Strategic Use of Metaphor in Nigerian Newspaper Reports: A Critical Perspective

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Abstract

Metaphor, a pervasive cognitive phenomenon for encoding social meanings and cultural presuppositions has been implicated as a strategic linguistic tool for the media in swaying public perceptions and assuming consensus for the argument they want to project as the 'truth'. Using insights from critical discourse analysis, conceptual metaphor theory and critical metaphor analysis, this paper appraises the array of conventional metaphors used by a privately-owned Nigerian newspaper, the Guardian, to report the Nigerian Union of Teachers' strike. Our findings revealed the newspaper's apparently inadvertent ideological solidarity with the power elite, hidden under the mask of metaphors in its attempt to act out its watchdog role in the teachers' case. The study puts this ambivalence down to either a deliberate strategic recourse to formulate new as well as exploit pre-existing conceptual frames as repressive apparatus against the NUT demand for a special salary structure or to lack of awareness of the negative effects of these metaphors. The paper calls these metaphors up for scrutiny and reconceptualization in terms of creating awareness to the Nigerian reading public, the political elite, the teachers and the newspaper on the pervasiveness and negative effects of such subtle metaphors in media reporting.

Key words: critical discourse analysis, critical metaphor analysis, conceptual metaphor, media, ideology

1. Introduction

The media have been described as powerful sites for the production and circulation of social meanings (Thornborrow 2000; Wodak & Busch 2004). They are the custodian of information on the content and structure of contemporary social reality and, to a great extent, decide the significance of events in the world for any given culture or social group. The choice of words, the grammatical constructions and the meanings conveyed by the media have a significant role to play on the particular worldview a particular discursive event is to be framed. As van Dijk (1993: 241) succinctly puts it, other elite discourses (political, racial, educational, and academic) find expression through the 'mediating and reinforcing functions of the media'. They therefore provide the dominant worldview and in this way, control public opinion, decide what gets written and how they should be written, the angle of vision,

the schemata to be formed as part of background knowledge and mental models.

One obvious means by which the media achieve these tremendous feats has been attributed to their use of subtle metaphors. Metaphor seems to be pervasive in most media reporting, among which is the newspaper, our focal point in this paper. The metaphorical names of some newspapers certify to the socially-assigned roles and expectations of the media as 'freedom-seekers and defenders' of the public: *The Guardian, The Vanguard, The Champion, The National Light, The Triumph, The Sun, The Voice of the People, The Chronicle, The Mirror, The Trumpeter* and others (Oloyede 1990: 66; Watson & Hill 2006: 119). In these roles, they are expected to act as the champion of public interest, as 'the Fourth Estate of the Realm', just as the other three 'estates' – legislature, executive and judiciary (Robinson 2007: 524; Watson & Hill 2006: 104). The fourth estate view sees the press as autonomous from the state, as 'watchdog', in constant surveillance of the powerful on behalf of and in the interest of the public. This mediating role raises questions of whether the media tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, or because the priorities of state seem to require it, manipulate, conceal or deny that truth.

These questions call to mind the other 'dog' metaphors used in relation to the media when they no longer serve as watchdogs – the 'guard-dog' and 'lapdog' metaphors (Watson & Hill 2006: 119). Whereas the guard dog media act as sentry for the power elite and are pretentious about loyalty to public interest, the lapdog image is a total rejection of the fourth estate view on all counts. A lapdog media are overtly submissive to authority, oblivious to all interests except those of the powerful group and contrive to frame all issues according to the perspectives of the highest powers in the system. Our questions in this write-up are: what type of 'dog' image do the Nigerian media have? Are they watchdogs, guard dogs or lapdogs? Do they, as one of the ideological state apparatuses, serve to secure support and hegemony for the ideologies of those who control the state? How have the metaphors used in our sample texts exemplified the ideological stance of the media in relation to their socially expected roles?

The *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, in its Chapter II, Section 22, captioned 'Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy: Obligations of the Mass Media', stipulates that 'the press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people' (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999: 13). This provision imbues the mass media in Nigeria with freedom to publish the truth without fear or favour and also be responsible to the people. The present article looks at the truism behind this press freedom and how this constitutional freedom was appropriated by *The Guardian* newspaper selected for this study. The theoretical underpinnings of the study are critical discourse analysis, initiated by Fowler and his associates as critical linguistics (1979, in Fairclough 2002), Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory and Charteris-Black's (2004) critical metaphor analysis.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Contemporary linguistic studies of the 1970s and 1980s called 'Critical Linguistics' (CL) and later 'Critical Discourse Analysis' (CDA) takes particular interest in the relationship between language and power. Advocates of this research agenda claim that language is a form of social practice and that the context of language use is very crucial in its analysis (Fairclough 1995, Wodak 2005; Wodak & Busch 2004).   To them, CDA is neither a theoretical framework nor a method of inquiry, rather 'a critical perspective in doing scholarship' (van Dijk 2005: 96). CDA scholars drew insights from the critical social theory of Karl Marx and his critique of capitalist ideology, his followers Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser and Michel Pecheux (Watson & Hill 2006). CDA proponents claim that hitherto, previous works on discourse and conversation analysis had been more 'descriptive', focussing on the local micro-level linguistic features of cohesion and coherence, topical markers and semantic principles that connect textual patterns; and less 'explanatory' and 'evaluative' of the macro socio-cultural dimensions of discursive practices (Fitch & Sanders 2005: 253). These earlier works have failed to answer questions such as: why certain discourses are structured to dominate others; how language is used and abused in the service of the powerful in society; how language can be structured to become a veritable instrument of propaganda, manipulation, marginalization, oppression, under-representation and misrepresentation among others –what Mey (2001: 293) referred to as 'linguistic repression' – a subtle but pernicious form of social control through discursive practices. They have failed to explain how discourse buttresses ideological formations of social institutions and why even those who suffer as a consequence fail to realize how many things that appear to be natural and normal are not at all so (Wareing 2000).

These scholars therefore look beyond the micro-descriptive level of linguistic analysis into institutional frameworks, cultures and ideologies to explain and evaluate how personal and social ideologies are tacitly encoded in, validated and reinforced by the institutionalization of certain mental models which stick to our memory and become commonsensical, how our utterance choices, instantiated as texts, are not just arbitrary choices, but are governed by our ideological inclinations. CDA proponents believe that since language use can be instrumental to the institutionalization of asymmetries and dominance, it can also be used to subvert them. Fairclough (1999) stresses the need to question all textual representations, in our textually-mediated contemporary society, to determine whose representations they are, who benefits from them and what social relations they draw us into. Since the media are among the instruments of power of contemporary society, vested with the special privilege of communication and means of information dissemination, it becomes equally germane to critically examine the strategies and ideologies which lie at the root of most reports and how the media try to attenuate these positions to make them invisible to, and undetected by, the uncritical reader.

Metaphor as a linguistic and conceptual phenomenon has been implicated as a strategic tool of persuasion that predisposes one understanding of reality over others. This characteristic makes it a serious subject of study in CDA

which takes particular interest in ideologically biased discourses and how they are used strategically as repressive apparatus for the less privileged in society. The media as controller and gatekeeper of public opinion are being appraised to determine how they employ metaphor to present balanced and unbiased reports that take cognizance of the needs of the less-privileged. CDA is viewed as biased on the side of the disadvantaged group, but proponents do not seem to be bothered about such critique of CDA goals. In this work, we adopt insights provided by CDA, conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and critical metaphor analysis (CMA) in the analysis of media discourse with particular emphasis on the conventional metaphors used in the selected newspaper reports. The synergy of these three research models in the analysis of texts has been established in the collection of works edited by Hart and Lukeš (2007) and in Charteris-Black (2004). In the following sections, we discuss the CMT and CMA models and some works of scholars who have adopted them in their analysis.

2.2 Conceptual Metaphor

Conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) is credited to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) *Metaphors We Live By* and is geared towards highlighting the role of cognition in the interpretation of discourse. Linguists locate CMT within the wider theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics (CL). CL recognizes the impact of the mind in structuring human language but holds that extra-linguistic factors and knowledge of them have direct bearing on linguistic structure. It also claims an intimate relationship between language, culture and cognition and how the mind processes information located in particular social contexts. This view is corroborated in van Dijk's (2005) concept of 'discourse-cognition-society' triangle which is rooted in Whorfian determinism. In van Dijk's framework, cognition is seen as an interface between discourse and society, society being the embodiment of micro- and macrostructures of local and global meanings respectively. Language users select from their mental models of global meanings in order to express local meanings of situated face-to face talk in interaction.

One of the ways of reproducing such societal and cultural background knowledge in memory is through metaphor which operates at the level of our thinking. It is pertinent here to distinguish conceptual metaphors from linguistic metaphors. According to Charteris-Black (2004: 15), a conceptual metaphor 'is a formal statement of any idea that is hidden in a figure of speech... that can be inferred from a number of metaphorical expressions and helps to resolve their semantic tension'. He thus defined metaphor as 'any word or phrase that causes semantic tension at the linguistic, cognitive and pragmatic levels resulting in a shift in domain use' and having persuasive potential of influencing opinions and judgements (Charteris-Black 2004:21). Lakoff (1993:215) extensively discusses this cross-domain mapping and the ontological correspondence metaphors induce in our minds between 'the source domain' and 'the target domain'. In what he termed the 'Invariance Principle', Lakoff contends that 'metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology (that is, the image-schema structure) of the source domain in a way consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain'. The source domain is said to consist of a set of literal entities, attributes, processes

and relationships linked semantically in terms of spatial, causal and temporal relationships, derived from basic human experiences and stored in the mind. Target domain, on the other hand, is derived from abstract concept of our experiences which takes its structure from the source domain. Entities, processes and attributes in the target domain are lexicalized using words and expressions from the source domain. These are called 'linguistic metaphors' or 'metaphorical expressions' to distinguish them from conceptual metaphors - that is, the underlying image-schema structure or cross-domain mappings evoked by linguistic metaphors. This underlying metaphor is usually described using the formula in uppercase: X IS (OR AS) Y: where X represents the target domain and Y the source domain, or as Lakoff's (1993) mnemonics, TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN. The often cited examples are; ARGUMENT IS WAR as in: *Your claims are indefensible. He attacked every weak point in my argument;* TIME IS MONEY as in; *Working on that car cost me hours*; LOVE IS A JOURNEY as in; *We've come to the crossroads* and others (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1993).

Though CMT provides a useful cognitive framework for resolving the incongruities of linguistic metaphors by establishing a similarity between two apparently dissimilar entities, it has been flawed as lacking pragmatic application. It is argued that metaphor goes beyond being merely a cognitive phenomenon to being a strategic rhetorical resource for winning consensus and projecting certain truths and ideologies. Since CDA is geared towards the deconstruction of ideologically biased discourses and bringing up for scrutiny linguistic representations that are repressive, metaphor appeared to be among the covert linguistic usages that may mask subtle asymmetries and repressions. The need arises to adopt a framework that studies authentic data in order to demystify metaphors that are ideologically motivated. Critical metaphor analysis has been postulated as a framework that complements the two approaches by providing a pragmatic explanation to the linguistic and cognitive dimensions of metaphor analysis.

2.3 Critical Metaphor Analysis

Critical metaphor analysis is an approach that takes metaphor analysis a step further by introducing the context of metaphor and their motivations. Proposed by Charteris-Black (2004) as a corpus-based approach to the analysis of metaphor, it seeks to fill the lacuna in the CMT which concentrated on cognitive semantics and psychological dimensions of metaphor interpretation based on contrived data. It brings together three hitherto unrelated fields of critical linguistics, cognitive linguistics and corpus linguistics and recognizes the need to study metaphor in existing corpus thus bringing in pragmatic dimensions where these metaphors are explained in authentic textual data. This approach thus incorporates 'the linguistic, cognitive and pragmatic' dimensions in metaphor analysis and its definition of metaphor is guided by these three criteria (Charteris-Black 2004: 21). The linguistic criteria will enable the identification of metaphor by establishing the existence of semantic tension in a word or phrase through reification, personification or depersonification. This semantic tension is said to be evident at the linguistic, cognitive and pragmatic levels resulting in a shift in domain use. Charteris-Black suggests focusing on conventional metaphors

than creative metaphors because the former have become clichéd in the language and may escape critical scrutiny. The cognitive dimension of metaphor analysis enables the analyst decode the image-schema structure of the metaphor, a kind of transfer of meanings from the word or phrase etymological source domain to a novel abstract target domain, and thus resolve the incongruous expression through conceptual metaphors or the higher level conceptual keys. At the pragmatic level, the motivations of these metaphors and how they can predispose the interlocutors to certain interpretations or misinterpretations are explained. Metaphors are seen as powerfully persuasive and emotionally appealing, and people tend to respond better to them because they are equally cognitively plausible.

The major distinguishing feature of critical metaphor analysis and conceptual metaphor is the former's emphasis on corpus-based approach to metaphor analysis. Charteris-Black (2004: 31) defines a corpus as follows:

> A corpus is any large collection of texts that arise from natural language use; in a linguistic context, it is in contrast to other types of text that were invented specifically for illustrating a point about language. The notion of attested language is very important in corpus linguistics and implies that data are not invented for the benefit of a model but rather that the model emerges from large and representative samples of language. Other than this, there are no constraints on corpus composition nor are there any constraints on corpus size; these are determined by our purposes in designing the corpus in the first place.

Going further, he asserts that a corpus need not be as large as existing corpora such as the Bank of English (approximately 418 million words) and the British National Corpus (approximately 100 million words), but should be 'as large and as balanced – that is, containing as many registers and types of texts – as possible' (Charteris-Black 2004: 31) and we might add 'as representative of the linguistic features being studied'. The method usually employed may be both quantitative and qualitative, to determine how frequently a word form occurs in a given corpus, and what different meanings are attached to particular word forms respectively. Our approach in this article would be qualitative since we are concerned not with the frequency of occurrence or typicality of metaphor in our corpus but with their various meanings as rhetorical strategies to persuade people to particular points of view and ideological positions.

Charteris-Black's (2004) seminal work focused on the various conventional metaphors used in political, media and religious discourses. Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, he discusses metaphors in Labour and Conservative manifestos, American presidential speeches, press, sports and financial reporting, the Bible and the Koran. His findings in the study of the New Labour party discourse, for instance, show a preponderance of metaphor choices drawing from the lexical field of religion – faith, mission, dogma, doctrine – to apply to the secular domain of politics based on the conceptual schema POLITICS IS RELIGION (Charteris-Black 2004: 57), giving the impression that a politician is a 'moral being' (Charteris-Black 2004: 64). In his corpora on the British party political manifestos, American presidential speeches, press, sports and financial reporting and in the religious texts, Charteris-Black adequately exemplified the cognitive and emotive effects of

metaphor and how they can be employed strategically to achieve pragmatic purposes of persuading people to accept certain ideological positions.

Other scholars who fully recognize the impact of metaphor as a strategic rhetoric of persuasion include Musolff (2007), Johnson (2007), O'Halloran (2007) and Mazrui (1998). Musolff's work dwelt on the impact of the metaphorical use of the word 'body' (source domain – human body) to conceptualize a state/society (target domain). This is exemplified in the use of the words 'body politic', 'head of government', 'three arms of the government', 'the government mouthpiece' and a number of references to 'body politic' as being 'ill/diseased' and in need of a 'cure'. He cited Hitler's infamous ideology that tagged the Jews as 'parasites', 'poison', and 'infectious bacillus' which penetrated the 'bloodstream' of his state and may cause the host nation to 'die' (2007: 18). According to Musolff, Hitler took it upon himself to rid his nation of this disease agent, and in this way justified the heinous crimes of the World Wars I and II that rocked the entire world for many years.

Johnson's work (2007: 28-54) focused on the various metaphors exploited by the United States media to legitimize the 'English-Only' movement in America, and to justify a proposition (called 'Proposition 203: English for the Children'). Metaphors describing 'bilingual education' were portrayed as 'bad' – 'failure', 'pathology', 'bad investment', 'segregation', 'trap', 'barrier', among others, while 'English Only' metaphors were 'good' – 'success', 'unity', 'gift', 'fulfilling the American dream' among others. In his study, O'Halloran (2007: 163) cited the use of the image of 'volcano' and its metaphorical entailments – 'simmering', 'erupted'' and 'swept through' to describe the civil unrest in Soweto as an example of media representation of favoured ideological perspectives. The snipe was obviously directed against the (black) rioters who caused the 'eruptions'. The agency responsible for 'the shooting of 174 Africans' was carefully hidden, while the police was represented as a harmless agent who 'headed the marchers off', the word 'headed' saying very little about the actions of the police. According to O'Halloran, the entailment of these metaphorical expressions may be lost on the casual or uncritical reader who may think that the report was neutral and transparent.

Mazrui (1998: 25-29) explored the metaphor of blackness and whiteness as used in the English language to depict evil and goodness respectively. He claims that Christianity has been so 'Europeanized' that Satan and his fallen angels are usually portrayed as black but God and the good angels are always white. Expressions such as 'blackmail', 'black market', and 'black sheep' all have negative connotations whereas 'white lily', 'white dove' and 'white chalk' symbolize righteousness, chastity and peace. Mazrui cautions against accepting these metaphors passively and uncritically.

These are just a few samples of studies that point to the efficacy of metaphor in the formation of biased evaluations which determine how reality is framed. We now turn to our corpus to find out how choices of metaphor in the selected newspaper helped to reinforce certain meanings that may become taken-for-granted as the authentic representation of the social event under review.

2.4 Textual Data and Methodology

Our corpus were excerpts from the *Guardian* newspaper headlines and reports of the June and July 2008 industrial action by the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) to demand a special Teachers' Salary Scale (TSS). The NUT's demand was that the Federal Government should issue a circular mandating the various state governments to pay the TSS. The data were drawn from the publications on the three-day warning strike which started on June 11th and ended on the 13th, and the strike proper, spanning a whole month, from June 30th to July 31st. A total of twenty-eight (28) editions of the newspaper containing reports on the strike were analyzed, out of thirty-six (36) editions recorded while the strike lasted. There were no reports for six days of the strike, while two editions (7th and 11th July) were not readily available at the time of the search for textual data. A privately-owned newspaper was preferred to a government one for the obvious reason that the former would be free from all forms of government influence.

We adopt Charteris-Black's (2004) methods of metaphor identification, interpretation and explanation based on linguistic, cognitive and pragmatic criteria. At the linguistic level – the level of metaphor identification, we regard as metaphorical those linguistic representations that cause semantic tension or incongruity as a result of a shift in the use of a word or phrase from its original context or domain of use to another context where it is not expected to occur. These transferences could be by 'reification' (transfer of meaning from abstract to concrete), 'personification' (inanimate to animate) and 'depersonification' (animate to inanimate)   (Charteris-Black 2004: 21). Using this criteria, we shall identify the linguistic metaphors that have been conventionalized by the newspaper reports and establish that these linguistic choices cause semantic tension. The cognitive criteria would enable the interpretation of metaphor vehicles and targets and the ontological association between them. We shall thereafter attempt to resolve the incongruity or the shift in domain use of the metaphors by postulating underlying conceptual metaphors, drawn from pre-existing as well as new ones contrived in the reports. Finally, in the pragmatic dimension, we shall attempt to explain the rhetorical, emotive and persuasive potentials of these metaphors, the positive or negative evaluations implicit in them with respect to the social event in question, their ideological underpinnings and their implication for CDA.

3. Data Analysis

The *Guardian* Newspaper used a number of metaphors both in the headlines and the reports targeted at the teachers, teachers' salary scale (TSS), the strike and the government. We present them in Table 1 as they appeared on some of the headlines and in the sample texts as identified in the body of the reports.

3.1 Identification of Conventional Metaphors in the Newspaper Reports

3.1.1 Metaphors in the newspaper headlines

Conventional metaphors identified in the newspaper headlines are underlined in Table 1 below.

S/N	Date/page	Headline
1	Thur. June 12, 2008:1	Teachers **down tools**, Government rules out talks.
2	Tues. July 1, 2008:1&2	Teachers' strike **cripples** schools
3	Tues. July 1, 2008:2	Schools **paralyzed** nationwide.
4	Tues. July 1, 2008:9	Private school owners **decry harassment** by NUT
7	Thur. July 3, 2008:57	Schools remain closed as teachers strike **bites** harder
8	Fri. July 18, 2008:30-31	When teachers insist on their **rewards on earth**...
9	Sat. July 26, 2008:1	Teachers' Strike **Stalls** Release of NABTEB Results
10	Sat. July 26, 2008:50 &53	Stakeholders **Groan** under the Effects of the Strike
11	Thurs. July 3, 2008:60	Retreat **reveals background** of teachers' salary structure
12	Sat. July 5, 2008:11	Who will **cry** with the teachers?

Table 1. Metaphorical Expressions in the Newspaper Headlines

3.1.2 Metaphors in the newspaper reports

In the texts that follow, we present excerpts from the reports that exemplify linguistic metaphors relating to the various stakeholders and issues at stake. These are underlined in the sample illustrations.

Metaphor Relating to Teachers' Salary

(1)

'We understand that teachers have been grossly underpaid for many years, but this is not the way to go about it and meet your demands on the implementation of the TSS'...He...urged them (teachers) to call off their strike before they could get their **rewards on earth...** (Oyekanmi and Musa, July 30, 2008:6)

(2)

The commitment and loyalty of the old teacher to his pupils is long gone. (Oguejiofor-Abugu, July 5, 2008:11)

Texts 1 and 2 illustrate the conceptual schema of 'the old teacher' which is, that TEACHERS' REWARD IS IN HEAVEN. The teacher was hitherto seen as 'a humble labourer in the vineyard of the Lord' (Fafunwa, 1971: 159). This was also evident in the headline in Table 1 (No. 8). These metaphors complement the assertion in the report in Text 2 to the effect that the teaching profession is 'sacrifice'. Teaching profession is conceptualized as a humanitarian assignment where members should not 'insist' on any earthly reward but should be 'committed and 'loyal' in the hope of heavenly recompense.

Metaphors Relating to Teachers

(3)

... the Archbishop of the Metropolitan See of Lagos, ...condemned the picketing of private primary and secondary schools by the striking teachers who have **put down tools** at the public schools... picketing of private primary and secondary schools by the teachers has been described as an act of hooliganism by his Eminence Anthony Cardinal Olubunmi Okogie... (Jimoh et al, July 4, 2008:1)

(4)

Teachers in private primary and secondary schools who refused to join the four-day old national strike have been **assured of adequate protection** by the Government ... in a reaction to the **NUT's threat** to shut down private schools, the government said it would **resist the move** and **defend the rights of law-abiding citizens** within the limits of law ... (Onuorah et al., July 3, 2008:1)

The first headline in Table 1 and the report in Text 3 referred to the teachers' strike as 'putting down tools'. This metaphor draws from the source domain of factory/farm workers. The image conjured up is that of anger or force giving a negative evaluation of rebellion or revolt. The attention of the reader is also directed to the use of the word 'hooliganism' to refer to public school teachers to reinforce the image of putting down tools. Teachers, by these metaphors, are conceptualized as outlaws or VILLAIN from whom 'law-abiding citizens' (private school teachers) should be 'protected' and 'defended'.

Metaphors Relating to Teachers' Strike

(5)

The seed of the ongoing teachers' strike was <u>sown</u> 19 years ago when they started **to fight** for a special Teachers' Salary Scale... (Popoola, July 22, 2008:39)

(6)

The first **victims** of the trade **dispute** are candidates writing the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination... (Onuorah et al., June 12, 2008:1-2).

(7)

The Assistant Director, Press and Public Relations…, said yesterday in Abuja that the strike would **aggravate** the already bad situation and urged the teachers to **sheathe their sword** for wider consultation … ('Teacher's Strike Cripples Schools' July 1 2008:2)

(8)

It was observed that the strike…**took its toll** on academic activities in public and a section of private schools in Kano metropolis… (Abuh, July 1, 2008:9)

Entailments such as 'fight', 'victims', 'aggravate', 'dispute' are derived from the lexical field of 'War', reinforcing the image of 'protect' and 'defend' in Text 4 and foregrounding the conceptual schema: TEACHERS' STRIKE IS WAR. The 'first victims' of this 'war' were 'candidates writing the Senior School Certificate examination', thus appealing to the emotions of the responsible agents as to its devastating effects. The 'war' was also reportedly 'taking its toll on academic activities' just as real wars take their toll on victims. These metaphors reinforce to the VILLAIN – VICTIM conceptual schema in reference to the NUT on the one hand, and school pupils and academic activities on the other. Using these metaphors, the newspaper leaves no doubt as to the responsible agent of this conflict, its consequences and how 'the seed' of discord 'was sown nineteen years ago when they (teachers) started to fight for a special Teachers' Salary Scale'.

Text 9 below and headlines 2, 3 and 10 in Table 1 extend the image of conflict by drawing on the metaphor vehicle of 'illness' as unpleasant aftermath of the strike, just as physical wars could bring about illnesses.

(9)

The ongoing national strike which has **spread agony** in many homes in the country is still far from being resolved … Indeed, the strike in almost all the states has **crippled** activities in both primary and secondary public schools… (Ozioruva et al., July 18, 2008: 30)

The use of metaphors such as 'cripples', 'paralysed' in reference to the strike and the effects of these on the people such as 'spread agony' and 'groan', conceptualizes the strike as conflict bringing about debilitating diseases and pain. Similarly, the use of metaphors such as 'bites' and 'stall' in the headlines (7 and 9 in Table 1) extend the image of bodily infliction which may subsequently cause inaction on the patient. Whereas the former conjures the image of a wild and ferocious animal causing physical pain by biting, the latter gives the impression of a 'cog in the wheel' preventing faster movement.

Metaphors Relating to Teachers' Salary Scale

(10)

Since the Federal Government has **tactically thrown the ball into the court** of the states by asking the teachers to negotiate with employers... (Adisa, July 2, 2008:67)

(11)

Nwachukwu stated that Government would not jump into the issue just to **score cheap points** as 'we are not in any popularity **contest** with anybody...' (Onuorah et al., June 12, 2008:2).

The underlined metaphors in Texts 10 and 11 draw from the domain of sports and thus refer to the strike as a 'game' where there are winners and losers. This is traceable to the conceptual key POLITICS IS A GAME, and in this context, the conceptual metaphor TEACHERS' SALARY SCALE IS A POLITICAL GAME. This strategic rhetoric, seen as diversionary, seems to characterize the power play and political propaganda enacted by the power elite where issues are treated in terms of winning political popularity and not by virtue of their social importance.

In the headline on Table 1, (No 12), the word 'retreat' was personalized, with a human attribute of 'revealing' a hitherto hidden fact that 'education is on the concurrent list'. That argument, though ad hoc, turned out to be the lethal blow that killed the TSS, as this 'revelation' was ostensibly corroborated by the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999:137-138). The next metaphor confirms the 'death' of the TSS and what the retreat revealed was instrumental to this death leading to a conceptual frame NON-ISSUES ARE DEAD ISSUES. The retreat revealed that the TSS was a non-issue for the Federal Government as 'education is on the concurrent list in the Constitution'.

(12)

The two-day retreat... turned out to be the much needed **avenue to drive a final nail into the coffin** of the contentious Teachers' Salary Scale (TSS)... (Abubakar, July 3, 2008:60)

Metaphors Relating to Government

(13)

A recent position of the Federal Government on the issue was that each state of the Federation should negotiate with the local leaders of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) on what percentage it could afford as its own teachers' salary scale... the peculiar needs of each state in the educational sector made state governments **final arbiters** on educational policy... (Fagbemi, July 23, 2008:6)

(14)

Education Minister…said… that 'it is not the mandate of the Federal Government to fix salaries for teachers in the primary and secondary schools … if the Federal Ministry of Education was invited as **arbiters**, it would respond accordingly …' (Onuorah et al., June 12, 2008:1-2)

(15)

Dukku argues that since education is on the concurrent list, it will be **wrong** for the government to fix salaries for the states… (Abubakar and Awoyale, June 30, 2008:1)

The metaphors in the preceding texts present the government agents as custodian of moral and ethical values where people should turn to obtain justice. They are taken in these reports as arbitrators of right and wrong and thus whatever position they have taken on the issue in question should be taken as morally right. This argument that the agreement between the government and the NUT regarding the TSS was 'wrong' seems to pervade the reports and it kept recurring in statements by government officials in the newspaper reports. We note particularly the clause that 'the peculiar needs of each state in the educational sector made state governments final arbiters on educational policy'. Our questions are; what could these 'peculiar needs' be? Does teachers' remuneration count among these peculiar needs? Would issuing the circular demanded by NUT adversely affect these peculiar needs of each state in the educational sector? Why would the Federal government choose the role of 'arbiter' in this issue of national significance? This argument seems as vague as it is ad hoc, and begs a lot of questions.

3.2 Conceptual Mappings in the Newspaper Reports

In Table 2, we propose a summary of the metaphor vehicles and their targets as they were conceptualized in the newspaper reports in order to establish the image-schema structure implicit in the metaphors. This step in metaphor interpretation will enable us appreciate the conceptual mappings that have been contrived by the newspaper reports to enhance the strategic rhetorical impact of the metaphors, their emotive and persuasive potentials.

These mappings were proposed for the purposes of explaining the pre-existing as well as newly formulated image-schema conceptualizations foregrounded in the reports. In the following section, we discuss the pragmatic implications of these metaphorical mappings, how their use explained the ideological stance of the newspaper and their implication for critical language awareness.

Source Domain	Target Domain
REWARD IN HEAVEN	TEACHERS' SALARY
SACRIFICE	TEACHING PROFESSION
VILLIAN	TEACHER
VICTIM	ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES/PUPILS
WAR/CONFLICT	TEACHERS' STRIKE
DISEASE/ILLNESS	TEACHERS' STRIKE
COG IN THE WHEEL	TEACHERS' STRIKE
WILD ANIMAL	TEACHERS' STRIKE
GAME	POLITICS
POLITICAL GAME	TEACHERS' SALARY SCALE
DEAD ISSUE	TEACHERS' SALARY SCALE
ARBITER	GOVERNMENT

Table 2. Interpretation of the Metaphors in the Headlines and Reports
according to Source and Target Domains

4. Discussion

The summary of our findings can be briefly stated in the following points. We argued that the groups of metaphors used in the reports were strategically ambivalent, maintaining apparent neutrality in their representations of the stakeholders in the strike and yet masking undercurrents of insinuations aimed at debunking arguments in favour of the NUT. These metaphor choices tended to highlight more the disruptive effects of the strike but deemphasized the role of the power elite on issues that led to the strike and how to positively address them. Furthermore, these metaphors portrayed the newspaper's penchant towards echoing the views of the power elite through verbalizations attributed to sources while claiming to maintain aloofness to these verbalizations. Finally, and more subtly, the uncritical reader and even the affected teachers may have missed the snipes of these metaphors judging by their innocuous representations.

From our analysis, it was found that the targets for most of the metaphors were the teachers and the strike brought about by them. Firstly, the headline - 'when teachers insist on their rewards on earth...' - calls up the age-old conceptual schema that TEACHERS' REWARD IS IN HEAVEN. This mental model of the teacher has a long history when, during the missionary era, the tag 'teacher' was synonymous with 'preacher' and as such, their discipline and vocation demanded that they discharge their godly duties without complaint and expect heavenly remuneration. With the formation of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) in 1931 (Fafunwa 1974: 159), the image of the old teacher began to change. Teachers started to agitate for their rights, but the schema has stuck such that when they go on strike, they are seen as unfeeling and inhuman to the pupils entrusted in their care. This metaphor smacks of the undertone that the teachers should never have embarked on the strike abandoning their godly duties of teaching innocent children when their profession is sacrificial and humanitarian and their reward celestial.

Secondly, some metaphors used to describe the teachers' strike were drawn from the lexical field of 'war' thus presenting an image-schema structure which is at variance with known attributes of a teacher, and also runs contrary to Lakoff's invariance principle. Such metaphorical expressions as 'fight', 'victims', 'aggravate', 'dispute' are terms denoting conflict that are not usually associated with the actions of a docile teacher. These metaphors thus construe the VILLAIN – VICTIM pair, making teachers the responsible agent of the conflict while school pupils and 'academic activities' are the casualties which the 'war' has 'taken its toll' on. Teachers are called upon to 'sheathe their sword for a wider consultation' and admonished to refrain from 'picketing' and 'harassment' which are acts of 'hooliganism' unbecoming of the teacher. We argue that calling up these images in reference to the teachers is a strategic means of presenting them in bad light and calling public opinion against their actions.

Thirdly, teachers' strike as 'war' was presented as having brought in its wake illnesses, pain and retrogression. Using such metaphorical expressions as 'paralysed' and 'cripples' and their attendant adverse effects on society such as 'groan', 'spread agony', the newspaper attempts to whip up cognitive and emotive responses. According to Fairclough, (in O'Halloran 2007: 164), the metaphorical representation of social problems as 'disease' or 'illness' is ideologically significant. When thus presented, public opinion is swayed against the source of this problem. The use of the metaphor, 'stalls' gives the picture of impeding movement/action, while 'bites' presents an image of cutting into the flesh with the teeth caused by an animal or insect and thus inflicting bodily pain. These metaphors tend to hoist the responsibility of 'illness', 'stalling' and 'biting' on the teachers' strike while masking the role of the government in contributing to the illness, inaction or pain. The point we are making here is that, though there is an ethical obligation to remove the cause of the problems, balanced and equitable representation of the roles of the teachers and the government seemed to be lacking. Whereas in most of these metaphors, the teachers were presented as the active participant in the cause of the social anomalies, the government agencies were relegated to a passive role.

It is interesting to note that the agency giving 'voice' to most of these metaphors were other sources which serve to shield the newspaper from direct responsibility to these verbalizations. Typical examples are 'hooliganism' attributed to 'the Archbishop of the Metropolitan See of Lagos'; 'harassment' to 'private schools'. Others are: 'stakeholders groan', 'retreat revealed' and 'teachers insist on their rewards on earth'. These attributions to sources were replete in the analyzed editions of the newspaper and seemed to attest to the newspaper's ideology of silence. Also replete in the reports were such metaphorical epithets as 'beggarly', 'hungry', 'poor' and other diminishing descriptions such as 'the teachers' plight', 'teachers are suffering', 'who will cry with the teachers?'. These metaphors present teachers as belonging to the lowest economic level, that is, below poverty level. Though they sound apparently good-intentioned, these descriptions do nothing to help the image of the teachers not to talk of strengthening the arguments in favour of the TSS.

The Government in the newspaper reports was presented as an 'arbiter', a moral agent, the custodian of ethical values and sound judgement on the

issues at stake. This is in line with Charteris-Black's (2004: 64) findings where politicians arrogate to themselves the image of custodians of morality. This stance that the TSS was 'wrong' and a 'mistake' seemed to be upheld by the newspaper, since it did not volunteer any comment or editorial regarding the argument by the government mouthpiece that 'education is on the concurrent list' (Onuorah et al., June 12, 2008: 2). Silence means acquiescence. The report (July 3, 2008:60) captioned 'Retreat reveals background of teachers' salary structure' confirmed the newspaper's determination to corroborate the views of Government mouthpieces that the TSS is a non-issue for the Government, that NON-ISSUES ARE DEAD ISSUES, and by this stance joined in declaring the TSS AS DEAD ISSUE. This implies that the newspaper was relieved by the idea that 'a final nail' has been driven 'in the coffin of the contentious TSS', and that what the 'retreat revealed' was the 'truth'. This particular extract goes to explicate how the apparently benign format and innocuous choice of words in newspaper publications can be injurious to those they claim to protect. It equally shows how certain ad hoc conceptualization of experience especially by the media can be taken as the model that shape social practice because to date, the TSS remains 'dead' and was never implemented.

We argue that the underlying conceptual metaphors proposed in Table 2 are the meanings foregrounded by the newspaper reports some of which run parallel to pre-existing mental models for framing issues relating to the teachers, the strike and the government. These ad-hoc image-schema structures were contrived to exaggerate the emotive and persuasive impact on the reading public. Rather than presenting the strike as a means of seeking redress for injustice that border on the teachers' remuneration, their personal, social, economic and psychological wellbeing, these metaphors serve the newspaper as informative mask to blow the strike out of proportion and thus keep face with the power elite. These highlighted meanings that may provide models for future conceptualization of the events and participants under review are therefore called up for reappraisal, reconceptualization and recontextualization.

That the Federal Government has 'nothing to do with' the issue of a uniform salary scale for teachers – an issue of such national importance – using the Constitution as cover sounds deceptive and depicts the newspaper's connivance with the powerful to legitimize their suppressive and hegemonic regimes, fraught with contradictions, inconsistencies and lack of proper application of the rule of law. Otherwise how can one explain the fact that the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education admitted that 'the TSS has been budgeted for' (Jimoh et al., July 4, 2008: 2), that 'about N780 million has been appropriated in the supplementary budget' to implement the increment (Olayinka, June 14, 2008: 2), only for the three Ministers of Education (Minister for Education, Minister of State for Education and Minister of State for Education II) to contradict this statement by the argument based on what the 'retreat revealed', that is, that 'education is on the concurrent list'. This type of argument has been described as 'ad hoc' (Trail 2004: 8), an argument invented on the spur of the moment to achieve spurious political ends but discarded as soon as its usefulness elapses. This implicates the newspaper as collaborative with the power elite in manipulating the wordings of the Constitution for propagandist and repressive purposes.

Other questions that may bug the mind are: if the Federal Government included the TSS in the 2008 budget 'for the purpose of fast-tracking the process of implementing the scheme for teachers in the country' and then subsequently discovered that the attempt was 'wrong', 'illegal' and a 'mistake' (Nwakaudu and Ogiji, July 22, 2008: 112), what then became of the funds so earmarked? What actually was wrong with the Federal Government issuing a circular to states to pay the TSS and then using the earmarked funds to subsidize it? These contradictions in the verbalizations of government mouthpieces call for critical scrutiny. If the Federal Government in its National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004:5) presents education as 'an instrument par excellence in effecting national development' and then allows such negative rhetoric and ad hoc arguments shrouded in metaphors to becloud issues concerning teachers' remuneration, then there is a deliberate attempt to entrench inequity, injustice and insincerity in the system. If the Federal Government in its Constitution provides that 'Government shall direct its policies towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels' (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999: 13) and then turns around to entrench inequality, there is need to reveal this asymmetry and create awareness for its redress. If we are sincere in our conviction that no educational system may rise above the quality of its teachers (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004: 39), then this issue of teachers' remuneration deserves more serious attention than it had hitherto received. We believe that the media should strongly stand up to its assigned role as the champion of public interest and should provide a window through which the public can appreciate better the intrigues and political gimmicks of the power elite when issues that border on basic sustenance of the less privileged are at stake, so as to react appropriately to their redress, rather than playing along with them through strategic recourse to diversionary metaphors.

5. Recommendation and Conclusion

The baseline of our recommendations is critical language awareness for both text-producers and consumers in Nigeria, that is, for the media, the political elite as well as the public. We saw from the foregoing discussion how metaphors served as masks in the newspaper reports to project elite views. Whatever freedom of the press stands for in Nigeria, the media should be unbiased and transparent in its mediation of social issues especially as it concerns groups with less access to societal power and the means of communication. In Nigeria's nascent democracy, the media should assume its traditional role as watchdog of society by providing it with accurate and stabilizing information on social issues. Nigerians should not be forced by her media to look elsewhere for authentic and reliable news. Nigerian media should be sufficiently credible in the task of educating the public on matters of doubt and clear the air for better interpersonal relations. Finally, those in power should be oriented towards being more sensitive to the yearnings of the masses especially in matters of basic sustenance rather than regarding every issue as a matter of winning political points. The onus lies on the Nigerian media to create this awareness. This will make room for equity, fair play and justice in the society.

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