

CHAPTER

7

**SECURITY CHALLENGE IN NIGERIA IS WAR:
METAPHORICAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN SELECTED
NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS**

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LANGUAGE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY: ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF JOSEF SCHMIED

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Abstract

This study is designed to investigate how insecurity and connected challenges are metaphorically conceptualised in Nigerian newspapers as war, hunting, natural disasters (water and fire), economy, farming, game and purification. Following the instances of the use of metaphoric expressions in the selected Nigerian newspaper editorials on the insecurity issues in Nigeria, the study reveals that insecurity is represented as a challenge, expressed through seven salient metaphors. Security challenge is constructed as war (53.5%) through war metaphors like weapon, bloodbath to portray Nigeria as a battlefield; hunting (12.1%) through hunting metaphors like captive, target; natural disaster (11.7%) through water and fire metaphors like flow, awash; engulf, extinguish; economy (10.6%) through economy metaphors like gains, cheap; game (4.8%) through game metaphors like tackle, league; farming (4.4%) through farming metaphors like plant, fish; and purification (2.9%) through cleansing metaphors like wipe out, flush out. The seven metaphors unearthed in this paper suggest the endless destruction of people, property and communities in Nigeria by the insecurity actors, while the game and purification metaphors suggest the need for the government to tackle and wipe out the insecurity actors.

Keywords: *Metaphor; representation; insecurity actors; security challenge; discourse analysis; newspaper editorial; Nigeria*

Introduction

INSECURITY is a concept which has often generated anxiety and intimidation because it deals with security challenges. It is a term which has recently taken the centre-stage in Nigeria. This study is designed to investigate how insecurity and its connected challenges are metaphorically conceptualised in Nigerian newspapers as natural disasters (water and fire), economy, purifier, farming and hunting activities. The insecurity situation has enticed pervasive attention including from the mass media within and outside Nigeria, bringing about several discourses from the Nigerian and international media via different news genres – editorials, news reports, headlines, opinions, interviews and so forth. The news media in Nigeria

and beyond have widely reported the various insecurity activities which have been challenging the continuous existence of Nigeria. News editors, through the editorials, have taken the centre-stage in orienting the general public on the insecurity cases and their causes, suggesting possible solutions. The editorial representations have been embellished with different literary and metaphoric expressions where editors map their arguments from one domain to the other. This is where our interest lies in this study. What metaphoric expressions have been deployed in the representation of insecurity in Nigeria? What are the possible source domains of the deployed metaphors? What percentage of dominance does each identified metaphoric field claim? What individuals and activities have been framed in the constructions? Using insights from Charteris-Black (2004) on the critical metaphor approach, this study explores how selected Nigerian newspapers employ metaphorical linguistic terms like bloodbath, captive, purge, influx, gains, and plant to construct insecurity issues and insecurity actors as vicious villains, while Nigerians and farmers are constructed as harmless victims.

Security Challenges in Nigeria and Media Representation

Security has been argued to be the pillar upon which every meaningful development could be achieved and sustained (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013). Growth occurs economically, technologically, agriculturally, educationally, politically, and so forth, mainly in an atmosphere that is not devoid of peace. Insecurity can be seen as a state of being subject to fear, terrorism, war, threat, danger, coercion, molestation, intimidation, harassment, extortion and so forth. The genesis of insecurity in any nation has often been anchored to governmental lapse. At present, Nigeria battles security challenges across its six geographical zones. Caused by unemployment, poverty, bad governance, rise in ethnic and militia groups, perceived victimisation, weak leadership, weak judiciary, domination and exploitation, ineffective security agencies, weak economy, struggle for power, corrupt practices (Jega, 2002; Saluwu, 2010; Okorie, 2011; Ezeoha, 2011 and Ali, 2013), security challenges in Nigeria vary. Criminal activities and other security threats such as ritual killing, militancy, Biafra agitation, oil bunkering, terrorism, daylight robbery, communal wars, Boko Haram activities, herdsmen activities, arms and drug dealing, racketeering, kidnapping, arson and brigandage, assassination, maiming the innocent, acid bathing, and other social vices have remained realities to the citizenry, and remain news headlines which continue to threaten the corporate existence of Nigeria, shaking the country's foundation, despite the provision of Section 14 (2b) of the constitution which stipulates that 'the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.' Although every nation has security challenges, the difference is the approach used in curtailing such challenges.

Mainly, insecurity in Nigeria has been heightened by Boko Haram terrorists, whose activities became very pronounced in Nigeria from 2009. Within a couple of years, the group had killed over 10,000 civilians and security personnel and bombed the United Nations office in Abuja, churches, mosques, army barracks, police headquarters, motor parks and other public places (Osisanwo, 2016). The group had also kidnapped numerous students of Chibok, Borno State (276 girls in April 2014); Dapchi, Yobe State (111 girls in 2018); Kankara, Katsina State (300+ in December 2020); Jangebe/Dengebe, Zamfara State (279 girls in February 2021); Kagara, Niger State (42 in February 2021) and so forth. When the former administration of President Muhammadu Buhari claimed to have decimated Boko Haram, the Fulani herdsmen went into full-blown atrocious activities, including wanton killing of farmers, carrying AK-47 rifles about while engaging in open-grazing, abduction and subsequent killing of passengers on highways, raping of women and girls across communities, and so forth. The Global Terrorism Index (2015) reports that the Fulani herdsmen are the 'Fourth deadliest' terrorist group in the world. Consequently, security in Nigeria has been further worsened by the killing of people in different places including worship centres, attacks on passengers on highways, abduction of passengers on highways for payment of ransom, human and drug trafficking, porous borders, ethnic militias, militancy (Niger-Delta and others), pipeline vandalism, armed robbery, hostage taking, political violence, ethno-religious conflicts, economic violence among others.

Representation has been described as the art of constructing reality using a particular viewpoint, which comprises certain evaluative patterns and value judgements (Chiluwa and Chiluwa, 2020). The news media have taken the lead in relaying different societal activities and issues, including security issues to news consumers, using different strategies and representations, including metaphoric representations of events – the concern of this study. The choices are often deployed to orientate readers and citizenry alike to guide them towards opinion formation. The role of language in the representations cannot be downplayed; hence, meaning is not necessarily embedded in reality as we perceive it but constructed through linguistic representation (Wenden, 2005). Editors in newspaper editorials subject language use to suit the objectives of the news medium they represent. Nevertheless, oftentimes, newspapers seem to converge to give similar representations to some issues generally perceived to be knotty. Thus, such issues (like insecurity, terrorism, and conflict) earn a preferred common perception of reality, where the represented social actors and actions may jointly be framed negatively. Therefore, language choices and literary expressions are crucial in media representations since they carry the power to shape the opinions of individuals or groups on a particular subject. Hence, in representing war, conflict and other challenges, the media have become powerful actors whose reports

influence public opinion and potentially ameliorate or deteriorate the situation (Nijenhuis, 2014).

Literature on the linguistic and discourse approaches to the study of media representations of security issues in Nigeria has examined how insurgency and terrorism are represented in the media (Chiluwa, 2011a, 2011b; Osisanwo, 2016, 2019, 2024a & 2024b). Some have examined issues of conflict and protest (Igwebuike, 2020; Osisanwo and Iyoha, 2020). However, despite its relevance, literature is rare on the linguistic and discourse approaches to the study of media representations of insecurity in Nigeria. Yet, the significance of metaphoric representations in editorials in tracking newspapers' subjectivity, and the significant impact of national insecurity on the Nigerian state are very crucial. Only very relatively few studies have focused on the thematic concept of insecurity in the representations by the media. Yet, the role of the media in containing or managing insecurity is noteworthy. Literature on the linguistic and discourse approaches to the study of media representations of conflicts in Nigeria is rare. Some such studies on Fulani-herdsmen conflicts include Gever and Essien (2017), Abdulbaqi and Ariemu (2017), Ciboh (2017), Olomajobi (2017), Ajibefun 2018 Olomajobi and Ajilore (2018), Chiluwa and Chiluwa (2020) and Igwebuike (2020). All the studies only partially relate to the current study in the reportage of an aspect of security threat. Nevertheless, Osisanwo (2024a) is closer to the current study in approach than others since both studies focus on security threats in Nigeria. However, while Osisanwo (2024a) focuses on discourse representation of 'self' and 'other' in newspaper editorials on insecurity, the current study's scope is on metaphoric representation. This study explores how the selected two Nigerian newspapers' editorials on the security challenges in Nigeria employ metaphoric expressions to construct insecurity issues and insecurity actors on the one hand, and Nigerians, farmers and security personnel on the other hand.

Critical Metaphor Approach

Credited to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*, conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), which has been located within the wider theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics (CL), is geared towards highlighting the role of cognition in the interpretation of discourse. Metaphors are useful in deconstructing and simplifying concrete concepts (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). To cognitivists, the mind plays a crucial role in the structure of human language; however, they believe that the other roles played by extra-linguistic factors and knowledge of them cannot be downplayed. To corroborate this view, van Dijk (2005) proposes the 'discourse-cognition-society' triangle, where he sees cognition as an interface between discourse and society. In relation, the CMT is committed to the view that human cognition is organised, in skeletal form, in conceptual schemas. Conceptual schemas "constitute cognitive models of some aspects of the world, models that we

use in comprehending our experience and in reasoning about it. Cognitive models are not conscious models; they are unconscious models used automatically and effortlessly” (Lakoff and Turner, 1989, p.65-66). In the cognitivists' approach to metaphor, metaphor is primarily a matter of thinking, and derivatively a matter of language. The cognitivists' paradigm suggests that thoughts can give rise to non-verbal or multimodal metaphors and insists that verbal metaphors are manifestations of thought. The fathers of conceptual metaphor theory (CMT), G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, have described the essence of metaphor as “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (1980, p.5).

As a linguistic device, metaphor is deeply rooted in language, thought and action, pervading everyday life. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 157) contend that metaphors have the persuasive power 'to define reality [. . .] through a coherent network of entailments that highlight some features of reality and hide others. Metaphor operates at the level of human cognition and or thinking and has proved to be significantly crucial in reproducing socio-cultural background knowledge in memory. According to Lakoff (1993:215), conceptual metaphor has to do with cross-domain mapping and the ontological correspondence metaphors induce in our minds between 'the source domain' and 'the target domain'. Using the conceptual term, 'Invariance Principle', Lakoff argues that 'metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology, that is, the image-schema structure, of the source domain in a way that is consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain'. While the source domain consists of “a set of literal entities, attributes, processes and relationships linked semantically in terms of spatial, causal and temporal relationships” ... the target domain is derived from the abstract concept of our experiences which takes its structure from the source domain (Ezekeife 2013). Hence, words and expressions from the source domain are deployed to lexicalise processes and attributes in the target domain. This underlying metaphor is usually described in uppercase using Lakoff's (1993) mnemonics, TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN. This can be rephrased using A IS (or AS) B: where A represents the target domain and B represents the source domain. Mainly, therefore, metaphors map a source domain, for example, NATURAL DISASTER, onto a target domain, for example, INSECURITY, thereby making the target domain appear in a new light. Hence, the conceptual metaphor, INSECURITY IS NATURAL DISASTER involves the abstract connection between one 'conceptual domain' (Lakoff 1993, 208–209) to another by mapping a source domain (NATURAL DISASTER) and a target domain (INSECURITY). The new light given to insecurity, therefore, is the fact that it is a natural disaster.

Existing studies have examined different aspects of metaphor. Cognitivist metaphor scholars (such as Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999, 2003; Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987, 1993; Lakoff and Turner 1989, Kövecses 1986, 2000, 2002, 2005;

Sweetser 1990; Turner 1991, 1996; Gibbs and Steen 1999; Charteris-Black 2004; Odebunmi 2010; Ezeifeke 2013) have widely explored the aspect of verbal manifestations of metaphor. Linguistic scholars have applied the metaphor theory to different contexts, ranging from political contexts, medical contexts, social contexts, and cultural contexts to media contexts.

Charteris-Black (2004) has contributed greatly to the strand of conceptual metaphor that is called the Critical Metaphor Approach (CMA). CMA, which perceives metaphors as powerful tools capable of influencing humans' perception of certain social realities, holds the view that the use of metaphor is not only dependent on social and societal factors but also ideological (Charteris-Black (2004). To unearth the ideological implications of the use of metaphorical language in discourse contexts, CMA approaches metaphor analysis using three interrelated processes: identification, interpretation, and explanation (Charteris-Black 2004, 2005). At the identification stage, the metaphors inherent in a text are identified. Charteris-Black (2004) explains the focus at each of the stages. At the interpretation level, the relationships between the source domain and the target domain are established, that is, the examination of the conceptual mappings of source and target domains of metaphors about the contexts in which the metaphors are rooted. At the explanation stage, the analyst examines the way the metaphors acquire meaning within their contexts of occurrence, that is, expounding on the discourse functions of the identified metaphors; hence, this stage involves 'identifying the discourse function that permits us to establish their ideological and political motivation' (Charteris-Black (2004, 39). Insecurity, for example, a societal issue that has become commonplace in Nigeria is metaphorically framed differently by different newspapers. The CMA therefore proves to be a useful theory in unearthing the metaphorical discourses in newspaper editorials.

Data and Methodology

The data for this paper were retrieved from newspaper editorials published between 2017 and 2020 by two Nigerian national newspapers, namely *Punch* (from the southern part of Nigeria) and *Leadership* (from the northern part of Nigeria). Both papers are privately owned daily national newspapers, supposedly without government interference. Editorials on security challenges that Nigeria is facing were sampled from the newspapers between 2017 and 2020. The four-year period covered the season of numerous security challenges, which go beyond insurgency to communal clashes, kidnapping, herdsman-farmer clashes, and so forth. The period also covered two years each from the first and second terms of President Muhammadu Buhari; it was also a period that the media produced numerous editorials on the insecurity situation bedevilling Nigeria. Using the word *insecurity* as the general search word for retrieving editorials from the newspapers, results showed 102 editorials for both newspapers. Out of over 1000 editorials by each of

the newspapers within the selected period, only 102 editions (*Punch* – 65; *Leadership Nigeria* - 37) were selected on the subject matter of security challenges. The retrieved 102 editorials were manually cleaned up in preparation for analysis; consequently, we were left with 85 editorials (*The Punch* – 51; *Leadership Nigeria* - 34).

The analysis of metaphor was undertaken using Charteris-Black’s (2004) critical metaphor approach and guided by the three interrelated stages of metaphor analysis, that is, identification, interpretation and explanation. At the identification stage, metaphorical words and terms, including combat, weapon, rifle, war, inflow, contain, spread, spill, awash, influx, engulf, flames, extinguish, seed, plant, root, fish, slaughter, trap, captive/capture, target, wipe, flush, tackle that are used with a sense in the text were identified and labelled as ‘metaphor keywords.’ The analysis of the identified metaphor keywords was authenticated with a quantitative search in the data corpus. Their frequency was determined and converted to percentages. At the interpretation stage, the conceptual cross-domain mappings of the metaphors were interpreted, and the identified metaphor keywords were linked to the conceptual domains they represent. At the last stage, the selected metaphors were explained about their meanings alongside the metaphor keywords.

Analysis and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of metaphor keywords about conceptual domains.

S/N	Conceptual Domains of Metaphors	Examples of Metaphor Keywords	Frequency of Occurrence by newspaper		Frequency of Occurrence (summation)	Percentage of Occurrence
			<i>Punch</i>	<i>Leadership</i>		
1	War	Kill, massacre, bloody, murder, bloodbath, weapon	74	72	146	53.5
2	Hunting	Captive, target, slaughter, trap	21	12	33	12.1
3	Natural disaster (moving water/ fire)	Flow, influx, invasion, unstoppable, uncontrollable, awash, spill over, engulf, extinguish, flame	18	14	32	11.7
4	Economy/ Business	Gains, ransom, fund, price, cheap,	10	19	29	10.6
5	Game	tackle, league	2	11	13	4.8
6	Farming	Seed, plant, root, fish	5	7	12	4.4
7	Purification	Wipe out, purge, flush out	3	5	08	2.9
			133	140	273	100%

Table 1 shows the number and percentage of times that metaphor keywords are used metaphorically to construct the seven identified conceptual domains of war, hunting, natural disaster, economy, game, farming and purification. War, with 53.5% (146) occurrence, is preponderantly deployed by the newspapers to construct security challenge (SC) as occasioned by the actors as involving the use of sophisticated *weapon* to engender *bloodbath, murder, killings, massacre* of civilians and other Nigerians, activating the spatial setting in Nigeria into a war zone. War is followed by hunting with 12.1% (33) occurrence, where Nigerians are represented as not just victims but prey that are being hunted by the actors who are activating the insecurity fire through metaphors like *captive, target, slaughter, and trap*. Hunting is closely followed by natural disasters which bifurcates into running water and fire with 11.7% (32) occurrence. With the running water conceptual metaphor domain, the newspapers construct SC as overflowing water that is dangerous to human existence, using examples of words associated with running water. Occasioned by water *invasion*, other words like *flow, influx, and awash* depict the water disaster as *uncontrollable* and *unstoppable, spilling over* to other cities and towns. In addition, with fire conceptual metaphor, the newspapers construct SC as intense fire with words like *engulf, flame* and the need to *extinguish* it. Economy has 10.6% (29) occurrence as the newspapers construct SC using business-associated metaphors like *gains, ransom, fund, price, and cheap* to depict how insecurity is used for buying and selling between the villains and the victims. Game has 4.8% (13) occurrence, constructed with metaphors such as *play, tackle, and league*. Farming has 4.4% (12) occurrence, constructed with farming-related metaphors like *seed, plant, root, graze, and fish*. Purification has 2.9% (08) occurrence, where the newspapers conceptualise cleansing where the cleaning agents are the state and security apparatus, who are urged to combat the insecurity actors and actions constructed with metaphors such as *wipe out, purge, flush out*.

SC is War

Metaphors that involve images from the source domain of WAR in the newspaper representations represent situations where insecurity actors are framed as warriors in a conflict, combating to defeat their opponents and count them among their victims. The war metaphors construct insecurity actors as warriors who use sophisticated *weapon* to engender *bloodbath, murders, killings, massacres* of Nigerian civilians and, in some cases, security operatives who are defending Nigerians. For instance:

- (1) For the uninitiated, what is going on can be easily and cheaply dismissed as a clash between farmers and herdsmen. But we are looking at the modalities of the crisis and the **weapons** used in executing them. (*Leadership*, January 8, 2018)

(2) But the senseless **attacks** by a group of them, carrying the deadly **Ak-47 assault rifles**, are unwarranted and unprecedented. (*Leadership*, March 24, 2018)

(3) Hardly does a day pass without reports of mass murder of innocent Nigerians. For instance, it was reported last week that bandits shot and killed 16 people in Kanoma village in the Maru Local Government Area of Zamfara State. In the same week, reports had it that no fewer than 50 people were killed when bandits attacked five Sokoto villages in Rabah and Isa local government areas... Boko Haram ... has been responsible for many deaths in Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Sokoto states. Another NST report said 7,253 died from violent activities in Nigeria between June 2018 and May 2019. They were either victims of mass killings by the different insurgent groups holding the country to ransom or those who are victims of extrajudicial killings by the military in the course of their counterinsurgency operations. On the recent attacks on eight villages in Niger State, an ex-lawmaker, David Umaru, said on Friday that 70 bodies were recovered... The NST report named Borno State, with 9,303 killed, as by far the worst hit, followed by Zamfara, Benue and Adamawa with 1,963, 1,642 and 1,529 deaths respectively. When the 1,488 killed in Kaduna; 771 in Plateau; 649 in Taraba; 467 in Cross River; 301 in Ogun and 252 in Niger are added, it becomes clear why the Nigerian landscape has sometimes been described as a killing field and why investors are giving it a wide berth. (*The Punch*, June 20, 2019)

During the war, words like 'weapon', 'attack', 'rifle', '**mass murder**', '**death**', '**mass killing**', '**murder**' and '**bloodbath**' are **commonplace**. The metaphor SC IS WAR paints the image of combat, battle and conflict, activated by different degrees of killings and unrest across the nation. In texts 1 and 2, SC IS WEAPON/RIFLE depicts the use of armament exploited by herders in displacing farmers. The representation of 'weapon' and 'AK-47 assault rifle' suggests the warrior state of the **attackers**, who engage in 'senseless attacks' on their victims. Other conceptual metaphors about war are SC IS ATTACK (texts 2 – 5), SC IS MURDER (texts 3 and 5), SC IS DEATH (text 3), SC IS KILLING FIELD (text 4), SC IS BLOODBATH (text 4), and so forth.

(4) The Emir of Potiskum, Yobe State, Umaru Bubaram, escaped by a whisker when his convoy was **attacked** on the Kaduna–Zaria Highway but six people were **killed** including his security details... illicit arms and ammunition into the country, which fuel this orgy of **bloodbath**. (*The Punch*, February 4, 2020)

(5) A defeated Boko Haram cannot routinely attack military fortresses or invade villages to slaughter defenceless citizens the way it did July last year when it murdered 65 people during a funeral ceremony ... landscapes of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, ravaged by these wanton killings, this tragic scenario is not likely

to change until the brutal reality that states should be involved in the security of lives and property is implemented. (*The Punch*, February 12, 2020)

The editorials represent war on farmers, farmlands and other locations in Nigeria using different weapons to displace and terminate the lives of innocent Nigerians. Text 3 deploys different expressions to create the image of a war front occasioned by the insecurity, especially in the north, and other parts of the country, using expressions like 'mass murder of innocent Nigerians', 'bandits shot and killed 16 people', '50 people were killed when bandits attacked five Sokoto villages', 'many deaths in Zamfara...', 'violent activities', 'victims of mass killings', 'victims of extrajudicial killings', '70 bodies were recovered', 'with 1,963, 1,642 and 1,529 deaths respectively', 'as a killing field.' The different expressions create the impression of Nigeria being a war theatre, a warfront, calling on the world for rescue. The number of deaths (text 3) and bodies recovered (texts 3 and 5) suggests further that Nigeria is a battlefield, where 'wanton killings' (text 5) have become the new order. The metaphoric mapping MURDER, KILL, DEATH, MASSACRE, SLAUGHTER depicts war zone where armed or unarmed warriors keep falling and dying, suggesting a serious collapse of the security outfit of the country where the defenceless citizens cannot be defended, while the endless attacks suggest heightened security challenges in Nigeria. The texts differently activated the warriors, who are otherwise better described as villains in this context, to include bandits, herdsmen, Boko Haram and others, while the victims are defenceless Nigerian citizens, farmers and security personnel.

SC is Hunting

Metaphors that involve images from the source domain of HUNTING in the newspaper editorials reveal contexts where insecurity actors are framed as predators hunting for preys. The metaphors construct desperado insecurity actors as hunters and captors who *target, trap, capture, slaughter* their *captives* and *targets*, that is Nigerians, farmers and security operatives. For instance:

(6) The rampant stories of the treacherous activities of herdsmen began two years ago with kidnapping and extortion, and in some cases, outright assassination of the **captives**, if the demanded ransoms were not forthcoming. (*Leadership*, March 24, 2018)

(7) At a point, anyone travelling between Abuja and Kaduna was a possible **target** for abduction. It took the belated action of the Nigerian police force to temporarily quell the frequency of attacks, but the situation is still potent. (*Leadership*, March 24, 2018)

(8) Since 2016, the Kaduna-Abuja Expressway has become a zone of kidnapping. In July 2017, bandits kidnapped 20 persons in broad daylight on the

road.. The bandits have been slaughtering police officers and soldiers in places like Birnin-Gwari with uncanny regularity. (*The Punch*, July 20, 2018)

(9) Dozens of farmers have been killed and hundreds of hectares of farmlands remained uncultivated. Most of the farmer victims were **trapped** on their farmlands and got killed. (*Leadership*, April 23, 2019)

(10) Benue State had in January 2018 similarly buried 73 people **slaughtered** by the herders. (*ThePunch*, February 4, 2020)

Insecurity actors are metaphorically portrayed as hunters who trail their targets. Characteristically, a hunter is a predator who stalks its prey and determines the best time to attack. Bandits, terrorists, kidnappers and cattle rustlers are predators and the represented hunters in this context. In the editorials, hunting is consistently used as source domain to entreat the idea that bandits, terrorists, kidnappers and cattle rustlers trail Nigerians, including inhabitants in the north-eastern part and farmers across the country. In text 6, emphasis is on cattle rustlers – herdsman whose represented occupation has gone beyond cattle rustling to kidnapping for ransom. The word, ‘captives’ metaphorically conceptualises herdsman as dangerous people who hunt others for economic gain. *Leadership* editorial in text 7 deploys the word ‘target’ to metaphorically conceptualise Nigerian roads, with emphasis on Abuja-Kaduna road as a dangerous field where hunters *target* their prey for capture. Similarly, *Punch* editorial in text 8 hinges on the danger associated with the Abuja-Kaduna road as a dangerous field where bandits do not only capture, but also *slaughter* their captives. The word ‘slaughter’ as used in texts 8 and 10 which metaphorically conceptualises the killing of animals by hunters; and in this case, *the bandits have been slaughtering police officers and soldiers in places like Birnin-Gwari with uncanny regularity*. Hence, SC IS SLAUGHTERING constructs bandits as hunting police officers who are unmindful of the assaults. This representation sees the bandits as the hunters, while the police officers and soldiers are the hunted preys who are slaughtered like animals. The use of ‘with uncanny regularity’ hypes the frequency of attacks on security officers, suggesting helplessness and the need for assistance from other quarters. Meanwhile, the slaughtering in text 10 pointedly identified herders – not just bandits – as the hunters behind the killings, with a figure of 73 deaths. In text 9, ‘trapped’ metaphorically conceptualises farmlands as a dangerous ground for the farmers who are hunted in ‘dozens’, leading to ‘hundreds of hectares of farmlands’ being left ‘uncultivated.’ Therefore, the general representation is that bandits and herders are hunters who deploy hunting strategies to hunt their victims.

SC is Natural Disaster (Running Water)

Natural disaster metaphors are commonly used in the media, editorials inclusive, to denote the idea that insecurity threatens the challenged. Natural disaster

metaphors in our data bifurcate into running water and fire. The newspaper editorials deploy the water metaphor which sees SC as domain of RUNNING WATER and conceptualises it through the identification of the regularity and quantity of destructive actions meted out to the Nigerian people by the insecurity actors. The editorials depict the incessant attack on Nigerians as an *unstoppable* and *uncontrollable* invasion of different territories in Nigeria. The editors deploy conventional metaphors like *flow, influx, awash, spillingover* to create the image of moving water. For instance:

(11) Boko Haram's **uncontrolled attacks**, including the abduction of the Chibok girls occurred during President Jonathan Goodluck's era. It was determined by some Nigerians that Jonathan was virtually ineffectual, clueless, and too weak for a hegemonic leadership. The blame game rendered perceived impotency of the administration. (*Leadership*, March 24, 2018)

(12) The challenges of securing Nigeria's extensive and expansive borders assumed national emergency in the wake of the war against Boko Haram terrorists and the suspected **influx** of criminals masquerading as herdsmen... The disturbing security issues in the neighbouring countries which **spill over** into Nigeria are not helping matters just as they demand that urgent **measures** be applied to make the country safe and secure. (*Leadership*, April 15, 2019)

(13) The news media is constantly **awash** with killings in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kaduna, Borno, Yobe among others. Some of the killings are attributed to Boko Haram or the bandits. Others are blamed on herdsmen. Yet others are blamed on ethnic rivalry and religion. (*Leadership*, April 23, 2019)

(14) It is a bold attestation to the fact that whatever the government seems to be doing to contain insecurity has to be improved upon if the country is to be restored to a society where people can live in peace... the threat of insecurity has been further worsened by activities of bandits spread across the northern states and pervasive nature of kidnapping... Striking alliances to stop the free flow of criminals into the country is therefore imperative. (*The Punch*, June 20, 2019)

(15) While we give credit to the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari for significantly degrading the Boko Haram terrorists in the North East, new centres of violence have emerged where banditry, kidnapping and cattle rustling have taken centre stage and **spreading** all over the country. (*Leadership*, July 21, 2019)

(16) **Bandits have become unstoppable, turning the country into a massive graveyard...** Their village was **invaded** by herdsmen wielding AK 47 rifles... Nigeria's northern land borders with Chad, Niger and Cameroon are major

suspected routes of the **inflow** of illicit arms and ammunition into the country. (*The Punch*, February 4, 2020)

Insecurity in Nigeria is constructed metaphorically as running water, thereby constituting a challenge to the Nigerian space. The principal portrayal is that the security challenges are like flood (natural disaster), affecting, overwhelming and displacing the people who reside in the affected geographical location.

Text 11 presents the attack on Nigerians using the image of water scenario that moves and runs beyond control, using the expression 'uncontrolled attacks.' Text 12 uses 'influx' and 'spill over' both of which entail mapping from the source domain of RUNNING WATER to the target domain SC. The representation in the metaphor of INFLUX depicts an uncontrollable release of water into a territory that subsequently gets flooded by the endless release. The release possibly culminates into making the territory inhabitable for the dwellers. Similarly, the metaphor SPILL OVER depicts a discharge of water from its containing confines into an environment where it is unwanted. Both INFLUX and SPILL OVER metaphors, as deployed by *Leadership* editorial represent the unending invasion of the Nigerian territory by 'criminals masquerading as herdsmen' and 'disturbing security issues in the neighbouring countries' (text 12) respectively. Hence, there is need for an urgent solution to the way the Nigerian state is being flooded by criminals and others. The consequence of the invasion is also seen in the use of the metaphor AWASH in text 13. The AWASH metaphor creates an image of an overflow of insecurity with unwarranted 'killings in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kaduna, Borno, Yobe among others.'

Text 14 uses 'contain', 'spread', 'free flow' and 'spreading.' The four expressions equally entail mapping from the source domain of RUNNING WATER to the target domain SC. The depictions in the metaphors represent different things. The CONTAIN metaphor liquidifies insecurity, calling on the government to ensure insecurity is enclosed in a protective container. The SPREAD(ING) and FREE FLOW metaphors create the image of a substance that moves and spreads to any unprotected location. The editorials metaphorically conceptualises insecurity, inviting the government to immediately put a stop to it so that banditry will not continue to spread into the nooks and crannies of the country, while the free range of criminals can be quickly halted.

The water metaphor is further created with UNSTOPPABLE, INVADED and INFLOW in text 16. The message in the metaphors of UNSTOPPABLE, INVADED and INFLOW depicts a challenging discharge of water flow that cannot be easily stopped, but which invades different territories with or without initial warning, and flows in uncontrollably, depicting the effect of the invasion as steady and uninterrupted. The metaphorical representation SC IS AN INVASION fronts

insecurity as flooding and unsettling of Nigerian communities. Hence, *Punch* editorial creates water image in representing bandits who have unstopably turned 'the country into a massive graveyard'; herders who have overrun and attacked selected Nigerian villages, 'wielding AK 47 rifles'; and the porous northern Nigerian land borders 'with Chad, Niger and Cameroon' which have become 'major suspected routes of the inflow of illicit arms and ammunition into the country.'

SC is Natural Disaster (Fire)

The editorials also deploy fire which sees SC as domain of FIRE INCIDENCE, and conceptualises it through the identification of the regularity and quantity of destructive actions meted out to the Nigerian people by the insecurity actors. Metaphors that involve images from the source domain of FIRE in the newspaper editorials reveal life situations where insecurity actors are framed as fire or fire starters who will stop at nothing but set their victims and their territory on fire. The editorials depict the attack on Nigerians as intense fire with metaphors like *engulf*, *flame* and the need for the state to *extinguish* the fire. For instance:

(17) It is inexplicable to understand the sources of weapons used by the insurgents; stories of aiding and abetting by those in the Nigerian military have surfaced numerous times, but quickly **extinguished** to forestall further probes into such allegations. The Boko Haram situation remains dicey and unresolved. (*Leadership*, March 24, 2018)

(18) Our politicians are inhuman, with senseless ideals for survival, at all cost. Therefore, if overheating the polity with some form of anarchy will prop their myopic vision, they will choose it, even if it means the nation should **engulf in flames**. (*Leadership*, March 24, 2018)

(19) Just last Sunday, the jihadists killed 30 travellers, abducted others and burnt vehicles in Auno village close to a military checkpoint, on the Maiduguri-Damaturu Highway. (*Punch*, February 12, 2020)

The primary portrayal is that the security challenges are like fire (natural disaster), capable of burning or ruining the target environment. Text 17 associates the metaphor EXTINGUISH with 'the sources of weapons used by the insurgents' to metaphorically conceptualise the keywords – weapons and insurgents – in the domain of fire. Text 18 also further creates the fire image using the expression 'engulf in flames.' However, text 18 takes a turn to implicate Nigerian politicians as part of those heating up the polity, and consequently aggravating the insecurity in the country for selfish gains. The metaphor ENGULF IN FLAMES metaphorically conceptualises SC as FIRE. Text 19 deploys the use of the BURN metaphor which entails mapping from the source domain of FIRE to the target

domain SC. The representation in the metaphor of BURN depicts the production of flames and heat, sufficient to raze down a territory or property.

SC is Economy

The editorials also deploy business terms which see SC as domain of ECONOMY. It is conceptualised through the deployment of words that relate to buying and selling, using metaphors of *gain, sell, ransom, fund, price, finance, cheap* for the relationship between the villains and the victims.

(20) Regrettably, the security operatives in this country—army, air force, Navy and the police, must properly be investigated, including some Nigerians, whose primary business is importation/leasing of deadly weapons to terrorists.... Very few Nigerians are **priceless**; the majority will sell their soul to acquire financial resources. (*Leadership*, March 24, 2018)

(21) Because of their activities, which includes kidnapping for ransom, it has become very difficult for people to move freely in Ondo, Ekiti and Osun states. (*The Punch*, June 20, 2019)

(22) But it only confirms how cheap human life has become in Nigeria, where such deaths are increasingly commonplace. (*The Punch*, June 20, 2019)

(23) To date, the jihadists continue to make territorial gains and occasionally recapture strategic border villages. This is why the country seems to be experiencing a reversal of fortunes in the war on terror. (*The Punch*, February 12, 2020)

To invoke the idea of business, economic terms like 'sell', 'gain', 'ransom', 'fund', 'priceless', 'cheap' are repeatedly deployed as source domain as evident in texts 20-23. The editorial texts construct Nigerians, Nigerian security apparatus, Nigerian politicians and bandits in relation to economy. From the conceptual metaphors, SC IS PRICELESS, SC IS SELL, SC IS CHEAP, values are placed on the lives of inhabitants in the Nigerian territory. These paint the image of commodification of lives for financial gains. It identifies the root cause of the proliferation of weapons as the commercialisation of same, where some are more particular about the financial rewards from selling weapons than preserving human lives. While the representation paints the image of some Nigerians as infallible despite projected financial gains, having integrity to protect fellow Nigerians at any costs, that is 'very few Nigerians are priceless' (text 20), majority are painted as fallible in the face of money, lacking integrity and capable of selling 'their soul to acquire financial resources' (text 20). This further confirms how economically impoverished the country and many Nigerians are, identifying this as a possible reason why insecurity keeps thriving. Similarly, the metaphor CHEAP in text 22 conceptualises SC AS CHEAP since SC IS LIFE and LIFE IS CHEAP in Nigeria.

The text also metaphorically conceptualises SC AS COMMONPLACE since SC IS DEATH and DEATH IS COMMONPLACE in Nigeria. The representations in text 22 are related to those in text 20 where human life in Nigeria is related to the valueless economy due to incessant killings. The proliferation of killings across cities and states depicts 'how cheap human life has become in Nigeria' (text 22), while the supposed priced and scarce resource called 'death' has become 'increasingly commonplace' (text 22).

From the conceptual metaphor, SC IS RANSOM, one of the purposes of kidnap is constructed as abducting to make money, that is, security challenge is purposely meant to enrich some, while the kidnapped and their relatives are thrown into financial and emotional bankruptcy based on the need to pay the demanded ransom and the need to reunite with the kidnapped alive. Text 23 deploys the use of the GAIN metaphor which entails mapping from the source domain of ECONOMY to the target domain SC. The representation in the GAIN metaphor depicts the acquisition of Nigerian territories by jihadists. In the latter part of text 23, FORTUNE metaphor which also entails mapping from the source domain of ECONOMY to the target domain SC, is used to paint the image of financial challenge that the Nigerian government has encountered subsequent on the need to keep using humongous resources to combat insecurity.

SC is Game

Metaphors that involve images from the source domain of GAME in the newspaper editorials reveal life conditions where insecurity actors or the state is framed as sportspeople involved in either *playing* the destructive game or *tackling* the actions involved in the game. Metaphor words like *play*, *tackle*, *league* are deployed. For instance:

(24) Recently, the Supreme Council for Shari'ah in Nigeria (SCSN) said that it is unhappy with the federal government over poor efforts in **tackling** insecurity in the country. (*Leadership*, April 23, 2019)

(25) Terrorism and other forms of criminality pose a direct threat to the security of the citizens of the country, and ... a challenge that the international community must **tackle** together. (*Leadership*, July 21, 2019)

(26) It is critical to observe that what makes the State of Israel, a small country by geographical size and population, one of the strongest fighting force in the world is her deployment of sophisticated technology... The time for Nigeria to join that league is now. (*Leadership*, July 21, 2019)

From the conceptual metaphors, SC AS TACKLE, SC AS LEAGUE, the insecurity situation in Nigeria is constructed as a game that needs to be tackled by the

government. The nominal form of the word 'tackle' is often associated with equipment that is required for a sport or task; while the verbal form that relates to the discourse at hand means to take ball from an opponent by intercepting them. The image created with the use of 'tackling' in text 24 and 'tackle' in text 25 paints the picture of the required interaction between the Nigerian government and the international community in combating insecurity. While text 24 condemns 'the federal government over poor efforts in tackling insecurity in the country,' text 25 calls on the international community to partner with Nigeria and see insecurity as what they 'must tackle together.' In text 26, the word 'league', which means a group of sporting clubs which play one another over a period, is also used to create the image of game. The representation is meant for Nigeria to act like other countries that belong to the group of countries using 'sophisticated technology' (text 26) to combat insecurity.

SC is Farming

Metaphors that involve images from the source domain of FARMING in the newspaper editorials reveal contexts where insecurity actors are framed as farmers who engage in different farming activities. The metaphors construct Nigerian security personnel, Nigerian government and insecurity actors as fishermen who *fish out*; arable farmers who *plant seed* and *grow* them; and livestock farmers who *rear* domestic animals. For instance:

(27) The Inspector General of Police, Ibrahim Idris, for one has made the required deployment of men and other logistics backed up by intelligence from sister agencies all as part of effort to bring the matter under effective control, try and **fish out** the brains behind the disturbance and possibly bring them to deserved justice. (*Leadership*, January 8, 2018)

(28) Intelligence is the only mode of **fishing** out perpetrators, if the government is pragmatic and proactive toward curtailing the prevailing insecurity in the land. (*Leadership*, March 24, 2018)

(29) It is, therefore, time to apply new strategies to deal with this **emerging and growing** security challenge. (*Leadership*, July 21, 2019)

(30) The seed of the current anarchy was planted long ago but its ultimate manifestation became obvious in 2009 when Boko Haram gained traction in the North-East. (*The Punch*, July 20, 2018)

(31) More than 10 years after the Boko Haram insurgency first reared its ugly head, it is inconceivable that the extremists are still having a field day, killing servicemen, kidnapping children and plundering towns and villages. (*The Punch*, June 20, 2019)

Farming metaphors such as *seed, plant, grow, fish* are deliberately deployed to create different images that relate farming to security challenges being experienced in Nigeria. While some metaphorical representations related SC to arable farming or growing of crops, some related it to fish farming – aquaculture, others related it to livestock farming. Fish farming or aquaculture involves raising fish in enclosures like tanks, ponds for food or economic gains. Livestock farming is the rearing of domestic animals for food or economic gains.

The expressions ‘try and fish out the brains behind the disturbance’ (text 27) and ‘mode of fishing out perpetrators’ (text 28) portray the Nigerian security and government as fishermen who must harvest the insecurity perpetrators by fishing them out. Text 29 relates the security challenge to a plant that is ‘emerging and growing,’ while text 30 metaphorically represents the security challenges caused by Boko Haram as seed that ‘was planted long ago.’

The conceptual metaphor created in text 31 is SC IS REARED. The idea of ‘rear’ has to do with animals that are raised within an environment. The editorial metaphorically represents insurgency as livestock that is reared or has been allowed to breed or fester for long and has practically grown from childhood into something big.

SC IS PURIFICATION

Metaphors that involve images from the source domain of PURIFICATION in the newspaper editorials reveal contexts where the newspapers conceptualise purification as cleansing, involving security agents on the one hand and insecurity actors on the other. These are constructed with metaphors such as *wipe out, purge, flush out*. For instance:

(32) These are obvious signs of security failures in the system, and some scoundrels within the military and other institutions, including politicians are earning blood monies. Maybe there is every reason to **purge** the rank and file of the institutions authorised to carry or look after the government’s armaments. Our borders are equally unfortified– with visible porosity. (*Leadership, March 24, 2018*)

(33) There is no doubt that the ongoing military operations to **flush out** remnants of Boko Haram and elements of Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) hibernating in obscure areas of the Northeast is steadily on course, especially around the Borno/Lake Chad axis. (*Leadership, January 23, 2020*)

(34) Evidence abounds where the IDPs returned to their villages but were wiped out sooner than later. As a result, Dambazao, Gwazo, Damask, Nganzi, Gamboru-Ngala, Buni Yadi, Mungono, Mafa, Dikwa, and Damaturu-Maiduguri Highway, among others, are always in the news for the wrong reasons. (*The Punch, February 12, 2020*)

To invoke the idea of purifying, purification terms like 'wipe out', 'purge', 'flush out' are repeatedly deployed as source domain. Purification could have both the villain-favoured and the victim-favoured connotations. The editorial texts construct the Nigerian security apparatus as needing purging in order to assume the desired position to withstand bandits, so that, rather than the bandits, herdsmen and Boko Haram wiping out villages (text 34), the Nigerian security personnel will be the ones flushing out remnants of Boko Haram and elements of ISWAP (text 33) and other bandits. Therefore, SC IS PURGING, SC IS FLUSHING OUT, SC IS WIPING OUT.

The conceptual metaphorisation is that bandits are precarious cleaning managers who are desirous of eradicating whoever does not belong to their camp, including Nigerians from 'the IDPs' who 'returned to their villages but were wiped out sooner than later' (text 34). SC IS WIPING OUT paints the image of total elimination of north-eastern villages and villagers. Meanwhile, the conceptual metaphorisation in text 33 puts hope in the hearts of the displaced, the affected and Nigerians in general, holding the view that 'there is no doubt that the ongoing military operations to **flush out** remnants of Boko Haram and elements of Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) hibernating in obscure areas of the Northeast.' The FLUSH OUT metaphor here is positively deployed to depict the Nigerian security personnel's intervention as essential to 'flush out' the terrorists from affected areas. This gives assurance to the masses that the government and security agents seem to still have the capacity to defend them and combat the insecurity actors.

Conclusion

The study has investigated how metaphors are deployed in the representation of insecurity and security challenges in Nigeria. The newspaper editorials represent insecurity as a recurring challenge to the Nigerian territory, and metaphorically conceptualise security challenge in Nigeria differently. The metaphorical constructions and the percentage dominance are war with 53.5% (146) occurrence (e.g. *weapon bloodbath, murder, killings*), hunting with 12.1% (33) occurrence (e.g. *captive, target, slaughter, trap*), natural disaster which bifurcates into running water and fire with 11.7% (32) occurrence (e.g. *flow, influx, awash, spillingover; engulf, flame, extinguish*), economy with 10.6% (29) occurrence (e.g. *gains, ransom, fund, price, cheap*), game with 4.8% (13) occurrence (e.g. *tackle, league*), farming with 4.4% (12) occurrence (e.g. *seed, plant, fish, fish out*), purification with 2.9% (08) occurrence (e.g. *wipe out, purge, flush out*).

SC IS WAR paints the image of insecurity as combat, battle and conflict, as depicted by the different degrees of killings and unrest across the nation, characterising the Nigerian territory as a war zone. SC IS HUNTING constructs insecurity actors as hunters who trail their preys. The editorials construct bandits,

terrorists, kidnappers and cattle rustlers as predators whose preys are armless Nigerians and farmers. SC IS NATURAL DISASTER (RUNNING WATER and FIRE) constructs insecurity in Nigeria as flood or running water and fire which overwhelm and displace Nigerians from their homes. SC IS ECONOMY paints the image of valuelessness of Nigerians' lives due to potential economic gains by a few. SC AS GAME constructs insecurity situation in Nigeria as a game that requires proper tackling to be won. SC IS FARMING creates images that relate insecurity to aquaculture – fishing out insecurity actors, arable farming – planting and growing of insecurity, and livestock farming – rearing of insurgency. SC IS PURIFICATION constructs the image of security challenge as cleansing as either insecurity actors wiping out Nigerians or insecurity fighters 'flushing out' insecurity perpetrators from Nigeria.

The metaphorical representations are polarised into: the actors (villains and victims) and the action (the different insecurity activities). The villains are the insecurity actors, including bandits, kidnappers, terrorists, cattle rustlers; the victims are the (armless) Nigerian citizens, farmers, security personnel. The metaphoric representation of security challenge as war, hunting, natural disaster, economy, game, farming and purification indicates the weightiness of insecurity situation in Nigeria. Insecurity perpetrators are represented as war commanders and warriors who used their 'weapons' to ensure 'bloodbath' and 'wanton killings' of Nigerians. They are predators who hunt Nigerians and farmers; water and fire who flood the affected zones and set villages ablaze; economists who profit from their atrocious activities; farmers who plant the seed of terrorism in Nigeria; and purifiers who wipe out villages and communities in numbers. The victims of insecurity are Nigerians, farmers, security personnel and others who are the fallen ones from the war, who are killed, bruised or made to suffer different degrees of injury. They are the hunted Nigerians and farmers; the flooded and burnt; the economically robbed; the harvested or victims of planted and nurtured insecurity; and the wiped out from earth or their places of abode, that is evacuees and refugees. Finally, the actions are the atrocious activities meted out to Nigerians. The activities involve warring by killing, shooting, injuring; hunting; flooding and burning to displace or kill; purifying to wipe out.

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