

Expounding the Nama-Herero genocide of 1904-1908: A cognitive metaphor approach

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Abstract

This study examines four literary texts about the Nama-Herero genocide in Namibia through the application of the Cognitive Stylistics Theory as a framework for analysis. The texts, namely, Lauri Kubuitsile's 'The Scattering' (2016), Jasper D. Utley's 'Lie of the Land' (2017), Rukee Tjingaete's 'The Weeping Graves of our Ancestors' (2017) and Zirk van den Berg's 'Parts Unknown' (2018), were chosen because they (re)present fictionalised historical accounts of the Nama-Herero genocide, which took place from 1904-1908, where over 65,000 Ovaherero and 10,000 Nama persons were killed in what is regarded as the first genocide of the twentieth century. The study promotes new insights into (re)imagining the genocidal trauma, depicted as collective cultural memory in Namibian literary works through the lenses of explications of cognitive stylistics. The study is significant in that it promotes new ways of reading, understanding and interpreting the historical experiences of the genocide. Cognitive Stylistics argues that any particular situation [in a literary text] can be interpreted in different ways. Interpretations from nuanced readings of the texts evince that themes in the texts largely centre on the inherited trauma of the natives' experiences of the genocide during this period of colonial occupation and encounter, passed down generationally as collective historical memory. This was achieved through the examination of these literary imaginaries through the use of cognitive metaphor, genocidal trauma, and mental and physical oppression. It was concluded that reading, analysing and schematising genocidal fictional works can reflect new and insightful ways of understanding and appreciating historical memory and experiences of trauma.

Keywords: *Cognitive metaphor, cognitive stylistics, fictional narrative, Namibia, Nama-Herero genocide, Schema Theory*

Introduction

The study is a cognitive stylistics analysis of the depiction of the Nama-Herero genocide of 1904-8 in Namibia in Lauri Kubuitsile's *The Scattering* (2016), Jasper D. Utley's *The Lie of the Land* (2017), Rukee Tjingaete's *The Weeping Graves of Our Ancestors* (2017) and Zirk van den Berg's *Parts Unknown* (2018) through the theoretical explications of Cognitive Stylistics Theory's sub-theory of Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT). Through the application of the insights of cognitive metaphor (Sperber & Wilson, 1986) in examining the four fictional imaginaries from, the themes and styles of the texts were explored in order to understand how cognitive tools and processes influence linguistic choices in the construction of collective memory and collective experience. One of the

critical components in understanding the meaning of texts is context (Semino & Culpeper, 2002). Hamilton (2002) observes that there is a contextual line, which is concerned with historical or political issues that form the context in which a literary text is produced and consumed. In this case, critique operates from the outside in, through adopting the modern historicist viewpoint that meaning is just as text, and that these are also contemporary novels which intertextually re-image and (re)imagine a metanarrative that focalises historical atrocities or genocide, achieving interpretive goals.

In light of this, the four selected historical fictional “texts”, Lauri Kubuitsile’s *The Scattering*, Jasper D. Utley’s *The Lie of the Land*, Rukee Tjingaete’s *The Weeping Graves of our Ancestors* and Zirk van den Berg’s *Parts Unknown*, were analysed through the explications of cognitive stylistics, especially with regards to the manners in which they re/construct and re/present the Nama-Herero genocide. Strauss (2011) defines genocide as violence that is extensive, group-selective and group-destructive (p. 5). Nandenga (2019), on the other hand, describes genocide as an act of brutality towards a targeted group, which is designed to destroy groups in specific territories under the perpetrators’ control (p. 1). Germany committed what is widely thought to be the first twentieth-century genocide in Namibia during its colonial rule - the genocide of the people of Herero and Nama (Hafeni, 2023; Melber, 2017). While the genocide was perpetrated more than 100 years ago, its profound effects are still important today (Sabao & Mlambo, 2023). In the years following Namibia’s end of German colonial rule, the colonial amnesia of Germany towards the Herero and Nama populations has been noticed, and their narratives have remained on the edge of the nation’s grand story (Abiatar, 2020).

The relationship between Namibia and Germany is marked by intense exchanges about the meaning and the consequences of the colonial wars of the early twentieth century in the erstwhile German colony (Kössler, 2008; Mlambo et al., 2023). German colonial warfare in the then South West Africa (present-day Namibia) between 1904 and 1908 meets the definition of genocide (Melber, 2017). Between 1904 and 1907, South West Africa experienced conflict with Germany (Correa, 2011). During that period, “Namibians were stripped of critical materialities and immaterialities, hence they were ‘decentred’ due to exposure to ‘dehumanising’ incidents” (Kandemiri et al., 2020; Mlambo et al., 2023). Shortly after Namibia’s independence in 1990, the Ovaherero people began demanding an apology and reparations from Germany (Kössler, 2008).

Kössler (2018) further states that after stern rebuffs on the occasion of the visits of Chancellor Kohl in 1995 and President Herzog in 1998, the Herero People Reparations Corporation (HPRC) began to file lawsuits in the United States of America (USA) against German firms that had been involved in colonial ventures (p. 144). Tjitemisa (2020) argues that in January 2017, the Ovaherero and Nama people filed a class-action lawsuit in which they sued Germany for excluding them from current negotiations between the German and Namibian governments concerning the 1904-1908 genocide (p. 1). This study investigates how cognitive metaphors contribute to the understanding of genocidal memory in the four selected novels using Cognitive Metaphor Theory. The study attempts to answer the following research

questions: To what extent does cognitive metaphor contribute to the understanding of genocidal memory in the four selected novels?

The analysis of the selected texts contributes to the understanding of the linguistic contexts of events and their creativity that informs the manner in which narratives on the Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia are constructed and should be interpreted and understood. The study also seeks to promote new *and insightful ways of understanding and appreciating historical memory and experiences of trauma*.

Literature Review

A literature review provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings (Creswell, 2014, p. 60). This part of the study, therefore, presents a review of literature conducted within the broad areas of cognitive stylistics. The literature review is sectioned and formulated in line with the research question of the study, which is concerned with cognitive metaphors re/presentation of genocide in the selected texts. The section also explains the major explications and underpinnings of the theoretical frameworks within which the current study is couched – Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT).

Stockwell (2002) defines cognitive stylistics as “a sub-discipline that is found in the field of applied linguistics and that offers a novel method of thinking about literature that involves the application of psychology as well as cognitive linguistics” (p. 4-6). Cognitive stylistics is mainly developed from the works of Wilson, Sperber, Freeman, Steen and Burke (2003). Influenced by other fields of studies such as psychology, cognitive psychology and cognitive linguistics, cognitive stylistics adapted many different theories developed within these disciplines (Mohammadzadeh et al., 2018). It mainly focuses on cognitive elements and concepts such as verbal irony, cognitive metaphor, image-schema, figure and ground, implicature, contextual effects and relevance. Krishnamurthy (2012) argues that such theories provide a set of frameworks in literary analysis, and which emphasise reading and understanding.

West (2013) opines that cognitive stylistics is a branch of stylistics which itself is a branch of cognitive linguistics that is related to cognitive poetics. Cognitive stylistics was birthed in the 1970s and developed from earlier structural and generative approaches to language description (Ponterotto, 2014). Ijam and Kazem (2019) thus, affirm that “cognitive stylistics deals with the cognitive theory of linguistics and cognitive psychology of reading” (p. 41). Stockwell (2002) asserts that cognitive stylistics looks at people as cognitive human beings who rely on their background knowledge and experience to understand literary texts. It offers a means for the reader to have a clear view of the text, context, circumstances, uses, knowledge, and beliefs (Ijam & Kazem, 2019).

Gavin and Steen (2013) submit that cognitive stylistics affords a new approach of thinking about literature that involves the application of cognitive linguistics and psychology to the storybook texts. Furthermore, Stewart-Shaw (2016) states that “cognitive stylistics is a discipline that draws from cognitive science, cognitive linguistics, and literary studies to analyse texts” (p. 24). In the same vein, Canning (2017) emphasises that cognitive stylistics offers a range of frameworks for understanding what producers of literary texts ‘do’ with language and how they ‘do’

it. A less prevalent conceptualisation, however, is an understanding of how these same frameworks offer insights into what readers 'do' and how they 'do' it.

There have been a number of studies conducted by different researchers and scholars (Al-Saeedi, 2016; Gawazah, 2020; Krishnamurthy, 2012; Woldemariam, 2014) in efforts to analyse different aspects of language and genres of literature using a cognitive stylistics approach. Among those aspects is metaphor. 'Metaphor', also known as 'conceptual metaphor' in cognitive linguistics, has been considered part of figurative language that contrasts with literal, non-figurative language. In this view, metaphor is seen not as a literary form or as a deviation from some supposed literal language, but rather as one of the building blocks of our thinking at both the level of language acquisition and language use (Maestre, 2000, p. 48). Al-Ali et al. (2016) submit that metaphor has been traditionally studied and analysed within the framework of rhetoric, literary works and literary studies, but it is also studied in cognitive linguistics. Considering the high value of lexical items, special attention is given to how the use of figurative language in general and metaphor, in particular, contributes to the projection and explication of fictional mind style (Glotova, 2014, p. 2446) in narrating literary works.

In Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, p. 142) words, "the meaning a metaphor will have for me will be partly culturally determined and partly tied to my past experiences". On the other hand, Burmakova and Marugina (2014) observe that cognitive theorists identify metaphor as a process of mapping between two different conceptual domains: the target domain (the concept to be described by the metaphor), and the source domain (the concept drawn upon, or used to create the metaphorical construction). Fadaee (2011) argues that "a metaphor is an implied analogy which imaginatively identifies one thing with another. A metaphor is one of the tropes, a device by which an author turns, or twists, the meaning of a word" (p. 21). The meaning of the author comprises imagination and indirect ways of saying things. Metaphors cause confusion when the reader's knowledge of the statement is overlooked. In addition, Izyenda (2018) states that in cognitive linguistics, a metaphor is not merely a figure of speech. A metaphor can be something other than a figure of speech. It is defined as the understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain; rather than to an individual metaphorical usage or a linguistic convention (Grady, 2007). Metaphors deal with the way language has been indirectly used to convey meaning. For instance, the authors of the genocide novels used a word such as 'bushman' in reference to the Nama people. Similarly, General Von Trotha is described as Thomas, meaning that General Von Trotha does not listen and that his orders concerning the Herero and Nama people were final. Military words were used in the selected novels to indicate that a genocide has been analysed in terms of a cognitive framework, whereby metaphors are of vital importance. Norgaard et al. (2010) affirm that:

...in cognitive linguistic terms, a conceptual metaphor is not a mere trope. A very pedestrian attempt at a definition would be 'an understanding of concept A in terms of concept B'. This understanding, however, is not realised at the level of the utterance, sentence or word, but at a cognitive level. It is more accurate to define conceptual metaphors as the understanding of some conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. Defining what constitutes a conceptual domain, nonetheless, is not free from controversy either. (p. 60)

Niekrenz et al. (2020) utilised the cognitive stylistics approach, specifically Rudolf Schmitt's (2017) metaphor analysis, to study and analyse texts. They described metaphors as linguistically dense images that transfer terms from their original usage to a different context and describe actions and objects beyond their literal meaning.

Müller et al. (2020) state that "language is replete with metaphors. If we examine metaphors more closely, they provide us with an insight into the ways in which people experience the world and how they think and act" (p. 1). They further note that metaphor analysis reconstructs metaphors and images. They further state that metaphor analysis is applied to explore a variety of research fields, such as people's experience with depression and psychotherapy (for example, Levitt et al., 2000) and the analysis of political speeches (for example, Carver & Picallo, 2008) or postcolonial novels (for example, Boehmer, 2005).

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Cognitive Metaphor Theory. Iziyenda (2018) states that the Cognitive or Conceptual Metaphor Theory has its origins in Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 2003) seminal publication, *Metaphors we live by*, and is one of the central areas of research in cognitive linguistics (Grady, 2007). CMT simply explains a metaphor as something that is expressed in terms of another for rhetorical effect. CMT is accordingly "positioning itself as 'contemporary', 'conceptual', and a major pillar of the cognitive linguistics paradigm and proceeds to argue for the relationship between linguistic metaphors and human cognition" (Tay, 2014, p. 52) and for that it best suits this study. The main principle of conceptual metaphor theory is that metaphor functions at the level of thinking (Iziyenda, 2018, p. 35).

Metaphor, also known as conceptual metaphor in cognitive linguistics, has been considered part of figurative language that contrasts with literal, non-figurative language. In this view, metaphor is seen not as a literary form or as a deviation from some supposed literal language, but rather as one of the building blocks of our thinking at both the level of language acquisition and language use (Maestre, 2000, p. 48). "The concept that becomes understood (the more abstract or unfamiliar concept) is the TARGET domain. The other concept, which somehow facilitates understanding or discussion of the target, is the SOURCE domain (the more concrete or familiar concept)" (Caruso, 2011, p. 1). Thus, one conceptual domain, the target, is understood in terms of another (the source) by mapping conceptual elements within the two domains (Iziyenda, 2018, p. 35).

A sizeable number of the expressions used by the authors of the selected novels on the genocide utilise genocidal metaphors and that makes it easy for the readers to pinpoint such metaphors for easier management of the cognitive stylistics analysis. The authors of these genocide narratives utilise cognitive tools such as cognitive metaphors for narrative expression. The current study is an attempt in the field of cognitive stylistics seeking to explore the narrative communicative potential of these cognitive metaphors employed by the authors in conveying their meanings for our understanding of the genocide, and towards our interpretations of the texts. This study, which examine how the authors of the four novels creatively used metaphors, notes the manners in which the writers exploited the linguistic resources that are

metaphors for both creative and narrative expression. As such, the CMT framework provides the most appropriate explanatory potential to the broad question raised by this study.

Methodology

The study adopted the qualitative research design. The qualitative approach was used to facilitate a deeper understanding of the genocide as (re)presented in Kubuitsile's *The Scattering*, Utley's *Lie of the Land*, Tjingaete's *The Weeping Graves of our Ancestors* and van den Berg's *Parts Unknown*. This study undertook a close reading of the four novels, set in Namibia during the Nama-Herero genocide, and examined them for their utilisation of cognitive stylistic tools for narrative and creative expression. Such projections of the genocide are interpreted as reflecting collective cultural historical memory, countering official historical memory. The study followed a qualitative approach, and a content analysis checklist instrument was used in collecting the data.

The choice of the four selected novels for study was a result of a purposive sampling process. As such, the novels were selected because they are all narratives of and about the 1904-1908 Nama-Herero genocide, representing fictionalised cultural historical memory of the genocide. The qualitative content analysis data were interpreted through the theoretical framework of CMT (Lakoff, 1980). Analyses were then extracted from the interpretation to formulate discussions, conclusions, and recommendations.

Findings

This section presents and analyses the data collected from the four texts. The data is analysed in line with the previously established objective of the study and guided by CMT as a framework for analysis. The purpose of a cognitive stylistic analysis is to decode the meaning that is embedded in a text. This accords readers the opportunity to extract meaning from the printed matter if they understand it letter by letter and word by word (White, 2018).

Synopsis of “*The Scattering*” (Kubuitsile, 2016)

The Scattering tells the story of a woman named Dineo who returns to her ancestral home in Botswana after many years abroad. As she reconnects with her family and community, she uncovers secrets about her past and her family's history. The novel explores themes of identity, tradition, and change, highlighting how personal and cultural histories influence present-day lives. Through Dineo's journey, the story examines the importance of understanding one's roots and the impact of history on individual and collective identity. *The Scattering* explores themes of family, tradition, and social change in Botswana. The novel follows the story of a woman who confronts her past and her family's secrets as she navigates personal and cultural upheavals. Through her journey, the novel examines how individual identities are shaped by history and community, highlighting the importance of reconciliation and understanding in a rapidly changing society. In *The Scattering*, the theme of the Herero-Nama genocide is central to understanding the impact of historical trauma on individuals and communities. The novel explores how the atrocities committed during the genocide, perpetrated by German colonial forces, continue to resonate, shaping personal identities, memories, and the collective consciousness of the Herero and

Nama peoples. It highlights themes of loss, resilience, and the importance of remembering history to foster healing and reconciliation.

Synopsis of “*The Lie of the Land*” (Utley, 2017)

The Lie of the Land explores themes of identity, truth, and societal change. The story follows a protagonist who grapples with uncovering hidden truths about their family and history, challenging perceptions of reality and trust. As secrets are revealed, the narrative delves into the complexities of personal and collective histories, questioning what is real versus what is fabricated. The novel ultimately examines how lies and truths shape our understanding of ourselves and the world around us. *The Lie of the Land* (re)presents the Nama- Herero genocide as a tragic and brutal chapter of history. The novel delves into the atrocities committed during the German colonial rule in Namibia, highlighting the devastating impact of colonial violence, dehumanisation, and the silencing of victims. It emphasises the importance of confronting historical truths, acknowledging past atrocities, and recognising the lasting scars left by such acts of genocide. Through this theme, the novel encourages reflection on justice, memory, and the need to challenge historical lies to honour the victims and prevent future atrocities.

Synopsis of “*The Weeping Graves of Our Ancestors*” (Tjingaete, 2017)

This story is told by one of the descendants of the Ovaherero ancestors, who were nearly exterminated by the German invading soldiers between 1904 and 1908. *The Weeping Graves of Our Ancestors* recounts the history and legacy of the Herero and Nama peoples during the colonial era. The story follows a family whose members are affected by the atrocities of the genocide committed by German colonisers. Through their personal experiences, the novel explores themes of loss, resilience, and cultural survival. As the characters grapple with grief and memory, they seek to honour their ancestors and preserve their heritage, highlighting the enduring impact of colonial violence and the importance of reconciliation and remembrance. The theme of the Herero and Nama genocide is highlighted as a profound tragedy that reflects the brutality of colonial oppression and the devastating impact on indigenous communities. The novel emphasises remembrance and mourning for the victims, illustrating how the genocide disrupted lives, erased cultural identities, and left deep scars on future generations. The graves, which are now seemingly abandoned, unattended and unkept, hold profound symbolic significance as they represent the resting places of ancestors who endured and suffered during the genocide. They serve as powerful symbols of memory, mourning, and cultural identity, reminding the characters—and readers—of the atrocities committed and the importance of honouring those who have passed. The graveyard was no longer maintained and it resembled a meadow. The graves are a testament to resilience and serve as a call to remember the past, ensuring that the suffering and sacrifices of the ancestors are not forgotten, fostering a sense of cultural continuity and healing. The novel underscores the importance of acknowledging this dark chapter in history, honouring the memory of those who suffered, and recognising the resilience of the affected communities in the face of such atrocities.

Synopsis of “*Parts Unknown*” (Van den Berg, 2018)

The novel *Parts Unknown* is a historical fictional text that narrates some of the most daring events of the German-Herero war. The novel narrates the storyline of the

German-Herero war that occurred from 1904 to 1908. The novel explores themes of identity, memory, and discovery. The story follows a protagonist who embarks on a journey into unfamiliar territories—both geographically and emotionally—seeking answers to personal and existential questions. As they navigate through mysterious landscapes and encounter diverse characters, they confront hidden truths about themselves and their past. The novel delves into the complexities of human experience, emphasising the importance of understanding oneself and the world beyond known boundaries. The unique part of the story is that of Germans who declined to participate in the mass killing of the Herero population at the behest of General Lortha van Trotha's extermination orders. Besides the historical perspective of this text, the text is rich with linguistic nuances that assist the reader to better understand the events in the story. The text presents cognitive schemata of the journeys travelled by the character Siegfried Bock until the time of his death. Linguistic schemata are spread out throughout the story. Traumatic events are also captured in metaphoric language throughout the narrative.

Conceptual metaphors from the texts

There are many conceptual metaphors in the text *The Lie of the Land* (Utley, 2017). For a linguistic structure to qualify as a conceptual metaphor in this study, it must have the characteristics of comparing two unlike entities, objects and ideas, to refer to human or non-human qualities. Another characteristic is that of using words to produce concise and vivid statements that are clear enough to convey a large amount of information in a creative way. They are also characterised as useful language tools for transferring knowledge among a group of language speakers and are used in everyday language. The “bull necked man” (Utley, 2017, p. 4) is a cognitive metaphor that compares qualities of an animal and a human being. This metaphor describes the appearance of a German Reichskommissar named Göring during his interview with a British agent named Sam, as evinced in the following short narrative.

A large curved pipe made of meerschaum shared a side table with a photograph of what I assumed were his Bavarian wife and children. An empty cup and saucer next to a brandy bottle showed he had already had his coffee. He was a portly, bull-necked man in his sixties with a huge grey moustache and a pair of piercing grey eyes. The deep sagging bags under his eyes made him look older than he was. I had a feeling that he didn't smile very often. Except, possibly, when saving Africa from its wildlife. He made no attempt to offer me a drink and went straight to the business at hand. (Utley, 2017, p 4-5).

The cognitive representation begins when the qualities of man are compared to those of a ‘bull’. A bull is an adult male ox that is commonly known for arrogance and for being dominant. It does not cooperate because of its stubbornness. When it comes to control, it is the figure of authority of a herd, and it feels that all the female members of a herd belong to him. The physical appearance of a bull symbolises masculine strength. In short, a man has been metaphorically compared to a bull. On the other hand, a man who has a neck that is compared to that of a bull is regarded as tough and misunderstanding. Similar characters have now been accorded to a man who is portrayed as a bully, stubborn, arrogant and does not listen to what other people say. The conceptual metaphor ‘bull necked man’ completes the characteristics that were

stated in this discussion, that a metaphor communicates a message that is concise and clear, and at the same time transferring knowledge without saying too many words.

In the same description, Sam mentioned another quality that would make Göring smile, “saving Africa from its wildlife” (Utley, 2017, p 4). Göring’s house was full of a variety of wildlife trophies that he gathered during his colonial tenure of exploitation in Africa. In literal terms, this metaphor sounds like a compliment that compares Göring’s interest in Africa with destroying its wildlife, but in fact, it discredits him as a greedy imperialist. The phrase conveys deep irony and cynicism on the part of the narrator. The metaphorical meaning implies that Göring hunted and killed wildlife in Africa, yet claimed to be protecting Africans from the dangers posed by wildlife. In reality, he was actually looting and destroying Africa’s natural resources. It is a bad sign for the colonial past to be read and remembered from Göring’s image because killing forms the basis of the genocidal mass killings of the Ovaherero and the Nama people of Namibia. Many Namibians perished as a result of the actions of men like Göring, who came to Africa to dispossess local people of their natural resources. As it were, during the colonial period of occupation, Africans were still living in forests, with wildlife and other domestic animals as their source of food and wealth. For Göring to be famous for harvesting a large collection of wildlife artefacts suggests that Africans suffered during the process.

A total failure, ‘leaving the country with his tail between his legs’, is a metaphor that compares Göring with the same character of a dog (Utley, 2017, p. 5). The metaphor explains the role of Göring in the colonial system – to oppress the people of South West Africa. The metaphor in its literal sense implies that Göring had his tail between his legs. This is a sign of fear and submission and/or defeat. The deeper meaning is that he left South West Africa with a feeling of being embarrassed or ashamed, especially because Göring had been defeated by the Ovaherero, the Nama and other local Namibian tribes. This was said by Göring during his colonial experience lecture to Sam. Sam identified many weaknesses in Göring’s character, one of which was his “fruitless attempts to buy off the local chiefs” (Utley, 2017, p. 5). The belief that Göring had was that African chiefs at the time could easily be bought and sell out/off their people’s freedoms, and those of their great-grandchildren yet to be born. The expression insists on the “fruitless attempts” efforts made by Göring to bribe African chiefs into colonisation. Despite having failed, Göring maintained his narcissistic attitude by saying that only he was the best cruel person who knew how to punish “the tribes of savages” in South West Africa.

The Lie of the Land is derived from a British metaphoric expression that refers to the existing condition of affairs, or how something is arranged. The literal meaning is how the land is laid out in terms of physical features that can be physically observed. In the context of this study, it describes the topography of the land or an assessment of the area of land before planning out, which implies the political terrain. There are two parties in conversation in this text, the Germans and the South West Africans. When Sam went to visit Reichskommissar Göring, he was not sure about what he was going to be told by Göring. He would soon discover that Göring highly regarded himself as the conqueror of the savage tribes in Africa. Politically speaking, “The lie of the land” would further be characterised by German colonial forces descending on the

Namibian shores to appropriate farmland, cattle and mineral wealth from the hands of the Ovaherero and Nama peoples. They set up political laws and most of the time, used force to acquire wealth. After the Ovaherero resisted occupation, von Trotha went on to issue a proclamation of extermination.

Contribution of cognitive metaphor to genocidal literary creativity

This part of the study responds to how cognitive metaphor contributes to the literary recreation of the manner in which the genocide is projected in the four novels. The cognitive metaphor is analysed to fully examine and interpret how cognitive metaphor contributes to creativity in a genocidal text.

The term cognitive metaphor can also be used to mean the same as conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphors are used to make texts more engaging. They convey meaning in a way that simple words cannot express. They make a piece of text more concise and shortened to the point. It is important to give a contextual meaning for the two terms, conceptual and metaphor, for clarity purposes. Conceptual means relating to how the reader of genocidal texts processes the ideas and concepts as they are formed in the mind (Donnachie & Hewitt, 2014). This has to do with how the brain forms and perceives ideas and concepts that are related to the devastating effects of the genocide. The second is defining the word metaphor. According to Mac Cormac (1985), a metaphor is a figure of speech that expresses similarity between something relatively well known or concretely known (the semantic vehicle) and something which, although of greater worth or importance, is less well known or more obscurely known (the semantic tenor), and it must make its point by means of words. In the context of this study, it has to do with comparisons of words such as idolising the head of a 'Hottentot' that is compared to an animal trophy (Utley, 2017, p. 4). After contextualising these two words, we can now define the concept. A conceptual metaphor, also known as a generative metaphor, is a figure that compares or describes one term (or conceptual domain) in relation to another.

Discussion

Literary creativity is an attribute that is associated with imaginative writing of fictionalised literary texts (Cetkovski, 2017; Harper, 2022; Iizyenda, 2018; Oguche & Omojuyigbe, 2022; Yoshihara, 2021). The present study determined that the four texts that were analysed demonstrate unique literary narration through the use of cognitive metaphor, genocidal trauma, and mental and physical oppression. The findings revealed that creative linguistic resources were used to project genocidal trauma in the narration of genocidal fictionalised stories. This is in agreement with Oguche and Omojuyigbe (2022) who believe that conceptual metaphor can be used to express an idea or event that would not normally be discussed openly because of the emotions attached to the genocide.

The study observes the manners in which all four texts, *The Scattering*, *The Lie of the Land*, *The Weeping Graves of Our Ancestors* and *Parts Unknown*, exploit metaphors for narrative and creative imports. The conceptual metaphors give the readers grounded experiences of victims of the genocide that are historicised and make them curious to want to know more about the perspective of descendants of victims of the genocide – remembered through generationally transmitted trauma. In this view, a metaphor is seen not as a literal form, but as a deviation from some

supposedly literal language – engrossing us deeper into the signified meanings and contexts. Furthermore, in agreement with this, Glotova, (2014) also avers that cognitive metaphor within the texts was used to project and expose the extent of the genocide killings that were committed by the Germans in the four literary texts.

Ordinary human beings do not take pleasure in killing fellow humans unless it is evil-spirited and coupled with extreme hatred towards people belonging to other races or who differ in opinion. One of the observations made in the study may have been the mental challenges of the person who instructed his soldiers to carry out the killings. As such, the military only kills at the instruction of their commander, who was General von Trotha. Some of the actions of the Germans may be considered mental problems (Hafeni, 2019) because of the manner in which the Germans killed Namibians. A German commander issued orders to exterminate the Herero people, “A soldier whipped the horses and the cart drove off, leaving the Ovaherero dangling”. This type of action can only be carried out by people who hate other humans, which can also be associated with mental problems.

Conclusion

This study examined four genocidal fictional texts that reflect and narrate events of the Nama-Herero genocide that happened in the then-German South West Africa between 1904 and 1908. Although fictionalised, the events reflect a true reality of what transpired during the genocide period, as remembered through collective cultural memory passed down generationally. The study evaluated themes and the literary style of language used in the fictional texts. The four texts examined in this here were Kubuitsile’s *The Scattering*, Utle’s *The Lie of the Land*, Tjingaete’s *The Weeping Graves of Our Ancestors* and van den Berg’s *Parts Unknown* through the theoretical explications of cognitive stylistics.

The research question sought to examine the ways in which cognitive metaphor contributes to the literary creativity and the narration through which the experience of the genocide is projected in the four novels, and from the perspective of descendants of survivors. This was achieved by the examination of literary creativity and narrative style through the use of cognitive metaphor, genocidal trauma, and mental and physical schemas. A number of cognitive creative resources were used to project genocidal narratives in the telling of genocidal fictionalised stories. In addition to that, conceptual metaphors were used to establish a connection between the reader and the text. This often makes the reader curious to know more about the contents of the text. This is a technique that is used by writers to keep readers glued to the text. The study concluded that cognitive metaphor is a creative literary technique that is effectively used to project the extent of the genocidal killings committed by the Germans against the Nama and Herero peoples, fictionalised in the four literary texts as inherited collective cultural memory.

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