board the vehicle can be interpreted as the entire citizenry of Ghana.

The conceptual metaphor behind Figure 6 can be represented as GOVERNING A NATION IS CONTROLLING A VEHICULAR MOTION. Table 6 below provides the conceptual mappings for this metaphor.



**Figure 6:** The mini bus scenario. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=875170351282518&set=pb.100063686824366.-2207520000&type=3>.

**Table 6:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Driver	President Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo
Journey	Governance
Truck	Ministerial reshuffle
Driver's mate	Vice President Dr Bawumia
Passengers	Retained ministers
People outside the bus	Sacked ministers
Jack Toronto Trotro Station	Government offices

The cartoonist employs a political metaphor in which President Nana Addo is depicted as a driver of a vehicle, which symbolically represents the government. In this vehicle, some passengers are removed and replaced with new ones through a ministerial reshuffle. This can be likened to a commercial driver who embarks on a journey, and throughout the journey, some passengers may disembark when they reach their destination while others board. This assertion facilitates the reader's comprehension of the cartoonist's message by means of the reshuffle. A substantial discrepancy is evident between ministers who are still in office and those who have left, as illustrated in Figure 6. Furthermore, the cartoonist depicts Dr. Bawumia, the vice president who assists the president (the conceptual driver), as the mate, who assists the driver in loading and unloading the bus.

A thorough review of the data reveals that the two individuals on the roof of the bus are the Honourable Kojo Oppong Nkrumah and the Honourable Titus Glover. This observation provides substantial credence to the allegations concerning their alleged association with the government.

As previously stated, the multimodal metaphor analysis incorporates all other semiotic resources, including the speech bubbles assigned to the characters. The speech bubble above the driver's mate's head reads, 'You have been promoted to the position of senior book-man'. This suggests that the former ministers have been reassigned to the role of 'book man' at Jack Toronto Trotro Station. The sobriquet 'Jack Toronto' was bestowed upon the incumbent president, Nana Addo Dankwa, by the former president, John Mahama, and the leader of the opposition National Democratic Congress party. In a similar manner, the term 'Trotro Station' has been coined to refer to the commercial bus terminals in Ghana. The signpost, upon which is inscribed the word 'Jack Toronto Trotro Station', serves as an indicator of the new place of work for the ministers who have undergone reassignment. The ministers confirmed their preparedness to undertake their new responsibilities by responding in the affirmative, stating 'All correct!'

The cartoon depicts a woman wearing a red scarf on her head. Her speech bubble states, 'still, the tyres are wobbling'. This indicates that despite the passage of time and the associated physical changes that accompany it, the government continues to face significant challenges. The woman in the cartoon represents the Ghanaian people, who are expressing their discontent with the reshuffle. Another structural (multimodal) metaphor is presented in the form of the phrase 'TAXATION IS A BURDEN', which is illustrated by the image of a heavily laden lorry transporting tax-related goods. This suggests that the taxes imposed by the driver are a significant financial burden for the Ghanaian people. Among the taxes illustrated are the registration number of the lorry and the Electronic Transfer Levy (E-Levy).

As illustrated in Figure 6, an additional conceptual phenomenon, known as metonymy, is evident. The deployment of two individuals on top of the vehicle is

metonymic, representing A FEW MINISTERS FOR ALL MINISTERS who are still part of the journey (governance). Two individuals are situated adjacent to the roadway. One of them is Ken Ofori-Atta, a distinguished public figure, while the other is Amoako Atta. The symbolism of their presence as representatives of ministers who have been either reshuffled or dismissed is a matter of interpretation. This group may be interpreted as representative of all dismissed ministers (PART FOR WHOLE). The act of dismissal can be interpreted as marking the conclusion of their journey and the transition of authority from the president to other passengers (MPs/ministers).

The conceptual metaphor can be identified from Figure 7 is GOVERNMENT IS A DRIVER. The cross-mapping from the source domain to the target domain is presented in Table 7 below.

As illustrated in Figure 7, the cartoonist employs a vehicle metaphor to portray the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, as a driver guiding the nation towards a desired destination. The vehicle under scrutiny is painted in the colours of the Ghanaian flag, namely red, yellow and green, thus confirming its association with the Ghanaian identity.

A review of the cartoon reveals that the driver, President Nana Akuffo Addo, has loaded the vehicle with a considerable quantity of goods and luggage. The cartoonist



June 4, 2021

**Figure 7:** The mini bus scenario.  
<https://www.facebook.com/TilapiaCartoons/photos/pb.100063686824366.-2207520000/535677691121819/?type=3>.

**Table 7:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

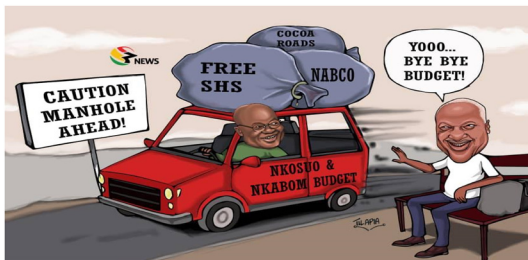
Source domain	Target domain
Driver	President Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo
Journey	Governance
Vehicle	Ghana
Passengers	Ghanaians
Luggage	Taxation

presents these goods as a form of draconian tax or burden imposed on the citizens by the president. The vehicle, representing Ghana, is subjected to an excessive burden, thus giving rise to the conceptual metaphor 'TAXATION IS IMPEDIMENT TO MOTION'. This in turn evokes the primary metaphor 'MORE IS UP', which draws upon the concept of metaphoric activation for quantity (MORE) by height (UP). This is exemplified by the heavy load on the car roof. This assertion is further substantiated by the data under review, which indicates that the cost of living is high, as evidenced by the inscription attributed to the load on the car. It is evident that substandard tyre conditions represent a significant impediment for drivers, as evidenced by the prevalence of deflated and deteriorated bus tyres. In such a scenario, the deflated tyre has the potential to impede the driver's (president) ability to reach the designated destination.

Furthermore, in Figure 7, the cartoonist employs the ontological metaphor of 'LESS IS DOWN'. This metaphor can be attributed to the president's 6 % increase in the daily minimum wage, which is less significant than the 13 % increase in transport fares, represented by the 'MORE IS UP' metaphor.

A metonymic effect was evident in the data under consideration. The passengers in the vehicle representing Ghana can be interpreted as metonyms, signifying that these passengers are representative of the entire citizenry. This phenomenon can be understood as a manifestation of metonymy, a rhetorical device characterised by the use of PART-FOR-WHOLE OR A FEW-FOR-MANY (Figure 8).

The conceptual metaphor can be construed as GOVERNMENT IS DRIVING A CAR. Table 8 shows the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.



14 November 2019

**Figure 8:** The cab scenario.  
<https://www.facebook.com/TilapiaCartoons/photos/pb.100063686824366.-2207520000/152799322742993/?type=3>.

**Table 8:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Driver	President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo
Journey	Governance
Vehicle	Ghana
Bystander/mockerer	Former President John Mahama

It is evident that, from the conceptual metaphor, which is apparent, a journey is metaphorically represented by the cartoonist in order to present the state of Ghana subsequent to the reading of the budget for the 2019 fiscal year in Parliament. It is important to note that, in light of the above points, the cartoonist has conceptualised the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa, as a driver steering the nation's affairs. Furthermore, the country itself is depicted in the review as the vehicle that is being driven by the president.

An analysis of the data reveals the presence of certain loads affixed to the vehicle. The nature of these loads is indicated through the application of specific labels that correspond to various government programmes and policies, such as 'Free SHS', 'NABCO' and 'Cocoa Roads'. These can be interpreted as a metaphorical burden for the driver (president) to bear. This also evokes the conceptual metaphor 'UNFULFILLED PROMISES ARE BURDENS'.

The cartoons under consideration feature inscriptions on the vehicle that read 'Nkosuo and Nkabom Budget'. These two Akan words can be translated to mean 'the budget for prosperity and unity'. This suggests that the driver believes that the budget proposed by the Finance Minister in Parliament will result in the citizens becoming prosperous and unified. The idea of achieving a goal is metaphorically linked to reaching a destination, which mirrors the driver's aspiration.

With the exception of the identified driver (the President), the cartoonist presents an additional character who is John Dramani Mahama, the former President of Ghana and the leader of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), situated alongside the road. The discourse delivered by the former president in the bubble speech reads 'Yoo... bye-bye budget!' His posture is suggestive of a state of mockery, and the driver's budget is derided, with the implication that the character does not endorse it. Notwithstanding the former president's absurd remarks concerning the budget, the vehicle's immobile tyre indicates potential impediments that may hinder the driver's ability to reach his destination.

Furthermore, a signpost is located along the designated route, bearing the inscription 'Caution Manhole Ahead'. This signpost is intended to serve as a warning to motorists, urging them to exercise caution to avoid accidents and personal injury. The cartoonist's message is that the president should exercise caution in formulating policy and implementing programs to prevent the country from descending into a state of decline.

In Figure 9, the conceptual metaphor can be identified as 'LEADING A GROUP (EC) IS DRIVING A VEHICLE'. Table 9 below shows the mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

The employment of the journey metaphor by the cartoonist is an efficacious means of conveying the message regarding the present circumstances surrounding the Electoral Commission of Ghana's plans to register new voters on its register prior

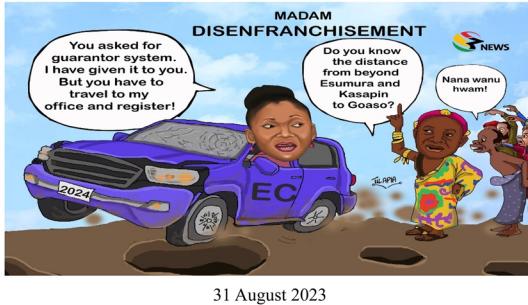


Figure 9: The V8 scenario. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=761595642639990&set=pb.100063686824366.-2207520000&type=3>.

Table 9: Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Driver	EC Chairperson, Mrs Jean Adukwei Mensa
Journey	Road to 2024 General Election
Vehicle	Electoral Commission of Ghana
Manholes/potholes	Obstacles/impediments

to the 2024 General Elections. In consideration of the aforementioned points, the cartoonist conceptualises the Chairperson of the Electoral Commission of Ghana, Mrs Jean Mensa, as the driver steering the affairs of the Commission in the description provided. This section places particular emphasis on the metaphorical role of the driver in relation to the EC Commissioner. The actions and directives of a leader have been demonstrated to exert a significant influence on the growth and productivity of any group or organisation under their leadership. It has been posited that she plays a pivotal role in the initiation of new voter registration initiatives, and her conceptualisation as the driver appears to be substantiated. The letters ‘EC’ are displayed boldly on the outside of the vehicle in question. It is acknowledged that the acronym ‘EC’ stands for ‘Electoral Commission’.

A more thorough inspection of the vehicle’s licence plate reveals that the year 2024 has been inscribed upon it. The numerical value of the digit in the cartoon is significant, as it contributes to the intended message of the cartoonist. It is evident that the driver (EC Chairperson) is providing direction to the group with regard to the 2024 general elections, as illustrated by the reference to the electoral roadmap. The content of the ‘bubble speech’ ascribed to the driver – who, in this case, is the EC chairperson – serves to illustrate the strategies employed by the driver to guarantee the success of the election. Her statement reads, ‘You asked for guarantor system. I have given it to you. But you have travel to my office and register!’ The EC

Chairperson’s discourse suggests that prospective voters should register at the EC’s offices to participate in the 2024 general elections, despite the request for guarantors.

The cartoonist employs the use of another character, one attired in customary regalia. This character is portrayed as a traditional ruler or a chief who engages the driver (EC Chairperson) through his verbal discourse. The Chief’s discourse is characterised by the utilisation of a verbal interrogative form. The content of the chief’s question reads ‘Do you know the distance from beyond Esumura and Kasapin to Goaso?’ The legitimacy of the EC Chairperson’s instructions, which aim to hinder people from exercising their right to vote, is called into question by this query. The requirement to travel to district capitals, which may entail significant distances and financial expenditure, poses a substantial obstacle for many ordinary voters. The cartoon’s caption, ‘Madam disenfranchisement’, appears to encapsulate the essence of the chief’s message. In addition, the cartoonist introduces an additional set of characters that can be interpreted as the chief’s subjects. The content of the subject’s bubble speech is, ‘Nana wanu hwam’. The phrase ‘Nana wanu hwam’, which, when translated, signifies ‘the chief has spoken well’ and they are happy about it’. This phrase is indicative of their support for the chief’s question to the driver’s directive. It is important to consider the role of the potholes and manholes depicted by the cartoonist. Their presence could potentially be interpreted as a hindrance to the EC Chairperson in achieving her objective of successfully organising the 2024 general elections.

In the context of the data under review, this cartoon demonstrates metonymy, another conceptual phenomenon. It is possible to view the cartoonist’s use of a group of characters as metonymic, representing the Ghanaian populace as a whole who objected to the driver’s order. The phrase ‘FEW FOR MANY’ can be used to describe this.

The conceptual metaphor behind Figure 10 can be construed as LEADING A COUNTRY IS DRIVING A VEHICLE. The image is a visual representation of the assertion that TAXATION IS IMPEDIMENT TO MOTION’. Table 10 below shows the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

The cartoonist employs the metaphorical representation of the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, as the driver of a burning car. The burning vehicle can be interpreted metaphorically to represent Ghana. A parallel



9 February 2024

**Figure 10:** The V8 scenario.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=870890331710520&set=pb.100063686824366.-2207520000&type=3>.

**Table 10:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Driver	President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo
Journey	Governance
Vehicle	Ghana

is frequently drawn between the President of Ghana and a driver, in that the President is responsible for the effective management of the country's affairs, and the driver ensures their passengers reach their destination safely. The vehicle's dilapidated state, consequent to a fire outbreak, can be interpreted as a metaphorical representation of the nation's poor condition, attributed to the driver's recklessness. The car's current state may prevent the driver from reaching his destination. The vehicle's inflamed state evokes the conceptual metaphor: 'IMPEDIMENTS TO IMPROVING ECONOMIC STATUS ARE PHYSICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO MOTION'.

The vehicle engulfed in flames bears a registration plate marked 'E-levy', denoting the electronic levy as a tax policy that was officially introduced by the government of Ghana. The bill was passed on 31 March 2022 and subsequently fully operationalised on 1 May 2022, imposing a 1.5 % tax on all electronic transactions, including mobile money payments, bank transfers, merchant payments, and inward remittances. The onus of this tax falls upon the payer, with the exception of inward remittances, which are the responsibility of the recipient (<https://gra.gov.gh>). This particular tax can be regarded as one of a multitude of onerous measures that have been instigated by the President, with the backing of his Vice President, Dr Bawumia. This specific tax has been the subject of significant criticism from the Ghanaian populace.

Aside from the identified driver, the cartoonist depicts another character at the centre of the data who is the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia. The cartoonist employs a conceptual metaphor to illustrate the vice-president's role in supporting the president, akin to the assistance provided by a companion to a driver on a journey towards a destination.

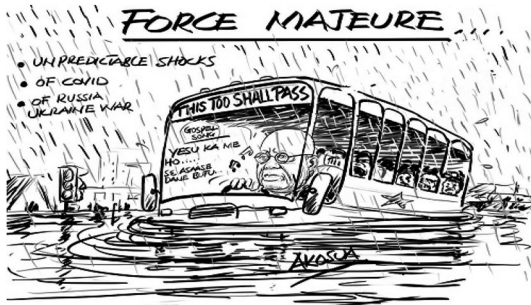
Nevertheless, given that it has been established that the vice president assists the driver (president) in managing the affairs of the country, the cartoon's depiction is contrary to this assertion, as the vice president is seen running from the fire-engulfed vehicle instead of rendering help. The 'bubble speech', ascribed to the running vice president, reads 'Otilɔn!', which is an imperative localised term signifying 'run'. The cartoonist employs this term to indicate the actions of

the Vice President to evade the danger when the driver (President) requires his assistance most urgently.

Another character positioned on the right side of the cartoon is John Dramani Mahama, the former President of Ghana. A speech bubble emanating from him reads, 'Jack Toronto Jnr, you cannot escape blame'. In one of the former president's addresses to supporters of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), he refers to President Nana Addo as 'Jack Toronto'. This suggests that the term 'Jack Toronto Jnr' is a reference to the vice president, Dr. Bawumia. Mr. Mahama's accusatory gesture and laudatory discourse imply that Dr. Bawumia is culpable for the vehicle's dilapidated state and cannot exonerate himself from blame.

The conceptual metaphor that can be construed from Figure 11 is *MANAGING A COUNTRY IS DRIVING A CAR*. Once this metaphor has been identified, the cross-mapping from the target domain to the source domain is provided in Table 11 below.

The cartoonist has chosen to depict the President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, as the driver of a car, while the country itself is depicted as a vehicle being driven by the president. This attribution is symbolic of the president's role as the leader of



24 October 2022

**Figure 11:** The bus scenario.

**Table 11:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.<sup>a</sup>

Source domain	Target domain
Driver	President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo
Journey	Governance
Vehicle	Ghana
Rainfall	Impediment from reaching destination
Passenger	Citizens

<sup>a</sup><https://dailyguidenetwork.com/force-majeure-2/>.

government business, steering the affairs of the country towards a successful destination. This can evoke the conceptual metaphor PRESIDENT IS A DRIVER.

According to Kövecses (1990: 71), natural forces such as floods, wind, and storms are considered to be extremely forceful, and as such, have a significant impact on physical objects. When considered in conjunction with the cartoon's caption, 'Force Majeure', this suggests the presence of unforeseeable circumstances that can be interpreted as an obstruction, preventing the driver from reaching his destination, and which are deemed to be beyond the driver's control. These may be regarded as a hindrance to the government's achievement of its objectives. The cartoonist enumerates a series of events he categorises as 'force majeure', including 'unpredictable shocks', Covid-19, and the Russia and Ukraine war, which collectively have been suggested to impede the president's ability to reach his intended destination. Another salient feature of the data is the indication of a significant precipitation event, which has resulted in the flooding of the roadway. Such occurrences may be regarded as impediments to the driver's ability to proceed.

A verbal inscription displayed on the front of the bus merits discussion: it reads, 'This too shall pass'. The phrase is associated with the driver (president), who employed it on multiple occasions during the period of the global pandemic (Covid-19), when addressing the nation. The cartoonist employs the use of a phrase that is particularly resonant with the driver, thereby directing readers' attention towards the underlying message that obstacles are not a permanent feature of life and are fleeting. Again, the vehicle's windscreen displays additional information regarding the driver's choice of musical accompaniment. The content of the song in question is 'Yesu ka me ho...se asase dane butu', which translates to 'Jesus is with me, so I am not afraid of any storm that comes my way'. This serves to underscore the driver's profound faith in Jesus Christ, whom he perceives as a saviour, capable of delivering both the driver and the nation from their prevailing circumstances. There is an instance of metonymy in the data under consideration. The depiction of a limited number of passengers in the vehicle serves as a metonymic representation of the broader Ghanaian population. This is a case of 'FEW-FOR-MANY' metonymy. The star symbol, embossed on the vehicle under discussion, is widely recognised as a metonym of the nation of Ghana. This is because the star symbol is an integral component of the national flag of Ghana. Therefore, it can be argued that the use of the star symbol in the context of the vehicle under review serves as a legitimate and appropriate representation of the country of Ghana.

As illustrated in Figure 12, the conceptual metaphor can be interpreted as representing 'AN ANTAGONISTIC FORCE IS AN OBSTACLE TO IMPROVING ECONOMIC STATUS'. This leads to another primary metaphor, 'LEADING A COUNTRY IS DRIVING A VEHICLE'. After identifying the metaphor, Table 12 presents the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.



**Figure 12:** The bus scenario.  
<https://dailyguidenetwork.com/the-dilemma/>.

**Table 12:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Drivers	President Nana Addo and Dr Bawumia
Journey	Governance
Vehicle	Ghanaian economy
Animals	Impediment from reaching destination
Passenger	Citizens

The cartoonist views governance as a journey and uses a travel metaphor to depict the current status of the Ghanaian economy. The President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa and his Vice President, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, are represented as the leaders responsible for guiding the country's economic journey in order to ensure a safe and successful arrival at its intended destination. In this case, the drivers of the vehicle metaphorically represent Ghana. The cartoon captioned 'Dilemma' functions as a medium to reinforce the cartoonist's objective of depicting the predicament faced by the drivers as they navigate their journey towards the destination.

The employment of personification as a ubiquitous form of metaphor by the cartoonist is evident in the depictions of wild animals, which serve to illustrate the challenges faced by the drivers. This stylistic technique is further embedded in the cultural context of Ghana where these creatures are widely regarded as both perilous and untamed. In view of the above-mentioned evidence, the cartoonist employs the image of a bear to symbolise the conflict in Russia. The bear, with its connotations of strength and untamed nature, is employed to symbolise the negative impact of the war on Ghana's economy. Furthermore, the artist employs the image of a lion to symbolise the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on Ghana's economic stability. Finally, the opposition is represented by a cobra, a symbol of deceit, cunning, and perceived danger. This may be indicative of the possibility of the opposition challenging the government. The utilisation of these animals by the artist

is implied as having the capacity to impede the successful completion of the journey by the drivers. The above conceptualisation has the potential to give rise to the conceptual metaphor **WILD ANIMALS ARE AN IMPEDIMENT TO ECONOMIC PROGRESS**. As indicated by the accompanying caption, ‘The Dilemma’, the drivers are experiencing a state of indecision regarding the source of their inability to reach their intended destination. The speech bubble attributed to the passengers in the car and the drivers (President and his Vice) reads, ‘Kai, herr! We for use...’ The nature of the statement made by the characters on board is elliptical, thereby suggesting the dilemma they find themselves in, trying to find the root cause of their predicament.

The data under review clearly demonstrates that the tyre of the vehicle is flat, thus rendering it immobile, and consequently impacting its ability to reach its intended destination. This observation evokes the conceptual metaphor **PURPOSIVE ACTIVITY IS SELF-PROPELLED MOVEMENT TOWARDS A DESTINATION**. The vehicle under scrutiny displays the registration number ‘GHA’ and the word ‘ECONO’ on the bonnet. The inscriptions appear to serve to reinforce the cartoonist’s assertion that the vehicle in question represents the Ghanaian economy, which is characterised by stagnation and a lack of meaningful progress. A salient observation from the cartoonist’s bold inscription on the vehicle is its function of directing readers’ attention towards the cartoonist’s implied message, which pertains to the economy of Ghana.

The data under review contains evidence of metonymy; thus, the passengers on board can be construed as a representation of the entire Ghanaian populace. This phenomenon can be interpreted as a manifestation of metonymy, specifically characterised as ‘FEW FOR MANY’.

As illustrated in Figure 13, the conceptual metaphor underlying the cartoon is ‘**AXING PEOPLE FROM A POSITION IS OFFTRUCKING PEOPLE**’. Table 13 below represents the structural mapping from the source to the target domain.

The publication of Figure 13 coincided with a decision by the leadership of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) to implement a change or reshuffle with respect to its leadership in parliament. In terms of characterisation, the cartoonist conceptualises Mr. Johnson Asiedu Nketiah, the chairman of the National Democratic



30 January 2023

**Figure 13:** The truck scenario.  
<https://dailyguidenetwork.com/generals-unity/>.

**Table 13:** Tables illustrating the structural mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

Source domain	Target domain
Driver	Johnson Asiedu Nketia
Offloaded people	Former minority (NDC) leaders in parliament
Vehicle	New Democratic Congress

Congress (NDC), as the driver of the vehicle under review based on his physical appearance. This depiction is appropriate given Mr. Asiedu's position within the party and his influential role in reshuffling the minority's leadership in parliament. The vehicle being driven by Mr. Asiedu Nketiah has been conceptualised as representing the NDC party, as evidenced by the embossed umbrella symbol on the vehicle's exterior. This interpretation is based on the recognised association of the umbrella with the NDC, particularly in the context of the party's flag and paraphernalia.

The purpose of the cartoon is to convey the forceful nature of the removal of the NDC's leadership from its front bench position in Parliament. The artist's depiction of the events in question can be interpreted as showing a lack of respect for the former leadership, particularly in light of the divergent viewpoints expressed on the subject. It is customary to reshuffle or change leadership; however, the cartoonist's portrayal of them in this manner serves to accentuate the assertive nature of their eviction. The Honourable Haruna Iddrisu and the Honourable Muntaka Mohammed, who formerly occupied the positions of minority leader and minority chief whip, respectively, in Ghana's 8th Parliament under the Fourth Republic, were removed from their respective roles by the party chairman in a manner that has been characterised as 'harsh' as depicted by the cartoonist.

The analysis was expanded to encompass the verbal expression articulated by the driver (NDC Chairman, Mr Asiedu Nketiah), which serves to reinforce the depiction presented by the cartoonist. The bubble speech reads, 'Reshuffle... but still united'. This statement implies that, despite the reshuffle, minority members of parliament maintain a sense of unity.

## 5 Conclusions

In accordance with the research questions that were established for the study, it can be observed that both cartoonists predominantly employ journey metaphors in order to convey their messages to their readers and viewers. The effectiveness of the journey metaphor is evidenced by the findings of several studies. These include those of Abdel-Raheem (2014), Silaški and Đurović (2019), Jia (2024) and Echitchi (2024). The potency of journey metaphors is derived from their universal

structure of source, path and goal (SPG), which renders them a universal phenomenon. The deployment of the journey metaphor facilitates fundamental comprehension on a global scale. Nevertheless, to comprehend the intricacies of each cartoon, one must possess a substantial degree of cultural and political knowledge specific to the publication in question. This finding provides further evidence in support of the argument put forth by Forceville (2008), El Refaie (2003) and Wekesa (2012) that the identification of visual metaphors, particularly structural ones, across cultures is a more effective methodology than the use of verbal metaphors. This is because pictures are more readily identified across nations. It is notable that both cartoonists perceive those occupying leadership roles or responsible for overseeing specific regions of the nation to exert a significant influence. The individuals depicted include Mr. Asiedu Nketiah, representing the National Democratic Congress; Mrs. Jean Mensa, representing the Electoral Commission of Ghana; Vice President Dr. Bawumia, representing the government economic management team; and President Nana Addo Dankwa, representing the nation. Conversely, the citizens or their subordinates are depicted as passengers in the vehicles being driven by the aforementioned individuals. The findings of the study corroborate the position put forward by Gibbs (1989) that comprehension of a metaphor is contingent upon its familiarity. Consequently, neither cartoonist employs a train scenario, given the unavailability of trains in Ghana, thereby buttressing the cultural specificity of visual depictions. Similarly, the cultural specificity of visual depiction is evident in the employment of the Bedford truck, Ghana's inaugural commercial vehicle, by both cartoonists. This choice resonates with the older generation and transcends to the current generation of buses, catering to the interests of successive generations. While the source-path-goal (SPG) of a journey may appear to be a familiar concept to all, it is important to recognise that the specific characters and context employed can significantly influence the ability of viewers to comprehend the underlying messages. Without a clear understanding of the context and characters involved, it is challenging to fully grasp the intended message. Consequently, it is essential for viewers to focus on the characters and context to ensure effective comprehension of the message.

In relation to the second research question, both cartoonists employ a range of cognitive devices beyond visual metaphor, including metonymy, personification, and the use of symbols. The incorporation of images, illustrations, and symbols, in addition to multimodal metaphors, can facilitate the identification of elements such as colours, flags, characters, and their respective roles. To illustrate, the deliberate use of specific colours by the cartoonist serves to enhance comprehension of the underlying meaning conveyed in the cartoons, as evidenced in Figures 4 and 7. In terms of the verbal components, such as speech bubbles and captions that

accompany the cartoons, they provide readers with clues about the story and assist in the comprehension of the message or the summarisation thereof, thereby demonstrating their effectiveness. It is recommended that subsequent studies examine the utilisation of particular linguistic patterns and structures by cartoonists.

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