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MULTIMODAL SIMILE IN INTERNET MEMES ON X RESPONDING TO THE 2024 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

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Abstract

This article explores how multimodal similes are construed in internet memes on the X platform responding to the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Drawing on insights from cognitive linguistics, a multimodal simile is defined as a simile in which the source and target domains are cued in different modes. The study analyzes four representative memes that prompt figurative comparisons between verbally and visually cued domains. Captured in the *X is like Y* format, multimodal similes are categorized as either narrow-scope or broad-scope. Narrow-scope examples typically pair emotionally charged images with *when-* or *if-* clauses, prompting viewers to map specific emotional or physical states onto abstract experiences. These similes rely on EFFECT-FOR-CAUSE metonymy, mapping vivid, delimited attributes onto the target domain. In contrast, broad-scope similes tend to involve *be like-* clauses to trigger more complex, dynamic mappings. For instance, one meme mocks Kamala Harris's electoral loss by comparing her campaign trajectory to the erratic movement of a faulty shopping cart. Another critiques Democratic priorities through a comparison of Democrats with a lone figure celebrating a minor legal victory amid urban devastation. These examples rely on frame metonymy and metaphor to construct satirical political critique. In all cases, humor emerges from the incongruity between incompatible conceptual structures, while the simile serves as both a cognitive mechanism and a communication strategy. The findings suggest that, despite being often overshadowed by metaphor in cognitive-linguistic research, a multimodal simile has substantial rhetorical power, exploiting the affordances of verbal and visual modes to forge figurative links across disparate conceptual domains.

Key words: 2024 U.S. presidential election, cognitive linguistics, humor, internet memes, metaphor, metonymy, multimodal simile, X platform.

1. Introduction

With the rise of social media, internet memes have become one of the most popular forms of online communication. Given their ability to influence public opinion, exacerbate ideological divisions and convey group identity through humorous and emotionally charged content (Mahasneh & Bashayreh,



2021; Ross & Rivers, 2018; Shifman, 2014), memes are by no means just entertainment; they play a significant role in political discourse.

Originally coined by Richard Dawkins (1976) to describe a replicable unit of culture, the term *meme* has gained renewed relevance in the digital era. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (n.d.), a meme is “an amusing or interesting item (such as a captioned picture or video) or genre of items that is spread widely online especially through social media.” In social studies, memes are more precisely defined as “(a) a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which (b) were created with awareness of each other, and (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users” (Shifman, 2014, p. 41).

The aftermath of Donald Trump’s 2024 election victory once again underscored the rhetoric power of memes. In the days following the announcement, supporters of Trump flooded the platform X (formerly Twitter) with memes celebrating his return and poking fun at Democratic figures such as Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and the Democratic Party as a whole. Often satirical, emotionally charged, and visually exaggerated, these memes served as digital acts of political alignment, critique, and celebration. They functioned not only as humorous commentary but also as ideologically motivated discourse reflecting partisan attitudes in the wake of the election.

A large portion of these memes took the form of image macros, i.e., captioned pictures combining verbal and visual cues to deliver punchy, often humorous political messages. Although internet memes appear in a variety of formats, including captioned images, short videos, hashtags, slogans, and recurring characters like *Pepe the Frog* or *Scumbag Steve*, one of the most prevalent formats is the image macro. Recognized as a prototypical meme form (Lou, 2017, p. 107), image macros are described as “emerging multimodal constructions relying as much on image as on text” (Dancygier & Vandelanotte, 2017, p. 565).

This article focuses on image macros as multimodal constructions that activate a variety of cognitive mechanisms, including metaphor, metonymy, and more complex conceptual processes. Due to their multimodal nature, these memes exploit the semiotic affordances of both verbal and visual modes, fostering creativity in the evocation of multimodal tropes. As a result, a growing body of research has explored visual and multimodal metaphor and metonymy in internet memes (Benammar, 2024; Bondarenko, 2024; Dancygier & Vandelanotte, 2017; ElShami, Shuaibi, & Zibin, 2023; Huntington, 2016; Krysanova, 2024; Martynyuk & Meleshchenko, 2022; Meleshchenko, 2024; Ngan & Dung, 2025; Piata, 2016; Scott, 2021; Younes & Altakhaineh, 2022). Despite this scholarly interest, multimodal simile remains significantly understudied, with relatively few contributions addressing this trope (Benammar, 2023; Dancygier & Vandelanotte, 2025; Lou, 2017; 2021). This imbalance is perhaps unsurprising, given simile’s long-standing secondary status to metaphor in cognitive linguistics.

This study *aims* to address this gap by investigating how multimodal similes are constructed in internet memes, specifically those disseminated on X/Twitter in the wake of the 2024 U.S. presidential election. The specific *objectives* are: 1) to define a multimodal simile and distinguish it from metaphor from a cognitive linguistics perspective; 2) to identify types of multimodal similes used in internet memes related to the 2024 U.S. presidential election; 3) to explore their socio-pragmatic potential to construct political critique and generate humor through incongruity.

The *material* for this study consists of 100 multimodal memes retrieved from the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) between November 6, 2024, and January 19, 2025, a period marked by a surge in politically charged online discourse following the U.S. presidential election.

2. Methodology: theoretical background

Simile has long been treated in literary studies and rhetoric as a figure of speech (a trope) that prompts an explicit comparison between two unlike entities (Leech, 1969, p. 156). However, its close conceptual and functional ties to metaphor have prompted debates across disciplines regarding its theoretical status. According to common assumption both tropes rely on resemblance, but while

simile makes this resemblance explicit through comparative markers such as *like* or *as*, metaphor presents it implicitly: the “parts of the analogy have to be hypothesized from ‘what is there’ in the text” (Leech, 1969, p. 153). In light of ongoing debates about whether simile is a subtype of metaphor or a distinct cognitive phenomenon, it is necessary to consider it from the perspective of cognitive linguistics.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) offers a foundational framework for understanding metaphor as a cognitive process rather than a figure of speech. In CMT, metaphor is defined as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). This process involves a partial and unidirectional conceptual mapping: the target domain is typically construed via a more concrete source domain (Kövecses, 2002). While similes also rely on mappings between domains, according to Dancygier and Sweetser (2014), simile and metaphor exhibit “different patterns of mapping” (p. 148). Similes result in more constrained, surface-level inferences, whereas metaphors encourage deeper conceptual integration (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014, p. 148). Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2023, p. 125) similarly highlights that simile establishes a “less tight, more open relationship” than metaphor, with a stronger emphasis on overt comparison and less subjectivity.

This contrast is also reflected in their constructional properties. Similes “rely heavily on comparative forms” (Israel et al., 2004), and their markers such as *like* or *as* play a crucial role in signaling the need to identify a mapping between source and target domains. As Dancygier and Sweetser explain, “the target domain is ‘compared’ to the source and construed in terms of it” (2014, pp. 146–147). This contrast is formalized in the simile pattern *X is like Y*, as opposed to the metaphorical *X is Y*.

While the general construction of similes involves explicit comparison, scholars have noted important differences in how similes are interpreted. To capture this variation, Moder (2008) introduced, and Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) later elaborated on, a distinction between narrow-scope and broad-scope similes. Narrow-scope similes are characterized by their ability to “evoke specific dimensions of similarity” (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014, p. 143) between the source and target domains. They “are restricted in their interpretation by the explicit linguistic specification of the attribute or dimension along which the mapping from source to target domain is to be made” (Moder, 2008, p. 312). These similes highlight specific qualities or features and typically serve an attributive function. For instance:

(1) *He slept like a log.*

In this case, the attributes STILLNESS, IMMOBILITY, and UNRESPONSIVENESS are mapped from the source domain (LOG) to the target domain (PERSON), yielding a focused and constrained comparison.

Broad-scope similes, by contrast, tend to be “typically relational rather than attributive and more open in their possible interpretations than the narrow scope similes” (Moder, 2008, p. 313). They are less accessible and require context to determine the relevant dimension of comparison. Consider a popular joke employing a broad-scope simile:

(2) *Men are like plungers... they spend most of their lives in a hardware store or the bathroom.*

Here, the simile establishes a humorous, less immediately obvious comparison. The link between *men* and *plungers* is inferred through context and background knowledge. Further explanation helps to evoke similarity between the behavior of men and plungers in terms of preferred ways of spending time.

While these distinctions are useful for analyzing verbal similes, the digital environment introduces an additional layer of complexity: multimodality. Accordingly, we can extend

Forceville's (2009) concept of multimodal metaphor, "whose target and source [domains] are represented exclusively or predominantly in different modes" (p. 24), to a multimodal simile, defined a simile in which the source and target domains are cued in different modes. Lou (2017, p. 109), who has conducted an extensive research of multimodal similes, points out that unlike multimodal metaphors, where the verbal and visual components are tightly integrated to evoke a conceptual blend, multimodal similes often preserve the distinctiveness of each mode and selectively map specific attributes across them.

According to Lou (2017, p. 128), in multimodal broad-scope similes the visual input may initially appear jarringly incongruous with the accompanying text. However, the intended comparison can often be uncovered by unpacking frame metonymies (Lou, 2017, p. 128), defined as cases where "characteristic parts of a frame are sufficient to call up whole frames" (Dancygier & Vandelandotte, 2017, p. 567). This aligns with Kövecses & Radden's (1998, p. 39) broader definition of metonymy as a cognitive process in which one entity provides access to another within the same domain.

Multimodal narrow-scope similes, on the other hand, tend to be more accessible. Even if the image and text initially seem mismatched, they usually highlight a clear perceptual similarity, facilitating mapping between the modes (Lou, 2017, p. 128). Lou (2017) further distinguishes between two subtypes of a multimodal simile: the *multimodal mimetic simile*, where the image directly depicts the action or emotion expressed in the text, and the *source-focused simile*, in which the absurdity or incongruity of the image is preserved rather than clarified by the verbal component (p. 128). In the current study, mimetic similes are treated as a subtype of narrow-scope simile, as they highlight a specific emotional or perceptual attribute across modalities. While source-focused similes fall outside the scope of this analysis, they remain relevant for broader typological classification.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that meaning-making in social media discourse is "a complex process that depends on the information supplied by different semiotic resources, social context of perception, and the end user's personal experience" (Shevchenko, 2022, p. 67). Accordingly, the analysis of multimodal similes in this study takes into account not only verbal and visual cues of the analyzed memes, but also the specific political and social context in which they emerged.

Having outlined the main types of simile and their multimodal characteristics, we now turn to the analysis of multimodal simile in internet memes on X created and disseminated in response to the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

3. Multimodal simile types in political internet memes: analysis and discussion

3.1. Multimodal narrow-scope simile: *when*-memes

As an initial example, let us consider Figure 1, which features a photo of Kamala Harris accompanied by a *when*-clause. According to Lou (2017; 2021) this meme is a typical *when*-meme that employs both visual and verbal modes to cue a multimodal simile.

In figure 1 below, the meme presents a close-up image of Kamala Harris, the former Vice President of the United States and a 2024 presidential candidate. The blurred background draws the viewer's full attention to Harris's facial expression: she appears serious and strained, her eyes seem thoughtful, and there is no trace of a smile. She looks as though she is either processing something deeply disappointing or reacting to a harsh realization. The verbal component of the meme is split into two parts: the top caption reads, "*When you tried to be unburdened by what has been,*" while the bottom line adds an ironic twist: "*Only to realize you were the burden all along.*"

While the meme does not include an explicit simile marked by conventional forms such as *like* or *as*, it cues a multimodal simile through the interplay of the *when*-clause and the image with the image functioning as the *then*-clause of a complex sentence. As argued by Lou (2021, p. 141),

when-memes are simile-based in that they use an image to show someone or something feeling the same as what is expressed verbally.



Figure 1. “*When you tried to be unburdened by what has been ... Only to realize you were the burden all along*” meme (Coach Cam, 2024).

In this example, the emotional state suggested by Harris’s facial expression is mapped onto the situation in which someone realizes they are the cause of their own problems. Importantly, Harris is not actually realizing that she has done something wrong; rather, she appears to be giving an interview. Consequently, the multimodal simile cued by this meme can be paraphrased as:

- (3) *When you tried to be unburdened by what has been only to realize you were the burden all along feels like Kamala Harris feels in a 2022 NBC interview.*

The text cues the target domain of the simile, while the image, capturing Harris’s expression of tension and disappointment, cues the source domain. Notably, in the 2022 NBC interview, Harris discussed the nation’s “suffering” following the Supreme Court’s decision on abortion rights (Kamisar, 2022). Thus, the emotional state cued by the image and mapped onto the target domain can be interpreted as SUFFERING and DISAPPOINTMENT. It is accessed through an EFFECT-FOR-CAUSE metonymy: HARRIS’S FACE EXPRESSION FOR MENTAL STATE.

In the context of Donald Trump’s presidential victory, this meme is not intended to elicit identification with Harris personally. The audience is neither invited to empathize with her nor to view the situation from her perspective. Instead, the meme mocks Harris as someone whose well-meaning efforts (“*when you tried to be unburdened*”) ironically contributed to the very outcome she likely feared, i.e., Trump’s re-election. The humor arises from the incongruity between the earnest tone of the original quote and the unexpectedly self-deprecating punchline. Harris’s visible expression of disappointment reinforces this incongruity and amplifies the meme’s humorous effect.

3.2. Multimodal narrow-scope simile: *if*-memes

Figure 2 provides another instance of a multimodal narrow-scope simile, which unlike the previous example uses a conditional clause. This meme features a viral photo of Joe Biden taken during the White House Christmas tree lighting ceremony on December 5, 2024. The image was widely

circulated online, sparking numerous memes that poked fun at the former U.S. president's appearance.

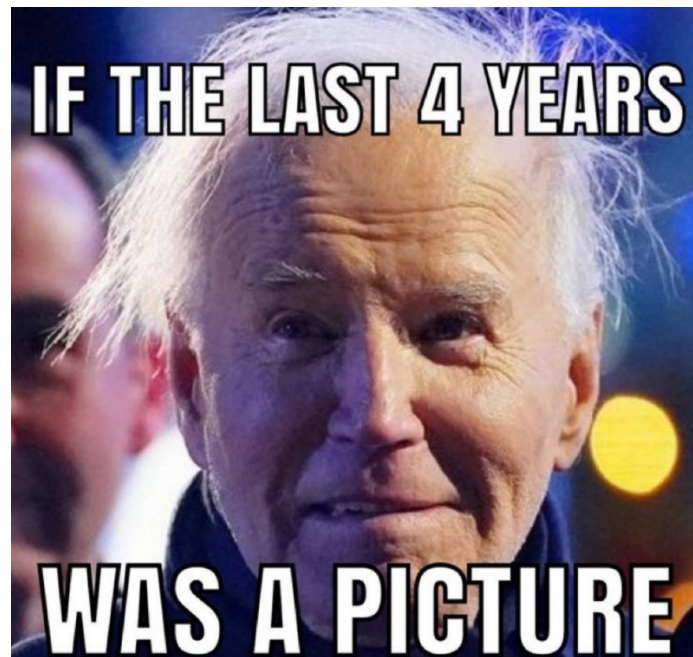


Figure 2. “*If the last four years was a picture*” meme (Gunther Eagleman, 2024)

In the meme, Biden appears disheveled and weary: his hair is unkempt, his eyes look slightly unfocused, and his facial expression conveys fatigue, confusion, and decline. The deliberately unflattering photograph is paired with a caption in bold white capitals, placed above and below the image, reading “*If the last 4 years was a picture.*”

Although this meme does not include a conventional simile marker such as *like* or *as*, we argue that it still functions as a narrow-scope simile. The meme invites the viewer to compare an abstract temporal experience, “*the last four years*”, to a single, emotionally charged image. The multimodal simile it evokes can be paraphrased as:

- (4) *Biden’s four years of leadership look like Biden looked in 2024 White House Christmas tree lighting ceremony.*

The photo of Biden cues the source domain of the simile while the text “*the last four years*,” put in the context of Trump’s recent victory, cues its target domain – Biden’s four years of leadership. Crucially, it is not Biden as a political figure per se who is targeted by the simile; rather, the simile maps certain attributes onto his presidential term to reflect the collective experience of those years. Biden’s visual appearance maps DECLINE, DISORDER and FATIGUE through an EFFECT-FOR-CAUSE metonymy (BIDEN’S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE for MENTAL/PHYSICAL STATE) onto the target domain of the simile. The comparison remains restricted to a specific, perceptually salient attribute: emotional/physical decline and fatigue. This mapping aligns the example with narrow-scope similes¹, which are typically characterized by clearly delimited interpretive dimensions and vivid, often exaggerated, representations of the source domain.

The rhetorical force of the simile also relies on a CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED metonymy (Kövecses & Radden, 1998), in which the agent (Biden) stands for his state. Therefore, a metonymic chain might be further inferred: BIDEN’S APPEARANCE FOR BIDEN’S MENTAL/PHYSICAL STATE FOR THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY UNDER BIDEN’S LEADERSHIP. Although an underlying conceptual metaphor such as TIME IS A PERSON may also be at play, it is not structurally

foregrounded. The incongruity between the abstract notion of a timeframe and the concrete, exaggeratedly unflattering image of Biden creates a humorous effect, making the meme both expressive and emotionally charged.

3.3. Multimodal broad-scope simile: *be like*-memes and frame metonymy

Unlike the previous examples, where the source domains map vividly embodied physical and/or emotional states, restricting interpretation to salient attributes, the meme in Figure 3 is a broad-scope simile. Rather than merely attributing static qualities, it sets up a dynamic comparison between relational processes, namely, Kamala Harris's 2024 presidential campaign and the erratic movement of a shopping cart with a faulty wheel.

Wheels on a shopping cart be like



Figure 3. “*Wheels on a shopping cart be like*” meme (Planet Of Memes, 2024).

The meme contains the caption “*Wheels on a shopping cart be like*”, which appears above four images arranged in a 2×2 grid. The first three images are identical official portraits of Kamala Harris: she is smiling, dressed in a navy-blue jacket, with the U.S. flag in the background. The fourth image, located in the bottom right corner, is a still from a video in which she addresses her supporters for the first time after losing the 2024 presidential election. In this photo, Harris looks dejected; her expression suggests fatigue or discomfort. Unlike the earlier images, she is not smiling and appears against a backdrop of beige curtains rather than the U.S. flag seen in the portraits.

The verbal part of the meme evokes the frame of pushing a shopping cart with a faulty wheel, which is a frustrating and widely relatable situation. It introduces the simile through the phrase *be like*, a construction characteristic of African American Vernacular English (Cukor-Avila, 2002). Although one might say that the meme cues the simile *Wheels on a shopping cart are like Harris's presidential campaign*, we argue that this is the case of reversibility of a multimodal simile, which is made possible by the multimodal format as audiences are likely to process the image before reading the text (Lou, 2017, p. 118). That is, the meme is likely to invite the viewer to conceptualize Harris's presidential campaign in terms of the dysfunctional dynamics of a shopping cart and not the other way around. Therefore, the simile can be paraphrased as:

(5) *Harris's presidential campaign was like maneuvering a shopping cart with a faulty wheel.*

The source domain (maneuvering shopping cart with a faulty wheel) is conveyed exclusively through the verbal mode, while the target domain (Harris's campaign) is communicated visually. The comparison is constructed not just on static imagery, but through the progression and contrast between images, drawing attention to the shift from steady appearances to a moment of breakdown or exhaustion.

Crucially, the multimodal simile relies on frame metonymy. The dejected image of Harris does not merely depict her personal emotional state; it evokes the entire frame of her campaign with its challenges, public reception, and outcome. This is an example of PART-FOR-WHOLE metonymy, where one photograph representing the aftermath of Harris's campaign gives access to the whole frame.

The simile sets the stage for humor, which emerges from the incongruity between a familiar bodily experience (maneuvering a wobbling cart) and a complex political trajectory. By projecting low-stakes bodily annoyance (janky cart) onto high-stakes political failure, the meme mocks Harris by downscaling the seriousness of the situation. The meme frames Harris's campaign as unstable, difficult to manage, or directionless not by directly critiquing her as a person, but by exaggerating a mundane mechanical failure to reflect campaign mismanagement, contributing to its perceived downfall.

3.4. Multimodal broad-scope simile: *be like*-memes and metaphor

While the preceding meme constructs its multimodal simile through frame metonymy, the example in Figure 4 introduces an explicitly metaphorical setting in its source domain. It stages a dystopian landscape to compare alleged Democrats' post-election response to that of a lone figure finding consolation amid widespread ruin.

Democrats be like
“at least we have abortion”



Figure 4. “*Democrats be like ‘at least we have abortion’*” meme
(Declaration of Memes, 2024)

The meme displays a *be like*-clause at the top reading, “*Democrats be like ‘at least we have abortion’*”. Below, an image shows a lone woman in a tattered dress standing atop a hill, overlooking a devastated, dystopian city. Most of the buildings are damaged or collapsed, and a high-rise in the background is in flames, with thick smoke rising into the sky. The juxtaposition of the woman in the foreground and the sprawling destruction before her constructs a bleak, emotionally charged scene.

This juxtaposition creates a strong tension between the visual and verbal elements. The quoted speech “*at least we have abortion*” adopts a tone of defiant consolation or misplaced relief, which

clashes with the apocalyptic landscape. The simile, cued by the meme's construction, could be paraphrased as:

(6) *Democrats are like a person overlooking a destroyed city, saying, "at least we have abortion."*

Here, the verbally cued target domain, Democrats as a political group, is compared to a visually constructed source domain: a lone woman in a ruined cityscape responding with misplaced optimism. The verbal cue "*Democrats be like...*" initiates a comparison between a real-world political subject (Democrats after Harris's electoral loss) and a fictionalized scenario (a lone woman responding to a catastrophe). This broad-scope simile maps not just specific traits or emotions, but a full attitudinal stance, embodied in the woman's placement, passivity, and verbal reaction, which prompts viewers to interpret alleged consolation of Democrats through the lens of emotional misalignment with material reality.

The dystopian cityscape also functions metaphorically, reflecting the meme's portrayal of the United States' condition after Trump's victory. The metaphor THE U.S. AFTER BIDEN'S LEADERSHIP IS A RUINED CITY is implied, with DESTRUCTION mapped onto the outcome of Biden administration's policies (e.g., inflation, crime, and border control). Despite this 'ruin,' the meme suggests that Democrats remain focused on abortion rights, an issue portrayed here as relatively unimportant in the face of broader national concerns.

The meme also relies on metonymy. Firstly, the verbal input "*at least we have abortion*" evokes the broader frame of Democratic policies on abortion rights, encompassing their philosophy, achievements, and shortcomings. Notably, although Harris lost the presidency, Democrats succeeded in advancing abortion rights in 7 of the 10 states that held referendums during the 2024 presidential election (see Derøux & Romain, 2024). Secondly, the Democrats represent the Democratic Party as a whole, including its leadership, platform and voter base, which is an example of PART-FOR-WHOLE metonymy.

The humor derives from the incongruity between the visual chaos and the perceived triviality of the spoken consolation, reinforcing the critique of the Democratic Party's messaging. By visually dramatizing post-election devastation and pairing it with a statement of misplaced optimism, the meme presents a satirical critique of the Party's priorities, implying that this focus may have contributed to their 2024 electoral defeat.

4. Conclusions

This study has examined how multimodal similes were constructed and functioned in political internet memes in the aftermath of the 2024 U.S. presidential election. Drawing on insights from cognitive linguistics, a multimodal simile has been defined as a simile in which the source and target domains are cued in different modes. The study examined four representative memes that give rise to similes prompting comparisons between the source and target domains cued in verbal and visual modes.

The two narrow-scope similes (the memes with *when-* and *if-*clauses) focused on clearly delimited emotional or physical attributes such as SUFFERING, DISAPPOINTMENT, DECLINE, DISORDER, or FATIGUE, which were accessed through the EFFECT-FOR-CAUSE metonymy evoked by facial expressions or body language and mapped then onto abstract target domains like self-perception or a presidential term.

In contrast, the two broad-scope similes (both built around *be like*-clauses) engaged viewers in more complex mappings of relational or narrative processes accessed via frame metonymies and a metaphor. One meme poked fun at Kamala Harris presidential election loss by comparing her campaign to the experience of navigating a malfunctioning shopping cart. The other meme embedded the metaphor THE U.S. AFTER BIDEN'S LEADERSHIP IS A RUINED CITY within the source

domain of its simile. The meme aimed to critique Democratic priorities by comparing Democrats as a group to a lone figure rejoicing over the passing of an abortion law while observing a city in ruins.

Across all examples, humor emerged through incongruity between incompatible conceptual structures. Simile, as both a cognitive mechanism and a communication strategy, enabled comparison and critique: it brought together disparate domains while exposing contradictions, misalignments, or perceived weaknesses in political performance and public perception. The findings suggest that, although often eclipsed by metaphor in cognitive-linguistic studies, a multimodal simile possesses considerable potential to shape public opinion by creatively using the semiotic affordances of verbal and visual modes to construe figurative links across different conceptual domains.

Future research could apply this analytical framework to a broader corpus of political memes to examine how multimodal similes function across different genres, platforms, and ideological contexts. Corpus-based studies of simile constructions (e.g., *be like*-, *when*-, *if*-memes) could also yield deeper insight into how verbal and visual modes interact to co-construct meaning in online political discourse.

Notes

¹The “*If the last four years*” meme might be seen as edging toward broad-scope evoking the overall outcomes of Biden’s presidency. However, its mapping remains limited to specific attributes such as DECLINE, DISORDER, and FATIGUE, thus supporting its classification as a narrow-scope simile.

Declaration of competing interest

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МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНЕ ПОРІВНЯННЯ В ІНТЕРНЕТ-МЕМАХ НА ПЛАТФОРМІ X У КОНТЕКСТІ ПРЕЗИДЕНТСЬКИХ ВИБОРІВ У США 2024 РОКУ

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Анотація

У статті досліджується те, як конструюються мультимодальні порівняння в інтернет-мемах на платформі X, які присвячені виборам президента США 2024 року. Спираючись на здобутки когнітивної лінгвістики, мультимодальне порівняння визначається як порівняння, в якому джерельний і цільовий домени подаються в різних модусах. Проаналізовано чотири репрезентативні меми, які породжують порівняння, що спонукають зіставляти джерельний та цільовий домени, втілені вербальним та візуальним модусами. Мультимодальні порівняння мають формат *X є як Y* та поділяються на порівняння вузького та широкого діапазону. Приклади порівнянь вузького діапазону зазвичай поєднують емоційно насичені зображення з підрядними часу та умови, спонукаючи глядачів проектувати конкретні емоційні або фізичні стани на абстрактний досвід. Грунтуючись на метонімії НАСЛІДОК ЗАМІСТЬ ПРИЧИНИ, ці порівняння проектують яскраві, чітко окреслені атрибути на цільовий домен. Натомість порівняння широкого діапазону зазвичай використовують конструкції з *be like*, залучаючи складніші та динамічніші мапування. Наприклад, один із мемів висміює поразку Камали Гарріс на виборах, порівнюючи траєкторію її кампанії з хаотичним рухом несправного візка для покупок. Інший критикує пріоритети демократів через порівняння їх із самотньою особою, що

святкує прийняття незначного закону на тлі зруйнованого міста. Такі приклади спираються на фреймову метонімію й метафору для створення сатиричної політичної критики. У всіх випадках гумор виникає з інконгруентності між несумісними концептуальними структурами, тоді як порівняння функціонує і як когнітивний механізм, і як комунікаційна стратегія. Отримані результати свідчать, що, попри те що порівняння часто залишається в тіні метафори у когнітивно-лінгвістичних студіях, мультимодальне порівняння має значний риторичний потенціал завдяки творчому використанню семіотичних можливостей вербального та візуального модусів з метою створення образних зв'язків між різними концептуальними доменами.

Ключові слова: *вибори президента США 2024 року, гумор, інтернет-меми, когнітивна лінгвістика, метафора, метонімія, мультимодальне порівняння, платформа X.*

Декларація про конфлікт інтересів

Автори заявляють, що не мають жодних конфліктів інтересів щодо цієї статті.