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War Metaphors in Nigerian Pidgin Political News Coverage

Ahmad Isyaku
Department of English
Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State
drahmadisyaku@gmail.com

&

Abraham Solomon Oreoluwa
Department of English
Federal University Dutsin-ma, Katsina State
osolomon@fudutsinma.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigates the types of conceptual metaphors of war in Nigerian Pidgin news coverage; it focusses on the BBC Pidgin political news of September to December 2023. Grounded in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and using a qualitative approach with purposive and convenient sampling techniques, the study identified and analysed eight distinct conceptual metaphors which depicted politics, political events and electoral court cases as battle or war. The conceptual metaphors are used in order to simplify complex political and legal processes; they make complex political issues more accessible and relatable to readers. Key findings reveal that metaphors are used to map abstract political concepts onto familiar domains of battle, war, physical struggles and explosion. Beyond shaping public perception, this study highlights implications for political discourse in multilingual societies; it shows Nigerian Pidgin's metaphorical language and bridges communication gap between government and grassroots audiences in political communication. By situating the analysis within literature on metaphor in pidgin and creole languages, this research contributes to understanding how creole and pidgin

languages uniquely mediate political narratives, particularly in postcolonial contexts. Further, the study emphasises the role of Nigerian Pidgin not only as a lingua franca; but as a dynamic tool for framing sociopolitical realities; it offers insights for scholars of media, linguistics and African political communication.
Keywords: Conceptual Metaphors, Conceptual Mappings, Nigerian Pidgin, Political Discourse

Introduction

In linguistic exploration, the complexities of language have continually captured the attention of scholars and researchers; this research hopes to demonstrate the pervasiveness of conceptual metaphors of war in the linguistic expressions of Nigerian Pidgin news coverage of 2023, particularly news surrounding political and electoral court processes of the BBC Pidgin news. According to Flusberg, Matlock and Thibodeau (2018), war metaphors are ubiquitous in discussions of everything from political campaigns to battles with cancer to wars against crime and drugs; they tap into fundamental knowledge structures and make it possible for us in order to achieve efficient communication and reasoning. Similarly, Castro Seixas (2021) asserts that militaristic metaphors are also known as war metaphors; they have been used in "political and media communicative practices. Researches on political discourse have been based on the view that metaphors are seen as powerful tools for rhetoric and persuasion (Otieno et al., 2016). Politicians and commentators have long used metaphor to motivate supporters and villify opponents; metaphors are used to win the hearts and minds of supporters, listeners and readers (Charteris-Black, 2009; Xu, 2015; Turner, 2021). Beard (2000) argues that by knowing how to use metaphorical language in an influential way, a politician could either gain or keep power.

According to Balogun (2013), Nigerian Pidgin is a vibrant and dynamic language; it is a historical language of wider communication across Nigeria. It is spoken and used in Nigeria

and beyond. To this point, its significance in bridging communication gaps among different ethic groups in Nigeria and between government and grassroots audiences in a multilingual setting like Nigeria cannot be overstated.

From a cognitive linguistic perspective, conceptual metaphors are vital tools of communication in many contexts, especially in scientific writing and thinking (Hermann, 2017). Lakoff and Johnson (2003) view metaphors as fundamental aspects of human cognition; they hold that language itself is metaphorical in nature. This cognitive linguistic theory of metaphor, also known as *Conceptual Metaphor Theory*, was first advanced by Lakoff and Johnson in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live* By (1980).

The BBC Pidgin service was launched in 2017 with over 7.5 million readers within a year of its launch; it targets West African audiences. The BBC Pidgin service recognises the widespread usage and popularity of Pidgin in countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. By broadcasting in Nigerian Pidgin, the BBC aims to make news more engaging, accessible and understandable for a diverse audience. According to Oyebola and Ugwuanyi (2017) the BBC chose to broadcast news in West African Pidgin English (WAPE) which include Nigerian Pidgin, Ghanian Pidgin and Cameroonian Pidgin; given where BBC Pidgin service is headquartered in Lagos, the influence of Nigeria Pidgin and the large number of its users cannot be ignored.

The aim of this study is to investigate the cognitive functions of war metaphors in Nigerian Pidgin news coverage; specifically, it seeks to answer the question. How do war metaphor's structure and simplify complex political discourse in BBC Pidgin news of 2023; and what are the implications for audience engagement and comprehension?

Literature Review

As a rich historical linguistic entity, Nigerian Pidgin is a language that is widely spoken in Nigeria and studied by many scholars (Balogun, 2013). Despite its significance as a means of communication, the study of conceptual metaphors in Nigerian pidgin has been relatively unexplored area, especially in news coverage. Previous studies have examined various linguistic aspects of Nigerian Pidgin: its historical development (Elugbe & Omamor, 2008), sociolinguistic characteristics (Akande & Salami, 2021), phonology (Ekpenyong, 2006), grammar, lexicon (Mensah, 2012) and semantics and language planning; the origins and development of Nigerian Pidgin have been explored, as well.

Nigerian Pidgin is a vibrant and diverse language that is widely spoken in Nigeria and beyond; it is a lingua franca that is used by people from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds in Nigeria. Nigerian Pidgin has been studied by linguists for many years; there is a growing body of research on its various aspects, such as its origin and historical development, its sociolinguistic features, grammar, lexicon and phonology (Oluwatosin 2020; Akinnaso 2002; Bamgbose 2003, Adegbija 2004). Its role as a lingua franca in Nigeria has been investigated (Osoba and Alebiosu 2016) and its relationship to other West African Pidgin (English) varieties have also been examined (Ofulue 2012; Bamgbose, 1971). These studies have contributed to our understanding of Nigerian Pidgin as a distinct linguistic entity in Nigeria; however, they have not adequately examined the linguistic-metaphoric aspect of the vibrant language.

Previous studies have examined the conceptual metaphors found in pidgin and creole languages. Conceptual metaphors play a crucial role in language and cognition, especially in pidgin and creole languages. Kosecki's (2024) research on Tok Pisin demonstrated how metaphors, like the pervasive "journey" metaphor, convey complex ideas, challenging assumptions about their cognitive complexity. In addition, García (2020) have examined the dynamic

nature of creole languages; they foster linguistic creativity through metaphorical mappings. Similarly, Chen's (2018) examination of metaphorical expressions in cultural contexts has revealed the complex connection between language, culture and cognition within creole communities. While these studies enrich our understanding of conceptual metaphors, broader research encompassing other pidgin types like Nigerian Pidgin is needed to enhance our understanding further. The studies provide evidence that metaphors are a powerful tool for communication in pidgins and creoles; they reveal the fact that metaphors are a common feature of these languages and that they can be used to express a wide range of ideas. Notwithstanding, the existing literature on the study of Nigerian Pidgin in the framework of conceptual metaphors is relatively scanty and underexplored. A few prominent contributions found in this area include the works of Mensah (2012), Idegbekwe (2020) and Kosecki (2024).

Mensah (2012) explored metaphors in Nigerian Pidgin using a qualitative and ethnographic approach; he gathered authentic linguistic data by actively listening to and recording conversations in everyday settings, such as bus stations and markets, where Nigerian Pidgin is commonly spoken. Through context-rich data collection, Mensah identified several metaphorical expressions, such as "shake body", which means to shift or create space for someone at a bus station; "one more chance," which refers to the act of bringing a passenger into a bus; and also, terms like "money bénjí," which signify unexpected financial gain.

Additionally, Mensah has examined the role of metaphor in conveyance of complex social realities; he highlighted this using example like "back hand" which signify bribery. His empirical approach emphasised the significance of context in comprehending metaphorical language. The study demonstrated that Nigerian Pidgin is a rich linguistic resource; it is used to express abstract

concepts and reveal insights into the socio-cultural dynamics of Nigerian society.

Similarly, Idegbekwe's (2020) analysis explored anthropomorphism in Nigerian pidgin proverbs through Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor framework; it highlighted how non-human traits convey complex human ideas grounded in cultural context. Through personal observation and surveys, study examined proverbs, such as "the tortoise is wise" and "water does not forget its source" in order to illustrate how anthropomorphism enhances understanding through linguistic and cultural elements.

Moreover, Kosecki's (2024) study employed a robust methodological approach. Grounded in cognitive linguistics, the study analysed body part expressions in Nigerian Pidgin; the effective use of metonymy, metaphor and embodiment frameworks provides an exploration of complex conceptual patterns. For instance, metonymic expressions like "bad belle" (bad belly) for 'jealousy, envy, malice' are used in order to show how the use of body parts convey abstract concepts. Similarly, the metaphoric linguistic expressions found such as "heart cut" (shock, fear) and "belly sweet" (well-said, happiness) do reveal the interplay between cognitive mechanisms. Despite its limitations, the study's methodology would benefit from greater transparency, particularly in detailing data collection methods and sampling techniques; incorporating comparative data from other pidgin languages or linguistic varieties would further enhance the study's validity and generalisability.

Briefly, these studies have mainly investigated the use of figurative language in Nigerian Pidgin proverbs and the role of metonymy in the language by drawing from cognitive semantics, particularly the principles of conceptual metaphor, as well as the exploration of lexicalisation in Nigerian Pidgin (NP); which provides profound insights into conceptual metaphors within language evolution.

Despite the wealth of research on various aspects of Nigerian Pidgin, there are limited studies that specifically focus on conceptual metaphors within the language. To the best of our knowledge and having delved into the current existing literature, there is hardly any study on conceptual metaphors of war in Nigerian Pidgin, particularly in the domain of political news coverage; therefore, this research closes this gap by investigating Nigerian Pidgin's conceptual metaphors used in the BBC Pidgin political news of 2023. Also, it seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on conceptual metaphors in pidgins and creoles. As a fascinating linguistic phenomenon, the study offers insights into the Nigerian Pidgin's metaphoric structure, cognitive functions and cognitive processes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is the theory of conceptual metaphors developed in 1980 by Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By.* According to the theory, metaphors are part of our everyday linguistic life, we use metaphors to conceptualise our experiences and express ideas. Defined in a non-literary perspective and from a strictly cognitive linguistic view, a metaphor is a tool which allows us to understand one conceptual domain in terms of another. The basic idea of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, (CMT) is not simply a stylistic characteristic of language but that thought itself is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Metaphor is a common systematic mapping of one conceptual domain, the source domain, onto another conceptual domain, the target domain, whose structure is only partially understood in terms of the structure of the source domain (Kövecses, 2005). According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003):

> Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language we have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but

> in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature... we have found that most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature. And we have found a way to begin to identify in detail just what the metaphors are that structure how we perceive, how we think, and what we do.

To the best of our knowledge, there is hardly any study on war metaphors on pidgins and creoles; however, CMT has been applied to study war metaphors in other studies to analyse political and healthcare issues. For instance, Flusberg, Matlock and Thibodeau (2018) have demonstrated the effectiveness of CMT in war metaphor analysis; they analysed statements like "We must fight against poverty" and "We are in a war against disease"; they found that war metaphors framed political economic struggles and healthcare initiatives as battles. They reveal that war metaphors can generate heightened emotional responses and drive public support for aggressive policies. The use of metaphor in political discourse is a powerful tool that reflects power dynamics. According to Beard (2000), politicians who master metaphorical language can gain or maintain power.

Similarly, Castro (2021) examined the use of war metaphaphors in political communication during the COVID-19 pandemic; he used CMT in order to show that political representatives employed war metaphors for diverse purposes in crisis communication and management. Castro challenged previous criticisms of war metaphors as inherently negative and damaging, he instead highlighted their potential to inform and expand crisis communication.

To this point, the theory of conceptual metaphors (CMT) is a powerful tool for understanding how we think and communicate; it

is based on the idea that we use metaphors to structure our understanding of abstract concepts in terms of more concrete or physical experiences. Through analysing the conceptual metaphors used in Nigerian Pidgin news coverage, we can gain a deeper understanding of how Nigerian Pidgin is used to project political news and information; as well as how Nigerian Pidgin users think and conceptualise their world in ways that are unique to their culture.

Conceptual Metaphors

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) define a conceptual metaphor as a cross-domain mapping whereby structures from one conceptual domain are projected onto another". Moreover, a conceptual metaphor, according to Kövecses (2005), is a common systematic mapping of one conceptual domain, the source domain, onto another conceptual domain, the target domain, whose structure is only partially understood in terms of the structure of the source domain. Conceptual mappings are the basis of metaphor. A conceptual mapping is a way of relating two different concepts. For example, the conceptual mapping "Time is money" relates the concept of time to the concept of money. This mapping allows us to understand time in terms of money. For example, we might say that we "wasted time" or that we "saved time." Consider the following example (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003, p. 6):

Life is a journey

He's without *direction* in life.
I'm at a *crossroads* in my life.
She's *gone through* a lot in life.
He's *gone* (=died).

Briefly, conceptual metaphors are not just linguistic phenomena. They are also part of our everyday thought processes. We use conceptual metaphors all the time, even without realising it. For example, when we say that someone is "in a tight spot," we are using a conceptual metaphor that maps the abstract concept of difficulty onto the concrete concept of being in a tight physical space.

On this strand of thought, we intend to explore the types of war metaphors used in Nigerian Pidgin political news coverage in order to gain insights into the complex workings of human cognition, language and culture. In addition, it is important for the preservation of Nigerian pidgin as a significant linguistic heritage. The study's findings have important implications for teaching and learning practices in linguistics, language teaching and media studies, and can inform the development of curriculum and language teaching materials that promote the preservation and promotion of Nigerian Pidgin as a unique linguistic heritage.

Pidgin and Creole

Pidgin and creole are new language varieties that developed out of contacts between nonstandard varieties of a European language and several non-European languages around the Atlantic and in the Indian and Pacific Oceans from about the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Pidgins typically emerged in trade colonies which developed around trade forts or along trade routes, such as on the coast of West Africa; they are reduced in structures and specialised in functions (typically trade), and initially they served as non-native *lingua francas* to users who preserved their native vernaculars for their day-to-day interactions. Some pidgins have expanded into regular vernaculars, especially in urban settings, and are called `expanded pidgins.' Examples include *Bislama* and *Tok Pisin* (in Melanesia) and Nigerian Pidgin and Cameroon Pidgin English; structurally, they are as complex as Creoles. The latter vernaculars developed in settlement colonies whose primary industry consisted of sugar cane plantations or rice fields, which employed massive non-European slave labour (Keesing, 1988). Moreover, on creole and pidgin languages, a crucial distinction is made between a creole language and a pidgin in which a creole language is perceived to have native speakers, which a pidgin language lacks. A creole language therefore is a developed language which has become first language or the native language of a speech community (Muysken and Smith, 1995).

Nigerian Pidgin

The history of Nigerian Pidgin has deep roots in the interactions between European explorers, particularly the Portuguese, and West African communities along the coast. This historical connection has been extensively documented in academic research; the first Europeans to conduct business along the Nigerian coast were the Portuguese, who landed in Benin towards the end of the fourteenth century. Some Nigerian Pidgin terms, such *sabi*, which means "to know," *pikin*, which means "kid," and *palava*, which means "trouble," appear to have origin in Portuguese. (Ndolo, 1989). However, Portuguese influence was not the sole factor shaping the linguistic landscape of West Africa. Subsequent to Portuguese exploration, other European colonial powers, such as the Dutch and British, arrived on the West African coast and contributed to the development of Nigerian Pidgin (Ndolo, 1989). According to Balogun (2013), Nigerian Pidgin is a contact and marginal language, used to serve communicative needs in well-defined situations, but consisting of features of the indigenous language of its users.

Methodology

This research design is largely qualitative one; a qualitative content analysis was used by the researchers to identify and describe the data. It involves systematic examination and interpretation of the textual data as informed by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) method. The primary source of the data is the online edition of news article texts of the BBC Pidgin News from their official news website. The data is extracted from their news article headlines and their content (news stories). The study analysed BBC Pidgin news articles from September to December 2023 in order to investigate the types of war metaphors employed in the political news coverage, based on the availability and accessibility of the data. The BBC Pidgin News was chosen for its reliability, extensive political coverage and unique cultural perspective. In addition, a combination of non-probability sampling techniques

which include purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used to select those news articles relevant to Nigerian political events with metaphorical projections; the purposive sampling targeted news articles which are rich in political metaphors to align with the study's goal, while convenient sampling allows for the selection of news contents available in the BBC Pidgin News contents in the domain of Nigeria. This suggests that data from other domains of BBC Pidgin news such as Africa and the World are not selected for the study. This ensured that the data is relevant and accessible, while focusing on Nigerian Pidgin and political context. The findings are presented in narratives, which explained the kind of war metaphors employed as well as their cognitive functions.

Moreover, the study's criteria for identifying the war metaphors went beyond surface-level language; it focused on how conflict concept's structure political understanding. Metaphors were validated through conceptual alignment; this means that linguistic items such as "battle" or "fight" systematically mapped political processes to warfare with cultural evocations, as evidently seen as an example in a uniquely Nigerian Pidgin expression "gbás-gbós": a vivid onomatopoeia for physical struggle that is rooted in local experiences of conflict. In addition, the metaphors were analysed for narrative consistency; their adversarial framing permeate the text with cognitive function; they are used simplify legal complexities into familiar concepts and relatable struggle. This approach framed war metaphors not as decorative language but as cognitive tools; it embedded politics within conflict frameworks that relate deeply to the Nigerian audiences and culture.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

The following is the data presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data which was collected from the BBC Pidgin news contents on the political topics and events. War metaphors with their distinct variant forms are uncovered:

1. Political Victory as a Physical Struggle/fight

The first kind of conceptual metaphor in this analysis is portrayed through the formula POLITICAL VICTORY IS A PHYSICAL STRUGGLE /FIGHT. In the following BBC Pidgin news article of 20 September 2023, we see this metaphorical representation depicted. This conceptual metaphor is used in political and legal context in order to frame the legal affirmation of President Bola Tinubu's victory as a physical struggle:

a) "Afta di Presidential Election Petition *Court uphold di victory of President Bola Tinubu..."*

Meaning: After the Presidential Election Petition Court upheld President Bola Tinubu's victory...

b)"...tribunal bin reject *Atiku and Obi cases against Tinubu election victory"*.

Meaning: ...the tribunal rejected Atiku and Obi's cases against Tinubu's election victory.

(Headline: "Wetin to know about Atiku, Obi, Supreme court case wey seek to cancel Tinubu victory 20 September 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cx9rw7rlylxo).

By describing the legal confirmation of victory as an "upholding," the conceptual metaphor engages the audience's cognitive understanding of physical struggles; "Upholding" here implies that the court supported or maintained the legitimacy of Tinubu's victory.

In a similar vein, another news content from 11 October 2023 conveys similar metaphorical language of challenging political victory as a fight or physical struggle; the following are the linguistic expressions found:

c) I go only drop *di fight* wen di court rule. If di court rule say I dey right, fine. If di court rule say *im dey right*, fine, Atiku tok.

Meaning: "I will only abandon the struggle when the court makes a ruling. If the court rules in my favour, that's fine. If the court rules in his favor, that's fine," Atiku said.

d) So dat na di end of *di fight,* sake of say at di moment we dey Supreme Court and e no get higher court dan di Supreme Court."
Meaning: "So, that is the end of the fight because, at the moment, we are at the Supreme Court, and there is no higher court than the Supreme Court."
(Headline: "Pipo wey no sabi something dey see Nigerians as certificate forgers Oda tins Peter Obi tok about Atiku vs Tinubu matter" 11 October 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cd172ndw7wko)

The metaphorical use of "fight" in this context of political discourse conveys the intense competition, challenges and conflicts connected to seeking and maintaining political power. Here, Nigerian Pidgin is used to describe electoral legal battle as a form of struggle or physical fight; in addition, these linguistic expressions subtly convey the idea that achieving and challenging a political victory involves a strenuous effort or struggle in Nigeria. Additionally, the phrase "uphold di victory" maps courtroom decisions onto physical endurance; the metaphor emphasises both the struggle for power and the legitimacy of the outcome.

Cognitively, the conceptual metaphor draws on the source domain of physical struggles; this is evident in the linguistic expressions such as "uphold di victory" and "di fight". Thus, the conceptual mapping to the target domain of political victory help to engage the reader's understanding of competitive and strenuous struggles.

2. Conceptual Metaphor: Electoral Dispute as a Battle
ELECTORAL DISPUTE IS A BATTLE is another metaphorical projection obvious in the following BBC Pidgin news article; the metaphor is employed to depict the electoral dispute as a legal confrontation. Linguistic expressions used include:
a) "...*dismiss di petition* wey di Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and dia candidate file..." **Meaning**: Reject the formal complaint

that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and their candidate submitted.
b) "...judgment of *two against one*..."
Meaning: Decision made by two members of the panel against one member...)
c) "...filing of di pre-hearing notice bin dey *abandoned and out of time..."*
Meaning: Submission of the preliminary notice was neglected and exceeded the permissible time frame...
(Headline: "Tribunal verdict on Kaduna state govnorship election and wetin e mean for di parties involved", 28 September 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cx94llply20o.amp).

The linguistic expressions above, vividly portray the legal proceedings surrounding the electoral dispute as a battle in the courtroom; they convey the strategic maneuvers and technicalities involved. The choice of linguistic items like "judgment', "filing", and "abandoned" adds depth to the portrayal of the adversarial nature inherent in legal battles. The use of linguistic items such as "dismissed petition" and "abandoned filings" frame legal complexities as tactical maneuvers; this impression may erode public confidence in the judiciary and creates a perception of partisanship.

Moreover, the metaphor (Electoral Dispute as a Battle) works by simplifying and concretising the abstract concept of electoral disputes; through highlighting legal proceedings as a battle, the metaphor helps to evoke cognitive understanding of conflicts. It makes the complexities of legal arguments more accessible and relatable to readers.

3. Conceptual Metaphor: Judicial Ruling as Triumph in a Political Struggle

JUDICIAL RULING IS A TRIUMPH IN A POLITCAL STRUGGLE turned up here; this is evident in Governor Peter

Mbah's remarks on the tribunal judgment in Enugu State, (dated 21 September, 2023), the metaphorical projection of JUDICIAL RULING as a TRIUMPH IN A STRUGGLE is noticeable. This metaphor is utalised in order to characterise the tribunal's decision as a successful outcome in the quest for justice; the linguistic expressions used include:

a) "Di govnor also tok say di *tribunal judgement* *na victory* *for di ban on Monday sit-at-home* wey dey shelle for Enugu State."

Meaning: The governor also stated that the tribunal judgment is a victory for the ban on the Monday sit-at-home order in Enugu State.

b) "*Na victory for Ndi Enugu*. *Na victory* *for democracy.* Na victory for massive development for Ndi Enugu. Na victory for exponential growth, na *victory* for Enugu greatness, di govnor tok."

Meaning: It is a victory for the people of Enugu. It is a victory for democracy. It is a victory for significant development for the people of Enugu. It is a victory for exponential growth, a victory for the greatness of Enugu," the governor said.

In the linguistic expressions above, we see the concept of tribunal ruling (target domain) mapped onto the concept of victory; this means that tribunal's decision is perceived as a victory. Tribunal judgments are often celebrated as moral triumphs; however, this language may perpetuate winner-takes-all politics rather than collaborative governance.

Cognitively, it connects with our cognitive understanding of success and triumph; this makes the complex issues of legal proceedings more accessible and relatable.

(Headline: "Why tribunal throway Labour Party petition against Peter Mbah", 21 September 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cne89ekz41go).

4. Conceptual Metaphor: Fraudulent Electoral Process as a Robbery

The metaphorical depiction FRAUDULENT ELECTORAL PROCESS IS A ROBBERY encapsulates the speaker's strong condemnation of perceived unfairness in the electoral events.

The linguistic expressions include:

a) "Nigerians be witnesses to *di electoral robbery* wey happun on 25 February, wey dey globally condemned but di tribunal for dia wisdom don refuse to accept di obvious."

Meaning: Nigerians are witnesses to the electoral fraud that occurred on February 25, which is globally condemned, but the tribunal, in their wisdom, has refused to acknowledge the apparent wrongdoing.

b) "LP say *wetin dey at stake na democracy* and dem no go relent until di pipo prevail.

Meaning: The LP says what is at stake is democracy, and they will not relent until the people prevail.

("Headline: " How PDP, LP, odas react to PEPC judgement and wetin fit happun next", 7 September 2023 - (https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cjld9028l4wo).

The use of the linguistic items such as "robbery" and "at stake" evokes this idea of electoral fraud as a robbery; it suggests a violent conflict or hostile takeover (war). The conceptual metaphor highlights the concept of "fraudulent electoral process" (the target domain) in terms of concept of "robbery" (the source domain) in order to describe and condemn the perceived irregularities in the electoral process which gave power to the other party through violent force or armed means. This metaphor taps into the readers common cognitive understanding of armed conflict, criminal acts, injustice and the violation of democratic principles; thus, it makes the complexities of electoral malpractice more vivid and relatable to readers.

5. Conceptual Metaphor: Election as a Battle/War/Contest

ELECTION IS A BATTLE /WAR is a recurrent conceptual metaphor obvious this study; in the following linguistic

expressions, linguistic items such as "battle" , "war" , "victory" "beat" "political enemy" (as opposition), "go face"(compete) and "drag power" suggest that election or political activities and opposition are perceived as a conflict, fierce battle or physical war; broadly speaking, these categories of metaphoric linguistic expressions fall under war metaphors which their variants are found in the analysis. The linguistic expressions in this include:

a) *'Na battle we lose, we neva lose di war.'*

Meaning: We lost the battle, but we have not lost the war.

b) "Atiku say make im supporters calm down sake of say *na battle dem lose yesterday,* but dem *neva lose di war*."

Meaning: Atiku said that his supporters should calm down because they lost a battle yesterday, but they have not lost the war.

c) "Meanwhile Nigeria President Bola Tinubu don welcome di judgement of di PEPC wey confam im *electoral victory."*

Meaning: Meanwhile, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu has welcomed the judgment of the Presidential Election Petition Court (PEPC) that confirmed his electoral victory.

(Headline: " How PDP, LP, odas react to PEPC judgement and wetin fit happun next", 7 September 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cjld9028l4wo). The linguistic expressions include).

d) "Douye Diri, Timipre Sylva, Udengs Eradiri *battle am out for Bayelsa election."*

Meaning: Douye Diri, Timipre Sylva, and Udengs Eradiri are competing in the Bayelsa election."

(Headline:" Douye Diri, Timipre Sylva, Udengs Eradiri battle am out for Bayelsa election", 9 November 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/c72rxjp7p8jo)

e) "*Usman-Ododo bin beat Shaibu Audu*, Stephen Ochen, Sanusi Ohiare, and even Smart Adeyemi for di APC Kogi govnorship primary election to emerge candidate of di party."

Meaning: Usman-Ododo won the APC Kogi governorship primary election, defeating candidates like Shaibu Audu, Stephen Ochen, Sanusi Ohiare, and Smart Adeyemi to become the party's candidate.

(Headline: "Ahmed Usman-Ododo: Wetin you suppose know about di new Kogi state govnor-elect ", 12 November 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/ck7pnkzym8zo)

f) "Emeka Ihedioha of di Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), one situation wey make am attract more *political enemies* for di state wey dey suffer from security issues..."

Meaning: Emeka Ihedioha of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) faced increased opposition in the state, which is grappling with security challenges...

g) "Di State Governor, Sen Douye Diri of di Peoples Democratic Party *PDP dey seek re-election and go face 15 oda candidates..."* (challenge).

Meaning: The State Governor, Senator Douye Diri of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), is seeking re-election and will compete against 15 other candidates...

(Headline: "Douye Diri, Timipre Sylva, Udengs Eradiri battle am out for Bayelsa election", 9 November 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/c72rxjp7p8jo)

h) "Sam Anyanwu, Athan Achonu, odas dey *drag power* from Hope Uzodinma".

Meaning: Sam Anyanwu, Athan Achonu, and others are actively competing for political power against Hope Uzodinma.

(Headline: "Sam Anyanwu, Athan Achonu, odas dey drag power from Hope Uzodinma" 9 November 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cpvpzxkk9qzo).

The metaphoric linguistic expressions portray electoral process as a battlefield; it denotes that engaging in elections is akin to participating in a conflict or war. The use of "battle" signifies an intense competition and opposition; it evokes and stresses the adversarial nature of politics in Nigerian context. The concept of election (the target domain) is described in terms of concept of battle or war (the source domain). Elections are often framed as contests with candidates as "political enemies"; this framing creates a narrative of ongoing conflict and polarises the electorate.

6. Conceptual Metaphor: Political Legal Proceedings as a Physical Contest/Battle

POLITICAL LEGAL PROCEEDINGS IS A PHYSICAL CONTEST/BATTLE is another variant of war metaphor that turned up in this study. Here, this recurrent war metaphor is that of a physical contest or battle to describe the legal proceedings in Nigerian court. This is in connection with Supreme Court, particularly the election victory of President Bola Tinubu. The linguistic expressions which suggest this conceptual metaphor are:

a) "*Nigeria Supreme Court* on Thursday *bin decide whether or not to uphold di election victory* of President Bola Tinubu."

Meaning: The *Nigeria Supreme Court*, on Thursday, was tasked with *determining* whether to confirm or reject *President Bola Tinubu's election victory.*

b) "*Im two main challengers*, Atiku Abubakar of di People's Democratic Party and Peter Obi of di Labour Party, bin wan *overturn* di February presidential election, alleging say mago-mago full inside."

Meaning: His two main challengers, Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party and Peter Obi of the Labour Party, sought to overturn the February presidential election, claiming that there were fraudulent activities involved.

(Headline: "Full details of Supreme Court judgement wey uphold election of Tinubu as Nigeria president plus reactions " 26 October 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cw0krg10e7ko)

The metaphorical projection of the legal proceedings as a physical contest or battle is obvious in the choice of linguistic items such as "decide," "uphold," "challengers," and "overturn"; these metaphoric linguistic expressions imply a sense of conflict, contest, and rival engagement. They further portray legal battle as a struggle between opposing forces. The concept of *electoral legal proceeding* (target domain) is mapped onto the concept of *battle or physical contest* (source domain) in order to highlight the adversarial nature of politics within Nigerian context. Linguistic

items like "overturn" frame court rulings as adversarial clashes; this may reduce public confidence in legal outcomes and erodes trust in the judiciary. The metaphor seemed to be employed in order to convey this message.

7. Conceptual Metaphor: Corruption as an Adversary of the Presidency in War

CORRUPTION IS AN ADVERSARY OF THE PRESIDENCY/ A PERSON is a war metaphor obvious in this analysis; the following metaphoric linguistic expression "war against corruption" personifies corruption as a person /an adversary or opponent in a war (personification of corruption). The use of "war" indicates an adversarial relationship between the authorities and corruption or rather those battling against it. This signifies that corruption is not merely a passive problem, but an active opponent that needs strategic and forceful measures to combat it.

a) Presidency say *di war against corruption* na part of *di Renewed Hope Agenda* of oga Tinubu

Meaning: The presidency states that the *fight against corruption is part of President Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda*.

(Headline: "Meet former Attorney-General wey Tinubu appoint as ICPC chairman " 17 October 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cn0362pe35ko)

Here, the concept of corruption (target domain) is mapped onto the concept of enemy/person (source domain); ontologically, this conceptual metaphor draws on our understanding of corruption as an enemy or a person that the government needs to fight with strategy and tactics.The personification of corruption as an enemy in the "war against corruption" normalises governance as a perpetual conflict; this framing may suggest legitimate authoritarian measures to tackle corruption and have implications of undermining democratic institutions.

8. Political Challenges and Controversies as Physical Struggle ("Gbas-Gbos")

This is another category of war metaphor evident in the following linguistic expressions; they suggest the construction POLITICAL CHALLENGES AND CONTROVERSIES ARE JABS:

a) "Dis executive meeting dey come afta plenti months wey *Aiyedatiwa don face serious gbas-gbos* from *evri angle* including di impeachment saga from di House of Assembly."

Meaning: This executive meeting is happening after many months during which Aiyedatiwa has encountered significant challenges and controversies from every angle, including the impeachment saga from the House of Assembly.

(Headline: Lucky Aiyedatiwa na deputy or acting govnor of Ondo State? President Tinubu tok as court give judgement" 30 November 2023 -https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/c7275p887rzo)

The Nigerian Pidgin linguistic expression "gbas gbos" is an onomatopoeic word that is used to describe vigorous struggles, confrontings or encounters; the use of "gbas-gbos" signifies the notion of a vigorous and strong struggle. It is often associated with the sound effects of punches or hits or wrestling. Here, in this political context, difficult experiences are described as though a physical struggle (source domain: "gbas-gbos") mapped onto the challenges and controversies he faced (target domain) in order to facilitate understanding of the complex political issues. In a similar vein, the linguistic expression " impeachment saga" reinforces this idea and implies a contentious and serious political ordeal. The onomatopoeic "gbas-gbos" localises political strife as wrestling-like struggles; it highlights Nigerian cultural significance of resilience and adaptability in politics.

9. Conceptual Metaphor: Political Crisis as an Explosion

POLITICAL CRISIS IS AN EXPLOSION is evident in this analysis. In the following linguistic expressions, political crisis of Rivers States is described as an explosion ("burst"); this suggests

that significant and contentious event occurred in Rivers politics in October which created a tumultuous situation and affected the political stability. The use of "burst" convey the swift and forceful nature of the crisis. It is treated as though an explosion in a war that needs attention and immediate response.The "kasala burst" metaphor frames crises as sudden events; this framing justifies urgent interventions and can undermine democratic processes. It is possible that the metaphor is employed to achieve this effect in conveyance of the message to the public.

a) "Na for October *kasala burst for di politics of Rivers* state wey dey South South Nigeria."

Meaning: In October, there was a political crisis in Rivers State, located in the South-South region of Nigeria."

(Headline: " Rivers political crisis - Wetin don happun since Tinubu intervene for Wike, Fubara fight" , 20 December 2023 - https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/articles/cm507d874kmo)

In the metaphoric linguistic expression above, explosion ("burst") is used as the source domain for characterising the political crisis (the target domain) of Rivers State. Cognitively, the abstract concept of political turmoil is described as an explosion in order to make the concept more vivid and relatable by drawing on the readers' common experiences associated with explosion in war to convey the urgency and disruptive nature of the crisis.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the analysis an interpretation of the data, the following are the findings of the study:

This study has identified the types of war metaphors present in the BBC Nigerian Pidgin news articles of 2023; the metaphors draw their source domains from the concepts of war, battle, physical struggle and explosion. It showcases the diverse range of war metaphors of political topics utilised in the news coverage within Nigerian context. The research uncovers a range of metaphoric linguistic expressions portraying political events as battles, war,

struggles and confrontations; the metaphors act as cognitive aids which simplify complex political ideas and make them more accessible through vivid imagery and emotional resonance. Through examination the use of these metaphors, the study contributes to our understanding of how Nigerian Pidgin influences the perception and interpretation of Nigerian politics; in addition, it provides valuable insights into the cognitive processes and cultural distinctiveness and uniqueness involved in news consumption within Nigerian context.

The findings of this study align with previous findings of researches on metaphorical use of war metaphors to describe political issues and events; Xu's (2015) examined the use of war metaphors, which drew on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) seminal work on the "argument is war" metaphor, exemplified by metaphoric expressions "They attack every weak point in my argument" and "win an argument". Xu uncovered the use of war metaphors which help to structure understanding of politics and conveyance of messages. These war metaphors reveal similar patterns of metaphorical usage in Nigerian Pidgin political news. The similarity highlights the pervasive role of war metaphors in shaping our understanding of politics and competition.

Similarly, Turner (2021) also explored the role of metaphor in politics and polarisation; he analysed violence metaphor use on cable news during the 2012 and 2016 US presidential debates and elections. The study highlights the significance of metaphor in shaping our understanding of politics and competition, where linguistic items like "war" and "fight" are used to convey strong emotions and create vivid imagery; it influenced public perception and opinion. Turner examined that the impact of metaphor in politics evident in examples like "War on Drugs," "Classroom Warfare," and the "Swamp in Washington"; this framing evoke issues in specific ways which are aimed at evoking emotions and contributing to polarisation. Through the use of metaphors,

politicians and commentators create metaphoric images in order to shape public opinion and influence how readers and listeners think and feel about politics. According to Otieno et al. (2016) , the conceptual metaphor POLITICS IS WAR structures the way we think about politics as a battle to be won.

Compared to previous studies, the findings in this present study reveal a unique blend of cultural distinctiveness and universality in war metaphors of political discourse. While aligning with previous findings on war metaphors in politics, such as Xu's (2015) study and Turner's (2021) analysis of violence metaphor in US cable news, this research showcases the diverse range of metaphors used in Nigerian Pidgin to describe politics within Nigerian political context and culture. Nigerian Pidgin metaphors reflect the country's unique cultural context; expressions like "gbas-gbos" describe political challenges as physical struggles.

In the end, the findings of the study are significant and can be of interest to scholars of language and education, communication and culture; the study has other implications for the teaching of Nigerian pidgin, language communication and political discourse. The findings can be utilised to develop more effective educational materials and communication strategies for using Nigerian pidgin in news coverage. Similarly, the findings can help educators and researchers understand how Nigerian pidgin is used to communicate in the context of political discourse, as well as the cultural complexities and worldview of Nigerians embedded in the pidgin. In the end, the study has implications for intercultural understanding and the preservation of Nigerian Pidgin as a significant linguistic heritage.

Conclusion

This study provides an exploration of the types of war metaphors employed in the metaphorical projection of political news and information of BBC Pidgin news articles of 2023; through the

analysis, we uncovered a diverse array of war metaphors that depicted political phenomena as war, battles, triumphs, adversaries and physical struggles. These metaphors work as cognitive aids; they highlight complex political concepts and convey their meaning with them with emotive resonance. Through the strategic use of familiar conceptual domains of war, political actors and media outlets wield significant influence over public narratives and perceptions; thus, the study emphasises the pivotal role of metaphorical framing in shaping political discourse and shaping public opinion. It therefore demonstrates the pervasiveness of conceptual metaphors within Nigerian Pidgin political discourse; it provides valuable insights into the dynamics of language, cognition and politics within the Nigerian context. Future research in this underexplored area of metaphors could compare war metaphors to other types of metaphor in Nigerian Pidgin; focus on sports or economic metaphors are potential areas of future studies.

Similarly, the study of metaphor use in different contexts is important area; this suggests that focus on social media, political speeches and everyday conversations as key areas to examine. New studies could examine the impact of metaphors on public opinion; this will suggest experiments or surveys in order to gather data. In the end, the goal is to comprehend the complex relationships between language, culture and politics. This understanding can inform effective communication strategies.

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