

Political cartoon as a tool for criticism: The case of Dr. Bawumia's steer metaphor

George Boakye-Yiadom

University of Debrecen, Hungary
Doctoral School of Linguistics, Literary and Cultural Studies
boachiejorge@gmail.com

Abstract

This study analyses the visual representations of the steer metaphor employed by Dr. Bawumia during his candidacy for the 2023 NPP presidential election, which will culminate in the 2024 presidential election, from the perspective of the cartoonist. Cartoons are regarded as a visual genre of communication that employs a range of techniques, including metaphor, metonymy, symbolism, irony, and exaggeration, to convey socio-political, economic, religious, and trendy issues that have gained the attention of the general public. A total of twelve political cartoons featuring a steer and Dr. Bawumia were meticulously selected and downloaded from the Facebook page of 3 News cartoonist Tilapia Da Cartoonist. In terms of the theoretical framework that underpins this study, the author employs Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and Forceville's multimodal metaphor approach for analysing the data. The analysis involves identifying the conceptual metaphor underlying each cartoon, employing the 'A is B' format. It also entails a critical examination of the effective use of semiotic tools by the cartoonist, which helps elucidate the intentions behind these cartoons. The analysis of the data has yielded some intriguing insights. It appears that the cartoonist's frequent use of the metaphor "driver's steer" relating to Dr. Bawumia serves to reinforce the verbal statement made to the public. The application of multimodal metaphor to this study has the potential to elucidate the import of real-life events and characters through the medium of an imaginary scenario, which can persuade the audience. Furthermore, it encourages critical thinking about a particular individual or entity. Additionally, it provides information about political issues, events, and players that no other medium could openly transmit. This makes the political cartoon a highly effective tool in our democratic system.

Keywords: political cartoon, Ghana, conceptual metaphor theory, multimodal metaphor, Dr. Bawumia.

1. Introduction

Ghana has a consistent and well-established electoral process, with presidential and parliamentary elections held every four years. This makes it a noteworthy case study in the

context of sub-Saharan Africa and the global practice of multi-party democracy. This is because the nation's constitution (1992) firmly established a multi-party democracy. The 1992 constitution of Ghana permits the president to seek re-election for a second term after serving a four-year term, provided that the electorate agrees. This provision extends the president's term of office to eight years. President Nana Addo and his vice, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, led the New Patriotic Party (NPP), which emerged victorious in Ghana's general elections in 2016 and 2020. Consequently, President Nana Addo Dankwa is no longer eligible to contest in the general election scheduled for December 2024, as he has completed his eight-year tenure. The NPP must therefore elect a new flagbearer to lead them into the 2024 elections. The New Patriotic Party (NPP) constitution stipulates the convening of a special delegates' congress, which serves to reduce the number of candidates vying for the presidency from an original pool of ten individuals to a final list of five. Following the constitution, the party called a special delegates' meeting in June 2023, intending to reduce the number of candidates to five, if ten (10) candidates ran in the 2023 presidential election. The party officials set November 4, 2023, as the date for the presidential primary, following the selection of five of the ten candidates during the special delegates meeting. Five candidates ran in the November elections: Francis Addai Nimoh, Dr. Afriyie Akoto, Hon. Kennedy Ohene Agyepong, the NPP Member of Parliament for Assin Central, Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, and Hon. Alan Kyerematen, who left the NPP before the elections. He later formed his own political party, the Movement for Change. On November 4, Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia won with 61.43% of the votes, followed by Hon. Kennedy Agyepong with 37.41%, Hon. Akoto Afriyie with 0.76%, and Hon. Addai Nimo with 0.41% (<https://gna.org.gh/2023/11/live-updates-2023-npp-presidential-primary/>).

As a result of this victory, he became the flagbearer of the NPP for the 2024 general elections. After successfully filling out and submitting his nomination forms for the general election on the ticket of the NPP, Dr. Bawumia addressed the party faithful in attendance on August 31, 2023, and urged them to give him the "steer," occupying the highest office of the land. The euphoria of this comment sparked much debate among journalists, political observers, and his opponents as to what he had done to deserve the "steer." The "Steer", which symbolises leadership, control, and responsibility, is commonly compared to driving a car, which entails navigating numerous obstacles to reach a destination. Therefore, Dr. Bawumia's metaphorical use of the phrase "the steer" serves to indicate his readiness to take the helm of the nation's leadership in December. The "steer comment" was a topic of discussion and writing by mainstream journalists. However, it should be noted that cartooning journalists were not excluded from this discourse, as they too presented Dr. Bawumia's clarion call for the steer. It has been demonstrated that cartoons utilise a satirical and humorous approach to address contemporary socioeconomic and geopolitical issues. To achieve this objective, cartoonists employ visual metaphor as a primary medium for communicating their messages.

Political cartoons constitute a distinctive genre, characterised by their conventions, stylistic features, and overarching objectives in communication. The employment of visual metaphors by cartoonists is a well-established rhetorical device utilised to convey ideas (see Edwards & Winkler, 1997; Morrison, 1992). The efficacy of this technique is well-documented. As Singh (2010, p. 127) asserts, the use of metaphors in clarifying concepts facilitates enhanced visualisation, thereby facilitating a more profound comprehension of abstract ideas. The hypothesis that metaphor enhances the aesthetic quality of language has been postulated. This premise has been in existence since the time of Aristotle's "poetic" writings. Following the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's seminal monograph, "Metaphors We Live By," in 1980, metaphor studies have evolved from being a linguistic phenomenon to a conceptual or cognitive phenomenon. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) posit that the conceptualisation of one phenomenon through the lens of another constitutes the fundamental essence of metaphor (p. 5).

Similarly, a group of academics examined the notion of metaphor from several angles in *Metaphor and Thought* (1993). Ortony discusses two main viewpoints in his introduction: the constructivist view, which encourages the reader or listener of the metaphor to interpret reality in a way that is not literal, and the non-constructivist view, which regards metaphors as “deviants” that do not adhere to rules or depict reality “as it is.” By couching the unexpected in a familiar framework and transferring traits from one notion to another, metaphors enable abstract topics to be dealt with more concretely. He notes that metaphors can be viewed as a cognitive activity rather than a solely verbal one. Metaphors manifest in various forms, including political cartoons, advertisements, graffiti, images, and symbols. In consideration of the claim mentioned above, Forceville (1996) advances a multimodal metaphor, proposing that metaphorical discourse may be expressed not only verbally but also nonverbally via multimodal means. For the detailed information on the theory, see the section on theoretical framework.

As a multimodal metaphor approach accounts for non-verbal aspects of metaphor, this study adopts political cartoons as its source of data to delve into the intricacies surrounding the visual representation of the steer metaphor. This research examines the field of cartoon journalism as a tool of criticism, with a particular focus on the work of Tilapia from 3 News. The analysis employs a discourse analysis approach to examine the utilisation of the steer metaphor by Dr. Bawumia, as articulated by other journalists and editors through verbal mediums. The present study will focus on the visual representation of the steer metaphor, examining how it is used to satirise and critique Dr. Bawumia’s candidacy.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Conceptual metaphor and multimodal metaphor

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the theoretical underpinnings provided by Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) conceptual metaphor theory and Forceville’s (1994) multimodal metaphor theory. The former theory shifts the emphasis of metaphor studies to cognitive or conceptual phenomena, rather than just linguistic or verbal ones. Lakoff (1993) posits that metaphor is essentially conceptual rather than linguistic, thereby providing support for the prior claim made by proponents of CMT (p. 244). Lakoff and Johnson provide substantial evidence for the pervasive utilisation of metaphors in daily discourse, a phenomenon that is particularly noteworthy given their assertion that metaphor transcends language. They note further that perceiving and comprehending one domain in terms of another domain constitutes the essence of metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). The two domains are the source domain and the target domain. The physical, concrete, well-known, and experienced domain serves as the source domain, whilst abstract, new, and less-known concepts are the target. As a result, the source domain helps to understand the target domain. The monograph “Metaphors We Live By” presents the well-known metaphor “LOVE IS A JOURNEY”. The metaphorical use of the journey to elucidate the concept of love is a strategy that resonates with the personal experiences of many individuals. The concept of love covers up the aspects of this experience that are susceptible to mapping. The proponents argue that metaphors can manifest in genres beyond language. Consequently, a lacuna has been created, thereby providing a valuable opportunity to examine the manner in which metaphor is visually expressed. In this regard, Forceville (1994, 1996) has proposed an innovative multimodal metaphor method that incorporates the visual depiction of metaphor. Its application encompasses a variety of genres, including advertisements, political cartoons, music, graffiti, and images, which collectively illustrate the multifaceted nature of metaphorical expression. The most valuable approach to defining multimodal metaphors is to commence with a delineation of pictorial metaphors, which

represent the non-verbal metaphor that has garnered the most attention from academics. As Forceville (1996) asserts, multimodal metaphor is a specific type of metaphor in which the targets and source domains are exclusive to two distinct domains, namely verbal and visual. This follows the A-IS-B structure observed in conceptual metaphor (pp. 109-126). Subsequently, it may be posited that VERBAL A IS VISUAL B, or vice versa. Koller (2009) contributes to the discourse on multimodal metaphor, advancing that multimodal metaphor constitutes a mapping or blending of domains from disparate modes, which expresses a thought in a genuinely creative manner (p. 46).

Furthermore, Müller and Cienki (2009) argue that multimodal metaphors are not only intriguing but also offer valuable insights into cognitive processes and have the potential to inform beneficial applications. Similarly, Müller and Tag (2010) espouse that multimodal expressions encompass images as their source domain. This suggests that an approach that views them as verbal metaphoric thought may be an inadequate one. Regarding the visual metaphor identification procedure and the purpose of this investigation, the visual metaphor identification process developed by Forceville (1996) will be employed. The steps are, (i) there should be an identity relation created between the two phenomena that in each context belong to different categories, (ii) the phenomena are to be understood as target (domain) and source (domain) respectively, and (iii) both target and source in the given context are not reversible, at least one characteristic associated with the source can be saliently mapped onto the target. Forceville (2018) posits that multimodal metaphors are characterised by their reliance on a variety of semiotic modes, including verbal mode, the physical characteristics of participants, dimensions of font size, colour effects, symbols, settings, and gaze. The verbal mode consists of textual information that provides implicit or explicit recognition of metaphorical elements and may function as headings or summary statements that describe the content of the data. This communication tool functions to enhance message interpretation between participants. Cartoonists use participatory characters that interact in specific social contexts to convey their message. Font size deals with the boldening and highlighting of specific text and characters that seek to accentuate the cartoonist's message.

On the other hand, colour plays specific roles in visual communication; according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), "Colours as signifiers carry a set of affordances from which signers and interpreters select and interact according to their communicative needs in a given context. Colours have the capacity to denote specific individuals, locations, and objects, as well as various categories of individuals and locations, thereby serving to indicate their identity (ideational functions). In terms of the interpersonal tasks of colours, they can be used to impress others or to warn of obstacles and dangers. Again, the addition of colour to documents has been demonstrated to increase reader attention by more than 80%. Also, the use of colour has been shown to stimulate or soothe people. Furthermore, the use of colour can serve to establish coherence within a text, thereby facilitating textual metafunction (i.e., the use of colour to achieve cohesion within a text). Settings include the location and cultural background used by the cartoonist to convey his message. The gaze entails body language, body movement, facial cues, and gestures that can help cue metaphorical meaning. Each mode discussed above contributes to the meaning of the metaphor. In contrast, the interplay of the modes mentioned above allows for richer, more complex metaphorical expression than language, making multimodal metaphor a worthy area of adventure.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data

The study examined a total of twelve political cartoons, published by Tilapia Da cartoonist, which have the element of the “steer metaphor. Although the study did not incorporate direct human interaction, the researcher sought authorisation from the cartoonist to utilise his artwork. The selected cartoons were sourced from the Facebook page of the cartoonist, Tilapia (<https://www.facebook.com/TilapiaCartoons>). The nature of the investigation is qualitative. The research adopted a qualitative approach to facilitate the identification and characterization of the different facets of the study. These components (participants, settings, colour, font size, etc.) make up the semiotic tools and visual cues that have recently been created using a range of easily accessible cultural modality resources influenced by society. As Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) contend, each of the semiotic tools contributes to shaping the meaning of the intended message. It is further explained that writing tells meaning, whereas images depict, and colour frames and highlights serve to enhance this meaning. Additionally, fonts are considered an integral part of the compositional arrangement. Participants are depicted as characters employed by the cartoonist to convey his message. Ranjit’s (2019) definition of “qualitative research as it primarily describes a situation, natural phenomena, problem, or actual enumeration of events, behaviours, and conditions without quantifying or influencing them”(p. 32) informs the methodological approach used in this article. The purpose of adopting the qualitative method was to enable the researcher to arrive at the findings. The months of September 2023 through December 2024 constitute the designated data collection period. The period under consideration spans from the release of the steer comment by Dr. Bawumia to the month of the 2024 general election. The following reasons inform the selection of Tilapia Da Cartoonist as the optimal choice. Primarily, Tilapia’s impartiality in addressing subjects contributes to the credibility of his works. Additionally, his affiliation with a television station helps disseminate information about his work, thereby enhancing its visibility and reach. Moreover, he is the current recipient of the Ghana Leadership Awards in the category of Best Comedy Sketch/ Cartoon Artist.

3.2. Selection criteria

For a cartoon to be considered in this study, it must meet many requirements. Firstly, the cartoon must contain a minimum of one reference to Dr. Bawumia and the steer. Secondly, the cartoon’s publication must be within the stipulated time between September 2023 and October 2024, as the period for consideration. Additionally, the cartoon must be published by Tilapia Da Cartoonist within the specified time. Furthermore, the availability of supplementary semiotic tools, such as the participants, colour effects, setting, and font size, facilitates the analysis of the selected cartoons.

3.3. Procedure of data analysis

The author identifies the conceptual metaphors and primary metaphors underlying the selected cartoons, given the resources embedded in them, both verbal and visual. The identification of metaphors primarily relied upon their visual depiction, with additional insight deriving from an individual’s sociopolitical background. To cross-map from the source domain to the target domain, the author employs Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), as it has proven effective in explaining the intricacies surrounding cartoons. To analyse the data and account for the transfer of features from the two domains, the author employs Forceville’s multimodal metaphor due to its ability to incorporate various modes in creating meaning. In addition to employing multimodal metaphors and conceptual metaphors to navigate the refinements of the cartoons, it

is imperative to recognise the significance of viewers' personal experiences, cultural contexts, and background knowledge in the interpretation of the underlying message conveyed by the cartoons. These elements facilitate the analysis process. The author examines the cartoonist's use of visual metonymy and its function in delivering the message. The analysis entailed examining the verbal components of the cartoon, including speech bubbles and subtitles, the content of the steer metaphor, and the visual depictions of characters and events. It is important to note that the interpretation and meaning of cartoons as a discourse genre are subject to variability. This is due to the influence of the political, social, and religious context of the audience on the analysis of the publication. Therefore, it is necessary to consider all the aforementioned factors to achieve an adequate comprehension of the message of the cartoons. However, it is impossible to exert control over the subjective nature of the genre and the audience's perspectives. Furthermore, given that the study's focus lies in a specific domain of steer metaphor, the process of grouping or coding the cartoons was not deemed necessary.

4. Literature review

4.1. The political cartoon genre

In a political dispensation, journalists write, and politicians are at liberty to talk, but what cartoons draw remains in public memory long after these alternative forms of expression outlive their usefulness. This makes cartoons a particularly valuable resource for historical research and analysis. The popularity of political cartoons within academic discourse is increasing, as they offer a valuable opportunity to analyse issues from a visual perspective. Greenberg (2002) maintains that political cartoons employ a variety of journalistic traditions, including metonymy, metaphor, and irony, to articulate normative judgements concerning social concerns (p. 185). These cartoons possess the capacity to persuade and inform their audience. El-Refaie (2009) asserts further that cartoons are the metaphorical codification of a humorous or satirical genre, wherein the cartoonist subtly informs, critiques, and amuses the audience (p. 181). In a similar vein, Desousa and Medhurst (1981) enumerate four purposes for political cartoons. These are (i) entertainment, (2) aggression reduction, (iii) agenda-setting framing, and (iv) specific policy. More precisely, political cartoons are a form of media discourse that convey ideas and opinions on current events through both verbal and nonverbal cues.

This approach is employed to address a social trend, a current political event or topic, or a prominent individual in a manner that presents a particular viewpoint (El-Refaie, 2009, p. 184). Agüero Guerra (2016) distinguishes between two distinct categories for the structural classification of cartoons: monomodal and multimodal cartoons. While the multimodal ones use a combination of visual features and accompanying verbal words to deliver a unified and integrated message, the first group primarily uses their graphical components to convey humour and intentions, with no genuine verbal mode included (p. 59). Cartoonists utilise the capacity of visual representation to translate abstract concepts into concrete drawings, thereby facilitating effortless comprehension for their audience. Due to the polysemy and variety of forms inherent in visual and verbal messages, political cartoons serve as a significant social medium, conveying their messages through signs such as index, symbol, and icon (Göçek, 1998, p. 2).

The interpretation of cartoons is contingent on the viewer's capacity to recognise personages, objects, and situations, as well as their familiarity with the pertinent facts, including historical and cultural references. Notwithstanding the humorous nature of cartoons, the medium can express thought-provoking messages, thus rendering it a genre worthy of discussion. As Schilperoord and Maes (2009) have asserted, the critical interpretation of cartoons is dependent upon the viewer's capacity to discern visual symbols, figures, objects, and scenarios.

This ability is further compounded by the viewer's familiarity with pertinent facts, including news events, historical occurrences, and cultural practices.

4.2. Humour of political cartoons

The utilisation of humour in political cartoons transcends the mere act of entertaining; rather, it serves as a potent medium for articulating salient messages. Furthermore, it functions as a device for defining reality. The medium of political cartoons is characterised by its unique utilisation of humour as a means to articulate a political perspective. In this capacity, they serve as a continuous commentary and critique of political events, offering a daily or weekly assessment of significant developments, individuals, and issues. Lewis (1989) posits that humour is a multifaceted phenomenon, contingent on the specific text and context. As posited by Davis (2014), the function of political cartoons can be described as cathartic, with the potential of humour to expose truths about societal issues being acknowledged. Similarly, Kuipers (2009, p. 227) pertinently observes that the utilisation of implicit references, double meanings, and allusions is a recurrent phenomenon in political cartoons, which tend to refer to sensitive topics that may offend people. They ideally incite laughter, hence softening the sensitive nature of the issues. This stylistic device is employed to facilitate the communication of the cartoons' messages, thereby inviting the viewer to comprehend the intended message while simultaneously enjoying the humorous content. According to the assertions made by Ashfaq and Hussein in 2013, this genre, characterised predominantly by its humour and wit, possesses the capacity to influence and shape public opinion.

4.3. Past research

A great deal of interesting research has been conducted on the portrayal of politicians and political candidates in cartoons. This study has drawn on a small selection of the numerous excellent studies conducted on this topic by leading scholars in the field. In an interesting study, Conners (2017) explored the world of political cartoons from the US perspective, examining the vibrant portrayals of the 2016 presidential primaries. She analysed a remarkable collection of cartoons published by forty-nine different cartoonists featuring the iconic Republican elephant and Democratic donkey between January 1 and June 8, 2016. www.cagle.com, a website that hosts a collection of cartoons for syndication, provided the source of the cartoons. The data analysis irrefutably shows that before the 2016 presidential primaries, a political cartoon image was a crucial factor influencing voters' decisions. It reinforced their opinions by reminding them of a particular issue or character flaw that provided a compelling reason to vote for a candidate. This research contributes to the effectiveness of political cartoons, which have the potential to influence voters and influence their decision to vote in a specific direction.

In the 2000 American elections, Edwards examined 490 editorial cartoons that featured the campaigns of the two leading presidential candidates, George W. Bush and Al Gore. Following the analysis of the cartoons, the researcher identified five principal themes that were pervasive in the cartoons and served as benchmarks for voters in casting their votes. The five key themes that emerged from the analysis were as follows: character, viability, competence, charisma, and independence. The study demonstrated that the portrayal of the candidates by the cartoonists could either enhance or diminish the probability of a candidate securing victory in the elections. This ultimately hinges on the potency of political cartoons. In his 2010 study, Jimoh examined the role of editorial cartoons in the democratisation process in Nigeria. To do so, he studied the work of thirty political cartoonists who operated with Nigerian dailies during the military regime. During the period of political and social unrest in Nigeria, the nation's media outlets were subject to censorship. However, one form of communication that remained unabated was

that of political cartoons, which served as a means of commenting on the prevailing events in the country.

The analysis conducted established that cartoons fulfil a pivotal function in documenting, critiquing, and reflecting social and political concerns. These visual narratives have emerged as a potent instrument in the propagation and promotion of Nigeria's cultural heritage. Similarly, Salisu Ogbo and Nuhu (2016) employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the utilisation of satire as a medium for political cartoons in Nigeria. The analysis of the data yielded the conclusion that the strategic employment of satire in the form of cartoons serves to shed light on issues such as corruption, political inefficiency, brutality, and cruelty. These issues are the ones national dailies are often unable to report due to the potential for victimisation. In consideration of the benefits mentioned above associated with satirical political cartoons, the researchers advocate for the allocation of augmented research resources to the domain of political cartoons, with the intention of fostering enhanced citizen participation in the national discourse. Once more, the influence of political cartoons on postcolonialism is the focus of the present investigation. Hammett (2010) conducted a case study on several cartoons by South African artist Zapiro. The analysis demonstrated that the cartoons in question highlight Zapiro's shifting engagement with the ruling party and his progressively critical stance towards the democratisation process in South Africa.

It is evident, once again, that cartoons possess the capacity to convey a more complex and nuanced account of engagements with evolving social, economic, and political conditions in the postcolonial era. In the context of the 2015 Nigerian elections, Akpati (2019) conducted a research study analysing six political cartoons related to the electoral processes and outcomes. The cartoons in question depicted the two leading political parties (the All Progressive Congress and the People's Democratic Party) and focused on both linguistic and non-linguistic features. The analysis revealed that these cartoons reflect the public discourse surrounding the ideologies of political parties and the attributes of their leaders. The multimodal resources employed by these cartoonists serve to illustrate the desperation of the two major political parties to either retain their position or vacate it. Finally, the analysis of the data revealed that the cartoonists employed a range of techniques, including exaggeration, satire, and mockery, to satirise and expose the politicians' weaknesses and flaws. In their 2011 study, Heinemann and Graz employ a conceptual approach to metaphor to provide an overview of the use of multimodal metaphors in various contexts, with a particular focus on their appearance in political cartoons and advertisements. I will focus on the aspect of political cartoons. The findings revealed that the use of these techniques in political cartoons serves to offer a humorous critique of politicians and their actions. The authors conclude that the combination of visual and linguistic elements is the most effective because images have a more extended memory, while linguistic elements control the interpretation of the intended message.

This finding corroborates the previous research of other scholars on multimodal metaphors, including Forceville (2009) and El Refaie (2009). As this study draws to a close, it is essential to consider the message outlined by Brantner and Lobinger (2014), which is particularly relevant in this context. The authors posit that cartoons have the capacity to influence our thoughts and behaviour, particularly when employed for political purposes (pp. 249-50). The authors further suggest that cartoons possess an enigmatic quality that renders them both convincing and innocuous. It is imperative to emphasise that the aforementioned reviewed works are pertinent to the present study, as they establish the foundation for the analysis.

5. Data presentation and analysis

This section provides a comprehensive examination of the selected political cartoons, with a focus on the various semiotic tools listed in the theoretical section. These tools are instrumental in the process of meaning creation, and this section aims to explore them in depth. The availability of verbal and visual elements within the cartoon will assist in identifying the conceptual metaphor, which will be presented in upper case throughout this study.

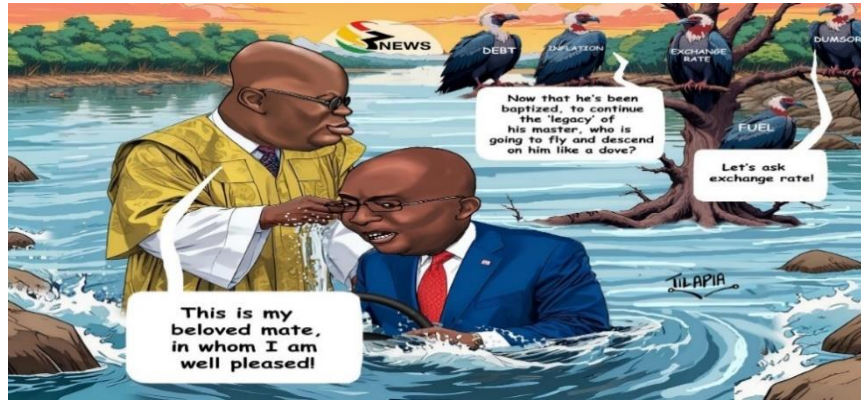


Figure 1. Theme of baptism. 9th May 2024

Figure 1 presents a reinterpretation of the baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist, utilising political satire as a medium to convey its message. In view of this, the conceptual metaphor can be formulated as POLITICAL SUCCESSION IS A CORRUPT BAPTISM. The cartoonist conceptualises President Nana Addo as John the Baptist, and Vice President Dr. Bawumia as Jesus Christ. The decision of President Nana Addo to baptise Dr. Bawumia symbolises his endorsement of the latter as his potential successor. As seen in the figure above, the baptism of Jesus Christ in the River Jordan is analogous to the political situation in Ghana, where Dr. Bawumia is likely to assume leadership following the electoral process, as Jesus began his ministry after baptism. The cartoonist positions Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, and the Jordan River as the source domain, the familiar concepts, while with Nana Addo, Dr. Bawumia, and Ghana are delineated as the target domain. The objective of the cartoonist is to facilitate the reader's comprehension of President Nana Addo's introduction and endorsement of Dr. Bawumia to the general populace by employing a familiar concept, such as baptism, with which many people can relate. It is evident from the data under review that one would have anticipated Dr. Bawumia to dress in a manner that accurately depicted the scene; however, this did not happen. This scene and Dr. Bawumia's attire appear to be in direct opposition. Nevertheless, Dr. Bawumia's attire (Jesus Christ) is indicative of an individual in a position of authority, which is congruent with the position (president) and power he aspires to attain.

From the above figure, Dr. Bawumia is depicted with the driver's steering wheel, which symbolises the leadership role he aspires to fulfill. In this context, the metaphorical representation of the steering wheel signifies leadership (presidency). The utilisation of this metaphor by the cartoonist serves to elucidate the notion of governance, drawing parallels between the operation of a vehicle and the efficacy of its steering mechanism in determining reaching its destination.

According to the Gospel of Matthew 3:13-17, a voice from heaven proclaims, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am pleased." In the "bubble speech," President Nana Addo (John the Baptist) makes the exact statement, "This is my beloved 'mate' with whom I am pleased". The substitution of the term "beloved mate" for "son" in the bubble speech suggests a political partnership, rather than being on a divine mission. It further accentuates the president's belief

and trust in Dr. Bawumia, the vice president, as the saviour who will guide Ghana to prosperity. The cartoonist's use of the term "mate" in the president's bubble speech from the Ghanaian context signifies a subordinate or a vice to someone. One notable feature of Figure 1 is the presence of vultures. The deployment of vultures in this context is indicative of economic decay, predation, and political opportunism. The cartoonist employs personification as a metaphorical device, with the vulture serving as a universal symbol for the financial challenges anticipated by the baptiste.

Each vulture is thus associated with a distinct economic challenge, including debt, inflation, exchange rates, fuel, and dumsor. The vulture bearing the "inflation" inscription is accompanied by a bubble speech that reads, "Now that he has been baptised into the 'legacy' of his master (President Nana Addo), who is going to descend on him like a dove?". This sarcastic speech implies that, in contrast to divine guidance, the new leader will face the same economic challenges and corruption. The vulture, inscribed with the word "dumsor" - a term originating from the Akan people of Ghana that denotes "constant power outages" - responds to the inflation vulture's question with a suggestion that let's ask the exchange rate! This baptismal imagery can be interpreted as a satirical representation of the act of political endorsement, thereby raising questions about the likelihood of reform under the new leadership or the probability of continuity with established practices.

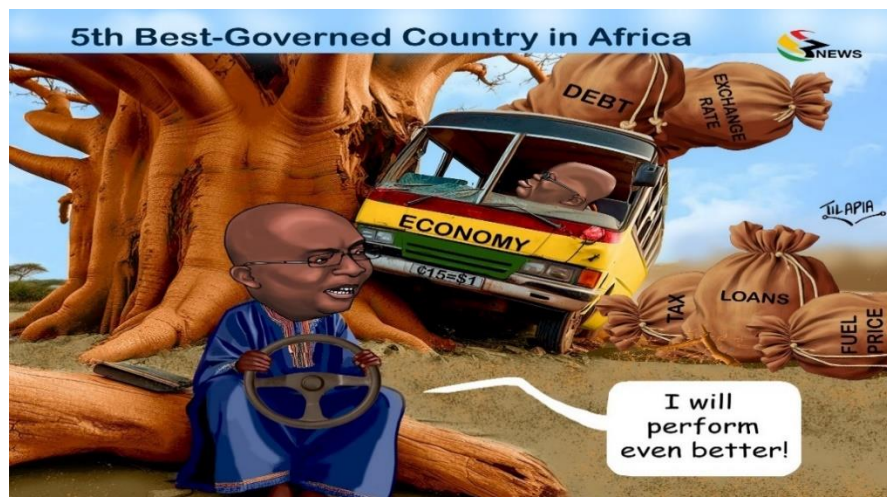


Figure 2. The theme of journey. 5th June 2024

Figure 2 employs the metaphor of a crashed bus labelled "Economy" to illustrate the state of the nation's financial and economic system. In light of this, the conceptual metaphor can be interpreted as "THE ECONOMY IS A CRASHED VEHICLE". The identified conceptual metaphor can evoke other primary metaphors, "LEADING A COUNTRY IS DRIVING A CAR," and "DEBTS ARE BURDENS OR LOADS." Considering the conceptual metaphor identified, the cartoonist conceptualises Ghanaian President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo as the driver of the metaphorical vehicle, navigating it towards its destination. The bus, driven by the metaphorical driver, may be regarded as a metaphor for the Ghanaian economy. This assertion is attributable to the vehicle's colour scheme, which incorporates red, green, and yellow—the colours of Ghana's flag. As it is customary in the design of Ghana's national flag, the yellow segment invariably incorporates the star symbol. In this instance, however, the vehicle's yellow zone is inscribed "Economy". One plausible interpretation of this phenomenon is that it symbolises the Ghanaian economy.

The word "Economy" is displayed in a bold font, thereby drawing the reader's attention to the cartoonist's message. The car under review has collided with a large baobab tree, which can

be interpreted as an economic barrier or a physical obstacle that the vehicle (Ghana) met, obstructing its movement or stopping it from arriving or reaching its destination. The sacks are employed metaphorically as a representation of the financial burdens, which can be interpreted as a cause of the vehicle's collision. It is evident that financial commitments, including but not limited to loans, debt, taxes, fuel prices, and exchange rates, represent a subset of the variables that have the potential to cause the collision. A further aspect of the cartoon that merits discussion is the use of the vehicle's number plate, which appears to deviate from the conventional format. The numerical sequence on the license plate is $\text{¢}15$, which is equivalent to the value of one US dollar. The persistent appreciation of the Ghanaian cedi against the US dollar, a phenomenon that exerts significant ramifications for the country's populace, serves as an indicator of the prevailing economic conditions.

The analysis considers the language elements of the data. As illustrated in Figure 2, it is plausible to construe the title "The 5th-Best Governed Country in Africa" as a critical evaluation of the portrayal in relation to the cedi-dollar ratio. The cartoonist's caption suggests criticising the situation, which is ironic. Except for the driver (President Nana Addo) of the vehicle involved in the incident (the Ghanaian economy), the cartoonist presents Dr. Bawumia, Ghana's vice president, who assists the president in governing the nation. Dr. Bawumia is depicted with a steering wheel, which is suggestive of his preparedness to assume the role of president and oversee the country's operations meticulously. Notwithstanding Dr. Bawumia's involvement in the vehicle collision triggered by his inadequate management of the economy, he persists in his attempts to position himself as the primary agent of change to improve the situation of the bus. The bubble speech emanating from him reads "I will even perform better," suggesting that, in the event of his electoral success and subsequent becoming the president, his performance may exceed that of his predecessor, Nana Addo, in the management of the vehicle (economy). This claim by Dr. Bawumia can be interpreted as a mere rhetorical device intended to influence the electorate to vote for him, given his own substandard performance as Vice President, which in fact precipitated the incident in question.

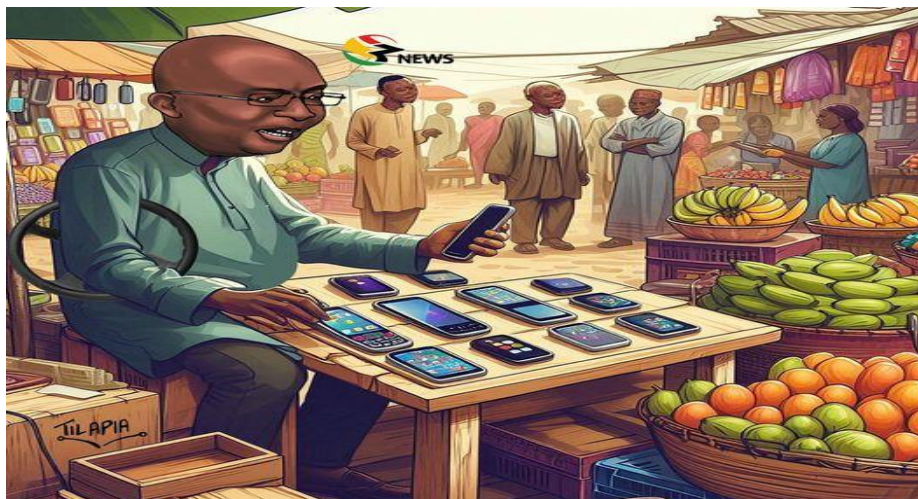


Figure 3. The theme of the market scene. 29th July 2024

In Figure 3, the cartoonist utilises an open-market scenario, a business setting ubiquitous in Ghana, as a medium to articulate his message. In light of this, the conceptual metaphor can be interpreted as "GOVERNMENT BUSINESS IS MARKETPLACE VENDOR". The image suggests an exchange of political solutions for votes, with the metaphorical marketplace representing the political market where ideas and promises are offered for sale. The cartoonist conceptualises Dr. Bawumia, the leader of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the current Vice

President of Ghana, as a market vendor, thereby drawing parallels between the political marketplace and the traditional market. The vice president has stated that, in the event of his election to lead Ghana, his administration would implement a credit card scoring system that would empower Ghanaians to purchase necessities in accordance with their individual scores. This statement was made during a visit to the residents of Lambussie, Nandom, and Lawra, all located in the Upper West Region, on Tuesday, July 23, 2024, during a campaign visit.

As reported by 3News, it is expected that, in the near future, cars and mobile phones will be among the items that can be purchased with a credit card (<http://3news.com>). In his detailed exposition of the intricacies of the proposed initiative, the vice president highlighted the government's potential collaboration with mobile phone carriers. The initiative involves providing mobile phones to citizens on credit, with individuals making payments over a designated period. The vice president further elaborated that Ghanaians would have the option to contribute a nominal sum of one Ghanaian cedi over a specified period, thereby facilitating the acquisition of a mobile device. To facilitate comprehension of the policy in question among the audience and readers, the cartoonist employs the well-known source domain of a market or trading area to convey his message. The vice president believes in being a businessperson who sells products. The telephones that are on display are those that Ghanaian citizens will purchase with Dr. Bawumia's credit score.

This visualisation evokes another conceptual metaphor of PROPOSING A POLITICAL POLICY IS SELLING A PRODUCT. The steering wheel symbolises the vice president's readiness to lead the country. It is a noticeable item that is situated under Dr. Bawumia's armpit. The traders within the market can be conceptualised as the entire Ghanaian citizenry who would benefit from Dr. Bawumia's credit scoring card if introduced. This conceptualisation can be considered a manifestation of metonymy, wherein the concept of "FEW-FOR-MANY" is employed. Thus, a few Ghanaians are represented in the image, representing the entire citizenry.

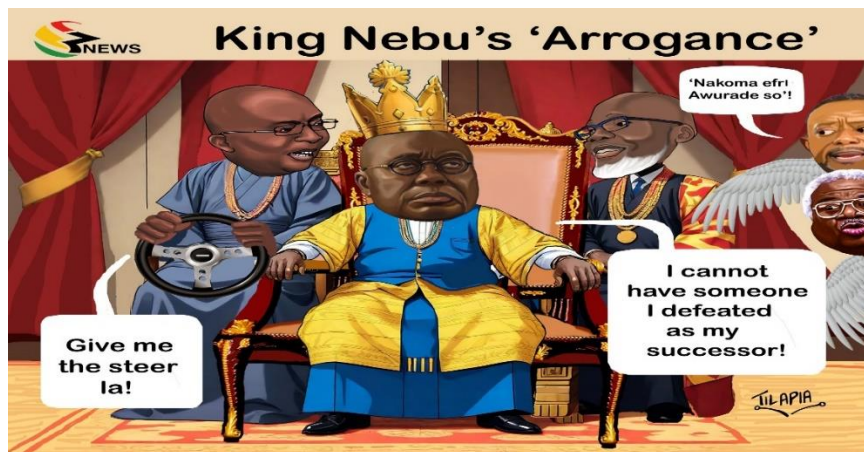


Figure 4. The theme of kingship. 1st May 2024

As illustrated in Figure 4, the conceptual representation employed uses the metaphor of monarchy to convey the notion of problematic succession in the context of political leadership. In view of this, the conceptual metaphor can be interpreted as "POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS MONARCHICAL RULE." The cartoonist employs a biblical allusion to articulate his perspective on President Nana Addo's actions regarding who will succeed him in the role of president, referring to the title of the data under consideration. In the course of a visit by the president to the inhabitants of Wa and Naa Fuseini Seidu Pelpuo IV, the paramount chief of Waala, the president declared his fervent hope that the 2024 general elections will see victory for Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, the flagbearer of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), who doubles as

the vice president of Ghana. This information was reported on 25 April 2024 by Myjoyonline (<https://www.myjoyonline.com>). A bubble speech attributed to President Nana Addo, who is conceptualised as King Nebuchadnezzar, reads “I cannot have someone I defeated as my successor!” This statement is believed to have been made by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, affirming his unwavering position against the transfer of presidential power to his predecessor, John Dramani Mahama, when he addressed the chiefs and residents of Wa on April 24, 2024 (<https://ghlifeonline.com/category/politics/>).

As cartoonists are commonly perceived as individuals who hold opinions on various issues, the President’s statement was interpreted as evidencing an attitude of arrogance and pride. This perception was further reinforced by the cartoon’s caption, which read “King Nebu’s Arrogance”. The cartoonist draws further parallels between a boastful comment made by President Nana Addo in his speech and a well-known quote from King Nebuchadnezzar, which is recorded in Daniel 3:13-15: “What God will be able to rescue you from my hand?” The cartoonist’s juxtaposition of these two figures emphasises their assumption of a particular domineering role and power that does not exist. The fact that the president is unable to determine his successor is a poignant point emphasised by the cartoonist. Similarly, in the biblical narrative of King Nebuchadnezzar, the monarch is depicted as being powerless to determine God’s will. The second figure, positioned to the president’s right, bears a resemblance to Dr. Bawumia, the vice president, and he is depicted grasping a driving steer. The steer is a symbol of leadership and readiness to lead the nation.

The bubble speech attributed to him is characterised by its rhetorical style and emphasis on persuasion, employing the metaphorical phrase “Give me the steer, la”. This expression signifies a compelling appeal and a clarion call to the Ghanaian electorate, urging them to entrust him with the responsibility of leading the nation. The subject’s facial expression, characterised by a broad smile and an expression of joy, appears to be indicative of a high level of confidence in his ability to lead the nation. The remaining pair of characters, each adorned with angelic feathers positioned on the president’s extreme left side, represents the Ghanaian clergy. It is possible to interpret the presence of these angelic figures as either an external influence or a form of moral judgement, or as political advisers attempting to influence decisions. These figures are Rev. Prof. Emmanuel Martey, a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, and Rev. Owusu Bempah, the founder and leader of Glorious Word Power Ministry International. Due to their proximity, these individuals possess a certain degree of affinity for the NPP, a hypothesis that lends credence to their depiction. The discourse delivered by Rev. Owusu Bempah, captured in the bubble Speech, expresses a sense of disdain and criticism directed towards President Nana Addo (King Nebuchadnezzar), as indicated by the phrase “Nakoma efri Awurade so!” To wit, “the President’s heart has departed from God.” This viewpoint suggests a perception of excessively proud tendencies and a lack of humility on the part of the President, which is further emphasised employing such audacious rhetoric.

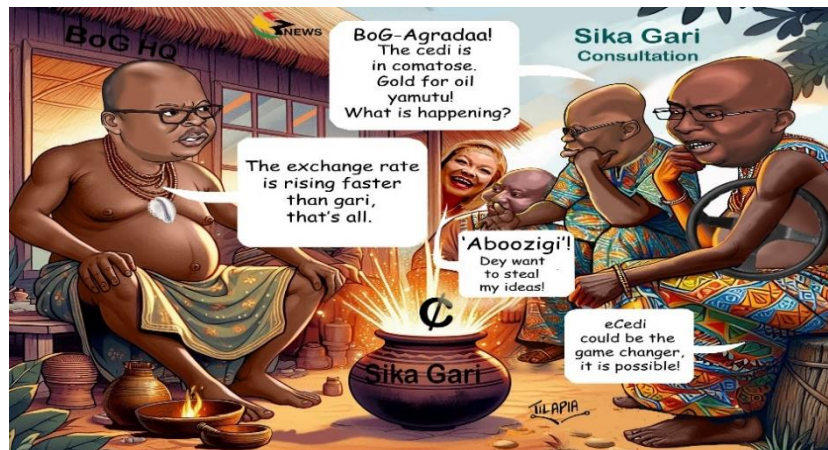


Figure 5. The theme of traditional ritualists. 17th May 2024

The researcher interpreted the conceptual metaphor that underlies Figure 5 as SOLVING ECONOMIC CHALLENGES IS CONSULTING A SOOTHSAYER/SEER. The cartoonist draws on a renowned source in Ghana to illustrate the current state of the Ghanaian economy, with a particular emphasis on the depreciation of the cedi and the government's response to address the situation. In this domain, a fetish priestess portrayed by Nana Agradaa promotes on television and radio stations that she possesses the ability to multiply any amount entrusted to her shrine, which she refers to as "Sika gari." The term "Sika gari" is employed to denote a specific category of financial deception, namely a Ponzi scheme. She draws parallels between her capacity to enhance monetary assets and the process of gari, which, when amalgamated with water, undergoes an increase in volume. The cartoonist employs a similar conceptual approach to critique the policies of the Bank of Ghana, drawing parallels with the quick money schemes perpetrated by fetish priests. The cartoonist has conceptualised the Bank of Ghana's (BOG) headquarters as a shrine. The building's inscription serves to corroborate the identification of the Bank of Ghana's headquarters (BOG HQ). The cartoonist contends that Dr. Philip Addison, the Governor of the Bank of Ghana, is engaged in a series of ritualistic actions aimed at promoting economic recovery.

In the presence of the ritualist, a vessel marked "Sika gari" is situated, from which a pleasant vapor and the symbol of the Ghanaian currency are emanating. The "Sika gari" pot serves as a metaphor for the government's hasty and ambitious economic endeavours, which may appear implausible and untenable. The ritualist's (BOG governor) speech bubble reads, "The exchange rate is rising faster than the gari, that's all." This statement suggests that the Sika Gari initiative is unable to resolve the issue of fluctuating exchange rates. The three male characters, dressed in traditional African clothing and positioned on the extreme right of the cartoon, are government officials, including President Nana Addo, Vice President Dr. Bawumia, and former Finance Minister Hon. Ken Ofori-Atta. The cartoonist has conceptualised these characters as individuals who have sought the guidance of the ritualist (BoG Governor) on measures to avert the depreciation of the cedi in relation to other major currencies.

A bubble speech credited to President Nana Addo reads, "BoG-Agradaa! The cedi is comatose. Gold for oil yamutu! What is happening?" President Nana Addo raised concerns about the state of the cedi, likening it to a state of comatose. He went on to express dissatisfaction with the gold-for-oil policy, stating that it had yielded no positive outcomes. The president then proceeded to interrogate the Governor of the Bank of Ghana (BoG-Agradaa) on the matter, to ascertain solutions to the impending problem. A female character in the cartoon bears a striking resemblance to Nana Agradaa (a fetish priestess who introduced the "Sika gari"). The cartoonist portrays her with a broad smile, and her speech includes, "Aboozigi! Dey want to steal my

ideas!” Her speech suggests that the president is seeking to emulate her unconventional approach to problem-solving, particularly in relation to the prevailing economic challenges. Dr. Bawumia, the Vice President, is another individual with whom the President shares a close relationship. He stated that E-Cedi has the potential to be a game-changer, reflecting his optimistic outlook on the cedi’s prospects. It is possible. Dr. Bawumia has been a vocal proponent of economic digitisation, asserting that the electronic cedi (E-Cedi) has the potential to address the nation’s financial challenges.

Once more, it is evident that Dr. Bawumia’s campaign slogan is frequently linked to this phrase, “it is possible,” which serves as motivation for his supporters. As indicated by the data, the vice president is seen with a driving steer in his arm, suggesting a metaphor for government leadership. In view of the points mentioned earlier, Dr. Bawumia is prepared to assume the role of national leader should the electorate elect him in the 2024 general elections. This figure serves to emphasise further the considerable economic challenges currently being faced by Dr. Bawumia and his team in their efforts to navigate Ghana’s financial landscape. However, his sense of optimism regarding the nation’s leadership remains steadfast, even in the face of prevailing economic adversity as depicted by the steer in his possession.



Figure 6. The theme of luring. 18th June 2024

The researcher construes the conceptual metaphor that underpins Figure 6 as follows: “VOTE BUYING IS BAITING A CHICKEN FOR ENTRAPMENT.” The cartoonist employs three characters, represented by their heads, to convey the message about how to vote in accordance with the principles of the New Patriotic Party (NPP). The cartoonist employs a traditional method of entrapping chickens using corn and a basket, and compares it to the practice of buying votes by luring an electorate. In this context, the chickens may be interpreted as the electorate whom politicians have enticed. The cartoonist’s use of the head is a metonymic representation, thus, HEAD-FOR-HUMAN BEING (PART FOR WHOLE) METONYMY. The heads represent the following characters: Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (President of Ghana); Dr. Bawumia (Vice President); and Godfred Odamtten (Attorney General of Ghana). The utilisation of these characters by the cartoonist is comprehensible, given their pivotal function in the domestic political landscape.

The thought bubble attributed to the characters read “They are cheap! More coins and we will win”! This speech functions to reinforce the message conveyed by the cartoon’s caption, which states that “C/R people are cheap.” This assertion suggests that individuals hailing from the Central Region of Ghana are susceptible to persuasion, drawing a parallel with the use of corn as bait to trap chickens. The cartoonist employs a rhetorical strategy of depicting the characters in a manner that suggests their moral and ethical shortcomings, with a particular emphasis on instances of political impropriety and dishonesty among politicians, particularly within the context of the current electoral race. One of the three characters bears a striking

resemblance to Dr. Bawumia, accompanied by the depiction of a steer positioned on his head. This visual representation suggests that, in the event an opportunity is presented by the Ghanaian populace, he is prepared to assume a leadership role. An alternative interpretation posits that the steer on Dr. Bawumia's head symbolises that he will be a direct beneficiary of the Central Region votes in the 2024 general election, thus indicating that politicians utilise a variety of means to canvass votes, whether dubious or legitimate.

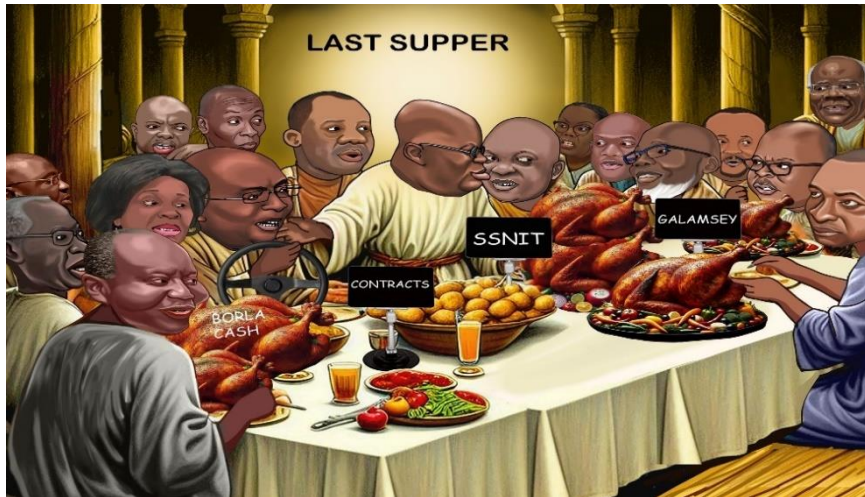


Figure 7. The theme of feasting. 22nd May 2022

In Figure 7, the cartoonist employs a religious reference to juxtapose a sacred meal, namely the Last Supper, with a sacrificial feast characterised by the unethical and dishonest distribution of resources. This sacrificial feast is represented by the participation of political figures, symbolised by their likenesses, in corrupt dealings. In view of this, the conceptual metaphor can be formulated as FEASTING ON CORRUPT DEALS IS THE LAST SUPPER. The cartoonist presents a familiar Biblical concept, as indicated by the data caption “Last Supper” and the visuals, which establish the tone for the analysis. The focus is on Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples. The artist has chosen to conceptualise the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, as Jesus Christ, a decision predicated on his physical resemblance and attire. The cartoonist further conceptualises President Nana Addo’s appointees as Jesus’ 12 disciples, with whom he had supper. The appointees in question include individuals from the highest echelons of government to its most junior functionaries.

The following individuals were in attendance: the Vice President, Dr. Bawumia; the Chief of Staff, Honourable Frema Opare; the Governor of the Bank of Ghana, Mr. Ernest Addison; and the Senior Finance Advisor. The attendees included the following individuals: The Honourable Osafo Marfo, The Honourable Matthew Opoku Prempeh (Minister of Energy), The Honourable Ursula Owusu-Ekuful (Minister of Communications), Mr. Ken Ofori-Atta (former Minister of Finance), and Mr. Bernard Antwi-Boasiako (NPP Ashanti Regional Chairman), among others. The conceptualisation and attribution of the characters depicted in the image are based on physical resemblance. In the biblical account, the Last Supper is said to have taken place between Jesus and his 12 disciples. However, the data under review indicates that the government appointees (disciples) may have been more than 12, which could be interpreted as a metaphor for the size of the government, indicating an elephant-sized government.

Moreover, an examination of the biblical account reveals a notable absence of references to female disciples of Jesus. However, the data under consideration does contain female disciples (appointees), which depicts gender representation among government appointees. The concept of the feast is symbolised by various meats and dishes, which are labelled as follows:

Galamsey (illegal mining), SSNIT, contracts, and borla cash (waste management cash). “Contracts” serves to illustrate the possibility of illicit practices in the awarding of contracts to government officials without the necessary degree of due diligence. The available evidence suggests that specific provisions of the questionable contracts are used for party activities, as illustrated by the data under review. “Borla” in our local slang refers to “dirty” or “waste” things, “borla cash”, money earned illegally, or filthy money.

Once more, according to a report submitted by Modernghana.com on March 13, 2021, the government implemented a 10 pesewa “Borla” tax to clean up Ghana (<https://www.modernghana.com>).

An analysis of the data indicates that the financial resources obtained from the “Borla tax” have not been allocated to their designated purpose of city cleansing. The acronym “SSNIT” refers to the Social Security and National Insurance Trust. This institution deducts a proportion of the salaries of civil servant employees to fund their retirement pensions, which are subsequently redistributed to these individuals. The government has misappropriated the funds for a purpose other than that intended. The colloquial term “galamsey” denotes illegal mining activities that are detrimental to the nation’s natural resources. These labels suggest that these politicians are benefiting from the misappropriation of public funds, corrupt deals, and illegal activities at the expense of the ordinary Ghanaian. The message conveyed by the cartoonist is that government officials are financially benefiting from these activities, which is hurting both the environment and the general populace of Ghana. It is notable that the Vice President, Dr. Bawumia, possesses an object of symbolic significance. The driving steer, which represents leadership, is a metaphorical representation of his readiness to assume the lead country should the electorate allow him to do so. Notwithstanding the contribution of Dr. Bawumia and the subsequent deterioration in economic conditions, he has demonstrated an admirable degree of composure in the face of these challenges, thus evidencing his commitment to assume the leadership role for the nation.

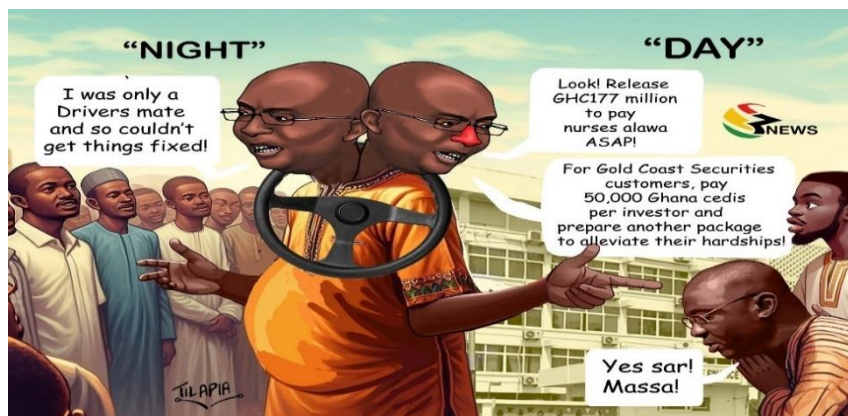


Figure 8. The theme of dishonesty. 20th May 2024

The researcher describes the conceptual metaphor underlying Figure 8 as follows: “THE VICE PRESIDENT’S CHARACTER IS A TWO-FACED PERSON.” In the cartoon, the artist presents a male figure bearing a striking resemblance to the Vice President of Ghana, Dr. Mahamadu Bawumia, as a being with two heads. This symbolic representation intends to convey the concept of duality between day and night, each saying something different. The artist has conceptualised Dr. Bawumia as a character with a dual head, thereby serving to represent the divergent views he espouses on specific issues. One of the heads is representative of ‘night’, and the bubble speech attributed to that head reads, “I was only the driver’s mate, so I couldn’t get things fixed”. The phrase “driver’s mate” is employed as a metaphor to describe the role of

the president (the driver) and the vice president. The vice president, therefore, plays a secondary role, which may explain why he was unable to address the nation's economic challenges. This may be construed as an evasion of responsibility, a failure to perform adequately, or an abdication of accountability. The statement by Dr. Bawumia also suggests a lack of authority and control over the implementation of solutions during his tenure as vice president.

The other head of Dr. Bawumia represents the concept of the “day,” and the bubble speech attributed to him reads, “Look! Release GH¢177 million to pay nurses ASAP! For Gold Coast securities customers, pay 50,000 Ghana cedis per investor and prepare another package to alleviate hardships”. The ‘day head’ is seen making promises, which represent hope, action, or a brighter future. The contrast highlights the perceived hypocrisy, as it shifts between excuses and promises depending on what suits the moment. This metaphor can also be interpreted as a suggestion that the vice president is either inconsistent or insincere in their approach. This communication is an instruction from the vice president to his subordinate, directing them to act with haste.

In response to the message, the recipient offers a verbal affirmation in the form of a spoken bubble speech, uttering the words “Yes, sar massa.” This response is indicative of a submissive stance on the part of the subordinate, as well as a power dynamic between the two parties. It is interesting to note that the steering wheel around Dr. Bawumia's neck symbolises his readiness to assume leadership of the nation. However, the utilisation of the metaphor of “the two-faced” by the cartoonist is a customary means of critiquing politicians who proffer divergent messages to different audiences, thereby compromising the alignment between their actions and their professed principles. Once more, within the Ghanaian context, the accusation of being ‘two-faced’ is a grave one, denoting dishonesty and a lack of integrity. This suggests that Dr. Bawumia is not worthy of the position. The presence of characters that face the president from the night head side can be interpreted as Ghanaian citizens or the electorate who listen to the vice president's double standard, which evokes metonymy. These citizens have the capacity to influence the vice president through their voting decisions. This phenomenon can be understood as a manifestation of metonymy, specifically a ‘FEW-FOR-MANY’ metonymy.

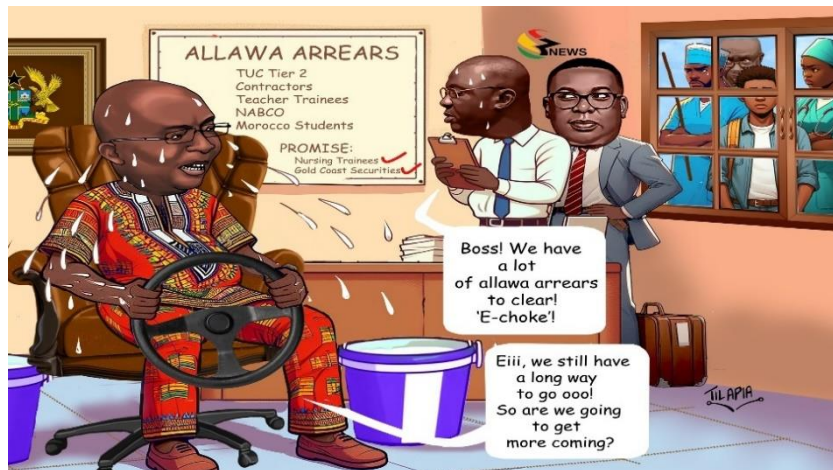


Figure 9. The theme of disappointment. 28th May 2024

In Figure 9, the conceptual metaphor can be interpreted as POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS AN OVERWHELMING PRESSURE. The cartoonist employs a range of visual elements to illustrate the scenario in which financial commitments concerning allowances are not honoured. The cartoonist utilises three characters to convey his intended message. In this respect, the Vice President of Ghana, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, is represented as a seated figure holding a steering wheel in his hand. The cartoonist depicts the vice president as the driver of a car,

signifying his readiness and willingness to assume the role of national leader, with the steering wheel serving as a metaphor for leadership. The vice president's physical exertion, manifesting in the act of wiping sweat from his face into buckets, is indicative of his inability to rectify the necessary allowances for the functioning of these institutions. The depiction of Dr. Bawumia experiencing profuse sweating can be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the considerable pressure he is under as a result of the mounting financial obligations and expectations placed upon him. The employment of buckets by the cartoonist serves as a prime illustration of hyperbole, a rhetorical device employed to create emphasis.

The "Allawa arrears" board attached to the data review wall enumerates the various institutions to which the government owes allowances. The affected institutions comprise TUC Tier 2, Contractors, Teacher Trainees, NABCO (Nation Builders Corps), and Moroccan Students. The TUC (Trade Union Congress of Ghana) has expressed discontent with the Government of Ghana's deductions from the pension scheme, categorised under Tier 2. The TUC has formally requested the reimbursement of these deductions to their parent union, the SSNIT (www.gbcbghanaonline.com). In addition, the government owes contractors for various projects. Furthermore, the government owes monthly allowances to students in teacher training, education, nursing, and NABCO workers. The other two characters play subordinate roles in relation to the vice president, bearing resemblance to the vice president's special aide and advisor, Dr. Gideon Boako, and the Minister for Finance and MP for Karaga Constituency, Hon. Amin Adam. The bubble speech accompanying the depicted characters reads, "Boss, we have a lot of allawa (allowances) arrears to clear! E-choke!" The utilisation of the exclamation mark in conjunction with the speech signifies a state of profound shock, thereby rendering any subsequent progression improbable.

The colloquial term "e-choke" is particularly resonant with a Ghanaian audience, reflecting real-world frustrations with delayed payments to various sectors. The cartoonist has successfully tapped into prevailing public sentiment regarding government inefficiency and unfulfilled promises. Dr. Bawumia's rhetorical inquiry, posed in the form of an exclamation, reads "Eii..we still have a long way to go oo. So we are going to get more coming? This rhetorical question introduces the notion of trepidation, suggesting that the prevailing challenges may intensify, thereby impeding the process of addressing the accumulated arrears. This cartoon lends further support to the argument that, despite considerable pressure and economic challenges, Dr. Bawumia remains firmly focused on leading the nation, as illustrated by the steer. The evidence of metonymy observed in this data is a manifestation of what is known as "FEW-FOR-MANY" metonymy. This occurs when a group of individuals representing the workers whom the government owes are behind the widows. The above individuals are monitoring the situation as it unfolds, anticipating that the government will give due consideration to their concerns.



Figure 10. The theme of the kids' playground. 23rd April 2024

As demonstrated in Figure 10, the cartoon employs rural settings to substantiate its argument. The presence of mud houses and huts, coupled with the availability of coconut, serves as evidence of rural life. This depiction is further confirmed by the clothing typically worn by rural settlers. The cartoonist has depicted four male figures positioned around a damaged vehicle, suggesting that the subjects are attempting to effect repairs to the car. Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge that the characters in question are depicted as young children engaged in a recreational activity involving the restoration of a broken toy car, as evidenced by the open bonnet and the presence of a detached tyre. In consideration of the above description, the researcher identifies the conceptual metaphor underlying Figure 10 as “FIXING A BROKEN ECONOMY IS FIXING A BROKEN CAR.” The artist employs a concept from the domain of mechanics – the repair of a vehicle – to depict the current state of the Ghanaian economy. This is a concept with which the majority of the audience will be readily familiar.

In this cartoon, the artist has chosen to portray key political and economic figures in Ghana by comparing them to car mechanics. The President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa, the Vice President, Dr. Bawumia, the former Finance Minister, Ken Ofori Atta, and Gabby Otchere Darko, a founding member of the Danquah Institute ‘think tank group’ (*an independent research and policy institute that generates ideas, conducts studies, and provides recommendations on national issues such as governance, economics, education, health, and development*) affiliated to the New Patriotic Party, are represented as attempting to repair a malfunctioning vehicle, serving as the vehicle’s mechanics. In light of their involvement in economic management, the cartoonist conceptualises them as mechanical technicians. The car being repaired by automotive repair technicians is interpreted as a metaphor for the current state of the economy. This interpretation supports the presence of the Economy inscription on the vehicle.

The cartoonist portrays the Vice President, Dr. Bawumia, with a steer on an improvised wooden cart. Conventionally, children, especially those in rural areas, use such improvised cars to depict driving. The driver of this improvised car comes with a balloon speech reading, “Mo ma me steer no!” Vuuummmm.. Vuuummmm... Pippiimmm!” The vice president’s statement, “Mo ma me steer no,” connotes a direct appeal to Ghanaians to support him and elect him to lead the country in the December 2024 general elections. The sounds “vuuummmm,” “vuuummm,” and “pippiimmm” are employed to symbolise the economy’s failure to respond to efforts to revive it, with the sounds being analogous to a car that won’t start. This lends further emphasis to the idea that the current leadership is failing to stimulate the economy. Despite the evident challenges confronting the economy, Dr. Bawumia maintains his unwavering stance, persistently urging Ghanaians to entrust him with the steering wheel.



Figure 11. The theme of support. 19th November 2024

Based on the visual elements available in Figure 11, the conceptual metaphor can be interpreted visually and verbally as **POLITICAL SUPPORT IS AN ENDORSEMENT**. The cartoonist employs three characters to convey his message. The first character from the left, attired in a light green dress, is Mr. Alan Kwadwo Kyerematen, the former Minister of Trade and Industry from 2017 to 2023. Mr. Kyeremanten later resigned from the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to establish his own party, the Movement for Change. The second character in the hat is the former president of Ghana, John Agyekum Kuffour, who served from 2000 to 2008. The third character in the grasp of the steer, beaming with smiles, is the current Vice President of Ghana, Dr. Bawumia. In a news item broadcast by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) on Sunday, 17 November 2024, the former President, John Agyekum, expressed his firm conviction in the capacity of Dr. Bawumia to invigorate Ghana's economy if he is elected in the forthcoming December elections, thereby throwing his weight behind him (www.gbcghanaonline.com). To facilitate comprehension among readers regarding the former president's press briefing, in which he expressed unwavering support for Dr. Bawumia, the cartoonist employs a gesture of patting people on the back. This gesture signifies positive actions or commendations. This visual narrative serves as the source domain, providing a foundation for understanding the target domain of endorsement, as illustrated by the cartoon's caption. Dr. Bawumia is at the helm, which signifies his readiness to navigate the nation's affairs. This can evoke the metaphor **POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IS STEERING A VEHICLE**. The other character, positioned to the left, has previously been identified as Mr. Alan Kyeremanten, and his bubble speech reads, "Eii...wofa".

The phrase "Eii...wofa" is a Ghanaian expression of frustration or disbelief, and "wofa" means uncle in Akan. The exclamation articulated by Mr. Kyeremanten is suggestive of his discontent regarding Mr. Kuffour's endorsement, especially considering the familial relationship between the two individuals. Given their familial ties, Mr. Kyeremanten had anticipated receiving the endorsement from him (the former president) rather than Dr. Bawumia. A notable feature on the steering wheel is a barcode that reads "scan to verify". During the electioneering campaign, Dr. Bawumia frequently asserted his role as a proponent of digitisation, positing that technological advancement is a catalyst for economic prosperity. The use of the barcode in the cartoon serves to validate Dr. Bawumia's digitalisation credentials.

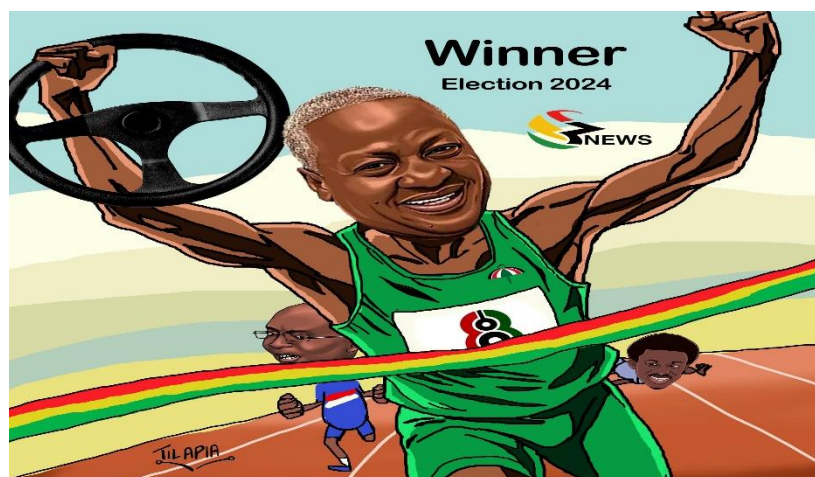


Figure 12. The theme of race. 9th December 2024

The cartoonist utilises a well-known source of athletic events to convey his message. In consideration of this, the researcher formulates the conceptual metaphor behind Figure 12 via the verbal element (caption) and the visual depiction as **WINNING AN ELECTION IS FINISHING FIRST IN A RACE**. In view of the identified event, the cartoonist employs the

metaphor of athletes to conceptualise the frontrunners in the 2024 general elections. These include Dr. Bawumia of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), Mr. John Mahama of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), and an independent candidate, Nana Kwame Bediako of the Freedom Party. The portrayal of these characters employs the primary metaphor of size, thereby establishing the importance of the concept of 'big'. This illustrates the depiction of the eventual winner, who is portrayed as more substantial in stature than his two opponents. In the domain of visual metaphor, Knowles and Moon (2006, p. 111) identify colour as one of the fundamental elements worth considering. This assertion emphasises the pivotal role that colour plays in facilitating the effective communication of meaning to the viewer.

In consideration of the above points, it may be observed that the cartoonist has employed the medium of colour in a manner that serves to augment the comprehensibility of the message conveyed. The eventual victor, Mr. Mahama, is depicted wearing colours that are predominant in the flag of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), namely green and white. In contrast, Dr. Bawumia is adorned in colours that are representative of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), primarily blue, white, and red, thereby accentuating the political allegiances of each figure. Interestingly, the cartoonist employs the colours of the Ghanaian flag to decorate the crossing line, thereby highlighting the fact that the message is related to that country. This depiction confirms Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2002) assertion that the colours of flags denote specific nations and corporations, revealing the identity of those who use them. The winner's attire bears several distinguishable embossed elements that merit attention. Primarily, numeral 8, which is emblematic of the NDC's electoral position on the ballot paper, is conspicuously present on the winner's attire. Additionally, an embossed symbol of an umbrella is notable. This metonymic representation of the NDC is employed in their flag and ceremonial dress, thereby serving as a symbolic embodiment of the party's ideological principles. The ultimate victor is beaming with radiant joy and firmly grasping a steering wheel, serving as a symbolic representation of leadership and authority. The winner in the competition (race) with the steer is indicative of the fact that he has been chosen as the preferred candidate ahead of Dr. Bawumia and Nana Kwame Bediako.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The principal theme that forms the objective of this study concerns the analysis of the role and portrayal of the steer metaphor articulated by Dr. Bawumia during his campaign period in his pursuit of being elected as the First Gentleman of the land. Each cartoon employs a distinct metaphor to offer a critical perspective on Dr. Bawumia's leadership. A recurrent theme in the examined cartoons is the vice president's leadership and the state of the Ghanaian economy. The cartoons utilise varied source domains, such as vehicle-related metaphors (steering wheels, broken vehicles), to frame governance and economic management, and a couple of biblical allusions, framing how they enjoy the dubious deals as a feast. The efficacy of these metaphors lies in their ability to resonate with universal experiences, such as driving a car, dealing with breakdowns, baptism, feasting or the last supper, race, or feeling overwhelmed. Moreover, they reflect both Ghanaian culture and political realities, thereby offering a multifaceted perspective on leadership and economic management. The progression of the metaphors employed in this analysis, from baptism as an introduction to hypocrisy to pressure, financial failure, traditional ritual consultation, the enjoyment of the nation's resources, and finally a failed campaign, provides a comprehensive picture of a leader who is losing public confidence due to his inability to address economic issues effectively. A thorough examination of the cartoons reveals an insightful critique of Dr. Bawumia's alleged involvement in financial mismanagement and his apparent fixation on steering the nation. Consequently, Dr. Bawumia's pursuit of the presidency

can be interpreted as an indication of unwavering faith, despite the criticism he has faced. The cartoons thus present a dichotomy between a clarion call for the steering of the nation and the question of whether the citizens of Ghana will entrust him with this responsibility.

Furthermore, concerning the function of political cartoons, these cartoons exemplify the efficacy of political satire in influencing public discourse. Despite the absence of empirical evidence to substantiate this assertion, it can be posited that the continuous publication by the cartoonist of Dr. Bawumia, depicted as a despondent figure in the electorate's eyes before the elections, had a deleterious impact on his electoral prospects. This hypothesis is substantiated by the substantial electoral margin by which he was defeated. This assertion is confirmed by Brantner and Lobinger (2014), who espouse that cartoons have the capacity to influence our thoughts and behaviour, particularly when employed for political purposes (pp. 249-50). Despite the humour-laden nature of political cartoons, the analysis reveals that the study of multimodal metaphors in political cartoons, epitomised by the analysis of Dr. Bawumia's steer metaphor, highlights the power of visual and verbal semiotics. Cartoons are potent tools that can be used to criticise and hold those in power accountable.

This investigation demonstrates that cartoons serve as a powerful medium for criticising and holding accountable those in positions of authority. Whilst the present study has revealed the considerable merits of political cartoons, the extent of their efficacy is contingent on the cultural awareness of their intended audience. It is essential to note that without such understanding, the intended meaning may remain elusive to the viewer. Finally, the findings of this study corroborate Jomoh's (2010) observations that cartoonists employ this genre of visual commentary to reflect on, critique, and shape the public's perception of social and political issues in the nation. The researcher recommends that subsequent researchers should direct particular attention to the verbal components that accompany the cartoons. This will enable them to determine the language choice and language pattern. This, in turn, will facilitate the identification of the dominance language pattern. Furthermore, it will enable the researchers to determine why these cartoonists prefer specific language patterns over others. The researcher's failure to get cartoons on the issue from other cartoonists, who could have provided a different viewpoint on how the steer metaphor appears to limit the study's conclusions, despite its success.

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