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## Conceptual Metaphors in Newspaper Reportage of the War on Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria

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### Abstract

The government of Nigeria has continued to wage (a) war on *Boko Haram* (BH) terrorists in Nigeria. Previous linguistic studies on (war on) *Boko Haram* terrorism in Nigeria have examined the media reportage of the BH activities, while such studies have not paid sufficient attention to metaphorisations in the representations of the news reports. This study, therefore, identifies conceptual metaphors deployed by the selected newspapers in representing the war on BH terrorism. Headline and overline stories are purposively sampled from four newspapers, published between 2011 and 2014, from the northern and southern parts of Nigeria. The purposively selected newspapers, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership Nigeria*, *The Punch* and *The Nation*, widely reported BH activities. The conceptual metaphor theory, complemented with systemic functional grammar, provided theoretical underpinnings; and the analysis reveals that the newspapers metaphorically conceptualise BH terrorism as war, evil and crime. The newspapers' metaphorical conceptualisations have cognitively tasked the readers. Readers' experience in relation to BH terrorism has been linked to the understanding of one thing in terms of the other.

**Keywords:** *Boko Haram*, conceptual metaphor, systemic functional linguistics, Nigerian newspapers, war on terrorism

### Introduction

Metaphor plays a central role in human discourse because of its significance in the human cognitive process. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have described the essence of metaphor as understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. It is when one understands one thing (source) in terms of another (target). Similarly, Charteris-black (2004, p.21) has defined metaphor as 'a linguistic representation that results from the shift in the use of a word or phrase from the context or domain in which it is expected to occur to another context or domain where it is not expected to occur, thereby causing semantic extension'. Media practitioners, as humans, are equally involved in the cognitive process. Since the media practitioners also hold the view that they are responsible for shaping the perspective of

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readers on general societal issues (Osisanwo, 2016a), they tend to use metaphors to persuade, shape, and orientate the readers. They use language and select the appropriate lexical and structural items for effective communication. Therefore, this paper sets out to examine how the selected newspapers have used metaphors to persuade and shape the readers' opinions on the BH terrorism in Nigeria.

### ***Boko Haram* Terrorism and the Nigerian Media**

The activities of terrorists across the world, especially *Boko Haram* (BH), a group labelled as a terrorist organisation, have been widely reported by the media. No doubt, the media, referred to as the “oxygen of terrorism” in the famous words of former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, has been at the heart of the dissemination of information relating to terrorism issues. The expectations of the citizens are clear: they sit back and await the release of news by the media outlets on latest developments, especially on the (most) terrorised territories. “Citizens expect the media to inform them as completely as possible without going overboard or resorting to sensationalism” (UNESCO, 2017, p.9). Nonetheless, news reportage in different news tabloids within and outside the African continent is arguably non-neutral. Media outlets often strive to protect and defend their ideological leanings in their presentations and representations of the actions and inactions of a phenomenon like terrorism. In the Nigerian media parlance, the media, including the traditional, electronic and others also engage in the general media belief that they hold it a duty to produce information to text consumers.

The Nigerian media, as an arm of media organisations in the world, has equally taken the centre stage in reporting the activities of *Boko Haram*, an acclaimed terrorist organisation domiciled in northern Nigeria. *Boko Haram* (a Hausa version of “Western education is forbidden”) is described as a militant Islamic sect otherwise known as *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*. The name *Boko Haram*, derived from a combination of the Hausa word *boko* (book) and the Arabic word *haram* (unlawful), means 'Western education is unlawful.' *Boko Haram* has rejected the government of Nigeria based on the notion of 'the unity of God' (*tawhid*), which argues against the sovereignty of states and for the sole sovereignty of God's laws (*hakimiyyah*) as the only legitimate form of governance; the Islamic Sharia is seen as the only sovereign government. The Jama'a groups believe in violence. For them, 'violence is... a sacramental act or divine duty executed in direct response to some theological demand' (Hoffman, 2006, p.88).

Between 2009 and 2014, *Boko Haram* has taken responsibility for numerous attacks, including bombing institutions, shooting the innocent, rendering thousands of people homeless and forcing over 650,000 people to run away from the conflict zone in the northern part of Nigeria (Osisanwo,

2016b). The violence perpetrated by this group has had some effects on Nigerians. In response, the Nigerian government has condemned the endless terror and declared total war against the group. The Nigerian media has equally responded by reporting widely both the *BH* activities and the war on the activities of the group. Therefore, this paper is interested in how selected newspapers have reported and metaphorically represented the activities of the group.

### **War on Terrorism**

The concept of “war on terrorism” gained prominence from the speech of the former U.S. President, George Bush, following the events of September 11, 2001, where he had declared Osama Bin Laden the prime suspect in the attack against the United States. **War on Terror** is an umbrella term used by the administration to refer to the various actions (military, political and legal) taken to curb the spread of terrorism. Bush had gone further a few days later, during a speech to Congress, and had said 'Our war on terror begins with Al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated'. Bush had identified the 'heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century', the terrorists who 'practise a fringe form of Islamic extremism' that has been 'rejected by Muslim scholars and the vast majority of Muslim clerics', and had declared, 'This is the world's fight. This is civilisation's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbour or to support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime' (*The Washington Post*, 2001).

Sequel to the declaration, the United States turned its attention to radical Islamist groups in Southeast Asia, especially those in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, while the countries in the region were pressed to arrest suspected terrorists. Woodward (2002) asserts that the response of the US administration to the horrendous 9/11 terrorist attacks was to regard, frame and represent them as acts of war and to declare a global 'war on terrorism'. In another analysis, Kellner (2005) posits that it was in his first statement about 11 September that Bush repeatedly portrayed the conflict as a war between good and evil. He extensively used the 'wild-West' metaphor, calling for Bin Laden 'dead or alive', and describing the campaign as a 'crusade'. In his speech to Congress on 20 September 2001, while officially declaring his 'war on terrorism', G.W. Bush described the conflict as a war between freedom and fear, between barbarism and civilisation. 'Bush continues to employ the notions of “freedom” and “civilization” to describe both what “the civilized West” is fighting for and what the terrorists are opposing' (Kellner, 2005, p.17).

Based on the speech, scholars, including Woodward (2002) and Kellner (2005), agree that the discourse contains the following elements: the war has been proclaimed between good and evil; the evil Other is Islamic terrorism, personified by Bin Laden; and the West has to unite in a war against terrorism to defend its way of life, its civilisation and its freedom. In like manner, *Boko Haram* has horrendously dealt with a section of Nigeria and Nigerians from 2009 till date. Their activities have literally paralysed the supposed gains of democracy in selected places in the Northeastern region of Nigeria. It has had adverse effects on the Nigerian State and parts of the West African sub-region. In response to the seemingly unending violence, the Nigerian government, having made unyielding and unsuccessful peace-pact with the group, eventually condemned the endless terror, and declared war against the sect on May 14, 2013.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The seemingly unending activities of the BH group in Nigeria have been a cause of concern to all, including the media, the government, Nigerians and the whole world. Scholars have, therefore, been making attempts to give the issue a scholarly intervention.

Previous linguistic studies on the reportage of BH terrorism have only centred on aspects of pragmatics (Chiluwa & Oyegoke, 2013; Odeunmi & Oloyede, 2016), lexis (Ogungbe & Alo, 2014), aspects of grammar and discourse (Aghedo, 2012; Yusha'u, 2012; Ayoola and Olaosun, 2014; Chiluwa and Ifukor, 2015; Osisanwo, 2016a & b), aspects of stance (Chiluwa and Odeunmi, 2016; Osisanwo, 2017a & b) and a few others. Meanwhile, very few have examined the war on terrorism outside Nigeria (Hodges, 2011) and within Nigeria (Osisanwo, 2017a & b). The lacuna created from the existing studies on BH terrorism in Nigeria subsists in the examination of metaphorical representations of newspaper reports. This study, therefore, examines conceptual metaphors deployed by the selected newspapers in representing the war on BH terrorism.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The conceptual metaphor theory, complemented with the systemic functional grammar is the adopted tool for analysis. The conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) has dominated metaphor studies since the publication of Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). 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 and used automatically and effortlessly” (Lakoff and Turner, 1989, pp.65-66). In the cognitivists' approach to metaphor, metaphor is

primarily a matter of thinking, and derivatively a matter of language. Metaphor can be monomodal or multimodal. Monomodal metaphor occurs in a single mode of representation, like verbal metaphor, pictorial metaphor or auditory metaphor. Multimodal metaphor occurs in diverse modes, for instance verbo-pictorial metaphor. The cognitivists' paradigm suggests that thoughts can give rise to non-verbal or multimodal metaphor, and insists that verbal metaphors are *manifestations* of thought. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory is deployed for the purpose of this study.

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). Their description suggests that what people do with metaphor is more or less at par with what it, really, is. Metaphors are expressed verbally and pictorially. However, for the purpose of this paper, interest is on verbal metaphors.

The transitivity aspect of Halliday's systemic functional grammar is deployed for use. In transitivity analysis, Halliday sees the ideational function of the clause as meaning “representation” (1985, p.101), that is, it is realised at the level of the clause as representation. The clause functions to represent our experience of the world as language users. This is because “a fundamental property of language is that it enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them” (Halliday 1994, p.106). This system allows the clause to be broken down into three general components: the *process*, the *participant* and the *circumstance* (Halliday, 1985; 1994; Bloor & Bloor, 1995; Butt et al., 1995; Simpson, 1993; Thompson, 1996; Martin, 2000; Teo, 2000). The 'concepts of process, participant and circumstance are semantic categories which explain in the most general way how phenomena of the real world are represented as linguistic structures' (Halliday, 1985, p.102). It is obvious that, as language users, in representing our experience of the world, we select from a number of different processes, participants and circumstances in order to get a particular message across.

According to Halliday, 'our most powerful impression of experience is that it consists of a flow of events, or “goings-on”,...chunked into quanta of change by the grammar of the clause' (Halliday, 2004, p.170). Only one process is available in a clause, and this “can be classified according to whether it represents actions, speech, states of mind or simply states of being” (Simpson 1993, p.88). Processes are typically realised by verbal groups. Halliday identifies three main process types: material, mental and relational. He also identifies three additional process types: behavioural, existential and verbal.

## Methodology

Data for this paper were purposively selected from four newspapers

from the northern (*Daily Trust* and *Leadership Nigeria*) and southern (*The Punch* and *The Nation*) parts of Nigeria because they are widely circulated across Nigeria. Equally, they widely cover reports on the activities of *Boko Haram* insurgency. From the 1461 editions each of the four newspapers, published between 2011 and 2014 (a period when the highest number of BH casualties were recorded), only the editions which reported the activities of BH were sampled. From the sample, twenty-four excerpts (6 from each newspaper) of the headline and overline reports which relate to metaphorical representation of the (war on) BH terrorism were purposively selected. The conceptual metaphor theory and aspects of systemic functional grammar guide the analysis.

### Analysis and Findings

“In the data, three conceptual metaphors relate to the BH terrorism: BOKO HARAM TERRORISM/COUNTER-TERRORISM IS WAR, BOKO HARAM TERRORISM IS UNCIVILISED EVIL, BOKO HARAM TERRORISM IS CRIME, as represented in Figure 2.1.

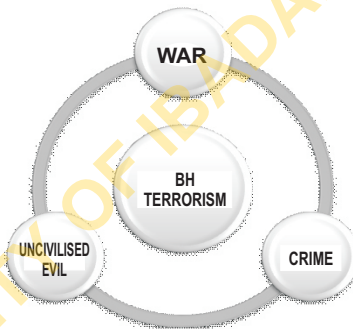


Figure 2.1 Newspapers' metaphorical conceptualization of BH terrorism”

### ***Boko Haram* Terrorism/Counter-Terrorism Is War**

The newspaper reports conceptually metaphorise BH terrorism/counter-terrorism as war. Metaphors map a source domain onto a target domain (Lakoff 1993, pp.208-209). Mapping here refers to 'a set of systematic correspondences between the source and the target in the sense that constituent conceptual elements of B correspond to constituent elements of A' (Kövecses, 2002, p.6). In the data, metaphors map a source domain (WAR) onto a target domain (TERRORISM/COUNTER-TERRORISM), and make the target domain appear in a new light. The new light given to terrorism/counter-terrorism is war.

First, there is a consistent use of metaphorical expressions such as 'war on terrorism', 'war on terror', 'war against terrorism' and 'war against terror'. The expressions consistently metaphorised the attack by BH terrorists and the attack on BH terrorists as 'acts of war', as found in samples (i) – (iv) and represented by three newspapers.

**i. U.S. Wants to See Nigeria Win War Against Terror – Envoy**

The U.S. Ambassador in Nigeria, Mr James Entwistle, has said that the U.S. wants Nigeria to win the war against terror. Entwistle expressed the view in Abuja on Thursday during a media Roundtable with some editors, saying: “The United States wants to see Nigeria win its war on terror. (*Leadership*, Jan 9, 2014)

**ii. Jonathan Orders Total War against Boko Haram**

President Goodluck Jonathan has directed the armed forces to launch a full-scale military operation against Boko Haram and other violent organisations to put an end to their impunity in the country. “I am determined to protect our democracy, our national unity and our political stability by waging a total war against terrorism,” he said in his nationwide Democracy Day broadcast in Abuja on Thursday.... (*The Punch*, May 30, 2014)

**iii. President Goodluck Jonathan has said that his administration owes Nigerians victory against the Boko Haram insurgents.**

Jonathan said this inside the Council Chamber of the Presidential Villa Abuja this morning before inaugurating the Victims' Support Fund Committee headed by General Theophilus Danjuma. The president lamented that terrorist attacks had claimed lives of many Nigerians and destroyed valuable property. The president also reassured the country that his administration remained committed to winning the war against terrorism. (*Daily Trust*, Jul. 16 2014)

**iv. Jonathan lists terms for B/Haram talks...declares 'total war' on terrorism**

In his Democracy Day broadcast, the president said... “A war has been unleashed on us. Extremist foreign elements, collaborating with some of our misguided citizens, are focused on an attempt to bring down our country and the democracy and freedom we cherish and celebrate today,” he said. (*Daily Trust*, May 30, 2014)

The open declaration by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in sample (iv) conceptually metaphorises *BOKO HARAM* TERRORISM AS WAR. This is related to the previous declarations by the US President George Bush 9/11, and the statement by the Prime Minister of Britain that 'whatever the technical or legal issues about the declaration of war, the fact is we are at war with terrorism.'

There are other situations where the campaign and the fight against terror are consistently related to historical war. The reporters relate the attack by terrorists and the attack on terrorists to historical wars, including First World War, Second World War, Civil War and so forth. In sample (v), the war on terrorism is related to the Civil War and taken as worse to it since the enemies in terrorism are faceless.

**v. Jonathan: Boko Haram insurgency worse than civil war**

Jonathan said this at the Presidential Villa in Abuja yesterday while receiving the College of Bishops of the African Church led by Primate Emmanuel Udofia, who paid him a courtesy visit. He said during the civil war, the battle line was drawn and the enemies known; while in a terror war, the enemies are from within and are faceless... “...apart from those of us from the Eastern region who witnessed the effects of the civil war, people have not witnessed this kind of insecurity in the country. “In the North-East, it is almost like it is even worse than the civil war because in the civil war, you know if you are here, you know the battle line, either a Biafran or Nigerian. You know where to run to. Right now, you don't even know where to run to because the enemies are in the Sokoto (trouser) pocket,” Jonathan said. (*Daily Trust*, Jun 26, 2014)

Besides, there are lexical choices which portray the situation as actual war. The choices include the use of words such as 'war', 'battles', 'battlefield', 'sieges' and 'war zones', 'command', 'declared war', 'mobilising', 'attack', 'troops', 'weapon', 'weaponry', 'sophisticated weapons', 'heavy weapon', 'bomb', 'raid'...in samples (vi) – (xi). Terrorists are often metaphorised or militarised as soldiers and combatants who use their military training and their military arsenal to conduct operations.

- vi. The *Boko Haram* terrorist group has at its disposal a seemingly limitless amount of heavy weaponry, vehicles, bombs and ammunition that it uses to kill with unfathomable wantonness. The Islamic militants, masquerading as members of the military, raided three

villages in north-eastern Nigeria this week and killed 400 villagers “from house to house” using “sophisticated weapons”, one local leader told Bloomberg. (*The Nation*, June 10, 2014.)

The reporter in sample (vi) describes the BH terrorists as using very heavy weaponry to kill over 400 villagers. All of the actions of the group described here are violent and war-like. Different discourse strategies are deployed to represent the group as militants and warlords. The reporter also identified the sophisticated weapons used in causing violence for the group's desired change to include “vehicles, bombs and ammunition” that “it uses to kill with unfathomable wantonness.”

In sample (vii), *The Punch* uses “Boko Haram terrorists”, “the insurgents” and “the mass murderers”, which all refer to the members of the group, to represent, determine and specify the social actors as attackers, militants, insurgents and murderers, all of which relate to what takes place in a war situation. The reporter lends his voice to the direct condemnation of the attack. This is lexicalised with the use of expressions such as *dastardly attacks*, *mass murderer* and *senseless killings*. In sample (viii), *The Nation* also represents the BH as attackers by using narrative strategy to describe the act carried out. Unlike *The Punch*, there is no external voice – eye witness – to support the claims here. Nevertheless, the report activates the BH members as those that unleashed the attack on the police station and the prison, and gave the number of those that benefitted from the attack, for instance, 105 prisoners who were freed. It also gave the number of the various people killed and the ammunition used in achieving their goal.

vii. Since that mortal attack on January 14, *Boko Haram* terrorists have carried out other dastardly attacks. A few days after the Maiduguri bombing, the insurgents laid siege to Gashigar... killed 15 people and torched houses. Similarly, the mass murderers descended on Alau Ngawo Fatie ...killing 18 innocent people...The senseless killings continued on January 21 and 22 when the insurgents attacked some satellite villages near Maiduguri. At least, 18 people were killed in the attacks on villages like Kaya, Mude, Njaba and Kwaljiri. (*The Punch*, February 2, 2014)

viii. *Boko Haram* militants have since infiltrated nearby towns, with little resistance from the army. In a well-planned attack on 7 May 2013 in Bama, some 70km (44

miles) from Maiduguri, about 200 heavily armed men stormed a military barracks, police station and government buildings. Fifty-five people were killed and 105 prisoners were freed in the raids. Significantly, the militants launched the attack in armoured vehicles mounted with machine guns. (*The Nation*, May 16, 2013)

The metaphorisation of war in relation to terrorism is popular. This popularity of 'war' for issues, which are deemed as threatening, according to Keith Shimko (1995, p.79), are: 'First, war is a widely and readily accessible concept; everyone knows what a war is. Second, war is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. Since there are so many aspects of war, there are many dimensions along which something can be like a war', just like in the instances in samples (vi) – (viii). The representations and the choices relate to happenings in a war zone.

People relate a large number of things, especially in relation to terrorism with war. Such relationships include the transfer of the source domain, 'war' to the target domain, 'terrorism.' For example, in a war situation, funds are often allocated to prosecute the fight. In like manner, so much is spent on fighting or warring terrorism. For example, while sample (ix) reports the need to have sufficient budgetary allocation for the acquisition of ammunition, sample (x) reports the fact that the ammunition has been procured in large quantity. The reporter also relies on the voice of the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Azubuike Ihejirika to authenticate the seriousness of the anti-terrorism plan of the government; and informs Nigerians that since so much has been committed to the procurement of ammunition, the government and its military arsenal are set to fight BH terrorism to a stand-still.

ix. Our armed forces and the police have not been trained in guerrilla warfare and counter-terrorism. That has prolonged the war on terror up till now. With the budget crisis which has not been resolved, it is doubtful if the huge budget for national security has been disbursed for the training and acquisition of vital equipment to prosecute the war (*The Punch*, May 25, 2013)

**x. Army Acquires Arms, Ammunitions To Fight Boko Haram**

The Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Azubuike Ihejirika on Monday said the Army authority has just acquired a cargo of new arms and ammunitions to fight terrorism.... Over time, procurement of armaments was slow, but of

recent, we have embarked on a lot of procurement to enable us... (*Leadership*, Nov 25, 2013)

Some of the critical questions which take the centre stage during wars are also answered in the news reports. For instance, a question like “Are we winning?” will have answers like samples (xi) – (xii).

**xi. Nigeria winning *Boko Haram* war, says Jonathan**

President Goodluck Jonathan on Friday said contrary to media reports, the Federal Government had started winning the war against the *Boko Haram* sect. He boasted that for about a week now, there have been no further reports of the sect seizing more territory... (*The Punch*, November 21, 2014)

**xii. Army frees kids, women abducted by *Boko Haram***

The President said “The women and children who were kidnapped from police barracks and environs during the May 7 attack on Bama had been held in the camp since their abduction and were featured in the video by Abubakar Shekau recently”. He said the women and six children were rescued after overrunning three terrorists' camps in the notorious Sambisa forest area of central Borno in the ongoing onslaught against terrorists. (*Daily Trust*, May 25, 2013)

xiii. This year's Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York is almost the toughest for terrorist groups like *Boko Haram*, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabab and others as virtually all the Heads of governments speaking during the 69th Session have indicated interests to join efforts to decisively combat the menace. (*Leadership*, Sep 26, 2014).

In sample (xi), *The Punch* activates Nigeria as a winner while “*Boko Haram* war” is assigned the role of recipient and war loser, and emphasises that the Federal Government is beginning to win. To corroborate the winning frame, the *Daily Trust* in sample (xii) frames the headline to assign the role of actor/agency in freeing the abductees to the army and the role of beneficiaries of the freedom to the kids and women. The fronting and foregrounding of “Army” purposefully construct the army, the security division and the Nigerian government, as winning the war. The report uses constructions such as “women and...children were rescued,” “overrunning three terrorists' camps,” “the ongoing onslaught against terrorists” and “destroyed

all the camps” to depict the government as winning. This suggests that the Nigerian government, which is the chief anti-BH terrorism warlord, justifies Jeffrey Simon's (1987, p.9) claim that 'equating terrorism with war effectively ends any debate over whether military responses are justified: if a nation is at war it must respond militarily to attack.' This also influences the perception of Nigerians, where they see the BH terrorists as enemies. In sample (xiii), the use of the expression, “combat the menace”, suggests how warlike the activities are.

Nevertheless, there are consequences in this kind of situation where everyone seems to agree with the metaphor that *BOKO HARAM* TERRORISM/COUNTER-TERRORISM IS WAR. First, it means the inevitability of military response, since a war is not fought one-sided if the other party wants to survive – attack remains the best form of defence. Two, since WAR is agreed upon, and military response is assured, it means violence and casualties at both camps (terrorist's and counter-terrorist's) are naturally accepted. Unfortunately, in such a situation, civilians also fall victims, since it is a WAR situation.

#### ***Boko Haram* Terrorism Is Evil**

*BOKO HARAM* TERRORISM IS EVIL is another conceptual metaphor found in the newspapers that constitute the corpus. The newspaper reports conceptually metaphorise terrorism as evil. In the data, metaphors map a source domain (EVIL) onto a target domain (TERRORISM), and make the target domain appear as something uncivilised and evil. This is indicated through metaphorical expressions which constitute terrorists and terrorism as 'possessed', 'harmful', 'malevolent', 'morally corrupt', 'evil', and perform 'monstrous', 'nefarious', 'unpleasant', 'undesirable', 'wicked', 'inhumane' and 'malicious' acts. Hence, with the activities and evils, so far perpetrated by the group in Nigeria, the BH terrorists are described as anti-human, who are devilish, evil, and attack the innocent without an iota of decorum (or civility). Samples (xiv) – (xviii) exemplify the evil in the BH terrorists.

- xiv. The president was apparently reacting to insinuations in some quarters that the Christmas Day bombing that left dozen dead was a religious war against Christians in the country. He said government will fight *Boko Haram*, the “**group of evil-minded people who want to cause anarchy to the end,**” and called for a concerted effort by all well-meaning Nigerians to bring this problem under control. (*Daily Trust*, Dec. 31, 2011)
- xv. Jonathan said how to mould and create a society that is

conducive to the people to interact was more important than the physical infrastructure that are provided. He assured that “the challenge of *Boko Haram* will surely come to an end because **everything about terror is evil.**” (*The Punch*, June 26, 2014)

- xvi. The Minister of Information, Labaran Maku, on Sunday in Abuja called on Nigerians to stand united with the Federal Government in the fight against terrorism. Maku who made the call at the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries Church, Utako said the fight against terrorism should not be left for government alone. He said the prayers of Nigerians could avert **the evils** occurring in the nation, adding that the challenges the country had been going through would soon be over. (*Leadership*, May 25, 2014)
- xvii. If there was an exact moment that the international community understood **the breadth of Boko Haram's evil**, it came last month, when the group's leader grinned and announced that he would sell more than 200 kidnapped schoolgirls in his “market of selling human beings”. (*The Nation*, June 10, 2014)
- xviii. The post-state-of-emergency military campaign is achieving some measure of success. Apart from recent attacks on secondary schools in Yobe and Borno states, there has been no major Boko Haram attack since May 14. The military operation should be encouraged to run its full course of **flushing out the evil insurgents** (*The Punch*, July 22, 2013).

The samples, especially (xiv) and (xv), deploy the voice of the President, Goodluck Jonathan to construct the BH as evil perpetrators, thereby labelling them as dangerous. The President's expressions, “group of evil-minded people who want to cause anarchy to the end,” and “the challenge of *Boko Haram* will surely come to an end because everything about terror is evil” do not only appeal to readers' emotions in the pitiable situation that Nigeria has found herself; it also suggests a great threat to the country, especially since the president does not have a direct answer to the problem. His lexical choices (futuristic) in the following constructions: “who want to,” “will surely come to an end” portray a difficult situation already created by the evil-minded miscreants, without an end in view. The information minister,

LabaranMaku, as reported in sample (xvi) brings a religious dimension to ending the evil. This is related to the construction of terrorism by the former President of the United States, President George Bush, as a type of “holy war” between the forces of “Good” and “Evil”. The government calls on Christians through the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries Church to pray to God so that the evil can be brought to an end.

Conceptualising the terrorists as evil or evil perpetrators shows that they are outcasts who are against reasoning. If they are against reasoning, then they are antagonistic to the other, thereby bringing about a polarisation or dichotomy. Polarisation here relates to two sides of a coin, where one is evil and the other is good. The construction of terrorism as 'evil' creates only two groups or camps. One can only belong to either of the camps. While one camp is bad/evil, the other is good. As constant, the good is the 'us' (the in-group), while the bad is the 'them' (the out-group). It is, therefore, a fight between us and them. Whoever is not one of them in reality or their supporter by association does not belong to their camp. The in-group is represented as the Nigerian people and the government who are fighting terror. They are not evil, despite the initial declaration of war on the group. They fight back in order to defend self and not become overwhelmed by the series of attacks and killings being perpetrated on them. The out-group is represented as the terrorists who are the actual evil perpetrators who are uncivil, uncouth and monstrous. They are initiators and perpetrators of evil.

Some possible questions in relation to the 'evilness' of terrorists are – why are terrorists evil-minded? Why do they kill, maim and destroy the way they do? The answer is obvious. They kill, maim, attack and destroy because they are evil (-minded). When the in-group (e.g. the Nigerian government and military) decides to eliminate 'evil' by inflicting extreme counter-measures such as military violence, detention without trial and others, such that torture becomes less shocking and begins to appear appropriate (Ivie, 2004, p.80), they tend to defend 'us' and keep us safe from 'them'.

### ***Boko Haram Terrorism Is Crime***

*BOKO HARAM TERRORISM IS CRIME* is another conceptual metaphor in the newspaper reports. Boko Haram terrorism is metaphorised as a criminal act. The metaphorical expressions map the source domain (CRIME) onto the target domain (TERRORISM). While the mapping of TERRORISM as WAR presents terrorism as something unusual, extraordinary, uncommon, irregular and unexpected, the mapping of TERRORISM as CRIME presents terrorism as something ordinary or regular. For instance, crime is a regular occurrence in society. The mapping then trivialises terror. This relates to the view of terrorists as 'murderers' and 'criminals' who commit 'murderous' 'crimes.' Who is a criminal? A criminal is an individual who is against the law, or who is guilty of breaking the law. Such an individual perpetrates crime by engaging in illegal deals which

range from killing to shooting, attacking the harmless, and so forth. A criminal act is considered a menace which lacks any kind of legitimacy. The criminal in the same vein is a deviant who does forbidden things or does not adhere to rules. Criminals break rules and, therefore, have to be punished in some sort of way. The defenceless citizens, who are sometimes 'crime victims,' are likened to the aftermath or victims of 'violence' from a 'crime scene.' Such lexical choices map terrorism as crime. Samples (xix) – (xxv) exemplify the metaphorisation of terrorism as crime, and the criminalisation of terrorism.

- i. President Jonathan even stated that this criminal act of mass kidnapping of school girls is the beginning of the end of the armed insurgents... His words; “*Boko Haram* has launched a vicious guerrilla-style campaign against the government and people of Nigeria. It has attacked schools, slaughtered students in their dormitories, destroyed villages, communities and government infrastructure and has wreaked havoc on the economic and social life of our people.” (*Leadership*, May 21, 2014)
- ii. Rupert Colville, the spokesperson for the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), said this in a statement at the UN Headquarters in New York on Friday. He reiterated calls on *Boko Haram* and other extremist groups in Nigeria to cease their “cowardly attacks” against civilians, members of government institutions, security forces and foreign nationals. “The High Commissioner noted that members of *Boko Haram*, if judged to have committed systematic attacks against a civilian population on grounds such as religion or ethnicity could be found guilty of crimes against humanity.” (*Daily Trust*, May 18, 2013)

In samples (xix) and (xx), both the *Leadership* and *The Punch* reporters manage the voices of newsworthy individuals to nominate, activate and criminalise the activities of *Boko Haram*. President Jonathan's voice is used to activate the agency of criminal acts carried out by the group. Some of the criminal activities as pointed out by the President, and lexicalised by the *Leadership* reporter in sample (xix) include “mass kidnapping of school girls”, “a vicious guerrilla-style campaign against the government and people of Nigeria”, “has attacked schools”, “slaughtered students in their dormitories”, “destroyed villages, communities and government infrastructure” and “has wreaked havoc on the economic and social life of our people”. Also, in sample (xx), the management of the voice of the UN officer,

Rupert Colvile, is taken from the constitutional perspective. The reporter attributes information source to the Rupert Colvile's voice in order to represent the standpoint of the UN High Commissioner where he outlawed the activities of the BH group with a threat of culpability and possibility of facing crimes against humanity. The High Commissioner, therefore, proposes the criminalisation of the BH if judged guilty of “attacks against civilians, members of government institutions, security forces and foreign nationals” and “attacks against a civilian population”

iii. Suspected members of the rebel sect *Boko Haram* stormed an agricultural college in Yobe, Northeastern Nigeria, on Sunday, killing at least 40 in the latest of a string of attacks that have rocked northern Nigeria. (*The Nation*, October 03, 2013)

iv. *Boko Haram* Kills 2,053 Civilians In 6 Months – HRW

Human Rights Watch has described continuous killings of innocent civilians by the terrorist sect, *Boko Haram* as a crime against humanity, saying over 2,053 civilians in an estimated 95 attacks were killed in the first half of 2014. According to Corinne Dufka, West Africa Director at Human Rights Watch, the figures are based on detailed analyses of media reports as well as field investigations. (*Leadership*— Jul 16, 2014)

The reports in samples (xxi) and (xxii) identify the BH terrorists as killers. Killing is a criminal offence, which is punishable by law. *The Nation* manages the indictment of BH by starting with 'suspected,' to show that nobody or group has taken responsibility for the killing yet. However, to support his suspicion, he indicts the BH group because the attack has an identity which relates to the handiwork of the BH group. The use of the expression “the latest of a string of attacks that have rocked northern Nigeria” implicates the BH group as the group that has been constantly unleashing attacks on the people and residents of northern Nigeria. The headline in sample (xxii) specifically identifies and activates BH as killers. The reporter assigns the role of agent to BH, while he assigns the role of client to the 2,053 civilians. The allocation of source of information to a human rights group, Human Rights Watch, in the headline, authenticates claims about the alarming number of people (2,053) whom BH have killed within a period of six months. *Leadership* foregrounds the figure of those already killed in the headline. This is an obvious instance of crime against humanity.

As exemplified in samples (xxiii) and (xxiv), the use of gun by non-licensed persons is a criminal offence.

- v. Dozens more *Boko Haram* members arrived at another village, Bargari ... Once they had gathered, another “large number of terrorists” arrived and “opened fire on the congregation”, one resident told Nigeria's *Daily Post*. “The gunmen numbering 20 ambushed the village with four Toyota Hilux vehicles, AK-47 rifles, improvised explosive devices, and petrol bombs,” the paper said. (*The Nation*, June 10, 2014).
- vi. The gunmen in Sunday's attack are reported to have killed dozens of students as they slept and rounded up others for execution. Several more students were injured trying to flee. (*The Nation*, October 03, 2013)

In sample (xxiii), *The Nation* reporter, twice, enumerates the number of the members of the group who stormed the village; the first set, almost armless were in dozens, while the second set, who were actually armed with guns, were twenty. He also identifies the village (Bargari) involved. The reporter manages an external voice – the voice of one of the villagers – to lexicalise the action involved when the gunmen were in action thus: “opened fire on the congregation” and “ambushed.” This representation also appeals to the emotions of the readers; a situation where gunmen just open fire, shooting armless members of the congregation is pitiable. The reporter criminalises the actions of the gunmen thus: “reported to have killed dozens of students as they slept,” “rounded up others for execution” and “several more students were injured trying to flee.” The reporter enumerates the number (“dozens”) of the students who were killed in the attack, several more were injured while others were rounded up for execution.

In contrast to *TERRORISM IS WAR* which calls for a military response, the conceptual metaphor *TERRORISM IS CRIME* most importantly calls for a judicial action. By judicial action, should there be a culprit in the whole BH terrorising vendetta, a military response cannot be the solution. The solution is for the culprit to be arrested, detained, prosecuted and, if found guilty, sentenced for a commensurate punishment. The mapping of the source domain *CRIME* to the target domain *TERRORISM* is clearly visible in sample (xx).

## Conclusion

The investigation of the *conceptual metaphors in Boko Haram terrorism reports in Nigeria* has revealed that the selected four Nigerian newspapers – *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *Leadership* and *Daily Trust* take an

unusual posture by converging to negatively represent an issue – the BH terrorism, possibly because it is largely negatively viewed by citizens within and outside Nigeria. The newspapers' metaphorical conceptualisations of BH terrorism as war, uncivilised evil and crime have cognitively tasked the readers. Readers' experience in relation to BH terrorism has been linked to the understanding of one thing in terms of the other. In the metaphorisations, while the target (BH terrorism) is constant, the source varies from war to evil and crime. The metaphorisation of the BH terrorism persuades, shapes and orientates the readers. Meanwhile, the fact that the reports on *Boko Haram* terrorism are allocated a large and regular space in the newspapers signals the symbiotic relationship between terrorism and media. As much as the terrorists need the newspapers to report their atrocities in order to instil fear in the masses and government, so as to press home their demands, the media also use the reportage for profiteering purposes. Readers have become quite eager to purchase newspapers with captions and headlines on the terrorising exploits of the BH group. If the criminal and evil activities of the BH terrorists do not get the desired attention from the government or reach a wider target audience, then the intention to gain public sympathy, as well as spread fear among the citizenry and the government becomes defeated.

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