

Ecolinguistic Analysis of Flood Representations in Select Nigerian Print Media Reports: The Conceptual Metaphor Approach

Ugomma Anaekperechi Agwuocha¹, Ephraim Chukwu, Prof.²

¹Directorate of General Studies, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State.

²Department of English Language and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7855068>

Published Date: 22-April-2023

Abstract: The call for environmental protection has been a major preoccupation of academic enquiries. Its urgency has necessitated researches outside the natural science disciplines, contributing to this global concern. Consequently, the language discipline has discovered point of intersection, just as demanded by some of its renowned scholars. Adopting the conceptual metaphor approach, this paper hence, carries out an ecolinguistic analysis of discourses on flooding in select print media publications in Nigeria. Drawing insights from the Pragglejaz Group's Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), the needed data are sourced from four national daily newspapers published between the year 2012 and 2020. The selected data are analysed using the lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as put forward by Lakoff and Johnson. The findings reveal that, concepts from the source domains of WAR, ANGRY MONSTER as well as CONTAINER SUBSTANCE, amongst others, have been adopted to talk about the target domain of flood. It posits that, these reports adopted these metaphors to reveal the conceptualization of flood as a catastrophe in the nation. The aim is to reawaken the need to manage and prevent flood disaster in the nation, and by extension, protect the environment from harm orchestrated by unfavourable natural and human influence. In conclusion, this study posits that, language is indispensable in addressing ecological issues. The evoked concepts reawaken our consciousness towards flood disaster management, which ensures environmental protection and sustainability.

Keywords: Ecolinguistics, Ecology, Language, Conceptual Metaphor, Metaphor, Flooding, Print Media Discourses.

1. INTRODUCTION

The beauty of language in communication is realised when it is used to produce expressions which have metaphorical underpins. In this, the users are expected to go beyond the literal level, to derive the actual meaning inherent in such usage. From the cognitive linguistics (henceforth CL) perspectives, this deconstruction of meaning entails the identification of the correspondences between metaphorical concepts in discourse and their cognitive connotations. The mapping correspondences in these concepts give rise to the understanding of certain concepts in terms of the others, which in turn yield conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphor (henceforth CM/s) is interpreted therefore, as the use of concepts from concrete sources to comprehend and talk about abstract concepts. They are realized through cross domain mapping of concepts in metaphorical linguistic expressions. These expressions are pervasive in ecological discourses especially as witnessed in print media reports, thus are resourceful in ecolinguistic researches.

Ecolinguistics, according to Stibbe, (2015:2) investigates "the stories we-live-by, mental models that influence behaviour and lie at the heart of the ecological challenges we are facing". These stories we-live-by are "cognitive structures which influence how multiple people think, talk and act" (Stibbe, 2015:10). They are manifested in the language used to report these ecological issues and crises. Environmental discourses have achieved a level of political and social awareness going

by some reports in the print media (Trckova, 2012; Dryzek, 2005). Such reports have contributed to the deep awareness of ecology. Ecolinguistic studies have taken the usual critical analysis of environmental and social phenomena a step further, by seeking to critically investigate the extent to which language shapes ecological issues as well as how it contributes to environmental sustainability or destruction as the case may be. Stibbe further argues that, researchers can study language as used in these ecological discourses by adopting frameworks from Critical Discourse Analysis, Cognitive frames and Cognitive Linguistics (2015:9). He further informs academics about this cognitive approach to ecolinguistic studies, where he listed metaphor as one of the eight forms of stories to look out for in research data. This illuminates the choice of the conceptual metaphor theory for data analysis, and in turn reveals the gains of interdisciplinary researches.

Language is highly relevant in addressing ecological matters, be it in the literary or linguistic works. Information dissemination on ecological issues is usually captured in the print media; therefore, such news items constitute avenues for conducting ecolinguistic studies. According to Stibbe, sample texts on these discourses can be drawn from “ecological reports, news-papers, environmental campaigns, nature writing”, (2015: 17), and so on. One of the unique attributes of human species is the possession of a sophisticated and dynamic written language skill. This provides humans with the ability to use or alter language during communication to suit their purposes. There are mental models through which such realities are construed. One major way of achieving this, is through the use of conceptual metaphors which are largely evident and “pervasive in most media reporting” (Ezeifeke, 2013:1).

Metaphor as conceived by Dryzek (2005:19) aims at convincing "listeners or readers by putting a situation in a particular light". The use of metaphor in the newspaper reports on ecological crises will continue to influence the way these social and environmental issues are viewed, interpreted, talked about, analysed and acted upon. Metaphorical concepts are powerful linguistic tools used to alter the course of an event. It is against this background that, this paper studies the various conventional metaphors incorporated in the language used to report flood (erosion) disaster; interprets and portrays their metaphorical conceptualization. There have not been ecolinguistic analyses of discourses in the select print media reports on flooding in Nigeria, from the conceptual metaphor approach. Therefore, investigating the manner in which mental representations of concepts are manifested through language used in these print media reports on flood becomes the problem of this study.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to:

1. identify the metaphorical linguistic expressions in the select newspaper reports on flood disaster.
2. interpret the mapping correspondences between the source domains and the target domain..
3. establish the various conceptual metaphors derived from these expressions and their implications for ecolinguistics.

Research Questions

The following research questions are answered.

1. What are the various linguistic expressions which are metaphorically employed in the newspapers' reports on flood disaster?
2. What are the mapping correspondences between the source domains and the target domain?
3. What are the conceptual metaphors of flood realized from these expressions; and their implications for ecolinguistics research?

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

The CMT is a theory propounded by Lakoff and Johnson following their 1980 publication-‘Metaphors We Live By’. Its major preoccupation is to bring to fore, the existence of metaphors, first in our cognitive system before being manifested in our language use. Hence, it is located within the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics (henceforth CL). The major principle of CMT is that, human beings produce linguistic expressions that are largely metaphorical. The

understanding and interpretation of these expressions are based on the correlation between the concepts under discourse, on the one hand and, the mental models they evoke, on the other hand. Usually, these mental models are concrete based, and they are used to describe the abstract notions in the metaphorical expressions. A language user needs to decipher the correspondences between these abstract and concrete notions to deconstruct the meanings in the given metaphorical expressions. The mappings of these correspondences are never “arbitrary but grounded in the body and in everyday experience and knowledge” (Lakoff, 1993:240).

Conceptual metaphors (CM) are categorized into structural, orientational and ontological metaphors. On the one hand, orientational metaphors as opined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:14), “organize a whole system of concepts with respect to one another”. They provide the basis for understanding certain concepts based on our physical and cultural experiences. For instance, from our physical experience, the drooping posture of a person signifies sadness and depression, while the erect posture signifies happiness or general positive emotional state. Hence, we realise the CMs HAPPY IS UP and SAD IS DOWN through these conventional metaphors. ‘That *boosted* my spirit’; ‘my spirit *rose*’ (HAPPY IS UP). ‘My spirit *sank*’; ‘I am feeling *down*’ (SAD IS DOWN). On the other hand, ontological metaphors provide the basis where our experiences are understood in terms of entities, physical objects and substances. For instance, our experiences with the rising prices of things are metaphorically accounted for via the noun-inflation. Lakoff and Johnson (1980:18) put forward these metaphorical expressions to explicate the notions. ‘We need to *combat* inflation’; ‘Buying land is the best way of *dealing with* inflation’. In these examples, inflation is being referred to as an entity to be dealt with or fought against. Hence, the conceptual metaphor INFLATION AS AN ENTITY is realised. However, for structural metaphors, certain concepts are metaphorically structured in terms of others. An example is the ‘Argument is War’ CM realized from the conventional metaphor- ‘He *attacked* every weak point of my argument’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:20).

CM operates on the basis of TARGET and SOURCE DOMAIN which are correlated when mapped together. The TARGET DOMAIN is usually in the abstract form, while the SOURCE DOMAIN is in the concrete form. It is thus presented in the formulae-TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN or CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN A IS CONCEPTUAL DOMAIN B or A is B/ A as B. In explicating this, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:4 & 27) put forward these linguistic expressions which are conventional. ‘Your claims are *indefensible*’. ‘I’ve never *won* an argument’. ‘He *shot down* all my arguments’. ‘We’ll just have to *go our separate ways*’. ‘We’re at a *crossroad*’. ‘I don’t think this relationship is *going* anywhere’. The CMs ‘ARGUMENT IS WAR’ and LOVE IS A JOURNEY are realised from the above conventional metaphors. Familiar concepts from the source domains of WAR and JOURNEY are deployed to describe the target domains of ARGUMENT and LOVE respectively. There exist correspondences amongst these domains. In the first three sentences above, concepts from the lexical field of WAR have been used to talk about the process of argument, an abstract concept. In argument, people win or lose just as in war. Similarly, in the last three sentences, concepts from the concrete domain of journey have been used to talk about love, an abstract concept. The love relationship is linked to a journey where one gets to a crossroad, that is, when both parties feel they are no longer compatible. Hence, the lovers end their union (go our separate ways).

There are sets of mapping correspondence in the structure of ‘war’ and that of ‘argument’ as well as ‘love’ and ‘journey’. The correspondences are as a result of the correlation of our experiences with which we use to structure these concepts in terms of their correspondents (Trckova, 2012). The point to note here is that, within the framework of TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN, in CMT, ‘Argument’ and ‘Love’ are the target domains, while ‘War and ‘Journey’ are the source domains. The examples cited above contain conventionalised concepts which are stored in an individual’s cognitive system. They evoke metaphorical concepts which depict that metaphor is not only a figure of speech but also a figure of thought. Its (metaphor) conceptualisation is “not in the words themselves, but in the mental images” they evoke (Lakoff, 1993:227). The mental models (images) evoked by these conventional metaphors yielded the conceptual metaphors.

Conventional metaphors are pervasive in our language use and are easily interpretable because “without realizing that a metaphorical conceptualisation is being processed, people can easily understand and use the expressions such as ‘He is in trouble now’” (Xu 2013:1470). Note that, conventional metaphors are the same as metaphorical linguistic expressions identified in the data here. It is just a matter of nomenclature. It is through them that conceptual metaphors are realised. Since conceptual metaphors are within the purview of CL, and conventional metaphors realise conceptual metaphors, therefore, they have been chosen for analysis in this study. Again, just as Stibbe (2015) asserts, in studying language use

in ecological discourses, methods and theories from other linguistics area of study can be adopted to do an ecolinguistic analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY

The data for this research are primarily sourced from reports on flood disasters in Nigeria by four Nigerian newspaper publications. They are: the Nations Newspaper, (henceforth NATIONS), *the Guardian* Newspaper (henceforth GUARD), Vanguard Newspaper (henceforth VANG), and the News Agency of Nigeria (henceforth NAN). The focus is on select series of their online publications between the year 2012 and 2020. The choice for these particular newspapers stems from the fact that, they have nationwide coverage of events and readership. Their online editions are also easily accessible. A total of 31 excerpts were collected.

The Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) as proposed by the Pragglejaz Group in selecting metaphorically used words from large corpora of data guided the data collection. The premise of their MIP is that, researchers can identify whether a word is used metaphorically or non-metaphorically in a given context, by using the dictionary and also by intuition. Steps in MIP as put forward in Group (2007:2) is presented thus:

Step 1: Read the entire text-discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.

Step2 – Determine the lexical units in the text – discourse.

Step3 – (a) For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context that is how it applies to an entity, relation or attribute in the situation evoked by the text (contextual meaning). Take into account what comes before and after the lexical units.

(b) For each lexical unit, determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in a given context. For our purposes, basic meaning tends to be:

– More concrete (what they evoke is easier to imagine, see, hear, feel, smell, and taste);

--Related to bodily action;

--More precise (as opposed to vague);

--Historically older;

Basic meanings are not necessarily the most frequent meaning of the lexical unit.

(c) If the lexical unit has a more basic current contemporary meaning in other contexts than the given context, decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it.

Step 4 – If yes, mark the lexical unit as metaphorical.

They, however, postulated that, while there may be a wide range of words that may be seen to be metaphorical, however, the degree to which they are metaphorical may vary.

In addition, the method of data analysis is qualitative, where the identified metaphorically used expressions are accounted for as conceptual metaphors following the tenets of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as put forward by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson.

4. RESULTS

4.1 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR: FLOOD EVENTS AS WAR

SOURCE DOMAIN: WAR. TARGET DOMAIN: FLOOD

In this study, conceptualizing flood events in terms of war is one of the prominent conceptual metaphor themes in the collected data. 'Battling', 'victims', 'tackle', 'taskforce', 'combat', 'battle', 'defense', 'fights' and 'curb' are part of the examples of lexical items which have been isolated following Steps 2-3 of the MIP. They are lexical choices prevalent in war register which have been adopted to talk about flood events. The act of war involves strategies that culminate in a physical activity, which, in the case of flooding, are literally unrealistic. This study identified such usage in the following metaphorical linguistics expressions.

Exc. 1- What the state needs at the moment is intervention fund to enable it to *combat* the prevailing flood disaster (VANG: Sept 1, 2019).

Exc. 2- He said Nasarrawa state needs intervention funds to enable it *fight* erosion and flood disaster (VANG: Sept 1, 2019).

Exc. 3- Our state government supports us with the resources we need to *tackle* flood (VANG: Sept 1, 2019).

Exc. 4- Apart from that, the state government has set up a *taskforce* on flood control. (VANG: Sept 1, 2019)

Exc. 5- Aside, the disbursement of N139 million to *victims* of the disaster... (NATIONS: Jan 7, 2014).

In the above excerpts, the activities undertaken to deal with flooding have been metaphorically explored using concepts from the source domain of war. In Exc. 1, for instance, the lexeme 'combat' has its basic/literal meaning according to the *Longman Contemporary English Dictionary* (2009:297) (henceforth LCED) as 'fighting', especially during a war. However, its contextual use which accounts for its metaphoricity indicates different nonviolent strategies deployed to stop flooding. Similarly, these lexeme- 'combat', 'fight' and 'tackle'- though denote violent actions, have been metaphorically used here to describe the efforts, plans and strategies, which are non-violent, adopted to curb flood disaster.

Similarly, 'taskforce' in Exc. 4 is a common terminology in military register. The LCED (2009:1698) explains it as "a military force sent to a place for a special purpose". Culturally, military activities connote fighting; thus the use of 'taskforce' here connotes the appointment of soldiers in readiness for a battle. The events of flood disaster have been reasoned in terms of war events, hence, the need to institute a taskforce on flood control. 'Taskforce' as employed here does not suggest a military force, but an assembly of brains to look into ways of mitigating flood.

Again, the word 'victim' according to LCED (2009:1837), refers to "someone who has been attacked, robbed or murdered". This basic meaning is common in discourses on physical violence. Be that as it may, flood activities, just as in war situations, have been conceptualised as having its victims. Thus, the critical perspective on the incorporation of war metaphor in natural disasters accounts for the reference to the 'victims' of flood in the excerpt. Besides, WAR metaphor is noted to be prevalent in many researches on natural disasters and climate change (Eriksson, 2019; Skinnemoen, 2009; Trckova, 2012). Just as Semino (2008) argued, the concrete domain of WAR usually is metaphorically used to talk about abstract domains which involve danger, difficulties and uncertain outcomes. The data collected here is replete with familiar discourse terms commonly found in a war situation which have been used to talk about flood events. Managing flooding have been construed in terms of war events. Below are the mapping correspondences which depict the adoption of concepts from the concrete domain of war to talk about an abstract domain of flood.

Lexical Items/ Trigger words	Source: War	Mapping Correspondence	Target: Flood Events
Combat, fight, tackle, taskforce, victims	Army Generals/Commanders/ Soldiers	corresponds to	Those preventing/ curbing flood events
	Battle fronts	''	Flooded areas/plains
	Enemy/war opponent	''	Flood
	War tactics/weapon/logistics	''	Ideas/resources/funds/polices with which to stop flooding.
	Objectives of war: Peace	''	Objective: Flood prevention/control/ management
	Victims of war	''	Flood displaced or killed persons (people affected by flood)

Discussion: Ecological discourses such as flood disaster management and control are replete with war terminologies. One way of studying ecology from the linguistics purview is to look at what the language used in talking about ecological events evoke in the cognition of the reader. As a structural metaphor, concepts from war domain have been used to structure the activities of flood management. The 'war' does not involve engaging an enemy in a physical fight; rather it connotes strategies which should curb the activities of flooding and by extension protect the ecosystem. Concepts from the source domain of 'war' are adapted to experience and talk about concepts in the target domain of 'flood'. The human cognition conceptualizes it as such, and hence newspaper reports on this ecological disaster talk about it as such. Such usage spurs people to take necessary actions towards protecting the environment by effectively managing the crisis.

4.2 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR: FLOOD EVENT AS ANIMATE BEING

SOURCE DOMAIN: ANIMATE BEING. TARGET DOMAIN: FLOOD EVENTS

The portrayal of flooding as an ANIMATE BEING is another conceptual metaphor which runs through the sampled data. Certain lexical items from this source domain have been adopted to describe the events of flood. The use of such lexemes ascribed the characteristics of animate beings to flood. Lakoff and Johnson (2003:33) argue that, “the most obvious ontological metaphors are those where the physical object is further specified as being a person” and such “allows us to comprehend a wide variety of experiences with non-human entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics and activities”. Such ontological metaphor is equally manifested in the collected data where the activities of flood, a non-human, have been experienced and talked about in terms of human. Below are some examples of metaphorical linguistic expressions identified.

Exc. 6- Anambra begins dredging of canals in flooded communities as flood *sacks* residents (VANG. SEPT 18, 2019).

Exc. 7- He said the directive by the governor is to prevent the kind of flooding experienced in 2012 which *swept away* Agwagwune community in Biase LGA ((VANG. SEPT 1, 2019).

Exc. 8- Flood *takes over* Kebbi as residents paddle canoes to access their homes (VANG. SEPT 12, 2020).

Exc. 9- ... also flood *disrupted* church activities in the affected areas. (VANG. SEPT 6, 2019)

Exc. 10- The recent flood *has dealt a deadly blow* on Kebbi state, especially in the area of flood prediction (GUARD: OCT 11, 2020).

Exc. 11- The natural disaster *brought with it* great flooding of the roads which made them impassable (NATIONS: JAN 7, 2014).

In exc. 6-11, the non-human concept as flood has been reasoned to perform activities which ordinarily are exclusive to human beings. Animate beings have the characteristics of ‘sacking’, ‘taking over’, ‘disrupting’, ‘sweeping away’, ‘dealing with’ as well as ‘bringing’. For instance, in exc. 6, the LCED (2009:1447) accounts for the literal meaning of ‘sack’ as: “if soldiers sack a place, they go through it destroying or stealing things and attacking people”. By implication, to sack somebody/something is an activity capable of being performed by a person, an animate being. Flood as used in this context has taken the role of an actor, a person capable of ‘sacking’ people in its literal sense. It also denotes to “dismiss someone from their job” (ibid). When you sack a person, you issue him/her a quit notice to leave a place or leave a job. Flood has performed this act of sacking people from their homes, which from its basic interpretation is a human related activity.

In a similar way, the basic meaning of ‘take over’ from the dictionary refers to the act of taking control of a company, a country or political organization, sometimes by using force. Flood, an inanimate being has been bestowed with the human characteristics of ‘taking over’ or even disrupting and sweeping away as it is seen in exc. 10 and 8. The choice of these lexemes entails that, flood is a person capable of causing willful actions. Notably, flood, an inanimate being, has been personified here. Ontological metaphors manifest as personification where certain physical objects are experienced and talked about in terms of a person. Human characteristics and activities are conferred on non-human entities just as it has been done in flood. The mapping correspondence is as follows:

Lexical Items/ Trigger Words	Source: Animate being	Mapping correspondence	Target: Flood
Sacks, swept away	Person/landlord	corresponds to	Flood
Disrupted, takes over, brought with it, and has dealt a deadly blow.	Sack/giving quit notice	”	Flooding of homes/making people lose their homes.
	Tenants	”	Flood victims.

Discussion: Language as used in reporting such ecological issue as flooding is replete with metaphorical expressions which have interesting conceptual connotations. In the identified CM, the abstract notion of flood has been personified in the expressions, thus yielding the given ontological metaphor. In this ontological metaphor, flood has been reasoned as an animate being, as a person, which allows the various news reporters to make sense of them in human terms in their ecological discourse. By this, actions are persuaded against flooding in Nigeria.

4.3 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR: FLOOD EVENT AS A CONTAINER SUBSTANCE

SOURCE: CONTAINER SUBSTANCE. TARGET: FLOOD EVENT

From our data, flood event is conceptualized as a container which puts people into a confined place. Container metaphors present us with entities and substances which are bounded by surfaces. These might not necessarily be a natural physical boundary which can be seen as the defining container. However, just as a Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 18) asserted “we impose boundaries-marking off territory, so that, it has an inside and a bounding surface-whether a wall, a fence, or an abstract line or plane”. Container metaphors could be talked about in terms of container objects or container substances. In exploring this ontological metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson (1980:18) presented a tub of water as a case. “When you get into the tub, you get into the water”, here the ‘tub’ and ‘water’ are experienced as containers but are of different sorts. The ‘tub’ is a CONTAINER OBJECT while the ‘water’ is a CONTAINER SUBSTANCE. Against this backdrop, this research identified the ontological metaphor- ‘**FLOOD EVENT AS A CONTAINER SUBSTANCE**’ from these conventional metaphors.

Exc. 12- What we need most is humanity from all of us to be able to extend the most vital needs to those *trapped* by the flood (VANG: SEPT 13, 2020).

Exc. 13- However, residents of the state have continued to recount their ordeals while lamenting federal and state government neglect in building infrastructure as the Edepie – Imiringi road linking Yenagoa with communities in the East senatorial district, where former President Goodluck Jonathan hails from, has been *cut off* by erosion and flooding (GUARD: NOV 5, 2020).

In exc. 13, to ‘cut off’ something, the LCED (2009:388) explains that, ‘if a place is cut off, people cannot leave it or reach it’. This implies confinement in a particular place, such as in a container. In this CONTAINER SUBSTANCE METAPHOR, the bounding surface of the container entails the body of water (flood) that surrounds the residents. The content of the container corresponds to the residents and areas within the bounding surface. Similarly, Exc. 12, ‘trap’ has its basic meaning in the LCED (2009:1769) as the act of preventing someone from escaping from somewhere. This implies that, when one is trapped, the person is bounded in a place (container) without any means of getting out of the enclosure. A container can be opened or closed, and when closed, the content is trapped and there is no means of escape from it. Contextually, the conceptualization of flood event as a container substance entails that, flooding has imposed “boundaries-marking off territories so that it has an inside and a bounding surface-whether a wall, a fence, or an abstract line or plane”, (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:31). Flooding and its activities have created well defined boundaries in the stated communities, which have trapped and put residents in confined places, abstract containers. The mapping correspondence can be realized thus:

Lexical items/ Trigger Words	Source: Container Substance	Mapping correspondence	Target: Flood
Trapped, cut off	Container (substance)	Corresponds to	Flooding/ Flood
	Bounded Surface	”	Body of water that surrounds the area
	Content of the container	”	Residents of the communities in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Discussion: Indeed, one can study ecolinguistics by looking at conceptual metaphors as used in ecological discourses. The existence of the extracted metaphorical expressions suggests the existence of metaphors, first of all, in our conceptual system and then manifested in our language use. Through this ontological metaphor, concepts and activities of flooding have been metaphorically structured and are evident in the language used in reporting the ecological event. Flooding as a substance capable of trapping someone in a container has been evoked in our conceptual system through the reading of the extracted expressions. The discourse form hence, is structured as such that, flood management actions should be taken urgently to avoid loss of lives as well as other ecosystems.

4.4 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR: FLOOD EVENT AS AN APPLIED FORCE/PROJECTILE

SOURCE DOMAIN: APPLIED FORCE/PROJECTILE. TARGET DOMAIN: FLOOD EVENT

Again, researchers have consistently identified the concept of ‘Applied Force’ as a source domain in researches on CM, (Bosnjak & Trinsic, 11; Eriksson, 2019:23). In these researches, inferences from this source domain have been adopted to talk about target domains of migration, war, poverty, political oppression, asylum seekers, but none on flooding. Bosnjak

and Trinsic adopted the lexis-projectile which focused on the same aspect of physical experience of ‘using force’. Applied force and projectile refer to the act of using force to push something or to throw something. Such is manifested in the data sourced for this research. The data discovered metaphorical expressions that suggest the activities of flood events which are regarded as being forceful. They include:

Exc.14 - Flood *hit* Delta state on Sunday 23rd September, 2012... (VANG: OCT 17, 2012).

Exc. 15 - Flood *washed away* over 2020 houses, farmlands and livestock in Bauchi state as a result of heavy torrential rainfall in September (VANG: OCT 17, 2012).

Exc.16 - ...this year’s floods have *displaced* about 600 people and cause one fatality in northern Kano (GUARD: AUG 28, 2013).

Exc.17 - Serious flooding *hit* Jimeta – Yola in Adamawa state after a heavy downpour in August 26, 2012 (VANG: OCT 17, 2012).

Exc.18 - Tukur also commended the state Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) for the synergy with it to alleviate the plight of those *displaced* from their habitats and have lost properties to the flood (GUARD: NOV 2, 2020).

Exc.19 - ...experts said that the cost is quite colossal when flood *impacts* on agriculture (GUARD: AUG 10, 2020).

‘Displace’ refers to forcing something out of its usual place or position, likewise ‘washed away’. Both make reference to the use of great force to carry away things. Metaphorically, flood events are conceptualized here as that, which is capable of exerting force. By implication, that which is capable of removing people and structures from their usual place/position is indeed forceful. Flood, an abstract entity has been projected here as that, which is with great power.

Furthermore, the use of ‘hit’ in ‘14’ and ‘17’, relate closely to a projectile. The basic meaning refers to moving into someone or something quickly and with a force. Flood event here is comprehended in terms of a projectile which throws itself at someone or something with a force. Just as in ‘Applied force’, it exerts force and affects the target badly. The juxtaposition of ‘FLOOD EVENT’ AS APPLIED FORCE with FLOOD EVENT AS A PROJECTILE could be accounted for in the basic and superordinate level of categorization. Both are at the basic level and thus could be subsumed under the superordinate category of FLOOD EVENT AS A FORCE. Although Lakoff (1993:209) asserts that, “a mapping at the superordinate level maximizes the possibilities for mapping rich conceptual structure in the source domain onto the target domain, since it permits many basic-level instances, each of which is information rich”. This notwithstanding, this study prefers the use of projectile as a source domain to clearly express the occurrence of the lexis ‘hit’ in the data. Besides the lexical items - ‘hit’, ‘displaced’ and ‘washed away’, the lexis - ‘impact’ is also used to denote the application of force. According to the LCED (2009:812), impact is seen as “the force of one object hitting another”. Contextually used, ‘impact’ refers to an effect or an influence which flood has on the agricultural sector. The effect is forceful. Certainly, the activities of flood events are better described and experienced through the correspondences in projectile/applied force. This ontological metaphor thus, provided us with the basis from our experience with which to talk about flood.

4.5 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR: FLOOD EVENT AS A PURPOSEFUL MOVEMENT IN AND OUT OF BOUNDED REGIONS

SOURCE DOMAIN: PURPOSEFUL MOVEMENT

TARGET DOMAIN: FLOOD EVENT

This study further identified another CM where flood events have also been conceptualized as a purposeful movement in and out of places. These lexical items from the register of journey (movement) have been adopted to talk about events in flood disaster. They include: coming, going, move down, brought, arriving etc. The following linguistic expressions lead to conceptualizing flood as a purposeful movement.

Exc. 20 - Secondly, in Kebbi, we also have water **coming** from the North, Goronyo Dam in Sokoto... Bakalari Dam in Zamfara from where it **comes to** Kebbi that has a flood plain of about 300 kilometers (NAN: OCT 11, 2020).

Exc. 21 - It’s already under water, and then, when it finishes in Nigeria, it would **move down** to some parts of Kwara, Kogi and it’s going to Niger/Delta (NAN: OCT 11, 2020).

Exc. 22 - Nigeria, starting from Kebbi, Niger, Kogi, Anambra, Edo, Rivers, all share the challenge of water **coming** downstream from as far as Guinea (NAN: OCT 11, 2020).

Exc. 23 - The natural disaster of 2012 **brought** with it great flooding of the roads which made them impassable (NATIONS: JAN 7, 2014).

Exc. 24 - The NIHSA has asked them to expect more flooding, adding that flood from the upper reaches of the Niger Basin, comprising Guinea, Mali... Cote d' Ivoire would be **arriving** Nigeria next month (VANG: SEPT. 1, 2019).

The marked trigger words or metaphor key words above are words commonly used to describe the activity of movement. However, a cursory look at their context of use presents a reader with a kind of semantic tension, apparently, such words found in the domain of movement are understood better when one talks about movement by a person. Flood event is not a human being that is capable of literally *arriving, coming, moving down or bringing something*. Even though, movement entails changing positions, and yes, floods do change positions. Adopting linguistics concepts such as 'arriving' however, depicts that, flood is capable of starting a journey with a purpose and a destination to arrive to. For clarity purpose, that flood has been described as an entity which has a purpose to achieve, in terms of where to go, makes its use metaphorical. As described in the language corpora, flood (water) that would come from the North, finishes in Niger, then moves down to Kwara, Kogi etc, surely has a purpose in mind.

More so, flood starting from the Upper reaches of the Niger Basin with a destination in mind arrives Nigeria and further achieves its purpose of bringing (brought) with it great flooding of the roads. A movement (journey) with a purpose has its challenges, thus flood in its movement, will bring its challenges when 'coming' downstream from Guinea to affect Kebbi, Niger, Kogi etc. To this end, to understand the activities of flood and how it flows, concepts from the source domain of movement have been mapped unto the target domain of flood. The conceptual metaphor: 'LONG-TERM PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES ARE JOURNEY' put forward by Lakoff and Johnson as cited in Kovecses (2002:135) buttresses this study's stand. FLOOD EVENT AS A PURPOSEFUL MOVEMENT is a CM at the basic level, while Lakoff and Johnson's 'JOURNEY' explicated earlier, is at the superordinate level. Just like Semino (2008:92), movement conventionally involves having a starting point, a path/direction to move/go through, challenges/obstacles on the path and a destination. As an ontological metaphor, flood has being personified as that which embarks on a journey. The cross domain mapping in the CM under discourse can be realized thus:

Lexical Items/ Trigger Words	Source: Purposeful Movement	Mapping Correspondence	Target: Flood Event
Coming/Comes, going, moving down, arriving, finishes	Coming, going, arriving, moving down	Corresponds to	The flow of flood
	Destination	''	Flooded homes/ areas/streets/road
	Purpose	''	To cause damages
	Route/path/direction to take	''	Flood tides/ plains
	Challenges/obstacles on the way	''	The damage/havoc it causes as it flows

Discussion: The linguistic metaphors above yielded a lucid understanding of how flooding, an ecological disaster operates. The cross domain mappings explicate this. Flooding, according to LCED (2009:614) is "a situation in which an area of land becomes covered with water, for example because of heavy rain". The covering of the land with water can be likened to covering of distance in the concept of movement. There is the flowing of flood towards a particular direction. The coming, going and arrival of flood represent the flowing of flood towards this particular direction, sometimes following a flood tide. To this end, actors in the required field of flood management are properly informed of the pattern of flood operation and the need to take urgent steps towards curbing its activities.

4.6 CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR: FLOOD EVENT AS AN ANGRY WARRIOR/ANGRY MONSTER

SOURCE DOMAIN: ANGRY WARRIOR/ MONSTER

TARGET DOMAIN: FLOOD EVENT

This study discovered another conceptual metaphor theme prevalent in the collected data. Flood event is conceptualized in these data as a warrior or a monster that is angry and furious with the mission to kill and destroy lives and properties. The following metaphorically used expressions led to this postulation.

Exc. 25- Floods in Kano state which swept through nine local governments on August 28, 2012, **claimed** 15 lives (VANG: OCT 17, 2012)

Exc. 26 - Flood hit Delta state on Sunday 23rd, September, 2012 submerging coastal villages and **killing** a 7-year- old girl. (VANG: OCT 17, 2012)

Exc. 27 - The flood **ravaged** many parts of the country in 2012, but drew great attention to Kogi which was heavily **devastated**. (NATION: JAN 7, 2014)

Exc. 28 - Edo state joined states affected by floods on Sunday, 23rd September, 2012, when flood **wreaked** havoc in seven communities of Etsako – central government area. (VANG: OCT 17, 2012)

Exc. 29 - No fewer than 11 villages at Duku with hundreds of mostly rice and millet farmers along the highway were seen struggling to salvage the remnants of their property from the **rampaging flood**. (VANG: SEPT 12, 2020)

Exc. 30 - The flood **killed** five people in Ketso community, a child in Kontagora town and a seven – year – old KhadijatAliyu in Fadipe areas of the state/ (Niger state) (VANG: SEPT: 12, 2020)

Exc. 31 - Flood **destroyed** 2,667 houses, farmlands in Niger – NSEMA (VANG: SPET. 19, 2019).

As is replete in these extracts, flood event has been likened to a warrior and a monster that *kills, destroys and ravages*. Flood being described as a rampaging flood gives it a human attribute exhibited by an angry warrior. From the corpora of data selected, *'kill', 'claim', 'wreck', 'rave'*, are amongst the lexical items marked to be metaphorically used which cause semantic tensions in the identified data. In exc. 25, 26 and 30, the lexemes *'claim'* and *'kill'* from their basic meaning is synonymous with 'put to death', on the one hand (LCED 2009: 887, 267). According to its literal meaning, 'warrior' refers to a soldier or a fighter who is brave and experienced, (LCED 2009: 1857), on the other hand. The use of the lexemes for a non-living thing as flood implies that, flood has been given the human attribute of bravery which includes 'killing/claiming lives' peculiar to a 'warrior'. This research thus argues here that, metaphorically, flood has been conceptualized as a 'warrior' or even a 'war lord', who is brave and experienced in the act of killing. In anger, flood sets out to kill and claim lives. Furthermore, *'rave', 'destroy'* and *'wreck'* denote 'to damage something very badly' (LCED 2009: 1360, 426, 1910). Consequently, the depiction of 'flood' as a destroyer or with the ability to damage something signifies that, it has been talked about as if it is a 'warrior'. Again, the use of *'rampage'*, looking at the context likens an inanimate-flood to an animate – warrior, capable of being on a rampage. 'Rampage' literally means rushing about in a wild and violent way, often causing damage" (LCED 2009: 1355). On rampage, flood, the warrior is rushing about ravaging, killing and claiming lives.

This study further argues that, 'FLOOD EVENT AS AN ANGRY WARRIOR' is an extension of 'FLOOD EVENT AS A WAR' CM. The latter is at the superordinate level of categorization, while the former is at the basic level. General mapping is usually done at the superordinate level, while the special cases occur at the basic level. Besides categorizing the above CM under the superordinate of level of WAR, it can equally fit into the superordinate level of ANIMATE BEING. This is because the actions depicted above are traits found amongst animate beings whether a warrior or otherwise. Nevertheless, the identified metaphorical expressions for this section demands analysis at the basic level for specificity.

Discussion: The above is an example of ontological metaphor, where flooding has been understood as an entity. The import of these representations in ecological discourses is to liken flood event to a physical entity which people are familiar with. Just as in depicting a tsunami as a 'warrior' that "is seen as acting with volition, aiming to physically set upon people", (Trckova, 2012: 147), flood is equally conceptualized thus in these newspaper reports. By implication, the conventional way in which language users in the media houses discuss ecological disaster such as flood is something they are hardly conscious of. Inference patterns of acting with volition from the source domain are mapped onto the target domain to understand it. They unconsciously conceptualize flood disaster metaphorically as an angry warrior, thus affirming the postulation that "the human conceptual system is metaphorically structured and defined" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:454).

5. CONCLUSION

Ecolinguistics studies the interdependence of language and the natural world. It explores the patterns in language use which influences the way people think about and react to ecological issues and, the quest for those forms of language use which inspires people to protect the environment. In this study, the role of language in the understanding and interpretation of the natural world has been manifested. In exploring the more general patterns of language which

influence the various ways people think about and treat the environment, text producers unconsciously realize linguistic metaphorical expressions which expose how flooding is conceptualized in Nigeria, giving rise to conceptual metaphors just as seen in this study. Language indeed evokes mental models with which people reason and talk about ecological issue as flood. These models gave rise to the conceptual metaphors which are prevalent in our daily use of language. For instance, the reasoning of flood as WAR and an ANGRY WARRIOR/MONSTER in Nigeria depicts the devastating effect of flood disaster in various communities and states. Residents thus, experience and talk about it in terms of its destruction of lives and properties. Most flooded communities discover that, they have been trapped to a fixed place by flood. Consequently, people experience and talk about flooding in Nigeria as a container substance. Flood as a container substance creates abstract lines and boundaries (water) which encircle and trap citizens whenever there is flooding. It does not only trap them, it never hesitates to 'sweep away' its victims as if it is a human entity. As a projectile/an applied force, flood uses force in its operation.

This study discovers that, inference patterns from these source domains have been employed systematically to reason about flood, the target domain, with the aim of drawing our attention to the crises of flood, so as to put the right measures in place to manage it and in turn save the ecosystem. The evoked concepts are interpreted based on the cultural and physical experience of the world. Language is always considered a child of the environment and through ecolinguistic analysis, it is discovered that it plays a valuable role in ensuring those practices that promote environmental as well as ecosystem protection are upheld. The media text creators in their language use unconsciously project flooding as that which requires urgency and seriousness in addressing it. Steps taking in this direction ensures the protection of the environment and the sustenance of the ecosystem.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abubakar, S. (2019, September 6). Residents count losses as flood ravages Osun communities. Vanguard News Papers. Retrieved from <http://www.vanguardngr.com>, on April 14, 2021.
- [2] Agada, A. (2012, October 17). Timeline of recent flood incidents in Nigeria. Vanguard Newspapers. Retrieved from <http://vanguardngr.com>, on April 14, 2021.
- [3] Ahon, F. and Egufe, Y. (2019, September 1). Anxiety as 15 states battle flood. Vanguard Newspapers. Retrieved from <http://www.vanguardngr.com>, on April 14, 2021.
- [4] Daniel, S. (2020, September 12). Kebbi floods: Nigeria-Niger highway to be shut as government relocates citizens. Vanguard Newspapers. Retrieved from <http://www.vanguardngr.com>, on April 14, 2021.
- [5] Daniel S. (2020, September 13). Kebbi flooding, a natural tragedy requires urgent attention. Vanguard Newspapers. Retrieved from <http://vanguardngr.com>, on April 14, 2021.
- [6] Deignan, A. (2005). *Metaphor and corpus linguistics*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- [7] Dryzek, J.S. (2005). *The politics of the earth. Environmental discourses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [8] Erikson, I. (2019). Retaining or losing the conceptual metaphor. A study on institutional translation of metaphors in political discourse from English into Swedish and Spanish. Unpublished masters' thesis, Institute for Interpreting and Translation Studies.ii+56
- [9] Ezeifeke, C. (2013). Strategic use of metaphor in Nigerian newspaper reports: A critical perspective. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, 6 (2), 174-192. Retrieved from <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk>, on 23 June 2020.
- [10] Fairclough, N. (2000). *New labour, new language*. London/New York: Routledge.
- [11] Group, P. (2007). MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically used words in discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 22(1), 1-39.
- [12] Guardian Development Network. (2013, August 28). Nigeria floods test government's disaster plans. The Guardian. Retrieved from www.theguardian.com, on April 14, 2021.
- [13] Kovecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in culture: Universality and variations*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.

- [14] Kovecses, Z. (2002). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [15] Kovecses, Z. (2000). *Metaphor and emotion: Language, culture and body in human feeling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [16] Kovecses, Z. (1995). Anger: Its language, conceptualization and physiology in the light of cross-cultural evidence. In Taylor, J. & Maclaury, R. (Eds), *Language and the cognitive construal of the world*, 181-196. Berlin: W.de Gruyter.
- [17] Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphors in A. Ortony (Ed), *Metaphor and thought* (2nd edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Pp. 202-251.
- [18] Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [19] Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [20] Lemke, J. (1990). *Talking science: Language, learning and values*. Westport: Ablex.
- [21] Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009). England: Pearson Education Limited
- [22] Ma, L. and Liu, A. (2008). A universal approach to metaphors. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, XVII (1), 260-268. Retrieved from https://web.uri.edu/files/2_ on January 28, 2020.
- [23] Matsuku, K. (1995). Metaphors of anger in Japanese. Taylor, J. & Maclaury, R. (Eds), 137-151. Berlin: W.de Gruyter.
- [24] Musolff, A. (2017). Metaphor and cultural cognition. In Sharifian, F. (Ed), *Advances in Cultural Linguistics*, 325-344. Singapore: Springer.
- [25] Odita, S. (2020, October 11). We need national drainage architecture to stop incessant flooding say Bagudu. News Agency of Nigeria (NAN). Retrieved from www.m.guardian.ng, on April 14, 2021.
- [26] Ogunyinka, V. (2019, September 19). Flood destroyed 2,667 houses, farmlands in Niger-NSEMA. Vanguard Newspaper. Retrieved from <http://vanguardngr.com>, on April 14, 2021
- [27] Osuji, S. (2014, January 7). Kogi after 2012 floods. The Nations Newspaper. Retrieved from www.thenationonline.ng.net, on April 14, 2021.
- [28] Perelman, C. and Olbrechts -Tyteca, L. (1969). *The new rhetoric: A treatise on argumentation*. Paris: University of Notre-Dame Press.
- [29] Semino, E. (2008). *Metaphor in discourse*. Cambridge/UK: Cambridge University Press.
- [30] Skinnemoen, J. (2009). Metaphors in climate change discourse. Unpublished Masters thesis, Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages, the University of Oslo. I+147. Retrieved from <https://www.dui.uio.no/MA> (pdf), on 24 May, 2020.
- [31] Stibbe, A. (2015). *Ecolinguistics. Language, ecology and the stories we live by*. New York: Routledge.
- [32] Taylor, J. & Mbense, T. (1998). Red dogs and rotten mealies: How Zulus talk about anger. In Athanasiadou, A. & Tabakowska, E. (Eds), *Speaking of Emotions: Conceptualisation and Expression*, 191-226. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- [33] Trckova, D. (2012). Metaphorical representation of a natural phenomenon in newspaper discourse on natural catastrophes. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, 5(2), 137-151.
- [34] Ujumadu, V. (2019, September 18). Anambra begins dredging of canals in flooded communities as flood sacks residents. Vanguard newspaper. Retrieved from <http://vanguardngr.com>, on April 14, 2021.
- [35] Yu, N. (1998). *The contemporary theory of metaphor: A perspective from Chinese*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.