

## **Metaphors of War and Engagement in Selected Sports Newspaper Reports in Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT**-Many works on the language of sports reporting have always focused on the stylistic features of their spontaneous nature of language use. This has neglected the rich resources of conceptual metaphors embedded in the language of sports reportage in print newspapers in Nigeria. Due to the pervasive nature of metaphor use in different spheres of our daily living, a number of metaphors of war and engagement were purposively selected from six issues each of Sunday Sporting Sun and The Nation Sporting Life newspapers in Nigeria between December 2019 and January 2020. The aim of the paper is to analyse the pragmatic functions of these metaphors selected from the different newspaper sources. The Metaphor Identification Procedure adopted is the Pragglejaz group (2007). The identified metaphors were then classified into conceptual metaphor categories for analysis using Charteris-Black's (2004) Critical Metaphor Analysis. The discussion and findings reveal that the pragmatic functions of metaphors in the selected newspapers are persuasive, emotive and antagonistic. This shows, as the study concludes, that beyond the entertainment value of sports, there is a language depicting a game of engagement and war, which is worth examining because of its implication for language use for scholarship and social behaviour.

**KEYWORDS:** Conceptual Metaphor, Critical Metaphor Analysis, Source domain, Sports, Target domain, War metaphor.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Earlier studies on metaphor were confined to the domain of poetry often referred to, in contemporary times, as Classical Era. Aristotle's works *The Poetics* and *The Rhetoric* formed the basis upon which scholars considered and analysed the concept of metaphor as an ornamental element of poetry and a literary device for rhetoric. It was considered a lofty and imaginary way of expressing ideas in an extra-ordinary manner. In the course of time however, the revolutionary work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), *Metaphors We Live By*, introduced a new way of treating (linguistic) metaphors. This removed the restriction placed on metaphor as an element of, and the language of poetry. With a combination of linguistics, pragmatics and cognition, Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphor is pervasive in the human communication system, which vary from person to person and community to community. What they postulated has come to be known today as Cognitive Metaphor Theory. They also provided the sentences below to support their argument:

What he said left a bad taste in my mouth. All this paper has in it are raw facts, half-baked ideas, and harmed-over theories. There are too many facts here for me to digest them all. I can't just swallow that claim. The argument smells fishy. Let me stew over that for a while. Now there's a theory you can really sink your teeth into. We need to let that idea percolate for a while. That's food for thought. He's a voracious reader. We don't need to spoon-feed our students. He devoured the book. Let's let that idea simmer on the back burner for a while. This is the meaty part of the paper. Let that idea jell for a while. The idea has been fermenting for years. (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, pp. 46-47).

From the examples above, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) posit that the expressions in italics are linguistic metaphors, depicting the idea of the conceptual metaphor IDEAS ARE FOOD. According to Charteris-Black (2004, p.3), there is sufficient evidence for the importance of metaphor which is found in the quantum of the diversity of research metaphor studies has generated.

Meanwhile, Charteris-Black (2004) defines a metaphor as a linguistic representation that results from the shift in the use of a word or phrase from the context or domain in which it is expected to occur to another context or domain where it is not expected to occur, thereby causing semantic tension. He goes further to state that a metaphor may have any or all of the linguistic, pragmatic and cognitive characteristics that are specified above. Specifically, he sees a conventional metaphor as a metaphor that is frequently used and is taken up in a language community, thereby reducing our awareness of its semantic tension; while a novel metaphor is a metaphor that has not previously been taken up and used in a language community, thereby heightening awareness of its semantic tension. However, Charteris-Black (2004) treats conceptual metaphor differently; for him, "it is a statement that resolves the semantic tension of a set of metaphors by showing them to be related" (p. 24).

Meanwhile, the general objective of the study is to investigate the use of metaphors of war and engagement in selected sports newspaper reports in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study include:

- i. To identify and classify metaphors of war and engagement in sports
  - ii. To state/ explain their pragmatic functions.
- Again, the following questions were formatted to guide the study:
- i. Are there metaphors of war and engagement in sports newspaper reports in Nigeria?
  - ii. What are their pragmatic functions?

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Since its introduction as a theory into the linguistic landscape, there have been a lot of works on conceptual metaphors. Ifeanyichukwu, Ijem and Kadiri (2018) considered metaphor as deployed in political discourse using the framework of Charteris-Black's (2004). Their study identified, analysed and interpreted the ideological and conceptual metaphors in political speeches. The study revealed that the speakers use metaphors as tools to enact power and wield influence on their audience. Otieno, Owino and Attyang (2016) also studied the use of metaphors in political discourse, seeing it as a linguistic strategy that has been used all over the world. They argued that metaphor, as a linguistic tool, could be manipulated both for pragmatic and strategic reasons to fulfill their persuasive and rhetorical goals in political discourse. Apart from being used as a face-saving strategy, the study showed that metaphors also revealed speakers' ideological positions. On her part, Ezeifeke (2013) studied the strategic use of metaphor in Nigerian newspaper reports where the pervasive cognitive phenomenon for encoding social meanings and cultural presuppositions has been implicated as a strategic linguistic tool for the media in swaying public perceptions and assuming consensus for the argument they want to project as the 'truth'. The findings revealed the newspaper's apparently inadvertent ideological solidarity with the power elite, hidden under the mask of metaphors in its attempt to act out its watchdog role especially in the teachers' case. Ahmed (2018) studied the use of metaphor in the construction of gender in media discourse. The study revealed that Nigerian women still use metaphorical expressions, which largely kept in place a gender ideology, which upholds male dominance and female subordination. Sobola and Agboola (2016) did a syntactic study of conceptual metaphors in Nollywood movies in order to ascertain the syntactic representation of structural patterns in the conceptual metaphors found in two Nollywood movies and the meaning mechanism involved in the interpretation of metaphorical structures. Lastly, Ishaku, Hasan and Kunalan (2016) considered the Use of Corruption Metaphors in the Online Media of Nigeria, Iraq and Malaysia in order to determine how the media of the different countries conceptualize the concept of corruption. The study revealed that all the countries in their portrayal of corruption see it as a war that need to be fought because of its evil nature. From the studies above, it appears that little or no attention has been paid to conceptual metaphors pervasive in war and engagement in sports newspaper reports, a vacuum this study aims to fill.

## **III. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**

The theoretical orientation adopted for this study is the Critical Metaphor Analysis postulated by Charteris-Black (2004). The theory is a blend of perspectives from Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and pragmatics. The basic argument in Critical Metaphor Theory propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) is that the human thought processes are highly metaphorical and that the human conceptual system is metaphorically conditioned. The perspective of Charteris-Black's theory therefore shows how metaphors could be interpreted from the view point of the user. Analysts working within the paradigm of this theoretical framework are to first and foremost determine the SOURCE and TARGET domain of a particular metaphor. Furthermore, this theory has a connection with critical linguistics and ideology. It tries to reveal the hidden or unconscious intentions of the language user. Thus to determine the metaphoricity of a discourse, three major stages or procedures are to be followed by analysts; viz: metaphor identification, interpretation and explanation. Metaphor identification requires a close reading of the sample texts with the aim of identifying candidate metaphors. These candidate metaphors are then examined in relation to the definition of metaphor provided. Metaphor interpretation involves establishing a relationship between metaphors and the cognitive and

pragmatic factors that determine them. This seeks to link the discourse with the interaction; in other words, to see the discourse as a result of the process of production and as a resource in the act of interpretation. Metaphor explanation, the third stage, involves identifying the social agency that is involved in their production and their social role in persuasion. Attempts are made here to find the relationships between interaction and social context in which metaphor has been used.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

The data was purposively selected from twelve issues of two sports newspapers *Sunday Sporting Sun* and *The Nation Sporting Life* in Nigeria. The texts were carefully studied with a view to determining the metaphoricality of some linguistic items. To test for candidate metaphors, the study adopted Cameron and Maslen’s (2010) adaptation of the Pragglajez’s Group (2007) Metaphor Identification Procedure. The procedure has four steps: familiarizing oneself with the discourse data; working through the data for possible metaphors; checking for the meaning of each metaphor in the context of the discourse; and determining whether the possible candidate metaphors satisfy the first three criteria and they are labeled Metaphors. The metaphors that were derived from the discourse texts were therefore analysed.

#### V. DATA PRESENTATION

**Table 1: Identification and Classifications of Metaphors of War and Engagement in Print Newspapers**

S/N	UTTERANCE	(LINGUISTIC) CONCEPTUAL MAPPING	METAPHOR TYPE/ CATEGORY
1	GOMEZ STRIKE SEALS WIN	A BALL IS A MISSILE, destroying an opponent to seal a victory	A metaphor of war
2	VARANE INSPIRES WIN	FOOTBALL IS BATTLE that must be won	A metaphor of engagement/war
3	Real Madrid returned to winning ways with 3 – 0 victory away at neighbours Getafe...	FOOTBALL IS A BATTLE, against rivals	A metaphor of engagement/war
4	...opposition keeper David Soria helped the ball into his own net under pressure from Varane.	FOOTBALL IS CONFLICT; one can inadvertently turn against oneself	A metaphor of engagement/war
5	... Getafe face third-tier side Badalona in the Copa de Rey second round on their return to action in a week’s time.	FOOTBALL IS COMBAT AND ACTION	A metaphor of engagement
6	VALENCIA have jumped up sixth in the LaLiga Santander table beating Eibar 1-0 at Mestalla on Saturday lunchtime.	FOOTBALL IS CONQUEST	A metaphor of war
7	Overall, Valencia deserved the victory and they will now fly to Saudi Arabia for the Supercopa de Espana on Monday with some added confidence.	VICTORY IN (football) CONQUEST IS CONFIDENCE	A metaphor of war
9	Carvajal hails great saves from Courtois	FOOTBALL IS DANGER	A metaphor of war
10	“Ibra did call me before taking his decision, he kept his word and remains a dear friend. It just means I’ll have to beat him on the pitch now...”	FOOTBALL IS ENGAGEMENT	A metaphor of engagement/war
11	SIMONE Inzaghi wants Lazio to “be aware of our capabilities, but at the same time humble” against Brescia, as they seek a ninth consecutive Serie A victory.	FOOTBALL IS STRENGTH; FOOTBALL IS BATTLE	A metaphor of war
12	“We hope to pick up where we left off in 2019, a year where we won two trophies in five-and-a-half months”....	FOOTBALL IS BATTLE	A metaphor of engagement/war
13	They beat Atalanta for the Copa Italia Final in May, then shocked Juventus 3-1 on December 22 to lift the Supercoppa Italiana.	FOOTBALL IS FIGHT; FOOTBALL IS A WAR OF SURPRISE AND VICTORY	A metaphor of engagement/war
14	“We must be aware of our capabilities, but at the same time be humble, because danger is always just around the corner...”	FOOTBALL IS STRENGTH and FOOTBALL IS DANGER	A metaphor of engagement/war
15	DANI hailed the performance of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois in the Real Madrid’s 3-0 LaLiga victory at neighbours Getafe.	FOOTBALL IS TACTICS AND WAR	A metaphor of engagement/war
16	Bayern’s training camp squad: LEWY, COMAN, MARTINEZ MISSING	FOOTBALL IS TRAINING CAMP FOR BATTLE	A metaphor of engagement/war
17	ROBERT Lewandowski, Kingley Coman and	FOOTBALL IS TRAINING	A metaphor of engagement/war

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	Javi Martinez are not part of the <b>Bayern München squad</b> that would travel to the club's <b>training camp</b> in Doha, Qatar, from January 4 to 10.	CAMP FOR BATTLE	
18	The trio will be staying in Munich along with Niklas Süle to work on their <b>recovery from injury</b> .	FOOTBALLERS ARE WARRIORS, with battle injuries	A metaphor of war
19	Lucas Hernandez, on the other hand, has been deemed <b>fit</b> enough to be included in <b>Bayern's 26-man squad</b> .	FOOTBALL IS STRENGTH	A metaphor of engagement/war
20	Dortmund include Gio Reyna in winter <b>training camp</b>	FOOTBALL IS BATTLE CAMP FOR TRAINING	A metaphor of engagement/war
21	American teenager Gio Reyna has been named among Borussia <b>Dortmund's senior squad</b> for their winter <b>training camp</b> in Marbella, Spain.	FOOTBALL HAS DEGREES OF WARRIORS	A metaphor of war
22	Gomez insists ' <b>hungry</b> ' <b>Liverpool players ready for Everton clash</b>	FOOTBALLERS ARE VORACIOUS WARRIORS (ready to FIGHT)	A metaphor of engagement/war
23	Klopp may be forced to use either Virgil van Dijk or Gomez at centre-back against Everton, but the latter is more than happy <b>to put his body on the line</b> .	FOOTBALL IS DANGER, which can take life	A metaphor of engagement/war
24	I think if you asked everyone in the dressing room they all have that desire to play every game and I think that is what is important for us in this team. <b>There is a real hunger and you feel it</b> .	FOOTBALLERS ARE VORACIOUS WARRIORS	A metaphor of engagement/war
25	...Nottingham Forest head to Stamford Bridge <b>to take on</b> Chelsea in the Emirates FA Cup third round.	FOOTBALL IS BATTLE	A metaphor of engagement
26	...the squad is excited about the prospect of <b>taking on</b> the Premier League side.	FOOTBALL IS A FIGHT	A metaphor of engagement
27	City created a multitude of chances, but the <b>breakthrough</b> came from Oleksander Zinchenko, granted the start in midfield, whose <b>long-range strike</b> was deflected in.	FOOTBALL IS SUSTAINED BATTLE; and the BALL IS A MISSILE	A metaphor of engagement/war
28	Harvey Barnes then doubled Leicester advantage just before half-time, capping off a <b>counter attack</b> and putting the Foxes in firm control.	FOOTBALL IS BATTLE	A metaphor of engagement/war
29	MOURINHO HINTS HE'LL CALL ON YOUTH FOR CUP <b>CLASH</b>	FOOTBALL IS CONFLICT/WAR	A metaphor of engagement/war
30	After <b>losing</b> Tom Heaton and Wesley to season-ending knee <b>injuries</b> this week and John McGinn to a long-term ankle injury before Christmas it was no surprise Smith took as many key players as he could out of <b>the firing line</b> as he could.	FOOTBALL IS DEATH; FOOTBALL IS PAIN;  FOOTBALL IS DANGER	A metaphor of engagement/war
31	The <b>attacker</b> told SPORTINGLIFE that he is elated to see Katsina United record yet another important <b>victory</b> that has taken them close to the mid-table with 15 Points from 11 games.	FOOTBALLER IS A WARRIOR; FOOTBALL IS A BATTLE	A metaphor of engagement/war
32	PYAGBARA <b>READY TO GIVE ALL AGAINST</b> RANGERS	FOOTBALL IS BATTLE	A metaphor of engagement
33	Japhet, Agbanyi <b>target</b> point against Dakkada FC	FOOTBALL IS TARGETING OPPONENT	
34	Aluko, who has been <b>training with Royals squad</b> since last week, had been included in the match-day 18 for the ongoing Emirates FA Cup <b>clash against</b> Blackpool at the Madejski Stadium.	FOOTBALL IS BATTLEFIELD;  FOOTBALL IS BATTLE	A metaphor of engagement/war
35	Liverpool will look to replicate their astonishing Premier League form in the FA	FOOTBALL IS RIVALRY	A metaphor of engagement/war

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	Cup when they meet local <b>rivals</b> Everton in the third round this afternoon.		
36	For Everton, it was their last visit to Anfield in December – a 5-2 <b>defeat</b> – that <b>put the nail in the coffin</b> for former manager Marco Silva, who was sacked soon after.	FOOTBALL IS WAR; FOOTBALL IS DEATH	A metaphor of engagement/war
37	Following a galvanizing <b>victory</b> over Chelsea under caretaker boss Daren Ferguson, the club secured the services of Champions League <b>winner</b> Ancelotti in what must be viewed as a masterful piece of <b>recruitment</b> .	FOOTBALL IS BATTLE  FOOTBALL IS TACTICS	A metaphor of engagement/war
38	Forest dares Chelsea	FOOTBALL IS THREAT/CHALLENGE	A metaphor of engagement
39	Mourinho’s Spurs <b>target</b> FA Cup fourth round	FOOTBALL IS WAR PLANNING	A metaphor of engagement/war
40	Jose Mourinho’s side will be the favourites to progress, but Boro will enter the third-round <b>clash</b> off the back of four straight Championship <b>victories</b> .	FOOTBALL IS WAR	A metaphor of engagement/war
41	Today’s <b>clash</b> will actually be the first time that these two teams have <b>locked horns</b> since February 2017, when Spurs recorded a 1-0 <b>victory</b> .	FOOTBALL IS BATTLE FOOTBALL IS CONFLICT  FOOTBALL IS WAR	A metaphor of engagement/war
42	Harry Arter climbed off the bench to dump Aston Villa out of the FA Cup with a spectacular <b>long-range strike</b> .	FOOTBALL IS A MISSILE	A metaphor of engagement/war
43	The midfielder had been on the pitch for barely 90 seconds when <b>he let fly from 25 yards to seal a 2-1 win for Championship Fulham</b> .	FOOTBALL IS A DESTRUCTIVE MISSILE IN BATTLE	A metaphor of engagement/war
44	Anwar El Ghazi had earlier cancelled out Anthony Knockaert’s cracker, but <b>Arter’s rocket fired the Cottagers</b> through to round four.	FOOTBALL IS A BOMB	A metaphor of engagement/war
45	<b>Defeat</b> may well end up being a blessing in disguise for Villa, however, as they <b>battle</b> to stay in the Premier League and begin their bid for a place in Carabao Cup final against Leicester on Wednesday.	FOOTBALL IS WAR	A metaphor of engagement/war
46	Harry Kane and Tanguy Ndembéle were the significant <b>injury casualties</b> , joining Ben Davies, Danny Rose and Hugo Lloris.	FOOTBALL IS DANGER/ PAIN	A metaphor of war
47	Adam Idah hat-trick <b>fires</b> Norwich into fourth round	FOOTBALL IS A MISSILE	A metaphor of engagement/war
48	Inter, Chelsea <b>at loggerheads</b> over Alonso	FOOTBALL IS CONFLICT	A metaphor of engagement/war
49	Arsenal, Roma hold Mkhitarayan <b>talk</b>	FOOTBALL IS A PARLEY	A metaphor of engagement/war
50	However, Danish media outlet Ekstra Bladet are reporting that Inter will pay Tottenham £20million in January <b>to beat their rivals to the punch</b> .	FOOTBALL IS WAR AND RIVALRY	A metaphor of engagement/war
51	REAL, JUVE <b>SCRAMBLE</b> FOR POGBA...OFFER KROOS, RABOT FOR UNITED STAR	FOOTBALL IS RIVALRY	A metaphor of engagement/war
52	ANCELOTTI: KLOPP <b>BEATS</b> ME TO LIVERPOOL JOB	FOOTBALL IS RIVALRY	A metaphor of engagement/war

( Extracted from *Sunday Sporting Sun* and *The Nation Sporting Life*).

## VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the table of analysis above, it can be seen that there are many different linguistic metaphors in the texts which can be grouped into conceptual categories on the basis of their conceptual domains. In spite of their varying linguistic frames, all the metaphors used here point to war and engagement nature; and their pragmatic functions are discussed below:

**a. The Emotive Function**

Emotions, rather like perception of metaphor, are ultimately part of a subjective world in which our interpretation depends on such diverse influences as our past experiences of people, of situations, and of language. There is a preponderant use of this metaphor in the text, and it has been used to achieve rhetorical effect. In using metaphors to achieve this function, the sports writers have deliberately selected conceptual metaphors that are capable of stirring up the emotions of the readers in a manner that will make them react or respond in the direction of the writer's intention. A number of metaphors used in achieving this function, are exemplified below: column 4 for example indicate the helplessness of the goalkeeper thus: "**opposition** keeper David Soria helped the ball into his own net under **pressure** from Varane." Similar idea is expressed in 10, 52, 51, 49, 45 and so on.

**b. The Persuasive Function**

Metaphor is effective in realizing the speaker's underlying goal of persuading the hearer because of its potential for moving us. The war and engagement metaphors amply used in the texts have their persuasive functions as they have also been deliberately used to dowse tension in the competition, and direct readers in the direction of the writer's intention. The following are linguistic-conceptual metaphors used in achieving this function 49, 2, 7, 10, 11, 24 and so on.

**c. Antagonism Function**

Although having an entertainment value, sports writing is laced with a gloomy disposition to creating antagonism in its characteristics. Thus both the emotive and persuasive functions are embedded in its apparent antagonistic outlook. All the examples provided on the table exhibit this feature of antagonism.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The use of war and engagement metaphors in sports writing constitutes the language of competition that reflects and reinforces social systems which place an important value on competitive social behaviour. To Chateris-Black (2004), it is a gateway through which persuasive and emotive ways of thinking about the world mould the language that we use and through which our thoughts about the world are moulded by language use. For cognitive linguistics, a key metaphor for the transfer of meaning is that of 'mapping' from a source to a target domain (Lakoff, 1993, p. 206). The structure of concrete source domains is mapped onto that of abstract target domains. The aim of the mapping is, therefore, to represent the structural identity between two domains. Lakoff labels these mappings using mnemonics along the lines of 'TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE-DOMAIN' (p. 207). Writing about sports is thus not an exception. The language of sport reporting, therefore, is densely laced with metaphors of war and engagement. The metaphorically used expressions are also spread across other domains of human social behaviour which upholds the veracity of the pervasive nature of metaphors in man's cognitive consciousness and make up. Thus it is from this broad network of conceptual metaphor that all the metaphor categories, and their corresponding linguistic metaphors are derived, including those of sports writing/reporting.

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