# The role of multimodal metaphors in the creation of the fake news category: a proposal for analysis

## *A atuação das metáforas multimodais na criação da categoria fake news: uma proposta de análise*

Natália Elvira Sperandio
Universidade Federal de São João Del-Rei (UFSJ), São João Del-Rei, Minas Gerais / Brasil
nataliasperandio@ufsj.edu.br
http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3912-1892

**Abstract:** Almost forty years ago, the proposal of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory represented a milestone for Cognitive Linguistics studies. From this point, many pieces of research were developed around the analytical category of metaphor. However, the majority of these papers are still in the monomodal field, intending to build a concept resulting from the source and target domains that come specifically from the verbal structures. Taking this into consideration, this paper intends to focus on the metaphorical occurrence in diverse semiotic modes that constitute multimodal texts. In order to fulfill this aim, we outlined a *corpus* of five editorial cartoons about "fake news". Our specific objective is to, making use of the concept of multimodal metaphors proposed by Forceville (1996, 2009), presented how the different semiotic modes, in this case the verbal and the visual ones, are interwoven in the building of these metaphors. In this way, in our study, besides validating the thesis proposed by Forceville (2009) about the occurrence of metaphors not only in the verbal mode, it was also possible to verify the importance of multimodal metaphors for the meaning construction process in the analyzed genre.

**Keywords:** metaphors; multimodal metaphors; fake news.

**Resumo:** Há quase quarenta anos atrás um marco nos estudos da Linguística Cognitiva, em especial em sua semântica, ocorreu: a proposta da Teoria da Metáfora Conceitual. A partir desse trabalho, muitas pesquisas foram desenvolvidas em torno da categoria

analítica da metáfora. Porém, grande parte desses trabalhos ainda encontra-se no campo dos denominados textos monomodais, visando apenas a construção conceitual resultante de domínios fonte e alvo oriundos especificamente do modo verbal. Diante disso, o presente artigo propõe-se a promover um trabalho dedicado à ocorrência metafórica nos diferentes modos semióticos que constituem os textos multimodais. Para cumprirmos tal objetivo, delineamos como *corpus* cinco charges que versam sobre o conceito *fake news*. Nosso objetivo específico consiste em apresentar, através do conceito de metáforas multimodais, proposto por Forceville (1996, 2009), a forma pela qual diferentes modos semióticos, nesse caso em especial o verbal e o imagético, imbricaram-se na construção dessas metáforas. Assim, em nosso estudo, além de vislumbrarmos a validação da proposição de Forceville (2009) sobre a não ocorrência do processo metafórico apenas no modo verbal, foi possível a verificação da importância das metáforas multimodais para a construção dos sentidos do gênero em análise.

**Palavras-chave:** metáforas; metáfora multimodal; *fake news*.

## 1. Introduction

We have been experiencing a culture increasingly surrounded by multimodal texts. This fact has been influencing the research produced in the Linguistics Studies field, which happens as well to the studies dedicated to the metaphorical processes. This issue was made evident by the rise of investigations, in Brazil and abroad, directed to analyzing the meaning resulting from multimodal metaphors.

However, in spite of this interference, when we look at the studies dedicated to the metaphorical process, we observe that most papers are dedicated to building the concept originated from a single semiotic mode: the verbal mode. When compared to the context of Cognitive Semantics studies, little has been discussed about the possibilities of different semiotic modes act on the construction of source and target domains of a specific metaphor and, consequently, on the sense derived from it.

Based on this proposition, this paper intends to promote an investigation about the different semiotic modes that work on the conceptual construction of the categories that surround our daily life. In order to achieve our aim, we are going to analyze the category of

multimodal metaphors. As a way of applying the theory, we chose as *corpus* five editorial cartoons produced on the internet context. These editorial cartoons are focused on representing the concept of *fake news*. In this manner, we are going to focus our studies on the way in which multimodal metaphors act on the conceptual construction of the term *fake news*.

Our paper is going to be developed through qualitative and bibliographical research methods. For this, we used the teachings of Forceville (1996, 2009), about multimodal metaphors. To demonstrate the classifications postulated by the author, we are going to borrow the analysis developed by Sperandio (2010, 2014). Besides this, our discussion is going to be guided by the concepts of metaphor, proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and of multimodality, presented by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001).

In our studies, it was possible to observe that the meanings aroused by the editorial cartoons analyzed stem from different domains activated by their producers. That is, the domains "person, weapon and war" (activated by the visual mode) and fake news (activated by the verbal mode). In this way, we notice the importance that these mode acquired during the construction of the term fake news, showing us, not only the articulation between the verbal and visual modes, but also the fact that the multimodality is present in analysis categories that, before now, were majorly built by the verbal mode, as the metaphorical process.

To accomplish our aim, we are going to divide our paper in three sections. In the first section we are going to develop a theoretical survey that is going to help us during the analysis procedures. We are going to start with the work by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001) since we believe it is fundamental to understand what multimodality and semiotic modes are. The second section is going to be about multimodal metaphors. Firstly, we are going to work on the concept of metaphor, based on the work by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), so that we are going to be able to discuss about multimodal metaphors, through research developed by Forceville (1996, 2008). The third section is going to be dedicated to the thorough exam of the metaphors chosen as research object.

## 2. The work of multimodality

We begin our paper with the postulates of the multimodal theory developed by Kress and Van Leewen (1996, 2001). In this work, the

authors work from the perspective of "practice" and base their findings in the idea of a variety of semiotic resources being used to produce the sign in concrete social contexts. Being these signs based on signifiers such as colors, perspectives and lines; used in the material representation of the signified. According to the authors, different from what is proposed by the traditional semiology, that conceived the signs from a dyadic perspective, that is the bi-relation between signifier (the sound pattern) and signified (the concept); this relation is not enough to comprehend satisfactorily how the signs are constituted. In this manner, the authors claim that the signs would be a motivated conjunction of signifiers (form) and signified (meaning), related to the compositional act, that is, there would not be an intrinsic relation between them.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) have been claiming that in the technology era and in the western culture texts are becoming more and more multimodal. The authors call this moment the "New Writing". From this perspective, they affirm that diverse semiotic modes are articulated simultaneously during the elaboration procedure, what attributes to them specific meanings. According to the authors, the semiotic landscape of communication has been changing and these changes have been affecting the text forms and their features. So, texts are becoming more and more multimodal, dealing with the coexistence of different semiotic levels as, for instance, the visual, audio, gestural, etc.

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) the two last decades witnessed a thorough change in media and ways of communication. However, we can also understand from these authors' teachings that communication has always been multimodal and, what is happening nowadays, although not new, is a relevant change, since today there seem to be an instance of a new text code and image, in which information is disclosed by the two modes. In this way, verbal and non-verbal elements of a text articulate themselves while building their meaning, being important to say that the visual element is not dependent on the verbal one, they coexist in an independent structure and organization.

That being said, we can infer that, with the broad circulation of multimodal texts, many fields of work, that focused solely on the monomodal texts, had to adapt themselves to this new reality, producing tools to help the multimodal analysis. It would not be different in what concerns to metaphors, because these figures of speech are not only present on the verbal level of language, but also on other semiotic modes. We are going to present now the multimodal metaphors.

## 3. Research on multimodal metaphors

Before working on the studies dedicated to multimodal metaphors, we believe it is necessary to present the concept of metaphor, because this is the concept that is going to guide our analytical section. Because of this, we begin this part of our paper with a brief presentation of this trope, focusing on the concept built by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The study dedicated to the metaphorical process is not new. Its origin, in the occident, is related to works proposed by Aristotle. The philosopher explained the metaphor as "giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy" (ARISTOTLE, 1991, p. 273). Besides Aristotle, according to Schröder (2008), research on metaphor was present on philosophical reflections of thinkers such as John Locke, Giambattista Vico, Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Nietzsche, Fritz Mauthner, Ernst Cassirer and Arnold Gehlen.

However, it is in the work by Lakoff and Johnson, published in 1980 and entitled *Metaphor we live by*, that we can notice a big revolution in this research area. In this book, metaphor is seen as omnipresent in our thoughts and language, associated to our daily life, language, thought and action. From this study, the understanding about the world starts to be related to the concept of metaphor, since a great number of basic concepts, as time, quantity, state, action, etc; besides emotional concepts as anger and love, are metaphorically understood. This makes clear the importance of metaphor role in the understanding of the world, of the culture and even of ourselves.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) see the metaphor as a tool to understand and experience something from another thing's perspective. According to researchers, there is a systematic mapping between two conceptual domains: the source domain, seen as an inference source, and the target domain, the domain in which the inference will be applied. As an example we can point out the metaphor "TIME IS MONEY". From this metaphor we can understand the target domain, time, based on the systematically organized knowledge we have about the source domain, money. Because of this systematicity we are able to understand a specific aspect of a term according to other term, concealing other aspects.

Other issue about the works by Lakoff and Johnson (2003) that deserves to be highlighted is the one that postulates that the metaphorical mapping should be considered multiple, since two or more elements from one domain will be mapped to two or more elements of the other domain. According to Kövecses (2002), the conceptual metaphor is constituted by a group of mappings between the source domain and the target domain, being this mapping a partial one. In this way, only part of the source domain is mapped on the target domain, and only part of the target domain is present in the mapping of the source domain. According to the author, we can recognize metaphorical highlighting in the target domain, bringing only some elements of this domain to focus; and the metaphorical utilization in the source domain, since only some elements are mapped on the target domain. According to the researcher, the emphasizing implies hiding because as the target domain has many aspects, and the metaphor focus on one, maximum three, the other aspects are going to be hidden or out of focus.

However, in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory presented, although the authors affirm that the metaphorical process is omnipresent in our lives, not only in language, but also in thought and action; the authors dedicated to the study of the verbal manifestation of this process, leaving the diverse semiotic modes of a multimodal text aside. We believe that a metaphor theory that focus only on the metaphors verbally built works with a partial notion of what constitutes a metaphor. As said by Cienke (2008), words are only one of the ways in which metaphors can be produced, in this way, metaphorical expressions can be found in many human behavior aspects, not only language.

In a study dedicated to visual metaphors in advertisement, Forceville (1996), based on the interaction theory developed by Black (1993), offers a pattern for visual metaphors, these metaphors being identified by the replacement of a visual element for another.

Black (1993) affirms that in a metaphorical statement we can find two subjects, named by the author as primary subject and secondary subject. In this statement there is the projection of an implication field present on the secondary subject over the primary subject. According to Black, in this context there will be interaction between the two fields, since the primary subject incites the receptor to select some features from the secondary subject and leads them to build a parallel implication consonant with the context, in the same way, features from the primary

subject change the implicative complex of the secondary subject. In this sense, the receptor builds a properties correspondence complex between both terms. As Black (1993) affirms, the similarity in the metaphorical process is built, not inherent.

Forceville (1996) articulates Black's proposal (1993) to the Relevance Theory develop by Sperber and Wilson (2001). In this way, his analysis consider that an advertisement receptor expects that something relevant and positive about the product will be communicated, restricting, in a way, the interpretation.

Forceville (1996) also highlights the context role in the interpretation of the analyzed advertisements. From his perspective, taking into consideration internal aspects o the text is not enough, that is, external aspects such as cultural background, the immediate physical environment and the genre should also be considered.

Besides the mentioned authors, Forceville (1996) bases his writings on works by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). In this way, the author promotes a study about the multimodal metaphors, having publicity as his research object. Throughout his research, Forceville (1996) offers us a series of analysis of print ads and billboards, identifying four subtypes of visual metaphors: a) visual metaphors with one term visually presented, b) visual metaphors with both terms presented, c) visual similes and d) verbal-visual metaphors.

However, in a new piece of research, he started to name the metaphors with one term presented as contextual metaphor, and the one with both terms presented as hybrid metaphors. Besides these new terminologies, the author introduced a new category, the integrated metaphors. He also categorized the verbal-visual metaphors as a subtype of multimodal metaphors. We are going to discuss each of these metaphors, using the analysis developed by Sperandio (2014) as example.

In the contextual metaphor, an object is metaphorized because of the visual context in which it is placed. One of the domains of this metaphor is not visible, as suggested by the visual context. Consequently, this context is indispensable, because out of this context, there is no possibility to visualize the absent term.

IMAGE 1 – Unimed Anti-Smoking Campaign



Available at: http://www.unimed.coop.br/pct/index.jsp?cd_canal=52880&cd_
secao=52854&cd_materia=311306. Retrieved on: 20 Feb. 2014

In the anti-smoking advertisement we can see the picture of a burning cigarette, smoking, with a building on the background. If the visual context was removed, we could not build the metaphor CIGARETTE IS A CHIMNEY. Taking into consideration the internal context, together with the verbal register that is constituted by an anti-smoking campaign, we can observe that we are before a metaphor that has only its target domain visually present, while its source domain is suggested by the visual context.

In hybrid metaphors, both domains are fused into a unique gestalt. In this model, parts of both domains of this metaphor are visually present, in this way, even if taken out of the visual context, the objects can still be visualized.

IMAGE 2 – DKNY Perfume Advertisement
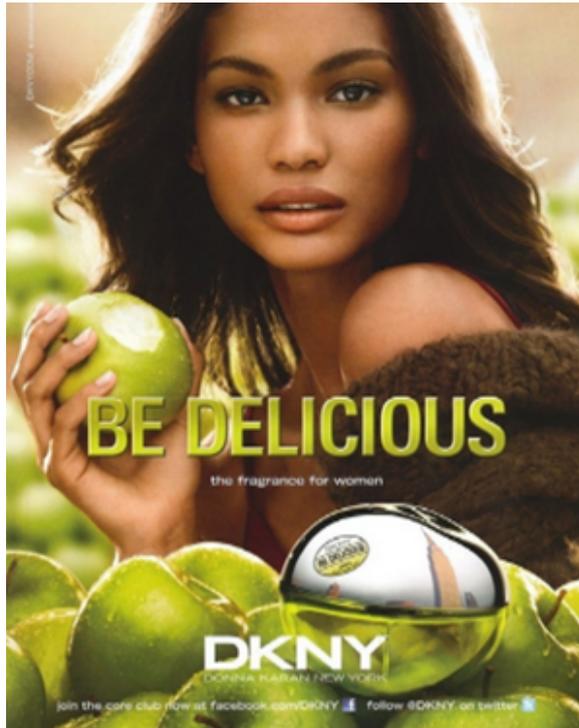


Available at: http://rickway.blogspot.com.br/2011/05/ultimos-lancamentos
-de-perfumes-parte3.html. Retrieved on: 15 Mar. 2014.

DKNY perfume advertisement exemplifies this model. In this advertisement, we can see the package of the perfume hybridized with a green apple, making both objects being seen as a single shape. With the hybridization of these images we produce the metaphor PERFUME DKNY IS AN APPLE, with both domains visually presented. The metaphorical concept produced is that the scent of this perfume is similar to the scent and the flavor of a beautiful green apple.

In the visual similes, both domains are presented in their totality, unlike hybridization, in which only part of the domains are presented. In the advertisement of the car Hyundai i30, we have this type of metaphor. In this advertisement, there is the picture of the product juxtaposed to a chessboard and chess pieces, together with the words: "Hyundai

I30, be part of this game". We can consider the visual metaphor of this advertisement, a simile, as HYUNDAI I30 IS A CHESS PIECE.

IMAGE 3 – Hyundai i30 Advertisment



Available at: http://alinegsantos.blogspot.com.br/2010/06/
propaganda-carro-ps.html. Retrieved on: 1 Feb. 2014.

The integrated metaphor is a subtype of the visual metaphor. In this type of metaphor we have a unified object or a gestalt presented integrally and this object reminds us of another object, without visual cues. In the anti-smoking advertisement below, we have an example of an integrated metaphor. In this advertisement, there are two cigarettes that form a gun shape, leading us to build the metaphor CIGARETTE IS A WEAPON. We would like to highlight that only the target domain cigarette is fully presented and it refers us to the source domain. That is, the source domain is suggested by the pictorial context: the way in which the cigarettes are positioned and split. With this integrated metaphor we can infer that, in the same way that a gun can take a life away, the continuous usage of cigarettes can kill us.

IMAGE 4 – Anti-Smoking Advertisement



Available at: http://comunicacaochapabranca.com.br/?p=15146.
Retrieved on: 10 Jan. 2014.

According to Forceville (2009), the visual metaphor has been grasping researchers' attention lately. Below we present an analysis made by Sperandio (2014) from this type of metaphor.

IMAGE 5 – Turtle Editorial Cartoon exemplifying the monomodal metaphor
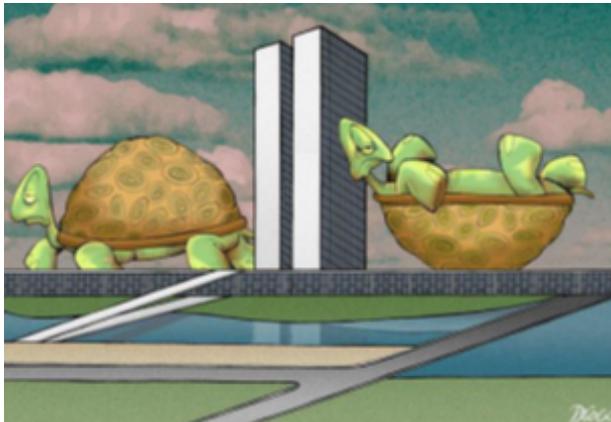


Available at: https://diogosalles.wordpress.com/. Retrieved on: 15 Jan. 2013.

This editorial cartoon builds its meaning from the metaphor BRAZILIAN POLITICS IS A TURTLE, with its domains built solely from the pictorial mode. In this way, we have the source domain, the

turtle, and the target domain, the politics, represented by the images of a turtle and the national congress building, respectively. With this metaphor there is the personification of a domain, the politics, attributing to it the feature of other domain, the turtle that, in this case, means slowness.

The last model proposed by the author is the verbal-visual metaphor. In this case, one domain is visually represented and the other domain is verbally represented, being important to say that the removal of the verbal context would affect the metaphor understanding.

IMAGE 6 – IMF Editorial Cartoon
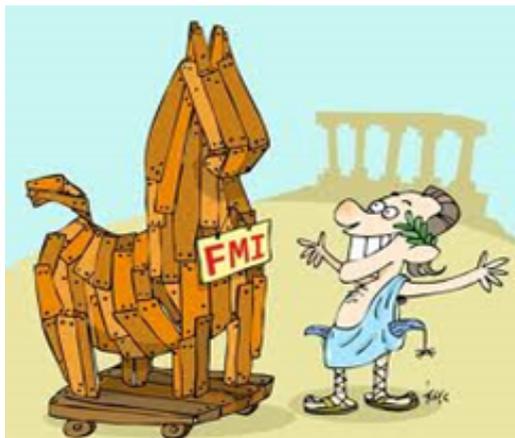


Available at: https://fmiminionu.files.wordpress. com/2011/08/charge-29061.jpg. Retrieved on: 15 Jan. 2013.

In this editorial cartoon, we have the metaphor IMF IS A CURSE IN DISGUISE, with the source domain, curse in disguise, built from the pictorial mode (the image of a horse, that takes us back to the history of Troy; the clothing, accessories and background representing Greece) and the target domain, IMF, built through written mode (the word IMF).

In his recent research, Forceville (2009) approaches three concepts: mode, monomodality and multimodality. According to the author, at first, mode is considered a system of signs that can be interpreted because of a specific perception process, in this approach, modes are related to the five senses. In this manner, we would have: 1) pictorial or visual mode, 2) auditory mode, 3) olfactory mode, 4) taste mode and 5) touch mode. However, according to the author, this is a

crude categorization, because in the auditory mode we have grouped, simultaneously, spoken language, music and other non-verbal utterances. From this perspective, the author proposes nine modes: 1) pictorial sign, 2) written sign, 3) spoken sign, 4) gestures, 5) sounds, 6) music, 7) scent, 8) taste and 9) touch.

Monomodal metaphors are seen as having both source and target domains constituted exclusively by a mode, being the prototypical monomodal metaphor the verbal one. We may take the analysis developed by Sperandio (2010, p. 53) as an example:

> "The average landless person that signs up in the ranks of the Landless Movement is a person with no professional perspective and no missionary instinct".

The sentence above, that is part of the report entitled "Landless and lawless", produced by *Veja* magazine, in 2000, can be considered a metaphorical expression of the conceptual metaphor AGRARIAN REFORM IS WAR. In this metaphor, both source domain, war, and target domain are produced exclusively by the written mode.

On the other hand, multimodal metaphors are considered by the author as the ones that have source and target domains represented solely, or mostly, by different modes. An example of a multimodal metaphor can be seen in the analysis of image 6, in which the metaphor IMF IS A PRESENT IN DISGUSE has its source domain activated by the visual mode while the target domain is activated by the verbal mode.

It is based on this last stage of Forceville's works (2009) that we will analyze our *corpus*. For this, we are going to take the aforesaid concept of multimodal metaphor to analyze the category *fake news*.

Before ending this section dedicated to the metaphorical processes, we think it is necessary to highlight that there are other researchers who work beyond the verbal modes in the activation of the metaphorical processes. We can give as example, the research developed by Cienke e Müller (2008) that work with the relation between metaphors and gestures. According to the authors, a thorough analysis of gestures offers support to a thesis sustaining that the metaphor is the general cognitive principle with mappings processed on-line. Consequently, with this presupposition, the metaphorical thought starts to be seen as creative, dynamic, flexible and culturally variable.

## 4. Fake news is...

We dedicate this section to the analysis of multimodal metaphors responsible for the construction of the term *fake news*. For this, as said before, we are going to take the metaphor concept proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and the proposition of multimodal metaphor presented by Forceville (1996, 2009) as our foundation.

Before starting the analysis, we think it is extremely important to discuss a little bit about our corpus, the editorial cartoon genre and the choice of the theme to be metaphorically analyzed: *fake news*.

The study of textual / discursive genres has been earning a place in the sun in the context of studies dedicated to language. Among the huge number of genres that are present in our society, we highlight the editorial cartoon genre. This genre is defined as a graphic element with the ability to approach day-to-day affairs in a condensed and humorous way, with criticism that expresses an opinion. According to Miani (2001), an editorial cartoon should be considered as a political, humorous, caricatural representation that aims to satirize a specific fact. According to the author, the editorial cartoon, as well as caricatures and comic books, are part of the iconographic language modality, because all of them constitute ways of expressing ideas by means of the art of representation produced through images made from human features.

Vasconcelos (2009) states that the importance of this genre can be noticed when we look at its historical path and, from this perspective, we can understand how it conquered its place in the means of communication nowadays. According to the author, in the beginning, the drawings in the editorial cartoon intended to grasp the reader's attention, aiming at selling. With the proliferation of illustrated magazines in Brazil, in the 19th Century, we witnessed the emergence of caricatures and editorial cartoons, being the first decades of the 20th century, the golden age of caricatures, characterized by the humor present in the Brazilian magazines. It is important to highlight that, even with the censorship imposed by the New State and the dictatorship period, as stated by the author, editorial cartoons were part of magazines and newspapers.

Consequently, we notice the importance acquired by this genre in our society. But, on the other side, why choosing *fake news* as the concept to be analyzed? Our choice for this conceptual category results from the

huge discussion that has been established about it. This discussion became a lively discussion during the electoral period and in the post-electoral period, in 2018. Taking these circumstances into consideration, it is necessary to ask: what we understand by *fake news*, how this concept is built, in the context of metaphorical studies, what are the source domains used by its conceptualization, what are the semiotic modes acting in its construction. We believe that our analysis helped us to better understand these questions. Thinking about his, we are going to start the analysis of the editorial cartoons chosen as our *corpus*.

The first editorial cartoon to be analyzed is "image seven". In this editorial cartoon, we can observe the use of two conceptual domains: the source domain, person and the target domain, *fake news*. When bringing to the conceptualization of *fake news* the domain person we have the personification of *fake news*, being this personification activated by the visual mode (a hand coming out of a mobile phone holding an object that, in this context, functions as a pendulum). In this way, with this personification, the term fake news acquires characteristics typical of people, allowing, in this way, the *fake new*s to act upon people.

An interesting aspect of this conceptual construction is that according to this multimodal metaphor, FAKE NEWS IS A PERSON, activated by the verbal signs (the written words *fake news*) and the visual signs (the image of part of a person, that can also be seen as a metonymical process, that is, A PART FOR THE WHOLE), there is the manipulation of meaning perpetrated by *fake news*, as we observe the pendulum, held by *fake news*, personified by the arm, as well as by the eyes of the character depicted in the editorial cartoon, eyes in a frenzy, thrilled. Besides this, it is important to notice that the occurrence of this manipulation did not happen in any environment, but by means of a technological tool, that may be recovered by the image of the mobile.

IMAGE 7 – *Fake news*



Available at: https://imirante.com/oestadoma/noticias/2016/07/18/
charge-cabalau/. Retrieved on: 20 Nov. 2019

In the second editorial cartoon analyzed, image number eight, we have again two semiotic modes acting on the conceptual construction of *fake news*, the verbal mode and the visual mode. In the verbal mode, the written word fake news activates the target domain, while the visual mode leads us to the activation of the source domain of this multimodal metaphor, that is, a weapon. In this way, the red hands of the characters depicted in the editorial cartoon lead us to associate the hands color with blood, so we can infer that, as a weapon, *fake news* can seriously damage people. Therefore, people who share this kind of information are left with blood on their hands, in the same way that people who commit crimes, above all, murderers. With these domains activated, we build the metaphor FAKE NEWS IS A WEAPON.

Another point to be highlighted in this editorial cartoon is the fact that the depicted characters look like sick people, colorless, lifeless, completely alienated, with their eyes stuck on the gadgets they are holding. Thus, we can associate these characters to society itself, allowing us to think of it as sick and alienated. In the concrete case, a society corrupted by the *fake news* that surround the reality, and the information are again shared through electronic devices.

IMAGE 8 – Fake news editorial cartoon



Available at: https://twitter.com/georgmarques/status/975687979330097154.
Retrieved on: 20 Nov. 2019.

The third analysis presented was based on the image number nine. In this editorial cartoon, again, the multimodal metaphor is presented by the association of the verbal and the visual domains. And, once more, we have the personification in the conceptual construction of fake news. But this time, differently from the first editorial cartoon presented, the personification present in the source domain of this metaphor is activated not only by part of a person's body (as it happened in the first one that the depiction of an arm was enough to activate this domain), but by the complete representation of a human being. It is interesting to point out that it is not any human being, but a liar, as indicated by the long nose of the depicted character. This nose allows us to remind of a children's novel, Pinocchio. As we know, Pinocchio is a character identified by his lies.

Furthermore, the editorial cartoon in question also allows us to outline another category: ethics. In this manner, the ethics was restrained by fake news during the electoral period that happened in Brazil, in 2018. Thus, we can understand that in this election, according to the person who created this editorial cartoon, was characterized by the lack of ethics and by the presence of deceptive, misleading information.

Another point that draws our attention in this editorial cartoon is the color of the clothing worn by the personified categories. While

ethics wears white, that in our culture represents peace, hope; *fake news* wears yellow and blue, colors present in our flag.

IMAGE 9 – Fake news editorial cartoon



Available at: http://jboscocartuns.blogspot.com/2018/04/fake-news.html.
Retrieved on: 20 Nov. 2019.

In picture number ten we can observe two metaphors: a multimodal one and a monomodal one, as pointed out by Forceville (2009). In the monomodal metaphor, fake news is conceptualized as an illness, caused by epidemics. In this way, we have the source domain illness and the target domain fake news, that activate the metaphor FAKE NEWS IS AN ILLNESS, built through the expression: "fake news epidemics".

With this metaphor we can understand fake news as a rise in the number of a certain illness that exceeds the number expected during a specific period. In this manner, the rise of *fake news* surpassed the expected average, affecting great part of the population.

In this cartoon, we can also observe the multimodal metaphor FAKE NEWS IS STRAY BULLETS. Metaphor build by the visual mode (image of stoppers that are conceptualized in analogy to the vest) and the verbal mode (with the expression "and the stoppers are meant to protect me from fake news). With this metaphor we can conceptualize fake news as an object that can harm people, in this case, a bullet. It is crucial to say that they are not random bullets, they are stray bullets. In

this way, as stray bullets they can harm any people, so, fake news can also harm people indistinctively, not selecting social class, gender, race, level of education and so on.

IMAGE 10 – Fake news editorial cartoon



Available at: http://blogdoaftm.web2419.uni5.net/charge-epidemia-de-noticias-falsas/. Retrieved on: 20 Nov. 2019.

To sum up, we present the analysis of the editorial cartoon in image number eleven. In this editorial cartoon, we activate in the construction of its meaning, once again, the multimodal metaphor FAKE NEWS IS WAR, what makes us infer the need of fighting it. This fact is reinforced by the image, because we can see two opponents, on one side a ballot box and on the other side WhatsApp icon. With the personification of these two elements, we can understand that fake news should be tackled, in the electoral context of 2018. However, we notice that in this fight, fake news – represented by a mean of communication (WhatsApp) – won. As depicted by the image, the ballot box is knocked out, with bruised purple eyes and without some teeth.

Other elements that help us in this analysis are the gestures presented by these characters. As stated by Cienke and Müller (2008), in metaphorical gestures, the target domain of metaphors is seen as abstract, that is, the gesture enacts or describes the concrete fundaments of an abstract

concept. These gestures are characterized independently of the context in which they occur (sign, or spoken language), as voluntary body movements that use mappings between domains to express thoughts and feelings.

In the editorial cartoon below, the gesture of raising the hands can be seen, metaphorically, as victory, because as it happens in our culture, and other western cultures, everything that is good is meant to be up and everything that is bad is meant to be down. So, the gesture of putting the hands up means the victory of Whatsapp and the gesture of putting the hands down means the defeat of the ballot box.

Bringing the gestures to our analysis, we meet the postulates of some researches who claim that gestures can be conceived as an articulatory mode independent of the used expression, not only expressing the semantic content verbally expressed. In this way, the authors consider metaphors as processes that should be analyzed independently of a specific modality, being seen as multimodal, not having instances only in the gestures, images, spoken or written language; but also in the combination of these instances.

In this manner, the gestures presented cannot be seen as a mere replica of the senses activated by the verbal and the visual modes, but as additional evidence of the mapping between the domains.

IMAGE 11 – Fake news charge



Available at: https://www.humorpolitico.com.br/tag/fake/page/2/.
Retrieved on: 20 Nov 2019.

## 5. Final remarks

As highlighted in our introductory section, this paper intended to analyze the concept of fake news according to the category of multimodal metaphors. For this, we presented in the first sections concepts that guided the discussions proposed on the third section – dedicated to the actual analysis of this concept.

Based on the works by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) we classified the metaphors present in the editorial cartoons chosen to be analyzed. In this way, we considered the source domains (person, weapon, illness and war) as sources of inference used to understand the target domain fake news. So, as we can notice the use of a domain in the conceptualization of the other, we can consider them metaphors.

However, as our research intended to go beyond verbal modes, we turned to Forceville's work (2009) on multimodal metaphors, so that we could not only postulate the existence of these metaphors but could also understand the meaning resulting from them. Thus, taking this concept into consideration, we worked on the different semiotic modes present in the editorial cartoons, focusing on the role they played in their construction. In this way, we identified the importance of multimodal metaphors in the creation of the concept fake news, as intended by their creators and, consequently, present in the meanings resulting from them.

A matter that deserves attention concerning the analysis is the presence, in all metaphors, of negative aspects in the source domains. That is, all the features activated in the source domains and mapped to the target domains are negative. As a result, we have a unfavorable representation of the term fake news. Because of this, this term is seen and represented either as a person who can inflict harm to other beings around or as stray bullets, illness or war.

Another point that drew our attention during the research is concerning the source domains presented being activated by the visual mode. This can make us consider that this use is an argumentative element used by the producers of the editorial cartoons analyzed. That is, as the image is a mode easily processed by our cognition, when using these images as the main source for their metaphors, the receptors activate their visual domains faster and doubtlessly, since the images are already ready, totally built for the reader. With this, a bigger commotion is caused in the people who access the editorial cartoons analyzed.

We firmly believe that research, as presented here, shows not only the possibility of occurrence of metaphorical processes in diverse semiotic modes (matter broadly accepted my the academy), but also the importance that these metaphors have in the conceptual construction, importance that should be truly valued when we look at the technological context, since in these contexts we observe the increasing possibility of these modes being fused together while building the meanings of their genres.

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