



Humour During Trump's Presidency: The Power of Cartoons

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Abstract:

The paper is a linguistic study of the power of humorous political cartoons. It aims at contributing to the understanding of political cartoons and humour. It attempts to investigate humorous political cartoons from a multimodal perspective. A thorough analysis of selected Pinterest political cartoons published during Trump's presidency is carried out employing Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar and the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH). An interview is conducted to a group of participants (10 males and 10 females between the age of 25 to 35 with different specialties) to elicit data about their understanding of the multimodal cues used in the selected cartoons, to find out which elements (verbal or nonverbal) help them more in the understanding of the cartoonists' point of view and whether this has any relation with gender and age or not. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied to gather, analyse and interpret the data. The results of the qualitative analysis have revealed that humour can be produced not only by verbal or visual elements, but also by combination of both. Analysis on the quantitative level has revealed that most participants can observe the cartoonists' point of view easily and through pictorial elements more than the verbal ones. In addition, age and gender have little effects on understanding humour in political cartoons; as male and old participants can observe the intended meaning more easily than females and young participants.

Keywords: humour, political cartoons, multimodality, Visual Grammar, General Theory of Verbal Humour, Knowledge Resources.



Humour During Trump's Presidency: The Power of Cartoons

Introduction:

Cartoons mean a lot though they appear to be only humorous; they carry a message to evoke arguments, convey opinions and stimulate readers to think deeply about depicted issues. Humour has been the subject of research in various disciplines; psychological researchers are interested in the role of humour in reducing tension caused by depression. Linguistics investigates producing and analyzing humour, and semiotics uses humour to reveal the message carried by signs in humorous texts.

Humour has both verbal and nonverbal forms. The present study attempts to investigate humorous political cartoons from a multimodal perspective. It is divided into four sections: the first section discusses the theoretical background of the relevant literature. The second section deals with data and methodology. Moreover, it presents research assumptions and hypotheses, research questions and variables of the study. The third section is allotted to the analysis of selected online cartoons and the participants' elicited data. The final section presents the findings and conclusion of the current research with respect to the study's assumptions and hypotheses.

Review of Literature:

Humour is a form of linguistic, social and cultural practice that includes the abilities to produce, recognize, and appreciate humour and to use humour as a coping strategy (Thorson & Powell, 1993). Interest in the linguistics of humour is widespread and develops through time and culture, but it is not until the late 1970s when linguistic studies of humor have begun. A full theory of humour is presented within linguistic semantics by Raskin (1985). The Semantic Script Theory of Humour (SSTH) tries to find out the necessary and sufficient conditions for a text to be considered humorous and at the same time eliciting laughter. The central category of the theory is "based on the notion of script. The script, frame, schema is a bunch of terms alternately used to denote a structured chunk of information" (Raskin, 2008, p.7). In 1991 Attardo and Raskin develop the SSTH theory into the General Theory of

Verbal Humour (GTVH) which focuses on the semantic/pragmatic content of humorous utterances and texts rather than their paralinguistic aspects.

According to Long and Graesser (1988, p. 4) humour is "anything done or said, purposely or inadvertently, that is found to be comical or amusing". Martineau (1972) defines humour as any communication that is perceived as humorous (reflecting circular reasoning). Romero and Cruthirds (2006) define humour as amusing communications that create a positive cognitive and emotional reaction in a person or a group.

For Hurren (2006) humour is seen as a verbal or nonverbal message that evokes amusement and positive feelings by the receiver. Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1991) emphasise the intentional use of both verbal and nonverbal communication behaviours that elicit positive responses such as laughter and joy.

Moreover, humour has both intrapersonal and interpersonal functions. For Martin et al. (2003) the intrapersonal functions of humour may serve to enhance relationships with others or the self. Humour may also help individuals cope with stress as it can help people see the amusing side of problems and can help them distance themselves from stressors (Banas et al., 2011).

As for the interpersonal functions; humour can increase/decrease closeness and power. That is to say, humour can facilitate liking and can bring people together, but it may be also used to degrade others and socially isolate them (Banas et al., 2011).

Humour is generally studied according to three major theories:

"Superiority Theory or Tendentious or Disparagement Theory (Hobbes 1588–1679)

Considered an aggressive form of humour which takes pleasure in others' failings or discomfort. A 'sudden glory of some eminency in ourselves, compared with infirmity of others'.

Incongruity Theory Kant (1724–1804)

Humour where the punchline or resolution is inconsistent or incongruous with the set-up.

Relief or Release Theory Freud (1856–1938)

Humour released by 'excess' nervous energy which actually masks other motives and, or desires".

(cited in McCreddie & Wiggins, 2008, p. 585)

That is to say, the superiority theory emphasises the ways in which negative or hostile attitudes are expressed through humour (Martin, 1998). It concludes that laughter occurs as a reaction to inferior object/person/group of people. It also indicates the use of humour by the society to correct deviant behavior (Attardo, 1994, p. 52). In the incongruity theory, the audience member is led to expect a certain behavior, statement, chain of events and then is surprised and humour is produced by the misperception or unrecognized meaning. Furthermore, humour comprehension, rather than humour appreciation, is at the core of the theory as it emphasizes cognition, requiring the mental capacity to note, understand, and categorize incongruous changes and thus to comprehend a situation and its implications before humour can be experienced. The relief theory focuses on the physiological release of tension by laughing (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2004; Meyer, 2000). Thus, while incongruity theory is considered a linguistic theory, superiority is a sociological approach to humor and relief is a psychological one.

Humour can stem from cartoon, as it is a joke told in a picture. Cartoon is defined by Attardo and Chabanne (1992, pp. 167–168) as a kind of joke text involving a mixed-code message. They claim that "the humorous point is created by the interaction of the drawing and the text" (Attardo and Chabanne, 1992, p. 168). Furthermore, Samson and Huber (2007, p. 14) assert that cartoon humor can result not only from the text included in it or the text and image interaction, but also from the picture itself, in case no text is included in the cartoon panel.

Political cartoons are "complex system of symbols, pictures and words put together in a way that newspaper readers, who understand the intended message of the cartoonist, will better understand the issue that the cartoonist addresses" (Bush, 2013, p. 63). Thus, political cartoons are drawings that can generally be found on newspapers and other journalistic outlets, whether in print or electronic form. They comment on politicians, political events or issues. Sometimes they are made for the purpose of entertainment or to convey editorial commentary on current and significant political issues to stimulate thinking and discussion about a cultural issue or event and persuade the reader to understand the cartoonist's point of view. They do not suggest what to be done; rather, they only highlight and comment on current issues. They are designed to affect viewer's opinion while making them laugh about serious issues.

The interpretation of the cartoons depends on individuals. That is to say, in order to decode them, readers should have some basic background knowledge about their subject matter. Political cartoonists use symbolism, exaggeration, labeling, analogy and irony to present serious issues in a funny way.

Methodology:

The study aims to evaluate the power of humorous political cartoons and find out the linguistic features in its language. It further attempts to check the impact of humorous cartoons on participants' understanding of the political life during Trump's presidency. To achieve its aim, the study applies both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach is used to analyse and interpret the information gathered from the selected cartoons, whereas the quantitative approach is applied to analyse the data obtained from the participants.

The study deals with two types of data: 10 selected political cartoons from Pinterest (web page <https://www.pinterest.com>) published during Trump's presidency and elicited data collected through interviewing 20 participants (10 males and 10 females between the age of 25 to the age of 35 with different specialties to find out whether age or gender has something to do with understanding cartoons or not). The participants are divided into four groups, each group consists of 5 participants as follows:

Group 1: males from 25 - 30.

Group 2: males from 30 - 35.

Group 3: females from 25 - 30.

Group 4: females from 30 - 35.

All participants are asked the same questions and the data elicited from the interview is analysed to see the impact of cartoons on the participants. The theories of Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar and the GTVH are applied to analyse the collected data.

The current study has three assumptions:

First: Political cartoons use both verbal and visual aspects to produce the desired effect among readers/viewers.

Second: The use of the visual aspects is more effective than the verbal ones.

Third: Humorous political cartoons can either represent or misrepresent political life.

On the basis of the above mentioned assumptions, the study tries to find answers to the following research questions:

- 1- What kind of multimodal cues are used in the selected cartoons?
- 2- Which characteristics make political cartoons humorous?
- 3- How can humorous cartoons reflect the truth/untruth about political life during Trump's presidency?
- 4- How do the cartoonists construct meanings of cartoons?

The research hypothesizes that in their response to the questions in the interview:

First: the participants would be able to identify the cartoonists' point of view in each cartoon.

Second: pictures are easier to be understood and have more impact than words.

Third: male participants would be more observant of the displayed humorous cues than female ones.

Fourth: old participants would be more observant of the political issues in the cartoons.

Cartoons represent the independent variable in the current study. The dependent variables include the participants' recognition and comprehension of various multimodal aspects used in the cartoons, the language used in the cartoons, the gender of the participants and their age.

Analysing the content of the selected cartoons involves looking at both verbal and visual aspects, and regarding the pictures to be as, if not more, important than the written material. That is why multimodal discourse analysis has proven very useful when it comes to examining other modes than linguistic features. Images communicate meanings as well as linguistic choices do. Therefore, these modes encode different meanings in context, and it is the receiver who decodes such modes to make sense of the meanings conveyed through them. Within the frame of the present study, verbal humour in the selected cartoons is analysed focusing on the six Knowledge Resources (KR), while the visual aspects are analysed using Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 114) believe that in visual representations, there is an interaction between the producer and the viewer. There are represented and interactive participants. The represented participants are the people, places and objects in images while the interactive participants are the producers and viewers of images. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 114) call this "perspective" and they (2006, p. 129) point out that it is another means to show relations between the viewer and represented

participants. When the image producer chooses a specific angle, this reflects a 'point of view'.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 130) specify that in Western cultures, there are two types of images: subjective images [images with (central) perspective (i.e. with a 'built-in' point of view)] and objective images [images without (central) perspective (i.e. without a 'built-in' point of view)]. In the first type, image producers present what they want the viewer to see from a specific point of view, while in objective images, the image shows everything concerning the represented participants, and thus objective images "disregard the viewer" (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006, p. 131). On contrary to this, subjective images select a specific point of view for the viewer.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, pp. 135-6) distinguish between two types of point of view in images: frontal and oblique. They state that the "difference between the oblique and the frontal angle is the difference between detachment and involvement". If the image-producer wants to show that he is involved with the represented participants, he uses the horizontal angle. However, if he wants to indicate that he is detached from what is represented in the image, he uses the oblique angle. In other words, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 136) put it, "the oblique angle says, 'What you see here is not part of our world; it is their world, something we are not involved with'". Thus, the viewers are limited by what is shown to them in the image, and they have to realize the viewpoint encoded in the image whether they accept or refuse this viewpoint.

Another point that Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 140) draw attention to is the relationship between vertical angle and power. A high angle represents the participants as small and not important, while a low angle signals superiority of represented participants over the viewer. They also state that when the image is at eye level, there is no power difference between the interactive participants and the represented participants.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 145), there are frontal and top-down angles. The frontal angle indicates maximum involvement as it is oriented towards action. On the other hand, the top-down angle is the angle reflecting maximum power as it is oriented towards theoretical, objective knowledge.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) argue that reading a picture or image is in the same direction of the target reading/writing cultures; for example, writing and reading of English is along a horizontal axis from left to right and so is writing and reading of images within such

cultures. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, pp. 179- 85) clarify that when images use the horizontal axis, elements on the left-hand and right-hand constitute 'the Given' and 'the New' respectively. On the horizontal axis, when elements of pictures and layouts are placed left, these elements are presented to the viewer as Given while elements placed on the right are presented as New. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 181) illustrate that

for something to be Given means that it is presented as something the viewer already knows, as a familiar and agreed-upon point of departure for the message. For something to be New means that it is presented as something which is not yet known, or perhaps not yet agreed upon by the viewer, hence as something to which the viewer must pay special attention.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 186) clarify when elements are positioned in the upper part of a visual composition, they represent the Ideal. On the other hand, elements placed in the lower part of the composition are considered as the Real. Thus, the lower section represents factual details; on the other hand, the upper section stands for abstract or general possibilities. They added that

for something to be ideal means that it is presented as the idealized or generalized essence of the information, hence also as its ... most salient part. The Real is then opposed to this in that it presents more specific information (i.e. details) ...

(Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, pp. 186-7).

They continue stating that in a page with both a picture and a text, if the upper section has the text and the lower part has the picture, the text then has the lead role over the picture. The picture in this case plays a subservient role. If the reverse occurs, the picture on the top presents the Ideal (i.e. this is the foregrounded part of the message) while the text elaborates on the picture.

Attardo and Raskin's GTVH is a semantic/pragmatic humour representation theory, which proposes that all humorous production must draw from six interdependent parameters (Knowledge Resources). The theory focuses on the semantic/pragmatic content of humorous utterances and texts, rather than their paralinguistic aspects. Attardo (2001, p. 28) claims that "the GTVH is broadened

to include all humorous texts, of any length. Specifically, it is not limited to narrative texts, but also to dramatic and conversational texts". Attardo (2001) argues that these broadenings are achieved by the introduction of six Knowledge Resources (KR), that must be tapped into when generating a joke.

(1) **Script opposition (SO)**: This "deals with the script opposition/overlapping requirement presented in the SSTH" (Attardo, 2001, p. 26).

(2) **Logical mechanism (LM)**: it refers to presenting the distorted and playful logic that causes the script opposition.

(3) **The situation (SI)**: "Any joke must be "about something" ... The situation of a joke can be thought of as the "props" of the joke: the objects, participants, instruments, activities, etc. Any joke must have some situation, although some jokes will rely more on it, while others will almost entirely ignore it" (Attardo, 2001, p. 24).

(4) **The target (TA)**: "The target KR selects who is the "butt" of the joke. The information in the KR contains the names of groups or individuals with (humorous) stereotypes attached to each. Jokes that are not aggressive (i.e., do not ridicule someone or something) have an empty value for this parameter. Alternatively, one can think as this as an optional parameter" (Attardo, 2001, pp. 23-24).

(5) **The narrative strategy (NS)**: "The information in the NS KR accounts for the fact that any joke has to be cast in some form of narrative organization, either as a simple narrative, as a dialogue (question and answer), as a (pseudo-)riddle, as an aside in conversation, etc." (Attardo, 2001, p. 23).

(6) **The language (LA)**: It "contains all the information necessary for the verbalization of a text. It is responsible for the exact wording of the text and for the placement of the functional elements that constitute it" (Attardo, 2001, p. 22).

The GTVH divides humorous texts into two classes. The first includes texts which are structurally similar to jokes and ends with a punch line (the last part of a story or a joke that provides the humour). The second includes texts in which humour is not restricted to their end, but may be diffused throughout those texts, encoded through words, phrases or sentences.

The jab line (a word, phrase or sentence including a script opposition) is a second kind of humorous lines introduced by Attardo (2001). Though the jab line is semantically identical to a punch line, but they differ in their position and function. That is to say, unlike the punch line that always comes at the end of the humorous text, jab

line may occur in any part of the humorous text except for the end. As for their functions; punch line interrupts the flow of the humorous text, while jab line is fully combined in it and is essential to the development of its plot.

Data:

The study deals with 10 selected political cartoons from Pinterest (web page <https://www.pinterest.com>) published during Trump's presidency. The selected cartoons highlight the cartoonists' point of view through prominent visual features (such as symbolism and exaggeration) and verbal context shown in the cartoon (such as labeling, analogy and irony). The selected cartoons are divided into three groups; group one in which humour stems only from the used text (figures 1, 2 and 3), group two in which the interaction of verbal and visual elements is the cause of humour (figures 4, 5, 6 and 7) and group three in which the picture is the only source of humour (figures 8, 9 and 10).

Analysis:

In the cartoons of the **first category**, it is the language used which is responsible for the production of humor; the script opposition stems exclusively from the text included in the cartoon. Image plays a supportive role in the production of humor by providing the background of the action.

In figure (1), Trump is reciting his presidential Oath of Office in the Presidential Inauguration Ceremony. The Oath of Office for the President of the United States in US Constitution, Article II, Section 1, Clause 8 is "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States". Here Trump's swear is "I, Donald J Trump do solemnly swear that I will faithfully *destroy* the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, *degrade, distort,* and *modify* the Constitution of the United States *to satisfy my ego*".

In Trump's oath, humour is not restricted to the end but is diffused throughout the text. It is encoded through words such as "destroy, degrade, distort, modify and satisfy my ego".

Trump's oath breaks the expectations regarding his political role and responsibilities; as the president is expected to "execute,

preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States". Instead, this cartoon presents him and implies his misconduct of his duties as a president of the United States and his care about nothing but his ego.

Using the six KRs proposed by the GTVH, humour can be analysed as follows:

SO: normal/abnormal. Trump here shows abnormal conduct of presidents.

LM: role- reversals.

SI: the Presidential Oath of Office.

TA: Donald Trump (The President of the United States).

NS: Cartoon.

LA: ironic.

The visual elements play a supportive role in the production of humor by providing the background of the action and illustrating the cartoonist's point of view toward Trump as a president. In the Presidential Inauguration Ceremony, the president has to place the left hand on the Bible and raise the right hand while reciting his presidential oath; here Trump is doing it as vice-versa the cartoonist uses the 'subjected image' or the image with central perspective and specific point of view (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 130) to convince the viewer/reader that Trump do everything wrongly not only words but also actions.

In figure (2), the president of the European Council (Donald Tusk) is asking Trump "What was so bad in the Iran Deal?". Trump's answer is the punch line of the cartoon, since it is the final utterance of the cartoon text and it is also breaking the expectations of the responsibilities of presidents towards previous agreements: "Obama's Signature". Trump is rolling back Obama's legacy as he finds it easier to tear down old deals than to make new ones. Doing so implies undermining U.S. credibility in diplomacy without feeling any concern about state interests but for flimsy excuses like "Obama's Signature". The punch line of this cartoon can be analyzed as follows:

SO: normal/abnormal as it is abnormal to rollback diplomatic deals just because of flimsy excuses.

LM: faulty reasoning.

SI: the rollback of Iran Nuclear Deal.

TA: Donald Trump (The President of the United States).

NS: Cartoon.

LA: ironic.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 233) point out that "[l]ow saturation may be subtle and tender, but also cold ... or moody". The cartoonist uses low saturated colours to signify that Trump takes important decisions concerning diplomatic policies according to his moods not for convincing reasons.

Like in figure (2), the guard's words in figure (3) are the punch line of the cartoon as they come at the end and break the expectations. Trump is depicted as a dangerous insane patient, who is put under the observation of a policeman or a guard. They tie his hands, muzzle his mouth and lock his cell phone in a box to forbid him from tweeting. Trump tells the guard "But I can't tweet like this" and the guard's answer, the punch line, is "exactly". The punch line of this cartoon can be analyzed as follows:

SO: normal/abnormal as it is abnormal for a president to be tweeting all the time.

LM: analogy.

SI: Trump and Tweeter.

TA: Donald Trump (The President of the United States).

NS: Cartoon.

LA: ironic.

The cartoonist's point of view is enhanced by the use of irony; Trump the president vs. Trump the patient who cannot stop tweeting all the time to. He also uses the label "the kind of Government shut down we'd like to see" and "Trump's cell phone" and tweeter's icon as a background to help the viewer/ reader to understand his point of view.

In cartoons of the **second category**, the interaction of verbal and visual elements enhances the production of humour via the juxtaposition of contradicting verbal and visual elements.

Humour in figure (4) stems from the punch line "believe me" accompanied with the image of Trump talking to his reflection in the mirror. In this cartoon, Trump is flattering someone by describing him as an "amazing brilliant, tremendously loyal guy". He is even assuring him that "if you get in trouble I will totally use my power to pardon you". The second picture reveals that the flattered and assured person is no one but Trump talking to his reflection in the mirror.

This cartoon is a humorous one because of the combination of both verbal and visual elements. The verbal elements try to shed light on the issue of Trump as a real narcissist; as he feels that he is "amazing brilliant, tremendously loyal guy". They also show his way

in dealing with his faults as a president "I will totally use my power to pardon you". As for the visual elements, the cartoonist uses the "subjected image" and to serve and persuade the viewers with his point of view he exaggerated and understated Trump's physical appearance; Trump's mouth is big to clarify that he talks a lot, while his hand is small to prove that he does not do anything but talking, even his eyes are closed to clarify his unawareness of his deeds. The words uttered by Trump are all written in capital letters to draw the viewers' attention to Trump's narcissism.

The punch line of this cartoon can be analyzed as follows:

SO: normal/abnormal as it is abnormal for a president to be a narcissist.

LM: juxtaposition.

SI: Trump as a narcissist.

TA: Donald Trump (The President of the United States).

NS: Cartoon.

LA: ironic.

The contradiction of the verbal and visual elements in figure (5) is the source of humour; here Trump's utterance "I'm going to surround myself with the best people" contradict the visual elements as he is surrounding himself with not only one Pinocchio (who is notably characterized for his tendency to lie, which causes his nose to grow), but with several ones. According to the KRs:

SO: normal/abnormal as it is abnormal for a president to be surrounded by liars.

LM: juxtaposition.

SI: Trump and his men.

TA: Donald Trump (The President of the United States).

NS: Cartoon.

LA: ambiguous as it can mean real best people or best liars.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 186) clarify that elements placed in the lower part of the composition are considered as the Real. Thus, the lower section represents factual details. Pinocchio and his nose are the symbol of lying. By positioning him at the lower part of the cartoon, the cartoonist signifies that the truth is that Trump and his entire surrounding ally are liars.

In figure (6), verbal and visual elements collaborate for the production of humour. Here the cartoonist is making a comparison between real smart and genius people (Einstein) and false ones (Trump); while Einstein believes that "the more I learn, the more I

realize how much I don't know", Trump's ego makes him believe that "I'm, like, really smart and stable Genius".

According to the KRs this can be analyzed as follows:

SO: normal/abnormal (stupidity/intelligence) as real genius people are always modest and feel like that they need to know more.

LM: juxtaposition.

SI: Trump's description of his characteristics.

TA: Einstein and Donald Trump.

NS: Cartoon

LA: ironic.

The exaggeration of the facial characteristics of Trump implies that he is not as smart or genius as he says. Furthermore, the cartoonist uses the sign of no books on Trump's suit to signify that his ego is born out of ignorance.

In figure (7), humour stems from the contradiction of verbal and visual elements. After his speech in the United Nations, here Trump is dragging a trolley suitcase (labeled America First) saying "I've accomplished more than any U.S. president in the history", while the picture represents collapsed platforms (labeled ICC 'International Chamber of Commerce', Paris Climate Accord, Iran Nuclear Deal, NATO 'North Atlantic Treaty Organization', U.N. 'United Nations', Mideast peace, TPP 'Trans-Pacific Partnership', NAFTA 'North American Free Trade Agreement', Migration PACT 'Global Compact for Migration').

The cartoonist here the subjected image with the central perspective of Trump being a man who can ruin all treaties and international organizations for his own benefit; as his tie is too long and hidden behind the trolley suitcase (labeled America Frist). By doing so, the cartoonist wants to draw the viewers' attention toward the real intentions behind Trump's actions.

In the picture there are also some people presenting other members of the United Nations, they look astonished and frustrated by Trump's deeds tough on the contrary Trump looks happy with a big smile on his face to show that he does not care about the welfare of the whole universe and he cares about nothing but his own benefits.

According to the KRs this cartoon can be analyzed as follows:

SO: normal/abnormal those who care about the welfare of the whole universe and those who care about their own welfare.

LM: juxtaposition.

SI: Trump's speech in the United Nations.

TA: Donald Trump.

NS: Cartoon

LA: ambiguous as it can mean that he has done good things or bad things.

In the **third category** cartoons, it is only the picture which is responsible for the production of humour; the semiotic resources used in the cartoons are signifiers that humour stems from and that labeling is just a way of helping the readers to identify objects or situations.

In figure (8) it is Trump sitting on a branch of a tree tweeting and his tweets returns back to the tree and start digging that the tree is going to crack. It is well known that Trump tweets a lot and that he has tweeted over 17000 times from his official declaration of candidacy till now. He tweets about different issues and some of his tweets are personal insults, others are retweeting from social media accounts that posts racist and false information. Since early in his presidency, his tweets have been considered official statements by the president of the United States. Thus, his tweets have some effects on the stock market and have been cited in court challenges against his actions as president. That is why sometimes the Trump Administration has deleted multiple public posts.

The cartoonist here uses Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006, p. 130) 'subjected image' with the central perspective that Trump's tweets are the cause of losing his "credibility" (labeled on the branch that Trump is sitting on). The barren tree symbolises the general situation in the states which is getting worse since Trump has been elected.

Trump is placed in the upper part of the cartoon, while his tweets are digging the tree, are placed in the lower part to represent the factual details. Furthermore, Trump as he tweets is placed on the left hand as "the Given" or something that the viewer already familiar with and the tweets as birds digging to crack the tree is placed on the right hand as "the New" or what the cartoonist wants the viewers to pay special attention about. The humour comes from that Trump is concentrating on his tweets and pays no attention to their effect.

In figure (9) Kress and van Leeuwen's subjected image is presented; as the cartoonist shows Trump's brain as a small "WALL NUT" referring to Trump's wish to build a wall along the Mexico-

U.S. border. In this figure the cartoonist uses analogy to compare between the walnut which resembles the brain and is a symbol of intelligence and wisdom, and Trump's brain which is a "madman captivated with one idea of building the wall". The idea of the wall starts by Trump throughout his presidential campaign and after his being elected he remains committed to the idea, but he has not been able to get the money because of the government's refusal, that is why he starts a problem with the government that ends with the government partly shut down for 35 days.

For Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 186) when elements are placed in the lower part, they represent factual details or are considered as the Real ones; here the cartoonist puts the label "wall nut" to signify the madness of Trump and his being captivated with one idea, namely the building the wall. The spelling of the label connotes Trump's captivation with the idea of the wall. The use of the low saturated colour in the cartoon is a connotation of Trump's moody personality as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 233) argue that "Low saturation may be subtle and tender, but also cold ... or moody".

In figure (10) Trump as being not qualified to be a president of the United States of America is the central perspective of the subjected image. The cartoonist uses the statue of liberty as a symbol of the United States of America. The statue of liberty is exaggerated and Trump is understated to connote that the United States of America is too big for Trump and the threatening facial expression of the statue signifies the Americans' hatred towards Trump's ways of conducting political issue and the label "you're fired" denotes that the Americans do not want Trump as their president.

The interview with the participants can be summarized in the following table:

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
understand the cartoonist's point of view	3	5	3	4
understand through visual elements	4	4	4	4
males vs. females	4	5	3	4
old vs. young	4	5	3	4

Findings:

The findings of the study are in accordance with the study's assumptions and hypotheses of both the qualitative and quantitative analysis. The study's results are summed up in the following:

In (3) out of (10) cartoons (30%), humour stems only from the text, while in (4) of them (40%) the interaction of verbal and visual elements are the cause of humour and in (3) cartoons (30%) the picture is the only source of humour.

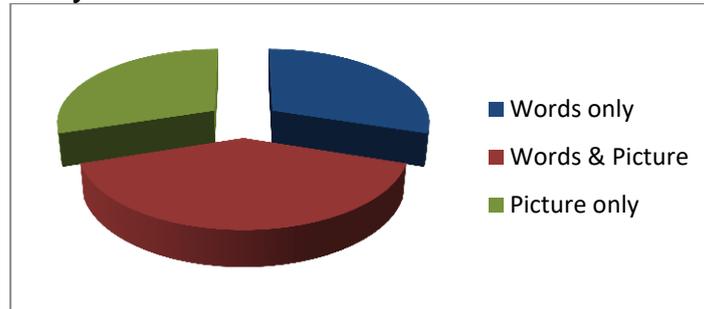


Figure (1)
Humour Sources

In the cartoons of the first category, it is the language which is responsible for the production of humor; the script opposition stems exclusively from the text included in the cartoon. Image plays a supportive role in the production of humor by providing the background of the action.

In the cartoons of the second category, the interaction of verbal and visual elements enhances the production of humour via the juxtaposition of contradicting verbal and visual elements.

In the third category cartoons, it is only the picture which is responsible for the production of humour; the semiotic resources used in the cartoons are signifiers that humour stems from and that labeling is just a way of helping the readers to identify objects or situations.

The first hypothesis is validated as most of the participants (75%) can understand the cartoonist's point of view, while only (25%) cannot detect the exact point of view of the cartoonists.

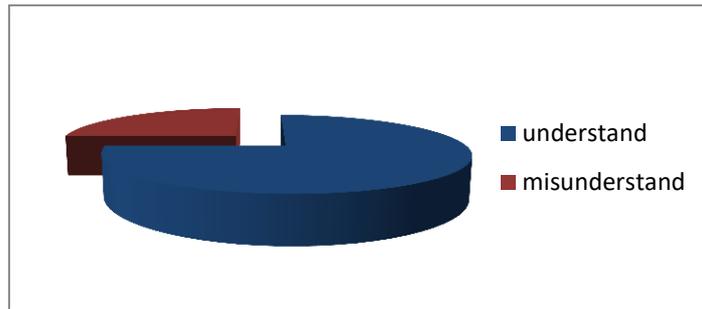


Figure (2)
Percentage of understanding the cartoonist's point of view

The second hypothesis is also validated as most of participants assert that the humour of the cartoons is more obvious from the picture than words. The percentage of those who believe that pictures are clearer than word is (80%), while the contrary percentage is (20%).

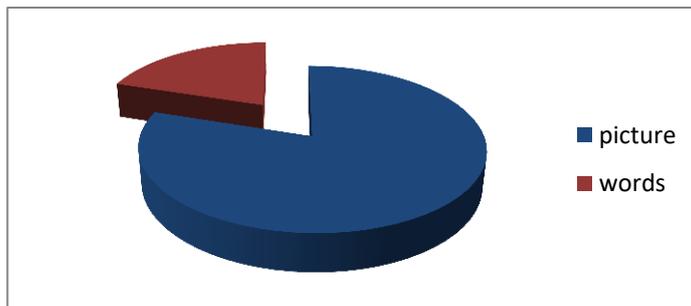


Figure (3)
Percentage of understanding Picture vs. words

The third and fourth hypotheses are partially validated as male participants are more observant of the humour depicted in the cartoons than female participants. Furthermore, older participants are more observant of the political issues presented in the cartoons than young ones, but the percentage is not significant.

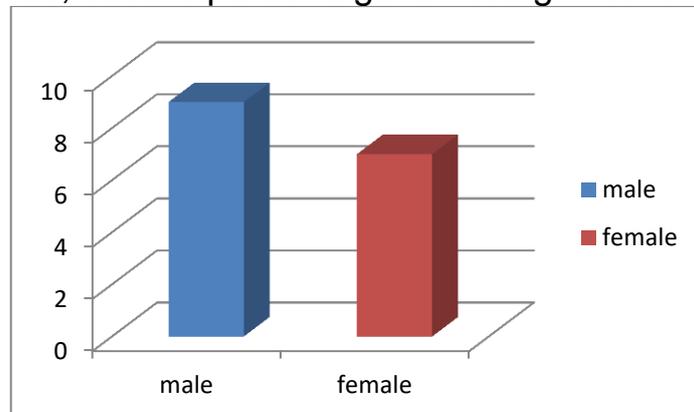


Figure (4)
Male vs. female observe of political humour

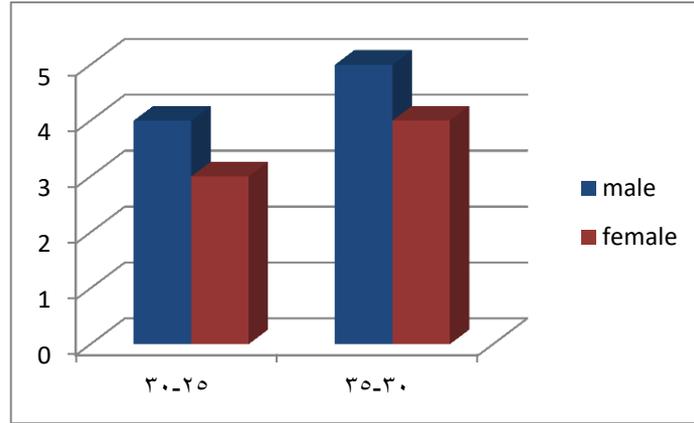


Figure (5)
Old vs. young observe of political humour

Conclusion:

The study applies Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar, and the GTVH to examine the humorous representations of Trump's presidency carried out on 10 political cartoons from a multimodal perspective. The analysis reveals that all cartoons are subjected images or images with a built-in point of view in which the cartoonists present what they want the viewers to see from a specific point of view. That is to say that all the selected cartoons are informative as the cartoonists' depictions during Trump's presidency shed light and criticize Trump's policy and that these humorous representations form an opposing voice against Trump's way of conducting issues. Furthermore, they try to stimulate thinking and discussion about depicted issues and attempt to alert and persuade the readers to understand the cartoonist's point of view.

Recommendations for Further Research:

Research of humour is not an easy issue. In order to understand a simple joke, one needs to be highly intellectual and aware of several social, political and cultural backgrounds. The study recommends that researchers may analyse humour in other genres such as cartoon animations, video clips, stand-up comedy shows, etc. Furthermore, they can analyse it from a sociolinguistic perspective using Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model to attempt to explain the social motivations behind using humour to accomplish specific targets such as constructing solidarity or in-group identity.

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Appendix 1 Cartoons

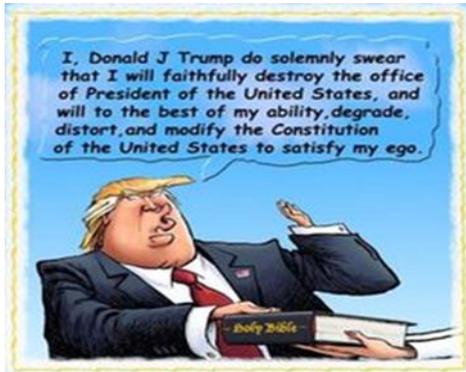


fig (1)



fig (2)



fig (3)



fig (4)



fig (5)

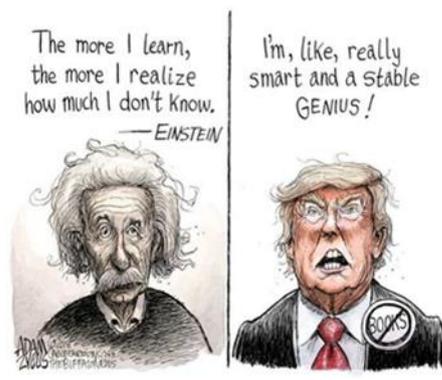


fig (6)



fig (7)



fig (8)



fig (9)



fig (10)

Appendix 2 Interview Questions

- 1- What issue is this political cartoon about?
- 2- What is the cartoonist's opinion on this issue?
- 3- Does the label make the meaning of the object clearer?
- 4- How do the words and captions relate to the cartoon?
- 5- Why do you think the cartoonists exaggerate the facial characteristics and clothing of Trump?
- 6- What is the cartoon's main analogy? What situations or things do the cartoon compare? do this comparison make the cartoonist's point of view clearer?
- 7- Is there any irony in the situation the cartoon depicts? if there is irony, what point the irony might be intended to emphasize? Does the irony help the cartoonist express his/her opinion more effectively?
- 8- Can you identify the symbols in the cartoons? what they stand for?
- 9- Are cartoons informative?
- 10- To what subject in the news does this cartoon refer?



- 11- Are these cartoons shed light on the American's point of view towards Trump's presidency area?
- 12- Do these cartoons give any ideas about political life in the U.S.A?
- 13- Do you prefer viewing political cartoons than reading about political life in the states?
- 14- To what extent cartoons are playing positive or negative role on the political life of a country?
- 15- In your point of view, do cartoons sometimes mislead the audience?
- 16- Do you enjoy viewing these cartoons?
- 17- What is the impact of these cartoons on you?

الفكاهة خلال رئاسة ترامب: قوة الرسوم الكاريكاتور

إعداد

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المستخلص:

البحث عبارة عن دراسة لغوية لقوة الرسوم الكاريكاتورية السياسية الفكاهية. ويهدف إلى المساهمة في فهم الرسوم الكاريكاتورية السياسية والفكاهة. وهو يسعى للتحقيق في الرسوم الكاريكاتورية السياسية الفكاهية من منظور متعدد الوسائط. يتم إجراء تحليل شامل للرسوم الكاريكاتورية السياسية المختارة التي نشرتها [Pinterest](#) خلال فترة رئاسة دونالد ترامب باستخدام قواعد كريس وفان ليوين البصرية والنظرية العامة للفكاهة اللفظية (GTVH). كما يتم إجراء مقابلة مع مجموعة من المشاركين (١٠ ذكور و ١٠ إناث تتراوح أعمارهم بين ٢٥ و ٣٥ عاما من مختلف التخصصات) للحصول على بيانات حول فهمهم للإشارات متعددة الوسائط المستخدمة في الرسوم الكاريكاتورية المختارة، وذلك لمعرفة أى العناصر سواء (اللفظية أو غير اللفظية) التي ساعدتهم أكثر في فهم وجهة نظر رسامي الكاريكاتير وما إذا كان لهذا أي علاقة بالجنس والعمر أم لا. يتم تطبيق كل من النهج النوعية والكمية في الدراسة لجمع البيانات وتحليلها وتفسيرها. وكشفت نتائج التحليل النوعي أن الفكاهة يمكن إنتاجها ليس فقط من خلال العناصر اللفظية أو البصرية، ولكن أيضا من خلال الجمع بين كلا العنصرين. وقد كشف التحليل على المستوى الكمي أن معظم المشاركين يمكنهم فهم وجهة نظر رسامي الكاريكاتير بسهولة ومن خلال العناصر التصويرية أكثر من العناصر اللفظية. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن العمر والجنس لهما آثار ضئيلة في فهم الفكاهة في الرسوم الكاريكاتورية السياسية؛ حيث يمكن للمشاركين الذكور وكبار السن ملاحظة المعنى المقصود أكثر من الإناث والمشاركين الشباب.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: الفكاهة، الرسوم الكاريكاتورية السياسية، تعدد الوسائط، النظرية العامة للفكاهة اللفظية، مصادر المعرفة.