

A Multi-modal Analysis of Metaphors and Metonymies in News Cartoons



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Abstract: Multi-modal metaphors and metonymies possess powerful expressive capabilities. For instance, cartoons convey complex meanings through simple images and minimal text, enabled precisely by their underlying multi-modal metaphorical and metonymic constructions. As a carrier of such expressions, editorial cartoons are increasingly used in publications and news. Unlike pure text, they leverage text-image synergy to map from source to target domains, generating emotional and expressive effects unattainable through words alone. Analyzing metaphors and metonymies in cartoons thus offers an effective approach to understanding current events and social issues. Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) provides a theoretical framework for interpreting these multi-modal mechanisms. CBT posits that meaning construction requires activating two inter-mappable input spaces. Their shared structures project into a generic space for integration, then selectively blend into a blended space, where content is combined, matched, or supplemented against existing knowledge. This study applies CBT to analyze COVID-19 editorial cartoons from China News Cartoon Network (post-lifting of restrictions). By decoding multi-modal metaphors and metonymies and their intentions, it aims to deepen public understanding of the pandemic. The analysis reveals that while China's pandemic response achieved significant positive outcomes with an overall improving trajectory, the fight against COVID-19 entails ongoing complexities and challenges.

Keywords: Theoretical Framework; Multi-modal Metaphors and Metonymies; Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT); News Cartoons; Epidemic Prevention

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1 Introduction

Words have been the way and tool for humans to use symbols to record and express information for a long time. Besides words, other tools such as images, sounds, colors and postures can also help us express feelings and emotions. With the advent of the digital age, people no longer rely solely on words to express their feelings. Multi-mode has become an important characteristic of modern communication, that is, the construction of meaning depends more on the integration of various symbolic resources such as images, sounds, colors, and so on. The study of multi-modal discourses has also become one of the focuses of scholars, and the study of multi-modal metaphor and metonymy [1, 6] is already in full swing.

Cartoons are more direct and concise than words in terms of conveying complex information.

Frank believed that the function of cartoons is not just entertainment [11]. As a carrier of multi-modal metaphors and metonymies, cartoons, which are not only full of wit and humor, but also profound in meaning, has received much attention from the study of multi-modal discourse research. News cartoons are mainly based on current affairs and hot topics and use expressions different from single mode to express the author's attitude on specific issues, reflecting reality and commenting on social issues. Therefore, it's a excellent corpus to interpret current events. Moreover,

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people prefer to learn about current events from such humorous pictures because of their witty styles.

From the perspective of linguistics, a news cartoon is a visual modal discourse combining images and language. It achieves the mapping from the source domain to the target domain through rich metaphors and metonymies and constructs a more complete and accurate meaning, which is also consistent with the Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT). We can apply CBT as a theoretical framework to carrying out metaphor and metonymy analysis on the corpus of news cartoons, and explain the construction and reasoning mechanism of cartoons' meaning to interpret the news through vivid cartoons and gain insight into the current issues, the essence of events and social attitudes behind the news. China's epidemic prevention and control has entered a new stage, and the situation is generally improving. Also, we should note that the global epidemic is not over yet, the novel coronavirus is still mutating, and other outbreaks, such as the swine flu, are also spreading. This reminds us that we should never be careless and take history as a mirror.

This article selects several cartoons about anti-epidemic from China News Cartoon Network as the corpus, and analyzes the metaphors and metonymies of these cartoons to help us review and understand the epidemic. The most important thing is to learn lessons from the epidemic.

2 Literature Review

"One of the earliest researchers in multi-modal discourse analysis is Barthes whose paper 'Rhetoric of the Image' explored the interaction between images and language in expressive meaning; Kress and Leeuwen study the relationship between modes and media, specifically exploring multimodal phenomena that regularly express meaning, including visual images, color grammar, newspaper layout design and the role of different media" [20]. In China, Hu Zhuanglin discussed the difference between multi-modal semiotics and multimedia semiotics, introduced computational semiotics with the dual characteristics of media and mode, and pointed out that human beings have entered the new century of multi-modal social semiotics, and should pay attention to the cultivation of multi-modal reading ability [16]. Zhang Delu tries to establish a comprehensive framework of multi-modal discourse analysis based on the theory of systemic functional linguistics [20]. In the 1980s, the famous linguists Lakoff and Johnson put forward the Conceptual Metaphor Theory for the first time in the book *Metaphor We Live By* [13]. Their research broke through

the traditional metaphor rhetoric view and proposed a cognitive view of metaphor utterly different from the previous conventional linguistic views. Lakoff believes that metaphor is universal. Metaphor is not a special means of language expression, but represents a kind of language normality and is ubiquitous in daily life. Besides, metaphor is systematic and conceptual [13]. Lakoff's research opened a new way for modern metaphor research. Nowadays, scholars have turned the research direction of conceptual metaphor to the multi-modal direction. Different from the traditional study of metaphor using only a single mode, multi-modal metaphor refers to the use of two or more modes to realize the mapping from the source domain to the target domain, including: animation, music, sound, gesture, film, taste, contact and other modes to cooperate with each other to achieve meaning construction. Forceville introduced conceptual metaphor into multi-modal discourse and proposed the Multi-modal Metaphor Theory [7-10]. Zhao Xiufeng and Feng Dezheng conducted a multi-modal metaphor study on Chinese-related political cartoons in the Economist from the social dimension, revealing the ideology behind political cartoons [22]. Based on visual grammar and metaphor theory, Wu Anping and Zhong Shouman conducted a multi-modal discourse analysis of political cartoons reported in the West to explore how they convey cultural connotations and communicative intentions to the world [18]. In addition, it is widely believed in cognitive linguistics that metaphor and metonymy are inseparable and closely related. According to Barcelona, a cognitive linguist, metonymy's reflection is the mental highlight or activation of a cognitive domain [1]. Goossens analyzed how metaphor and metonymy interweave and interact, and proposed the concept of metaphonymy [12]. Two types of interactions are common, namely "meta-phor from metonymy" and "metonymy within meta-phor." Metonymy is a more fundamental way of thinking than metaphor and plays an extremely important auxiliary role in metaphor. Zhang Qiaotong analyzed the phenomena of metaphor and metonymy in three public crisis cartoons from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, based on the Multi-modal Metaphor Theory [21]. By combining the linguistic characteristics of public crisis cartoons and the social environment presented in the texts, he attempted to explore the cultural connotations presented in the source domain and target domain and better understand the multi-modal information and cultural values conveyed by public crisis cartoons. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, guided by the theory of multi-modal metaphor and combining the historical background behind the centennial stamps of the Founding of the Communist

Party of China, Yang Congcong and Li Xue analyzed the phenomena of metaphor and metonymy in stamps and explored the interactive relationship between metaphor and metonymy in stamps, so as to interpret the story of centennial Party history in stamps [19].

In the 1990s, Fauconnier, an American linguist, proposed Conceptual Blending Theory [2-6]. One of the most important parts of Conceptual Blending Theory is the conceptual blending network, which refers to the mental spatial network with the frame structure. Frames are constructed by the speaker's background knowledge. Fauconnier believed that a complete conceptual blending network consists of four conceptual spaces, namely, input space 1 and input space 2, generic space and blending space. This theory provides a new way and a new explanation for human innovative thinking and the construction of new concepts. Many scholars combine it with Conceptual Metaphor Theory to explore language. By analyzing allegory, Huang Hua briefly and systematically compares the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Synthesis Theory from the aspects of scope and mental space, mapping and projection, fixed meaning and online process, as well as the principle of metaphor mechanism, which provides a broader theoretical space for our future metaphor research, literary criticism and discourse analysis [15]. By comparing Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Blending Theory, Wang Linhai and Liu Xiuyun try to combine the research structure of cognitive linguistics and take the multi-modal discourse of the science fiction movie *Avatar* as an example to explore the role of CBT in the metaphorical construction and cognitive mechanism formation of the multimodal metaphor discourse [17]. It can be seen that CBT and Conceptual Metaphor Theory are effective methods to explore the meaning of language construction. Some scholars have analyzed the political cartoons [14] and generalized military language [24], but have not yet interpreted the cartoons related to anti-epidemic. This paper intends to analyze the meaning behind anti-epidemic cartoons through multi-modal metaphor interpretation based on the Conceptual Blending Theory.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Multimodal Metaphor and Metonymy

In the 1980s, the famous linguists Lakoff and Johnson (ibid.) put forward the Conceptual Metaphor Theory for the

first time in the book *Metaphor We Live By*. Forceville (ibid.) introduced conceptual metaphor into the study of multi-modal discourse and put forward the theory of multi-modal metaphor. He briefly defined modes as "symbolic systems that can be interpreted by concrete perceptual processes." On this basis, Forceville defines "unimodal metaphor" and "Multi-modal metaphor" respectively [7, 8]. An unimodal metaphor is a metaphor that the target domain and source domain only use or mainly use one mode. The multi-modal metaphor refers to a metaphor in which the source domain and target domain are represented separately or primarily by different modes. For example, animation, music, sound, gesture, film, taste and other modes cooperate with each other to achieve meaning construction. For example, the text expression "Beijing is the heart of China" is a typical single-modal language metaphor, while the cartoon conveying information through images, subtitles, words, etc., is a typical multi-modal metaphor. Forceville's definition of multi-modal metaphor is defined in a narrow sense. In a broad sense, the metaphor that the target domain and source domain are jointly constructed by two or more modes is also regarded as multi-modal. In graphic metaphor, if the source domain and target domain are both presented by image and text (that is, the same mode of presentation), it can still be regarded as a multi-modal metaphor in a broad sense. This study adopts a broad definition of multi-modal metaphor.

Barcelona (ibid.) argued that in metonymy, the reflection is asymmetrical, and the metonymic domain of the source projects its conceptual structure onto the target domain, mainly by conceptually highlighting the source domain and placing the target domain in the background [1]. In multi-modal metonymy, the source domain is highlighted through visual, auditory, or other modes to achieve the functions of reference, meaning extension, and pragmatic reasoning. Zhao Xiufeng (ibid.) pointed out that the construction process of multi-modal metaphor is often more complex than that of pure literal metaphor, and more dependent on serial metonymy or metonymy-metaphor chain [23]. It can be seen that the analysis of multi-modal metonymy plays a fundamental role in the further analysis of multi-modal metaphors.

3.2 The Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT)

In the 1990s, American linguist Fauconnier (ibid.) put for-

ward the Conceptual Blending Theory. One of the most important parts of the Conceptual Blending Theory is the conceptual blending network, which refers to the mental spatial network with a frame structure. Frames are constructed by the speaker's background knowledge. Fauconnier & Turner thought the concept of a complete blending network includes four conceptual spaces, i.e., the input space 1 and 2 input space, generic space and blending space. This theory provides a new way and a new explanation for human innovative thinking and the construction of new concepts.

The specific process of conceptual blending is to project the common structure of input space 1 and input space 2 into the generic space, and then through simple cross-space mapping, the common structure is selectively projected into the blending space to realize the construction of meaning.

4 Results

This article selected cartoons from the Chinese News Cartoon Network (<http://cartoon.chinadaily.com.cn>). In order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the epidemic, this study uses metaphorical analysis to interpret cartoons according to the classification of cartoons content.

4.1 People's Attitudes Towards the COVID-19 Epidemic

The interpretation of Figure 1: casual and careless attitudes.

Figure 1 cartoon is called "Wear Masks." We can see that the main part of the cartoon is four people of different genders and different ages (a man and a woman wearing glasses on the left and right side are somewhat older, and the two in the middle are a little younger), each carrying a bag and eating a variety of snacks. They dress differently and have different hairstyles, but they all don't wear masks normally, just hanging them under their chins.



Figure 1 "Wear Marks" 2023-03-04

The cartoon is mainly divided into two parts. The text part is the title of the cartoon, and the above picture part is the main part of the cartoon. The text part occupies a small position. On the contrary, the image part occupies the main prominent position, which is easier to attract readers' attention. The cartoon contains two modes: text and image. First of all, the people in the picture are of different genders and ages, wearing various clothes and different hairstyles. Although there are only four people in the picture, it implies that there are many men, women and children behind the cartoon. This metonymy map is mapped to various people by highlighting the differences of the characters in the cartoon to achieve the effect that only four people in the picture can represent many people. Another metonymy in the cartoon is presented by that everyone is wearing sneakers and carrying backpacks. According to our common sense, this scene is obviously not common in the home. The backpack and sneakers can be activated in our minds, and this cartoon is a metonymy of people being outside. The title of the cartoon is "Wear Masks," reminding us to focus on the masks in the cartoon, which can immediately trigger awareness of the epidemic. We can also see that no one in the cartoon is wearing masks properly outside. The combination of the image of not wearing proper masks and the quotation of the cartoon title can reflect the social phenomenon that many people do not wear masks properly when they go out, which is convenient for readers to understand. Cognitive linguists generally believe that metaphor and metonymy are inseparable and closely related. In this cartoon, through the synergistic effect of text mode and image mode, metonymy activates for us the cognition of "epidemic," "many people," "people in the outdoors," and "masks not worn carefully," which also reflects the attitude of a considerable number of people towards the epidemic and help us construct the metaphorical meaning of "people's attitude towards the epidemic is a mask hanging casually on the chin." Combined with the publication date of the cartoon, it shows that after the policy of liberalizing the epidemic, the threat of the epidemic to people is reduced after the recovery of the society, and people's attitude towards the epidemic is relatively casual and careless.

When interpreting the meaning of this cartoon, the source domain is the image, namely, four people eating snacks outside without wearing masks. The target domain was a more casual attitude towards the epidemic. The source and target domains form input space 1 and input space 2. Input space 1 borrows the casual state of people wearing masks when they go out. It is known that the correct way to wear a mask is to

wear it over the mouth, not under the chin as shown in the picture, which shows that people treat it as a display. With reference to the publication time of this cartoon, input space 2 borrowed people's attitude towards the epidemic after the situation improved. After the epidemic was released and the society was fully infected and recovered, the threat of the epidemic to people and the degree of fear in people's hearts has reduced. The elements that fit each other in input space 1 and input space 2 are determined and mapped to the blending space through the generic space. People don't wear masks seriously and ignore the epidemic is mapped into the blending space through the generic space, implying that people's attitude to the epidemic is a mask hanging on the chin, which is the current situation of the epidemic.

After experiencing the epidemic for three years, everyone has finally returned to their normal life, work and study. But now, people don't wear masks when they go out. They go to parties and travel everywhere, even to travel abroad. But in fact, the virus has not completely disappeared and there is still the possibility of an outbreak. Even if the epidemic is gone, there are other flus like swine that continue to exist in the country, which is a wake-up call for all of us to pay attention to. We must not take it carelessly and continue to wear masks and do a good job of disinfection.

The interpretation of Figure 2: attitudes of acceptance.

Looking at Figure 2 cartoon as a whole, we can find that it is divided into two parts, the lower title "Uninvited Guests" and the drawing part. The drawing part is the main body of the cartoon. In the drawing, a man and a sheep gather around a table to drink and eat. They raise their glasses to drink and talk happily. The words "during the pandemic" on the table directly indicate the time of the gathering.



Figure 2 An Uninvited Guest 2022-12-16

Figure 2 cartoon contains two modes: text and image. First of all, the word "during the epidemic" can activate the cognitive background of the COVID-19 epidemic in our minds. In the cartoon, people and sheep smile, toast and laugh, which construct a metonymy in people's mind that they can accept each other. They are happy and harmonious together. Metaphor and metonymy are inseparable. A key breakthrough in the interpretation of this cartoon metaphor is the metonymic interpretation of the sheep. In Chinese, the word "Yang," testing positive for COVID-19, sounds the same as the sheep "Yang," so the sheep in the cartoon uses the homonym to achieve the metonymy mapping of COVID-19 positive. With human movements and expressions, we can understand that sheep represent COVID-19-positive patients. In combination with the publication time of the cartoon and the metonymy meaning of the sheep, the cartoon title "An Uninvited Guest" activated the sudden and rapid spread of the novel coronavirus in society at that time with positive patients everywhere around us. After activating our cognition, the multi-modal metonymy in the cartoon helps us construct the metaphorical meaning of "the epidemic has become a guest who can walk into people's lives," which is convenient for readers to understand. This conveys people's attitude towards the epidemic is a optimistic attitude of acceptance, and shows that the epidemic is less harmful to human beings. Humans have become more adept at dealing with COVID-19.

The metonymy of the animal sheep is crucial in the analysis of this cartoon. Therefore, when using the Conceptual Blending Theory to interpret the meaning of this cartoon, we choose to carry on the dual interpretation of this crucial metonymy and the main metaphor. The first layer is the interpretation of metonymy. The source domain is sheep. The target domain is positive for COVID-19. These two constitute input space 1 and input space 2, respectively. The Chinese pronunciation of sheep "Yang" and COVID-19 positive "Yang" is the same. This common element is confirmed in the generic space and projected into the blending space, forming a metonymy mapping between the sheep and COVID-19 positive. The sheep in the cartoon, like a man, can talk and eat, which can represent COVID-19-positive patients. The second is the interpretation of metaphor. The source domain is the image of a person and a sheep (COVID-19-positive patients) eating and drinking happily. The target domain is that after the epidemic is released, people can treat the epidemic and positive patients with a positive attitude of acceptance. The source and target domains form input space 1 and input space 2. Input space 1 borrowed a person and a

sheep in the banquet getting along harmoniously and happily. Input space 2 borrowed the fact after the liberalization of the epidemic policy, although people were suddenly around a lot of positive patients, and even themselves became positive, they did not panic too much and held a receptive attitude to treat the epidemic. They can coexist with the epidemic in harmony. The common elements of input space 1 and input space 2, namely harmonious coexistence between the two, are confirmed in the generic space, and then projected into the blending space to form a metaphorical meaning, that is, the epidemic is a guest who suddenly enters people's harmonious life. It shows that human beings are more capable of dealing with the novel coronavirus, which is a huge step forward in the fight against the epidemic.

The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 has posed a serious threat to people's life and health. After three years of arduous efforts, the current epidemic situation in China is generally improving. The threat of the virus to people's physical health has been reduced, and people's psychological acceptance of the novel coronavirus has also been significantly improved. All these demonstrate the great success of China's three-year fight against the epidemic, which provides great confidence and valuable experience for China's future development and epidemic prevention and control.

4.2 Current Economic State After the Epidemic Has Stabilized

The interpretation of Figure 3 cartoon: thriving after the epidemic has stabilized.

Figure 3 cartoon has bright colors and rich images. The first thing you can see is three men of different genders and outfits (a white-collar worker in a suit and tie with glasses, a farmer in a straw hat and apron, a blue-collar worker in a hard hat and overalls) holding a big red arrows winding upward. The plants behind and the crops are predominantly yellow and red. In the distance stand tall buildings, windmills and cell towers. There are two auspicious clouds in the sky.



Figure 3 China's Economic Growth Recovery is Thriving 2023-03-06

The cartoon contains two modes of color and image. The title of the cartoon is "China's Economic growth Recovery is Booming", and this meaning is conveyed through a series of metaphor and metonymy. The colors of plants and rice-like crops in cartoons can convey important metonymic meanings. Crops such as rice glow golden when they mature. Apples, maple trees and other plants turn red. Therefore, the two colors of plants and crops in the cartoon represent the joy of harvest, which means that economic development has achieved remarkable results in this cartoon. A few auspicious clouds in the sky also indicate good fortune and peace, and the metonymy reflects a prosperous and developing economy. All kinds of tall buildings also symbolize thriving industries. The different occupations of the three people in the cartoon can give us a metonymy of the various industries represented by the three people. That is, what the cartoon wants to convey is the situation of all walks of life. And that red arrow is winding up, which can activate the cognition of thriving, fitting in with the above metonymy, the idea that all walks of life are thriving. Combined with the publication time of the cartoon, we can know that after the epidemic stabilized, China's economy prospered. Metaphor and metonymy are inseparable and closely related. In this cartoon, metonymy activates our awareness of the prosperity of all walks of life. An arrow running through the cartoon, other images and color cooperate to construct the metaphorical meaning of "the current situation of China's economy is a big arrow of upward trend," which expresses the wonderful scene of China's economic recovery and development.

When interpreting the meaning of this cartoon, the source domain is the image, that is, a big arrow winding upward in a prosperous landscape, and the target domain is China's booming economic growth recovery. The source and target domains form input space 1 and input space 2. Input space 1 borrows the upward momentum of the arrow, and input space 2 borrows the current situation of the Chinese economy, that is, the Chinese economy develops upward and the growth momentum is good. Input space 1 and input space 2 contain both upward and prosperous elements. Under the action of the generic space, the common elements of the two input Spaces are determined and then mapped to the blending space, metaphorically indicating that the current situation of China's economy is a big arrow with upward momentum.

"China's economic recovery is full of vitality as the spring flowers bloom." Han Wenxiu, deputy director of the

China Financial Affairs Office, said at the economic summit of the China Development Forum 2023 Annual Meeting. He also pointed out that the sustained and stable development of the Chinese economy will be a rare bright spot in the turbulent world economy, with accelerated growth, stable prices, full employment and a basic balance of international payments. Entering the post-COVID-19 era, China's economic development has pressed the accelerator button of recovery, and economic optimism is spreading.

The interpretation of Figure 4: getting out of the epidemic dilemma.

The road spreads out over the cliffs, and one part of it is as intricate and dangerous as a labyrinth. A small car with the Chinese economy on it has just emerged from a complex maze of troubles and is on a relatively smooth, straight road. The people in the car looked back at the maze behind them. White smoke followed the back of the car, and there were air waves caused by air vibration in the front of the car.

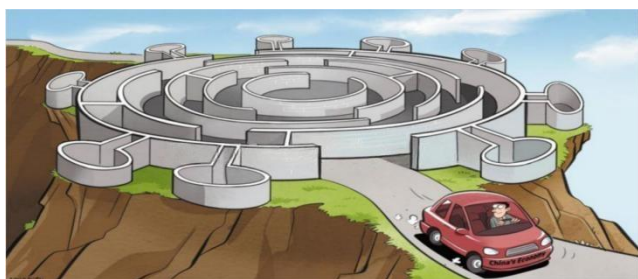


Figure 4 China's Economy has Emerged from the COVID-19 Crisis 2023-01-03

The cartoon contains two modes: text and image. First of all, considering the publication time of the cartoon, we can know from the title of the cartoon, "China's Economy has Emerged from the COVID-19 Crisis," that the cartoon intends to express the gradual recovery of China's economy after the epidemic stabilizes. And this meaning is constructed by a series of metonymy and metaphor. Combined with the words on the car, we can clearly know that the car represents China's economy. The road behind the car is as complex as a maze, which can make metonymy that China's economy has encountered difficulties here and its development is hindered. Now the car is driving on a smooth road, which reflects that after the current epidemic has stabilized, China's economy has come out of the predicament and the environment for development has improved. The car is followed by white smoke and the air wave produced by air vibration in the front of the car, which is the embodiment of the car full of power and the car running fast on

the road. This detail can just make metonymy that China's economic development momentum is relatively strong. The driver in the car looks back in fear, which make metonymy that although the situation is good, the impact of the epidemic on the economy is still continuing. And the cars on the road are marked with the Chinese economy, which means that the road below is the road of economic development. The road of economic development is always on cliffs, which indicates that the road of economic development is not broad and easy to walk. In this cartoon, metonymy simultaneously activates the cognitive domain of economic development environment and economic situation. Through the synergistic effect of text mode and image mode, the metaphorical meaning of "the epidemic is a huge maze on the road of economic development, and after the epidemic is stabilized, China's economy is a powerful car" is constructed, which helps readers easily understand the economic situation.

When interpreting the meaning of this cartoon, there are two key metaphorical meanings that need to be interpreted. The first metaphorical source domain is the image, the labyrinth-shaped road twists and turns around, and the target domain is the obstacles caused by the three-year epidemic in China. The source and target domains form input space 1 and input space 2. Input space 1 borrows the state of complex maze and serious obstacles, and input space 2 borrows the condition of difficult development. Input space 1 and 2 fit. The elements of input space 1 and input space 2 are determined and mapped into the blending space through the generic space, metaphorically indicating that the epidemic is a huge labyrinth for China's economy.

The source domain of the second metaphor is also the image. The car is full of power on a relatively smooth road, and the target domain is China's booming economic recovery. The source and target domains form input space 1 and input space 2. Input space 1 borrows the state of full momentum and input space 2 borrows the fact that China's economy enjoys strong momentum of development. Input space 2 and space 1 correspond to the element of good momentum. The common elements of input space 1 and input space 2 are confirmed and mapped into the blending space through the generic space, implying that after the epidemic is stabilized, China's economy is a powerful car with a promising future.

The apparent subside and stabilization of the epidemic have removed a great obstacle to economic development. China's economy has shown a momentum of recovery, with both production and demand improving, and employment

and prices generally stable. However, the Chinese economy still faces many challenges. The impact of the epidemic and conflicts continues, the recovery of the real economy is weak, entrepreneurs' confidence has been dealt a heavy blow, and a large number of small and medium-sized enterprises have gone bankrupt. Therefore, we should not rejoice too early and continue to work hard to boost confidence.

4.3 Chaos in the Anti-epidemic Process

The interpretation of Figure 5: nucleic acid fraud.

A hollow shiny large gold ingot stands on the ground. There are several words, "XXX nucleic acid testing technology company," written on the ingot. There is a pair of couplets attached to the door. The English version of the couplet basically means, by hook or by crook, to try to make you positive even if you are negative, and vice versa. Inside the ingot, a judge wearing a mask and holding a judge's pen gave a COVID-19-positive verdict to the man on the ground and ticked the book. And there's a dazed man on the floor with a negative certificate.



《阴阳判官》

Figure 5 Yin and Yang Judge 2022-11-24

The cartoon is divided into two parts, the text part on the top and the image part on the bottom. The text part occupies a small position, whereas the image part below occupies the main prominent position, which is easier to attract readers' attention. The cartoon contains two modes: text and image. First of all, we can know from the text part that the cartoon is about the chaos of the epidemic, that is, during the epidemic, driven by interests, the falsified test results of some nucleic acid testing institutions were frequently revealed in various places, which caused high anxiety and strong indignation among the public. The metonymy of the appearance and behavior of the two characters in the cartoon maps the phenomenon that nucleic acid results are reversed. Couplets on the door also play a role in suggesting nucleic acid chaos. The huge ingot metonymy shows that

some nucleic acid testing institutions are driven by interests to do such illegal things, which gives readers a more vivid and accurate representation of this mess and a clearer picture of the actual situation of the epidemic. In this cartoon, metonymy activates our cognition and constructs the metaphorical meaning that "some nucleic acid testing institutions are profit-seeking judges" through the synergistic effect of text mode and image mode.

When interpreting the meaning of this cartoon, the source domain is the image, and the judge determines the negativity and positivity for COVID-19 at will for the sake of interests. The target domain is that nucleic acid testing institutions falsify for profit during the epidemic. The source and target domains form input space 1 and input space 2. The common elements of the two input spaces, "falsification," "interest" and "random judgment," are confirmed, and mapped into the synthetic space through the generic space, implying that some nucleic acid testing institutions are profit-seeking judges.

It is inevitable that there will be some chaos in the process of epidemic prevention. In order to make money, some nucleic acid agencies detected fraud and drug dealers deliberately stock up on medicine and pushed the price of drug up. Fortunately, the state timely acted, such as the timely suspension of the nucleic acid companies listed. Local governments are also trying to coordinate drug supplies. We must face up to these obstacles, because this can provide lessons and guidance and help us a lot in the future epidemic prevention and control efforts.

5 Conclusion

Cartoons, which contain text mode and image mode, are increasingly used in various magazines and news. It uses a large number of metaphors and metonymy to convey profound information. If we want to understand news, current affairs and social hot issues through cartoons, we must understand metaphor and metonymy. Taking the news cartoon about the epidemic as an example, this article uses the Conceptual Blending Theory of Fauconnier and Turner to explain the process and mechanism of multi-modal metaphorical meaning construction in the cartoon. Through interpretation, we can find that the epidemic cartoon can show the good results of the fight against the epidemic and enhance the optimistic belief of society about the epidemic. It can also point out the current problems and provide directions for practical anti-epidemic work in the future.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship of publication of this article.

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