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Legitimizing Violence in Religious Propagation?: Linguistic Metaphors as Stance Acts in Boko Haram Pre-Violence Sermons

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ABSTRACT

Much linguistic effort has been made to analyze Boko Haram's (BH) threat texts or newspaper reports on its activities using various discourse analytical and pragmatic tools. However, the group's early preaching, which offers a deeper understanding of its mission and ideology, has hardly ever received attention, much less how the group conceptualizes violence through religious propagation. This article investigates how linguistic metaphors are conceptually deployed in BH's early sermons to mark the group's stance on using violence in religious propagation. The corpus comprises five full-length sermons delivered in Hausa/Arabic by earlier BH leaders (Muhammad Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau) between 2008 and 2011 before the group went into violent confrontations. The sermons were recorded, translated to English for uniformity, coded in line numbers, and subjected to content analysis drawing insights from Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Stance Triangle. The study reveals that the BH group employs several conceptual mapping strategies that project three stance acts, namely, assigning value to the group's positions on the use of violence in religious propagation, drawing their target audience into similar positions, and invoking ethno-religious rewards/reasons for such positions. The results suggest that the use of certain metaphors could potentially impact society in various ways.

KEYWORDS

Boko Haram; metaphorization strategies; religious extremism; sermons; stance rhetoric

Introduction

Metaphors are fundamental to human communicative experiences, especially as a vehicle for seeing one thing in terms of another (Kövecses, 2010, p. 4). This is corroborated by Edelman (1971), who defines metaphor as a tool that spells out "the pattern of perception to which people respond"; meaning that "Each metaphor can be a subtle way of highlighting what one wants to believe and avoiding what one does not wish to face" (p. 28). It is for this reason that there is always an ideological effort

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By "pre-violence sermon" we refer to the preaching activities done by the Boko Haram leaders before the group became confrontational and violent. This is a critical stage when many people and in fact most of the sect's valued commanders were recruited. Sadly, the pre-violence texts have received very little scholarly attention.

to get a language user's metaphors (ideas) accepted as the conventional ones (Fairclough, 2001, p. 45). There is a usual distinction made in the literature between *original* (live or active) metaphor and *conventional* (literal or inactive) metaphor. The former, in Goatly's (2005, p. 22) view, has complex grounds and target that are more observable and hence debatable in working out, which gives it a minimal potential of unsettling or changing an established mindset. The latter, however, has a more stimulating effect considering the fact that its grounds are usually ignored, and the target is easily reached and accepted, as a result of its hidden workings (p. 22). The point here is that inactive metaphors have become part of the rhetorical agenda in group propaganda, particularly as they go unnoticed in constructing and communicating the group's attitudes and positions on issues, and eliciting or justifying certain behaviors or feelings from members (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. xi). This obviously implies that these kinds of metaphors have consequences for society (Burnes, 2011), and are usually readily utilized by religious terrorists to strengthen the impact of their stances.

Generally, the manipulative power of terrorist communication has always been a source of concern to critical studies (Lentini, 2013; Ononye & Nwachukwu, 2019; Ononye & Osoba, 2020), some of which have suggested that—unless the rhetorical force responsible for radicalizing members through preaching is linguistically analyzed and revealed—they are likely to undergo a "future," more violent phase of confrontation that may trigger a full-blown war (Chiluwa & Chiluwa, 2022; Gray & Adeakin, 2019; Isa & Adam, 2017). However, as existing literature suggests, not enough linguistic effort has been made in this regard, which prevents a full understanding of the smoldering danger of radicalizing individuals through subtle metaphorization strategies. This paper, therefore, offers a linguistic insight into how members' acceptance of information is manipulated through conventional metaphorical source domains capable of inducing action in group members through organized intersubjective mechanisms that regulate experience and trigger emotional conviction. Answering this crucial question is expected to advance the understanding of terrorist propaganda in the West African sub-region, by specifically explaining how metaphorization strategies can create cognitive images capable of drawing emotion from citizens to identify with radical positions. So far in this section, the concept of metaphor and its effectiveness in religious terrorism have been discussed. In the following sections, a brief history of Boko Haram is provided; the existing linguistic studies on BH are reviewed, with the objectives of the paper marshaled; the theoretical basis and methodology presented. This is followed by a discussion of the analytical findings, and finally the conclusion of the paper.

The Boko Haram discourse in Nigeria

The term, Boko Haram (BH, hereafter), interpreted literary as "Western education is forbidden" is a Nigerian-based Islamic terror organization which has its real name as *Jama'atul Alhul Sunnah Lidda'wat, wal Jihad* (translated as) "People committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" (Uzodike & Maiangwa, 2012, p. 93). According to analysts, some combined factors gave birth to BH in Nigeria, namely, economic, political, and religious factors. The actual date of the group's emergence and its founder is still uncertain. However, available and reliable reports indicate that

the group was founded by Lawan Abubakar from Northeast Nigeria in 1995. Later, on leaving for further studies in Saudi Arabia, Ustadh Muhammad Yusuf took over the affairs of the group. It was Ustadh Muhammad Yusuf who popularized the group with radical preachings of "Islamism" and engaged the group in physical opposition and attack on the police and other constituted authorities. Hence, members of BH have officially recognized Ustadh Muhammad Yusuf as their leader. Meanwhile, the BH movement which is believed to have started since 2002 in Borno State, Northeast Nigeria, was referred to initially as Yusufiyya Islamic Movement (YIM). It was the residents of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State who, based on the group's *modus operandi*, dubbed the movement "Boko Haram," as a combination of Hausa (*Boko*) and Arabic (*Haram*), the term is literally interpreted as "Western education is forbidden."

BH's ideology is anchored on a deep tradition of Islamic Salafism, and its devotees are reportedly influenced by the Koranic phrase "Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors" (Adedokun et al., 2018; Friedmann, 2003, p. 150). As its operations suggest, BH is strongly opposed to "Western-based incursion that threatens traditional values, beliefs, and customs among Muslim communities in northern Nigeria" (Agbiboa, 2013, p. 160). Mohammed Yusuf himself in 2009 told the BBC that "Western-style education is mixed with issues that run contrary to our beliefs in Islam" (Rogers, 2012). He further argued elsewhere that "Our land was an Islamic state before the colonial masters turned it to a *kafir* land. The current system is contrary to true Islamic beliefs" (Salkida, 2009). This negative attitude toward Westernization, with other factors, has driven the group to become more confrontational, especially after the extrajudicial killing of its leader, Muhammad Yusuf (Apard, 2015), by the Nigerian security forces in 2009. It has thereafter meted out deadly insurgency in Nigeria under the leadership of Yusuf's deputy and successor (Abubakar Shakau) and other factional leaders such as Abu Musab al-Barnawi of the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP). In fact, BH has claimed responsibility for several deadly attacks in Nigeria and other neighboring West African countries, resulting in the loss of many lives and properties. According to the Council of Foreign Relations, for example, the group is responsible for the deaths of 15,525 civilians between May 2011 and May 2016. As of December 2019, Nigeria still stands with a Red Mark, according to data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, which interprets that over 1.5 million people are still being internally displaced as a result of such religious violence. Clearly, these facts make the group not only one of the deadliest but also fastest growing terror organizations in the world today (Onapajo, 2020).

Scholarly attention to BH radicalism in Nigeria can be broadly categorized into linguistic and nonlinguistic Studies. The latter can be sub-categorized into studies that have taken historical (Àrendàs, 2016; Brinkel & Soumia, 2012; MacEachern, 2018; Torbjörnsson & Johnson, 2017; and so forth); political (Njoku & Nwachukwu, 2015, Okonofua, 2013; Serrano & Zacharias, 2014; and so forth) and sociological (Adigun, 2018, Akanji, 2009; Zenn, 2014; and so forth) perspectives. However, the former category (to which the present study belongs) exists as different investigations of the discursive manifestations of the reportage of conflict activities. The linguistic category bifurcates into studies with discourse analytical (Ayoola & Olaosun, 2014; Chiluwa, 2016; Chiluwa & Ajiboye, 2014; Osisanwo, 2016a, 2016b, Roelofs, 2014; Ugwuona,

2015; and so forth) and pragmatics (Abba & Musa, 2015; Agbedo et al., 2013; Chiluwa & Adegoke, 2013; Odebunmi & Oloyede, 2016, and so forth) approaches.

At the discourse level, three major areas have been covered, namely, media representation of discourse participants, issues and opinions that have been featured in BH media coverage, and ideological leanings of BH activities. The studies on media representation and ideological leanings of the media have largely utilized critical discourse analysis (CDA), but have not accommodated metaphorization as one of the major discourse strategies through which the discourse participants and activities going on could be represented. Existing pragmatics studies on BH have also focused on two kinds of data, namely, media reports and computer-mediated language. These have largely explored the elements of speech acts and framing deployed by the media in conveying information on BH activities. Another category of pragmatics studies focuses on the pragmatic act strategies employed by the sect in its social media accounts. Theoretically, these pragmatics studies fall apart from the present paper in not considering metaphor as one of the pragmatic elements through which BH online communication is issued.

Generally, therefore, aside from differences in theory and objective, the discourse and pragmatics studies reviewed can be distinguished from the present paper for one major reason. The studies largely investigate media (print and online) representations of the sect's violent activities as data, while this paper relies on actual renditions of the BH sect itself. Closer to this focus however, are the above works of Agbedo et al. (2013) (which focuses on Abu Qaqa and Abubakar Shekau's real online updates) and Roelofs (2014) (which analyses the early activities of BH), but which do not specifically study BH pre-violence preaching, routinely delivered before the sect resorted to violence. The present paper, being an aspect of a broader research, becomes a pioneering effort at examining the key context-sensitive metaphors deployed in BH pre-violence preaching. Specifically, it seeks to identify the broad conceptual mappings and the sub-domains they are sourced from; and explore the way in which the conceptual metaphors used—consciously or unconsciously—betray the group's attitude and position on the issues projected in its preaching.

Materials and methods

The current research thrives on insights from Lakoff and Johnson (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Du Bois (2007) Stance Triangle. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980 with the publication of the book, *Metaphors We Live By*. This publication was revolutionary in establishing that metaphors are not just rhetorical devices used in literary works but part and parcel of everyday use of language. In fact, metaphors are not just used in language but applied in thoughts. Generally, the perspective taken in CMT is that of cognitive linguistics which is concerned with the relationship between language and mind (Kövecses 2010).

Kövecses (2010), for example, defines conceptual metaphor as "a systematic set of correspondences between two domains of experience" (p. 14). This correspondence is also known as "mapping." CMT has to do with cross-domain mappings in the conceptual system, i.e., the understanding of one domain of experience (known as the

Target Domain—TD) in terms of another (known as the Source Domain—SD). For instance, when we use such conventional metaphorical expressions as "we have come a long way in our relationship" or "the way of love is not without obstacles," we think of love in terms of the conceptual metaphor, LOVE IS A JOURNEY. Here, features of "journey" (the SD) are mapped to "love" (the TD). However, in CMT, not all features of the SD can be mapped to the TD. In explaining this, Lakoff (1990) posits that the features that can be mapped onto the TD are those that do not conflict with the image-schematic structure of the TD. Similarly, Grady (1997) avers that the mapping of SD to TD should be based on primary metaphors or what Kovecses (2003, p. 65) calls "specific-level metaphors;" i.e., the simplest conceptual metaphors as against complex ones. Corroboratively, Kövecses (2010) observes that mapping is based on the features belonging to the main meaning focus or foci of the SD.

There are many classifications of conceptual metaphors, two of which have been the most popular in the literature. They include classification according to function by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and classification according to conventionality by Kövecses (2010). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) identified three types of function that conceptual metaphors can key into, namely, structural, orientational, and ontological. Structural conceptual metaphor exists with a similarity in the image-schematic structure of the SD and TD. Thus, the structure of TD is formed from that of the SD. A commonly cited example that exemplifies this concept is the metaphor "ARGUMENT IS WAR," demonstrated by various English expressions such as "your reasons are *indefensible*," "you can't ever *win* an argument with him," and so forth. The orientational type is based on the spatial orientation of a person. It has many variants such as up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, and so on. For example, human feelings are conceptualized as "HAPPY IS UP" and "SAD IS DOWN" as shown in the expressions "her face *sank* with shame," "I am in *high spirits* today," and so forth. In ontological metaphor, entities personified as abstract domains are conceived in terms of containers. For example, the human mind is seen as a fragile object ("THE MIND IS A FRAGILE OBJECT") as demonstrated in the examples "the result *shattered* me," "she *broke down* at the sight of the child," and so forth.

On the other hand, Kövecses (2010) introduced the idea of conventional and creative metaphors to explain conceptual metaphors that are unique to a speech community. He posits that metaphors are conventional as they are deeply rooted in people's minds with respect to the conventions of a particular speech community. Apart from the conventionality of conceptual mapping, Kövecses (2010) observes the possibility of mapping additional concrete knowledge a community or group has about an SD onto an abstract TD. This is what (Gibbs, 2017, p. 92) calls "metaphorical inference" or "entailment," and it is relevant for the understanding of the kinds of SD created in BH pre-violence texts in a bid to project the group's stance.

Stance, therefore, is the way speakers/writers structure their acts (linguistic or otherwise) in relation to ongoing discourse or events, in order to evaluate, position, and align the acts in social relations (Du Bois, 2007, p. 171). One of the most significant things religious fundamentalists do with language is to take stance, and this has the power of assigning value to their positions of interest, drawing their target audience into similar positions, and invoking presupposed systems of sociocultural or ethno-religious rewards and reasons for such positions (Du Bois, 2007, p. 139). Yet

very little is realized at present about what stance is, what boost metaphorization can give it, and what damage the act of taking stance can be utilized for in the broader play of religious terrorism. Thus, stance-taking is a rhetorical act as well as a social act, because it necessarily involves, whether by action, assertion or inference, invoking value on a precise target that informs participants' actions (Fitneva, 2001, p. 405). In this regard, stance both "derives from and has consequences for social actors, whose lives are impacted by the stances they and others take" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 141). The deduction here, therefore, is that the effect of any stance utterance is to be understood from its framing to elicit collaborative acts from co-participants in discourse.

There are many communicative means - speech, gesture, and other forms of symbolic action—deployed to achieve stance in the public arena. And this is what Du Bois (2007) stance triangle tries to achieve: an extensive level of analysis that can be applied systematically to any instance of stance. Stance always combines elements of generality and specificity; but while the stance triangle as a theoretical object is general by design, it is also intended to frame the concrete analysis of specific stances. The figure below captures the principles governing a stance act (Figure 1).

The three joints of the stance triangle represent the three key entities in the stance act, namely the first subject, the second subject, and the (shared) stance object. The three sides of the triangle stand for the three subsidiary acts of evaluating, positioning and aligning, which represent actions that organize the stance relations among the entities, but are not evenly distributed among the three sides. Rather, two of the three sides represent evaluative vectors directed from one of the two stance subjects toward the single shared stance object. The first evaluative vector, for example, emanates from the first subject, the second from the second subject, while the third (the vertical line on the left) represents an alignment between the two subjects. Generally, the stance triangle provides the basis upon which the causal and inferential linkage arising among the various subsidiary acts may be understood. It attempts to shed light on the realization, interpretation, and consequences of stance in group communication such as that of the BH sect. The sect uses their knowledge of the elements, actions, and vectors

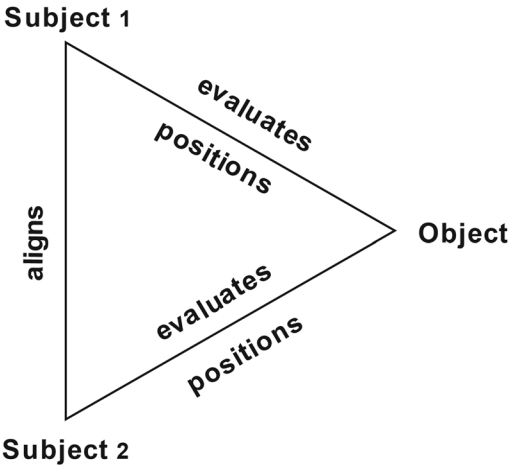

Figure 1. The stance triangle (adapted from Du Bois, 2007, p. 163).

of stance to advance the complex consequences of their group and their target members' unfolding stances. Therefore, "Concomitant to evaluating a shared stance object, stance-takers position themselves. Concomitant to positioning themselves, stance-takers define alignment with each other, whether the alignment is convergent or divergent" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 164).

The primary data for this study consists of five full-length pre-violence audio recordings, which capture the sermons delivered by BH leaders Muhammad Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau between 2008 and 2011. Generally, the communication of Boko Haram is categorized into two main types for the purpose of this study: pre-violence texts largely in the form of sermons made by the group before they engaged in violent confrontations, and post-violence texts made after they engaged in violent activities. The current research focuses on the pre-violence texts to elucidate the context under which BH's initial religious outreach evolved into a radicalization tactic leading to their later violent actions. This exploration is crucial because many extremist groups in Nigeria initially engage in religious propagation, which is frequently neglected by governmental bodies (Abah, 2021). And for this reason, the BH pre-violence activities have been relatively understudied in academic research.

The five topics of the original audio recordings, delivered in Hausa/Arabic, include *Ba Cika Baki* (Open Letter) by Muhammed Yusuf (15 min, 15 s), *Ba Cika Baki* (continuation of Open Letter) by Muhammed Yusuf (15 min, 8 s), *Ba Cika Baki* (continuation of Open Letter) by Muhammed Yusuf (17 min, 23 s), Jihad by Abubakar Shekau (9 min, 14 s), Critique of Western Education by Abubakar Shekau (16 min, 40 s). These sermon topics were purposively selected for their manifestations of linguistic metaphors deployed to justify violence. They were translated into English with the assistance of an expert proficient in Hausa/Arabic to ensure accuracy, uniformity, and wider accessibility. Once translated, they were transcribed into written form, coded based on their target and source domains, and line-numbered in an A4 Word document to facilitate analysis. The data were subsequently subjected to content analysis, which draws upon both descriptive and interpretative methods, with insights from two theoretical frameworks, *viz*. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Stance Triangle (ST). In the first round of the analysis, the CMT, which is particularly relevant for addressing the first and second objectives of the research paper, was utilized to first identify the linguistic metaphors present and itemize their patterns of distribution within the data (see Table 1), and then describe their conceptual mappings detailing the target and source domains. In the second round, the ST, employed to achieve the final objective, is employed to first examine the linguistic metaphors, along with the new knowledge derived from them, and then interpret how their various patterns influence different stance acts, which enable the BH sect to convey their views effectively and potentially evoke emotions and actions from their audience.

Results

From the findings, two target domains of language use are observed in the data, namely, religious propagation, and violent engagement of transgressors or Jihad. These underscore the general focus of BH's earlier preachings. In the first instance, religious propagation

Table 1. The broad and sub-domains of metaphorical sources in BH pre-violence preaching.

s/n	Target domain	Source domain	Sub-domain	Distribution	Aver-age	Stance
1.	Religious propagation	GOD'S BUSINESS	GOD IS A BROADCASTER	16	(27)	Defining alignment
			GOD IS AN INSTRUCTOR	11	23.5%	Defining alignment
		HUMAN NATURE / ACTIVITIY	RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS HUMAN SENSE	15	(38) 33.0%	Making evaluation
			RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS WORK	23		Maintaining position
2.	Violent engagement	USE OF FIREARM AS USE OF HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT	USING A FIREARM IS OPENING A DOOR	07	(17) 14.8%	Taking position
			USING A FIREARM IS HANDLING A KNIFE	10		Taking position
		BLOOD AS A PRECIOUS MATERIAL	THE BLOOD OF A MUSLIM IS AN INVALUABLE ASSET	09	(17) 14.8%	Making evaluation
			THE BLOOD OF A MUSLIM IS MONEY	08		Making evaluation
		HUMAN BEINGS AS OBJECTS	BH WARRIORS ARE BOTTLES	07	(16)	Making evaluation
			BH WARRIORS ARE FRUITS	04	13.9%	Making evaluation
			NIGERIAN SOLDIERS ARE OBJECTS	05		Making evaluation
				115	100%	

is described from two broad sources of metaphor, namely, RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS GOD'S BUSINESS and RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS HUMAN NATURE or HUMAN ACTIVITY. The God's business category is marked by two sub-domains—GOD IS BROADCASTER and GOD IS AN INSTRUCTOR, which tends to define the sect's alignment to the belief that it enjoys God's support and direction in its stance and activities. The human nature/activity category is characterized by two sub-domains—RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS HUMAN SENSE and RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS WORK—which project the sect's fundamentalist belief that a religious practice involves constant effort. The second target domain (violent engagement) also has metaphors broadly mapped onto three domains, namely, USE OF FIREARM IS USE OF HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT, BLOOD IS A PRECIOUS MATERIAL and HUMAN BEINGS ARE OBJECTS. The former is mapped onto two sub-domains (USE OF FIREARM IS USE OF A DOOR and USE OF FIREARM IS USE OF A KNIFE), the medial onto two sub-domains (THE BLOOD OF A MUSLIM IS AN INVALUABLE ASSET and THE BLOOD OF A MUSLIM IS MONEY), while the latter has three (BH WARRIORS ARE BOTTLES, BH WARRIORS ARE FRIUTS and SOLDIERS ARE OBJECTS). These violence-motivated metaphorical sources and their sub-domains, evaluated as household entities that an average vibrant Muslim cannot avoid, confirm the group's position that members have to wage a war against any force opposing the sect's quest. These findings are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 presents the two main targets of BH pre-violence preaching (religious propagation and violent engagement), which drive most of the conceptual metaphors recorded in the data. The next column by the right bears the four broad conceptual mappings, which are followed by the fourteen sub-domains spread across the four mappings. Out of the four mappings, conceptual metaphors sourced from the domain of HUMAN NATURE/ACTIVITY are the most frequently used (33.0%) in describing religious propagation in BH sermons. This may not be surprising as the group's earlier messages appear more focused on making individuals better and more devoted Muslims. The next preponderant mapping is RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS GOD'S BUSINESS (23.5%), while HUMAN BEINGS ARE OBJECTS (13.9%) is the least employed in the

data. Two mappings under violent engagement (USE OF FIREARM IS USE OF HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT and BLOOD IS A PRECIOUS MATERIAL) have a tie (14.8%). Generally, however, out of the two target domains emphasized in the sermons, religious propagation takes the highest frequency.

Discussion

Going by the objectives set out earlier, this section discusses the following: the broad conceptual mappings identified, the sub-domains they are sourced from, and the stance strategies through which the conceptual metaphors used—consciously or unconsciously—are made to project the group's attitude and position on religious propagation and violent engagement. This will be discussed in succession with the broad conceptual mappings being the sub-headings.

Religious propagation as God's business

The propagation of religious (in this case, Islamic) faith and Jihad practices is conceptualized here as God's own preoccupation. Hence, God is not only expected to do it Himself but also guide any faithful who engages in His business. Thus, BH's stance is strongly aligned with the belief that God rewards the sect with His guidance and support because it engages in vibrant religious propagation. Divine guidance and support for the sect is indexed in many conventional metaphors found in the data. These are conceptually mapped in two ways: GOD IS A BROADCASTER and GOD IS AN INSTRUCTOR. The mappings largely portray God as a human agent physically involved in the dissemination of information as well as instructing the BH leadership on its religious propagation effort. Some excerpts from the data can be considered along these mappings.

GOD IS A BROADCASTER		
	Allah ya yada da'awarmu	(Lines 143–144)
(1)	God broadcast our religious propagation	
	Allah ya sanar da mutane	(Line 146)
(2)	God has informed the people	
	Allah ya yada ko ina an ji	(Line 281)
(3)	God broadcast everywhere and it was heard	
GOD IS AN INSTRUCTOR		
	Allah yace ku kashesu…soboda su basuda alkawari	(Lines 185–186)
(4)	God says kill them…for they do not keep a promise	
	Allah yace duk in da kaga ana bautan wani abu….	(Line 439)
(5)	God says anywhere you see that something is being worshipped….	
	Allah ya sake yin bayani akan Annabi Ibrahim….	(Line 452)
(6)	God did another explanation about Prophet Ibrahim….	

In Excerpts (1–3) above, the lexical items "broadcast" and "inform" are sourced from the domain of broadcasting, which underscores the fact that part of God's support for the sect is to broadcast its religious messages Himself. This strategy of demonstrating divine support in the group's activities is a powerful stance rhetoric confirmed by Odebunmi and Oloyede (2016, p. 281), which is usually intended to draw both emotional and physical compliance from the audience. Hence, by saying (in 3) that "God broadcast [the message] everywhere and *it was heard,*" the group aligns the wide

acceptance of its message to the fact that God is the one doing the conviction and drawing people to His business. The metaphors in Excerpts (4–6) are sourced from the domain of giving instruction. These are instances of ontological metaphors that conceptualize God's supposed direction of the group's religious propagation to the idea that GOD IS AN INSTRUCTOR. The idea of receiving instructions directly from God has become a popular strategy utilized by religious terrorist leaders to authenticate their message, as well as evaluate non-members' views as standing against God's. Notice the verbal processes sustained in the excerpts, "God says…" (in 4 and 5) and "God did…explain…" (in 6), which go a long way in proving that the group does not only take but also acts on God's instructions. The ontological metaphors above create an impression to the audience that despite the abstract entity of God, the group still receives tangible instructive direction from Him. This therefore explains the group's attitude that no human opposition can stop them. Generally, in BH's pre-violence preaching, ontological metaphors are largely used in mapping the group's idea of religious propagation to God's divine help in broadcasting its messages as well as instructing it on what directions to take. Let us see below how religious propagation has been differently mapped to human nature or activity.

Religious propagation as human nature/activity

The conceptualization of RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION AS HUMAN NATURE or HUMAN ACTIVITY has three sub-mappings, which include RELIGION IS HUMAN SENSE, RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS WORK and RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS BUILDING. Some examples of these mappings from the data can be considered below:

RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS HUMAN SENSE		
	Abunda Da'awarmu take nufi	(Lines 142–143)
(7)	What our religious propagation is thinking.	
	Da'awarmu ya shiga gurare da yawa	(Line 144)
(8)	Our religious propagation has gone to many places.	
RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS WORK		
	Zamuyi addinin mu	(Line 3)
(9)	We will do our religion.	
	Sai anyi Sharia Musulunci	(Line 216)
(10)	Islamic law must be done.	
	A baiwa yan Izala dama suyita waazi	(Line 112)
(11)	Give *Izala* chance to do preaching.	
	Mun gina da'awarmu	(Line 118)
(12)	We built our religious propagation.	

In the above conceptual mappings, the conceptualization of the abstract domain of religion is done by BH using the more concrete domains of HUMAN SENSE, WORK, and BUILDING. This betrays the group's stance on religious fundamentalism, which does not only equate the abstract term "religion" or "religious propagation" to a more concrete "human life", but also evaluates it as something that needs to be worked or built on over time. Hence, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) classification, two types of conceptual metaphors are observably utilized in presenting the topic of religion. They include ontological and structural metaphors. In RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS HUMAN SENSE, for example, we have the ontological mapping of human nature

to religion, where religious propagation is conceptualized in the excerpts (7 and 8) above through the mapping of some essential features of humans, as indicated below:

HUMAN SENSE		RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION
Thinking ⟹	⟹	Aim ⟹
Acceptance ⟹	⟹	Spreading ⟹

Linking religious propagation to human sense like "thinking" ("…our religious propagation is thinking" in 7) and "getting acceptance" ("…has gone to many places" in 8) is a way of legitimizing its Salafist mode of propagation, and evaluating it a sensible thing to be done by any serious Muslim. This heralds the group's stance on the fact that every right-thinking person should join in any way they can in the propagation of the group's religion, which is fast spreading and gaining acceptance. This, in Friedmann's (2003) view, makes anyone on the contrary a transgressor (p. 150).

In the sub-domain of RELIGIOUS PROPAGATION IS WORK, we have a case of structural metaphor, the meaning of which has been extended through the process of "metaphorical inference or entailment" (Gibbs, 2017, p. 92). Meanwhile, religion and work are not grounded in similarity or resemblance which makes a straightforward structural mapping difficult. However, some resemblance (or structural) metaphors are defined by social conventions and can be categorized further as socio-cultural metaphors (Goatly, 2005, p. 22). There is a socio-cultural code in virtually all religions that perceives the practice of religion as engaging in work. For instance, the observance of a set of obligatory prayers daily, or fasting and arms giving in most religions. This reality is perfectly utilized in the data for metaphorical entailment in Excerpts (9–11) above. If work is an activity requiring the exertion of efforts to produce what sustains a living, then BH's idea of practicing Islam goes beyond faith and worship: it involves active work to protect one's religion; it means fighting against practices that do not fall in line with Islam. This extended application of religious practice through structural metaphors sourced from the domain of work gives primacy of place to religion (Islam) in the life of BH members by depicting a system of faith and worship as an activity requiring the exertion of effort to sustain. The material process of "building" used in Excerpt (12) above also has structural features of "constructing" something, which is sourced from the domain of work. This presents the group's religious propagation and achievement as having been meticulously developed, and hence, deserving the acceptance of its followers and the public. In sum, BH's preaching on religious propagation employs ontological and structural metaphors as well as metaphorical entailments in mapping the concept to human senses and work. This depicts the group's conception of their religious faith as a living entity, requiring constant and continuous effort in order to sustain it. Let us turn to the conceptual mappings bordering on violent engagement, which is the second focus of BH's pre-violence preaching.

As earlier hinted, several conceptual mappings recorded in the data betray BH sermons as focusing on inspiring its audience into violent engagement, which is a means of forcing opposing forces to comply with its religious propagation. These include USE OF FIREARM AS HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT, BLOOD AS AN OBJECT, and HUMAN BEINGS AS OBJECTS. These are discussed in turn.

Use of firearm as use of household equipment

This betrays the preponderant use of firearms, the use of which is presented in the sermons as a household material that everyone should be aware of. This underscores the group's attitude toward members' readiness for the use of firearms. In this regard, the use of firearms is described as the use of such household equipment as "door" and "knife". The feature of "opening" in a door is mapped to that of "firing" in a gun; while that of "sharpening" a knife is mapped to the "loading or equipping" of a gun. From these, two sub-domains are identified, namely, USING A FIREARM IS OPENING A DOOR, and USING A FIREARM IS HANDLING A KNIFE. Some excerpts from the data can be examined:

USING A FIREARM IS OPENING A DOOR		
	In babu inda zamu iya yi, sai mu buda	(Line 5)
(13)	If there is no way out, we will open [our gun].	
	Suka bude musu wuta da bindiga	(Line 18)
(14)	They opened fire on them with gun.	
USING A FIREARM IS HANDLING A KNIFE		
	Ku koda bindigan ku	(Line 297)
(15)	You should sharpen your guns.	
	Sai suka ja bindiga	(Line 99)
(16)	Then they pulled their guns.	

Using household materials (door and knife) in the above mappings to describe the use of a firearm presents instances of extended structural metaphor or metaphorical inference earlier mentioned. Thinking of using a firearm as opening a door is hinged on the concept of a closed door as encountering opposition in religious propagation. This is graphically represented with the schema below:

DOOR (source domain)		FIREARM (target domain)
opening ⟹	⟹	⟹firing

Thus, opening a closed door by firing a gun demonstrates the group's position toward violent engagement of "transgressors," whether political, cultural, or religious entities. Hence, the metaphorical choice of the lexical item "open" ("*bude*" in Hausa) represents "getting access" to anything with the use of firearms or material force. Meanwhile, "door" and "firearm" are not grounded in structural similarity but there is a conventional use of the item, "*bude*" with the sense of "clear off the obstacle," within the Hausa speech community, such as "*bude hanya*" ("pave way for something or someone") and "*bude wuta*" ("open fire"). This knowledge is extended to the firing of a gun to allow the progress of religious propagation by the BH sect. This informs the statement in Excerpt (13), (*In babu inda zamu iya yi, sai mu buda*), which is translated as "If there is no way out, we will open [our gun]." The message here is that followers should use their guns any time they are hindered from practicing their faith or observing practices contrary to their religious faith.

In a similar vein, thinking of the use of firearms as using a knife is another case of metaphorical inference. Here, the sub-domains of "sharpening" and "pulling" (as from the sheath) of a knife are mapped to those of "equipping" and "cocking" in the use of a gun. In essence, firearms and knives share some similarities in that both can be used as weapons but do not have a straightforward structural similarity to provide a clear structural mapping. Hence, the application of the extended cultural knowledge

in recovering the meanings that the metaphors are put to in the data. For instance, since the sharpening of a knife means preparing it for use, people rely on this cultural knowledge to apply "sharpening" to other things that need preparation before use. In Excerpt (15), *Ku koda bindigan ku* (You should sharpen your guns), for example, the preacher extends the feature of "sharpening" to guns, being aware that firearms need some processing before use, just as knives. In Excerpt (16) as well, BH followers are made to realize the idea of getting ready for any violent engagement through the extended application of the structural metaphor, "pull guns." Generally, these rhetorical stance acts of making inferences from the extended application of structural metaphors, in Fitneva's (2001, p. 406) view, are capable of invoking action on a precise target, which in this case, can inform followers' opening of closed doors or getting ready for violent engagement through the use of firearms. Another interesting mapping found in the data is conceptualizing blood as an object.

Blood as an object

The metaphorical use of blood by BH is in connection with objects of value that must be defended or avenged when destroyed. The recurrent use of lexical elements such as *zubdashi* [the shedding of blood] and *a cikin jininsu* [in the pool of blood] conjures a level of familiarity with violence. BH sermons present the issue of shedding the blood of their members using different conceptual mappings, which describe the blood of a member as an invaluable asset, and money. Some examples from the data can be considered:

THE BLOOD OF A MUSLIM IS AN INVALUABLE ASSET		
	Jinin muminai yafi karfin arne ya zubdashi	(Line 206)
(17)	The blood of a believer is too strong for the unbeliever to shed	
	Wannan jinni na yanuwa bazai tafi kyuata ba	(Line 389)
(18)	This blood of brothers [that was shed] will never go free.	
THE BLOOD OF A MUSLIM IS MONEY		
	Jinin Musulmi yanada tsada	(Lines 32–33)
(19)	The blood of a Muslim is very costly.	
	Yanuwa dasuka bada jinisu	(Line 363)
(20)	Fellow brothers that donated their blood	

The general idea running across these mappings is that "blood" is symbolic of life. In the mapping, THE BLOOD OF A MUSLIM IS AN INVALUABLE ASSET, for example, the blood of BH members is constructed as something sacred. In Excerpts (17 and 18), for example, the sermons introduce extreme words like "too" and "never," respectively, which attach a higher value to the blood (and hence, life) of a Muslim brother or believer than that of a "transgressor" or nonbeliever. This is powerful rhetoric, which vividly raises a sense of belonging in the mind of the group's followers, a physical reward consciousness that their blood will never go unavenged should they lose their lives in any violent engagement. This stance strategy confirms Du Bois (2007) point that religious terrorists have the power to not only assign value to their positions of interest but also draw their target audience into similar positions by invoking systems of religious rewards and reasons for such positions (p. 139). This attitude motivates the group's conceptualization of the blood (or life) of its members alone as an invaluable asset, thereby creating the mindset that any other individual's blood is worthless and hence can be shed.

In another sub-domain, the blood or life of a Muslim follower is also conceptualized as money, with the mapping THE BLOOD OF A MUSLIM IS MONEY. Such key lexical items in Excerpts (19 and 20) as "costly" and "donated," respectively, constitute this monetary mapping of human blood. Here, both the structural and ontological conceptual metaphors are engaged. Attaching financial worth to human life (in 19) is akin to the earlier rhetoric (advanced in Excerpts (17 and 18 above) of placing a high value on the blood of a Muslim believer. In the second instance, presenting Muslims' donation of their blood to the cause of Salafism draws on the source domain of having contributed (money) a lot to the religious struggle, which of course has both spiritual and physical rewards. In sum, BH pre-violence sermons deploy structural and ontological metaphors in the conceptual mappings of blood to invaluable assets and money. In this regard, the sect aligns itself to the position that the blood of a Muslim believer is worth much more than that of the unbeliever, and hence cannot go unavenged, especially when shed by the unbeliever in violent engagement. Another interesting mapping in the data is conceptualizing human beings as objects.

Human beings as objects

This broad mapping involves metaphors that allow the audience to think of both the BH warriors and Nigerian security forces as objects. However, the sub-domains of metaphor sourced, reveal the different kinds of meaning attached to the two opposing categories of object. The BH members are presented as warriors that have undergone different travails, ruined as bottles and consumed as fruits, on account of religious propagation. Hence in the sermons, these members are constructed as objects of victimization in violent engagement. This is markedly different from the security forces, who are represented as undesirable objects without worth. The attitude projected here is that the security forces are supposed to be kept far from people but the Nigerian government (which is also perceived as an enemy) chose to deploy them to cohabit with the people just to oppose the group's religious propagation. Let us examine how these mappings are captured in the discourse.

BH WARRIORS ARE BOTTLES		
	Akwai wanda aka pasa masa cinya	(Line 23)
(21)	There is someone whose thigh was smashed.	
	Akwai wanda aka ragargaza masa kafafu	(Lines 22–23)
(22)	There is someone whose legs were shattered.	
	Akwai wanda aka karyamasa hanu	(Line 24)
(23)	There is someone whose hand was broken.	
BH WARRIORS ARE FRUITS		
	Akwai wanda aka fede	(Line 20)
(24)	There is someone who was peeled.	
	Ko zasu cinyemu	(Line 347)
(25)	Even if they will eat us up.	
SOLDIERS ARE OBJECTS		
	A ciresu a cikin gari	(Line 172)
(26)	Remove them [soldiers] from inside of town.	
	Ana ajiyeshi a bayan gari	(Line 173)
(27)	He [soldier] is being kept at the back of the town.	
	Sai ka daukoshi ka kawoshi cikin gari	(Line 173)
(28)	Then you took him [soldier], you brought him inside the town.	

In the excerpts above, humans (BH members and soldiers) are reduced to mere objects through the ontological mapping of the features of the objects to humans. In Excerpts (21–23), for example, such lexical items as "smash," "shatter" and "break," respectively, depict an ontological correspondence between a bottle (source domain) and BH member's suffering (target domain). Similarly, the lexemes "peel" and "eat up" allow the audience to think of BH members' victimization as that of eating fruits (source domain). Through the objectification of BH members' sacrifice in the struggle, the preachers paint a clear picture of the kinds of price members can pay in the event of violent engagement. This instance of stance act has been confirmed in previous studies as a way of aligning the victimization sometimes suffered by BH members in violent engagements as acts of bravery and sacrifice (Chiluwa, 2016; Chiluwa & Adegoke, 2013). Specifically, it is designed to arouse followers into gallantry, as well as draw sympathy from other Muslims across the globe. On the other hand, a different set of metaphorical sub-domains is deployed to understand how the members of the security forces are moved at will as objects, which, on the one hand, can be dispensed with (by BH warriors), or on the other hand, whose opinions are not important (in the eyes of the Nigerian government). Of course, the idea demonstrated with such material processes as "remove [ing]" (in 26), "kept [keeping]" (in 27), "took [taking]" and "brought [bringing]" (in 28) the Nigerian soldiers from one place to another. Generally, BH's preaching is replete with conventional metaphors that project some of the sacrifices made by members who engaged in one confrontation or the other with Nigerian security forces. Idealizing sacrifices made and rewards associated confirms Agbiboa's (2013) observation that "the promises of the next world are primary motivating factors in driving insecure, alienated, and marginalized youths to join religious terrorist groups as a means of psychological empowerment" (p. 158).

Conclusion

The study delves into the linguistic metaphors and conceptual mappings present in specific BH pre-violence sermons. It aimed to understand how these metaphors, whether deliberately or unintentionally employed, convey the group's perspectives on violence. The motivation for this research stems from a noted imbalance in previous linguistic investigations on the communication surrounding BH. Many studies have predominantly centered on how the media portrays the sect, both in print and online, but neglecting the direct content and expressions of the group itself. While previous research has touched upon aspects like the representation of discourse participants, their views, and the sect's ideological inclinations, they have not adequately addressed the metaphorical strategies BH employs to convey its stances. This gap underscores the novelty and significance of the current study. Through a detailed content analysis, the sermons primarily emphasize two main themes: religious propagation and violent actions. As indicated in Table 1, BH places greater emphasis on religious propagation, framing it in ways that align with Muslim beliefs and portraying it as a noble endeavor every devout Muslim should undertake. However, the metaphors used in preaching about violent engagement employ rhetorical stance acts that make inferences from the extended application of concepts, which invoke a particular desired emotion or trigger action from the group's followers. The analysis uncovers that BH pre-violence sermons

strategically employ various metaphorical mappings that serve three primary functions: reinforcing the group's stance on using violence for religious propagation, engaging and aligning the audience with BH's views on violence, and providing justification and ethno-religious rewards to validate their stance on violence.

Generally, the study delves into the less-explored area of BH's early sermons. Understanding these early sermons can provide deeper insights into BH's mission and ideological foundations. The methodological approach used, which allows for the translation of the pre-violence sermons into English and the application content analysis, is a huge contribution to existing scholarship on BH communication, as it aided a systematic explanation of how linguistic metaphors are used in the sermons to articulate BH's stance on violence in the context of religious propagation. In essence, the study suggests that the use of specific metaphors in BH's sermons can have broader societal implications, influencing perceptions, and beliefs, and potentially justifying violent actions. However, the findings might be better generalized if a more holistic study, capturing both pre- and post-violence texts in an analysis that runs across different levels of language, were done.

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