

A Conceptual Mapping of Metaphors in a Nollywood Film - *Ẹlú kú Ẹràwò*

Eniayọ Sobola

Department of English
University of Lagos

Abstract

Film is one of the effective tools used in communicating cultures through language use in a speech community, and such language is enriched with metaphorical expressions. The use of language in film is a reflection of language as it is used in real human society. Nigerian films make use of language filled with metaphorical expressions. This paper examines the use of metaphors in Ẹlú kú Ẹràwò (Ẹlú kú the star), a contemporary Nigerian film produced in Yoruba and subtitled in English. The paper utilized the Conceptual Metaphor Theory as propounded by Lakoff and Johnson for the study of metaphor in everyday language to examine the analytical mapping of metaphors in the film. The study reveals the beauty of language use in the film and makes the creative work aesthetically satisfying by showing understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another. It also shows that there is metaphor in our everyday language as portrayed in the film, and that metaphor is rightly situated in the appropriate context of language use with cultural expressions. The paper concludes that metaphors and especially conceptual metaphors are veritable cultural tools that enrich language use, spur artistic productions and aid aesthetic satisfaction.

Keywords: metaphor, language, film, Nollywood, conceptual mapping

Introduction

Advancement in technology has developed film as a tool of communicating recorded information beyond cultural bounds and time limits. It is one of the effective tools used in communicating cultural nuances through language in a speech community. The role of film as a means of entertainment more than that of education has made it popular in disseminating important information in a light and effective manner. It portrays social reality through moving pictures and texts. It also represents utterances that are used in human society because it is actual representation of real conversation in natural society (Sobola and Agboola, 2016). Moreover, filmmakers are members of society, who use the language available in their society to portray their social beliefs, cultural heritage, philosophical ideologies and linguistic peculiarities. These are expressed through the film text which includes the spoken and written discourse displayed on the screen (Taylor, 2004; Herrero and Chan, 2010). It is compared to language on the platform of communication. Film and language communicate meaning in social contexts. It communicates meaning both denotatively and connotatively using language. Language is an intrinsic part of film, which qualifies it to be adopted as a means of communication (Villarejo, 2007). Film is guided by cinematic conventions called film grammar, and it has different forms and usages just like language.

Filmmakers write their stories from the common pool of the society where they belong. Different societies have diverse cultural practices which are projected to the world through films from those societies (Ekwuazi, 1987; Ogunleye, 2008). Johnson (1997: 99) makes an assertion that, "film is the most effective medium for promotion, propagation and preservation of culture. Many cultures of the world have used its potential to their advantage." British, American, Chinese and Indian cultures have influenced some Nigerians and people of other countries who enjoy watching their films (Adesanya, 1997). Cultures of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria: Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo have been communicated to the world through Nigerian films. These cultures are couched through the use of figurative expressions one of which is metaphor. Metaphor is one of the cultural nuances embedded in filmic language. It is an expression that uses a concept to define another concept in order to create an implicit comparison. It is an aspect of language creativity that enables a language user to use the language outside the literal context to create meaning with effects (Sobola, 2016). Bailer-Jones (2002) asserts that:

A metaphor is a linguistic expression in which at least one part of the expression is transferred from one domain of application (source domain), where it is common, to another (target domain) in which it is unusual, or was probably unusual at an earlier time when it might have been new (114).

Metaphorical expressions are often used in films like other aspects of language, and it is not appropriate to interpret a metaphorical

expression in the literal context because it loses its meaning outside the metaphorical context. Metaphor has a strong cultural component because it is part of culture, and it is best understood in cultural context (Fromkin et, al, 2003). Metaphors are linguistic expressions used to express cultural values and beliefs of people in a society. Members of speech communities use metaphors to communicate their worldview though the metaphors vary across languages (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010). Natives of a language use images available in their culture to construct their metaphors; therefore, different cultures employ diverse images in constructing their metaphorical expressions. Different metaphorical expressions are found in various languages as a result of cultural differences. Nevertheless, there are metaphors that cut across cultures. Metaphor and culture are entrenched in each other because cultural models are used in construction of metaphors while metaphors are representation of culture. Metaphorical expressions project the cultures of their origin through the two concepts that are compared in them to generate a new meaning. Basso (1976) asserts that:

For it is in metaphor, perhaps more dramatically than in any other form of symbolic expression, that language and culture come together and display their fundamental inseparability. A theory of one that excludes the other will inevitably do damage to both. (117)

Therefore, metaphor can be seen as an aspect of both language and culture. The use of metaphors in films is the display of both language and culture in the films. On this ground, metaphors in Nigerian films

can be seen as demonstration of linguistic situation and cultural values in Nigeria.

Failure to understand the meaning of a metaphor hinders effective communication because the message of an encoder would not be interpreted by a decoder in the appropriate context. The use of metaphors is common in Nigerian films, and the purpose of the filmmakers is not to confuse their audience but to promote their cultural and linguistic values to their immediate and remote audience. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the use of metaphor in a Nollywood movie to explore how linguistic elements that serve as correspondences in the source and target conceptual domains contribute towards their interpretation in a cultural context.

Nollywood

Nigerian film industry was christened Nollywood by Matt Steinglass in 2002 in *New York Times* when he was in search of a name for the emerging Nigerian video film industry. He used N- to connote Nigeria and named the industry Nollywood after the American Hollywood and Indian Bollywood (Haynes, 2005; Oni, 2008). Though the name faced oppositions from stakeholders in the industry, who are not in its support, it has come to stay as the identity of Nigerian films. The Hausa filmmakers who did not want to associate with the name produced other varieties of it: Kannywood and Kennywood to designate the films produced in the Northern Nigeria, which portray Hausa culture and religion (Adeoti, 2008). In spite of the challenges, Nollywood has become an icon and identity of Nigerian film industry. It has been found as a veritable tool that teaches people across the

globe Nigerian cultural values and norms including peculiarity of language use in Nigeria. Nollywood has been declared the third largest film producing industries in the world following the Indian Bollywood and the American Hollywood. The industry has distributed Nigerian films across different parts of globe, and the films have informed, sensitized and educated the wider audience on Nigerian issues (Haynes, 2007; Agbese, 2013).

Metaphor and Film

Metaphor is an aspect of language use found in films because language is used in films as it is used in actual speech communities. Metaphors in films are called cinematic metaphors (Whittock, 1990). Several metaphors exist in films which are used as cultural expressions. Some of these metaphorical expressions are used for generation of new meaning from ordinary concepts (Horowitz, 1992). For viewers and film analysts to understand a film, the metaphors in it must be interpreted properly, failure of which may render the film discourse meaningless or ambiguous. For this reason, the study of metaphors in films is essential. Nigerian films are enriched with metaphors which are part of Nigerian cultural heritage. These metaphors are drawn from cultural elements present in ethnic cultures of the filmmakers. This is evident in Nigerian films from different cultural backgrounds.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Conceptual metaphor theory propounded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980)

is a framework for the study of metaphor in everyday language. According to Lakoff and Johnson, everyday language, thoughts and actions are filled with metaphors. Production and comprehension of metaphorical expressions are determined by metaphorical correspondence that guides our mental representation of complex concepts (Mcglone, 1996). Conceptual metaphor means an understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. There are two conceptual domains in metaphor: source domain and target domain. The source domain is the conceptual domain from which a metaphorical expression is drawn while the target domain is the conceptual domain which is intended to be understood. There is correspondence between the two domains through conceptual mapping. Conceptual mapping helps to bring the features shared by the two concepts in a metaphor together to generate meaning. Therefore, mapping is bringing the sets of correspondence between the source and target domains together (Kövecses, 2002). In mapping, it is important to understand the domains because understanding of the domains implied the understanding of the sets of correspondence that exist in the domains. The concept in the source domain is vehicle while the concept in the target domain is tenor.

Conceptual metaphor typically employs a more abstract concept as target domain and a concrete concept as source domain. This metaphorical process goes from concrete to abstract, that is, an abstract concept is understood in terms of a concrete concept. In some cases, there may be concrete concepts in both conceptual domains as it is found in this study. Metaphor is not only a linguistic

phenomenon: it is also a mode of representation. Conception of metaphor is different from culture to culture, but one thing it does is that it helps us to understand one concept in terms of another.

Methodology

This study employs media monitoring to generate the data. The data for this study are metaphors in a Nigerian film, *Eluku Irawo*, produced in Yoruba subtitled in English. The film chosen was produced in 2014 and uploaded on the internet through the YouTube. The film is chosen from the YouTube because it has been exposed to the outer world beyond the cultural boundary, which allows people from different parts of the world to access and view it at their convenience. The film projects Yoruba socio-cultural and sociolinguistic background to the world and the use of metaphor is also present in other Nigerian languages. The choice of a Yoruba film as a Nigerian film in this study is justified by the data produced by UNESCO Institute for Statistics in January, 2012 on 'Linguistic Diversity on Feature Films' where it was reported that the Nigerian films produced in Yoruba has the largest percentage among the films produced in Nigeria in 2009, which is 54.7%. It was followed by Nigerian films in English which is 24.7%. The rest of the films in Nigerian languages take the following percentages: Hausa 16.0%, Bini 4.2% and Igbo 0.4%.

Four metaphorical expressions were discovered and extracted from the film as data. They are presented and analysed with Lakoff's conceptual metaphor theory.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section deals with presentation and analysis of data.

Text i

Ẹlú kú ̀l̀ràwò	Yorùbá
Ẹlú kú the star	English translation

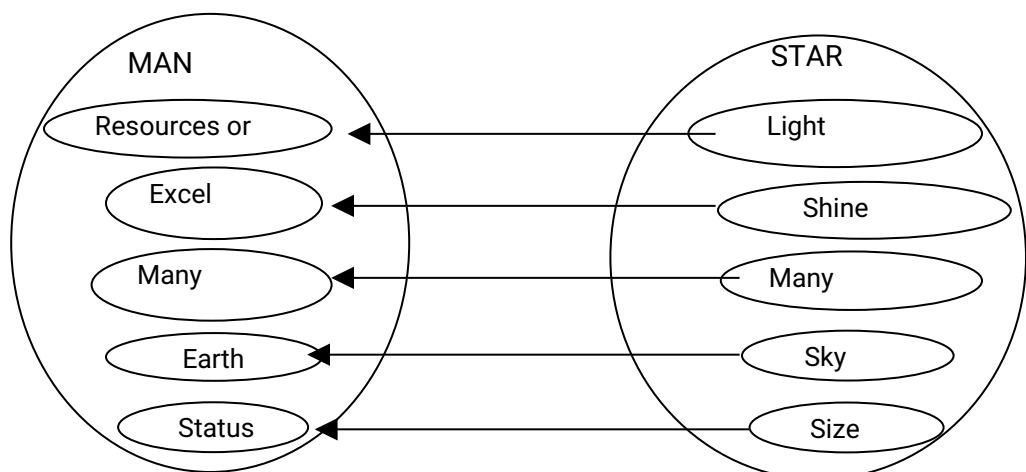
Ẹlú kú the star generates a conceptual metaphor Ẹlú kú is a star which generates the conceptual metaphor 'man is a star. The syntactic structure of the conceptual metaphor is SVC.

Ẹlú kú is a star.

S V C

The conceptual domains in the metaphor are concrete entities. Star is the source conceptual domain while man is the target conceptual domain. In the metaphorical expression, man which is the target domain is understood in terms of star which is the source domain. The metaphorical expression is derived from the source domain, star because star is the metaphorical word.

It implies that man has some attributes that make him comparable to star. This can be demonstrated through conceptual mapping.



Target domain (tenor)	Source
domain (vehicle)	

The conceptual mapping shows that the concept of man is understood in terms of the concept of star. The sets of correspondence in the two concepts are conceived and interpreted to generate meaning.

Correspondence

- i. Resources or skills ----- Light

Light is conceived and interpreted as resources or skills that man possesses. The correspondence shows that star has potential which is light, and man has potential which is his resources or skills. The potential or glory of man can be interpreted in terms of the glory of star which is light.

- ii. Excel ----- Shine

A star shines at night by illuminating light around itself. Man also has ability to excel in time of trouble. As a star fights darkness to shine, man uses his resources or skills to confront his challenges and overcome them. Man excels when he is able to shine above his challenges.

- iii. Many ----- Many

There are many stars in the galaxy as there are many people on earth.

- iv. Earth ----- Sky

Man and star have their separate habitations where they function. The star shines in its right habitation which is sky while man excels on earth. Both of them become less significant outside their right habitations.

v. Status ----- Size

Stars are of different sizes and the bigger the star; the brighter it shines. Glory of star is measured by its size. Man is classified according to his status. The status of man is determined by his resources or social influence. Both of them can be considered in terms of levels of influence on their contemporaries.

The features in the two conceptual domains show that it is possible to understand man in terms of star through conceptual mapping. Cognitive features of the two conceptual domains are present in the Nigerian socio-cultural and sociolinguistic contexts. The lexical items in the correspondence are available in Nigerian languages, and that made subtitling and translation easy.

Text ii

Ẹyin lohùn. Yorùbá

Utterance is an egg. English translation

The conceptual metaphor 'utterance is an egg' has syntactic structure of SVC.

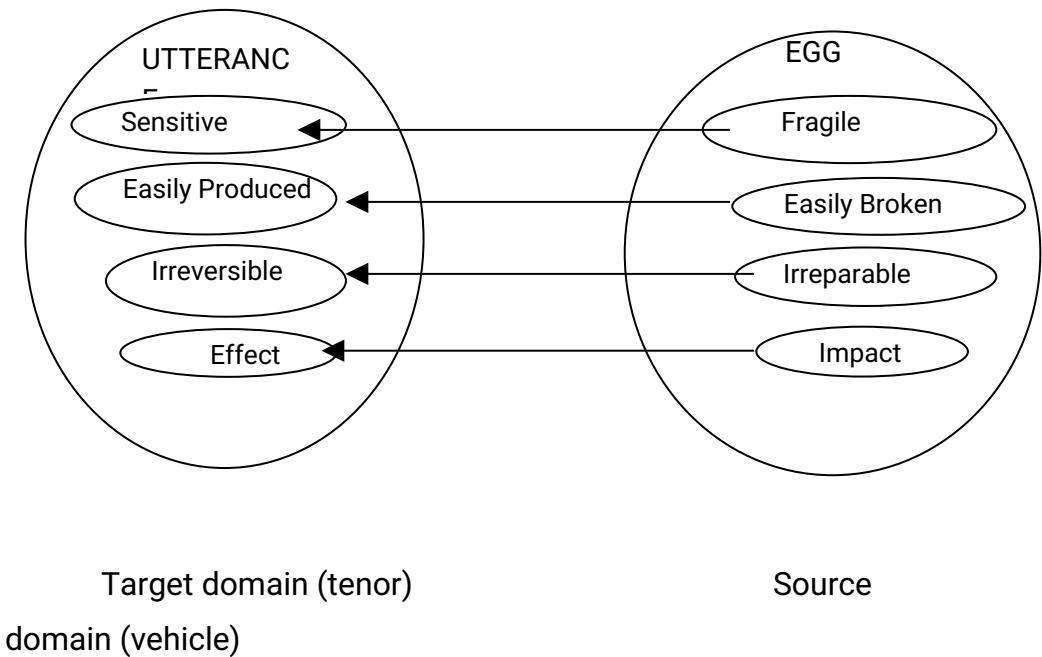
Utterance is an egg.

S V C

The concept in the target conceptual domain is an abstract entity while

the concept in the source conceptual domain is a concrete entity. In the metaphor, the abstract entity ‘utterance’ which is the concept in the target domain is understood in terms of the concrete entity ‘egg’ which is the concept in the source domain. The metaphorical expression is drawn from the source domain, ‘egg’.

It implies that voice is understood through egg. Both of them have certain features which serve as correspondence between them. These features are mapped below.



The conceptual mapping shows that the concept of utterance is understood in terms of the concept of egg. The sets of correspondence in the two concepts are conceived and interpreted to generate meaning.

Correspondence

i. Sensitive ----- Fragile

Utterance is conceived and interpreted in terms of an egg in the metaphor. An egg is fragile and needs to be handled with care. An utterance is also sensitive and carefulness is required when it is being used. Wrong use of tongue is dangerous and disastrous. Sensitivity of voice is interpreted through fragility of egg.

ii. Easily produced ----- Easily broken

When an utterance is produce, it may be either positive or negative. The same way an egg can easily be broken. The people who talk without caution easily say what they are not supposed to say in some cases. This shows that as an egg is easily broken when it is not handled with care, an utterance can easily be produced, if the tongue is not controlled.

iii. Irreversible ----- Irreparable

Once an utterance is made, it is irreversible. The fact that the speaker can deny the utterance does not make such utterance reversible, especially, when it has been recorded. Forensic phonetics has proved that an utterance can be used to locate the speaker. Likewise when an egg is broken, it can no longer be repaired. Therefore, an utterance is conceived and interpreted in terms of an egg through this correspondence.

iv. Effect ----- Impact

Utterance has lasting effect on the hearer, and it provokes reactions as in speech acts. It can harm or heal the psyche of the hearer. If an egg

falls to the ground and breaks, it has impact on that ground by staining it and smelling. An utterance can be interpreted in terms of an egg based on the feature of impact that egg has.

Conceptual mapping has shown that the features shared by the two concepts serve as correspondence between them. These features portray that an utterance can be conceived and interpreted in terms of an egg. Though both of them do not have semantic collocations, their metaphorical correspondence in the two domains helps us to generate the intended meaning. This conceptual metaphor is present in Nigerian cultural and linguistic contexts, especially in Yoruba culture.

Text iii

Oò lè sá ré kojá ká dàrá . Yorùbá

You cannot outwit destiny. English translation

The metaphorical expression 'you cannot outwit destiny' generates conceptual metaphor 'destiny is personality'. The syntactic structure of the metaphor is SVC.

Destiny is personality.

S V C

The concept in the target conceptual domain is an abstract entity while the concept in the source conceptual domain is a concrete entity. In the conceptual metaphor, the abstract concept 'destiny' in the target domain is conceived and interpreted in terms of the concrete concept 'personality' in the source domain.

This implies that destiny can be understood through personality. The



metaphorical expression is derived from the source domain, personality.

Target domain (tenor) domain (vehicle)	Source
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The conceptual mapping reveals that 'destiny' could be understood in terms of personality because the two concepts have some features which are sets of correspondence in them. These features reflect the aspect of the two concepts that make it possible to interpret destiny in terms of personality.

Correspondence

- i. Stability ----- Identity

Destiny is believed to be unchangeable. It is stable and constant. It can be understood to be constant by many who wield esoteric skills. Personality has identity that marks a person out. This identity makes a

person to be easily recognized. As a person's identity does not easily change, destiny is believed to be stable.

ii. Effect ----- Influence

Destiny affects human achievement. It is believed that every man is controlled by their destiny to become what they become in life. Every personality has ability to influence others. The influence of personality is used to interpret how destiny affects people. Destiny could be understood as a result of impact it has like personality.

iii. Possibility ----- Reality

Destiny is possibility because it is believed that some people do not live to fulfil their destiny. Personality, on the other hand, is a reality. People are identified through their personality. People's personality can easily be identified, but their destiny might not be recognized because they might not be able to fulfil it.

iv. Manipulation ----- Control

It is believed that destiny could be manipulated as personality could be controlled. The cultural belief that destiny could be manipulated is expressed in terms of personality. Individual's personality could be controlled with conscious efforts. These features help us to realise that in spite of constant nature of destiny it can still be manipulated either by being delayed or deferred.

The correspondence shows that the two domains possess necessary features which make it possible to interpret destiny in terms of personality. The attribute given to destiny in the metaphor is that it

cannot be defeated in the competition of life. Therefore, destiny is understood as personality that is stable, has effect and can compete.

Text iv

O ti dewú rẹ.

Yorùbá

You have become a goat. English translation

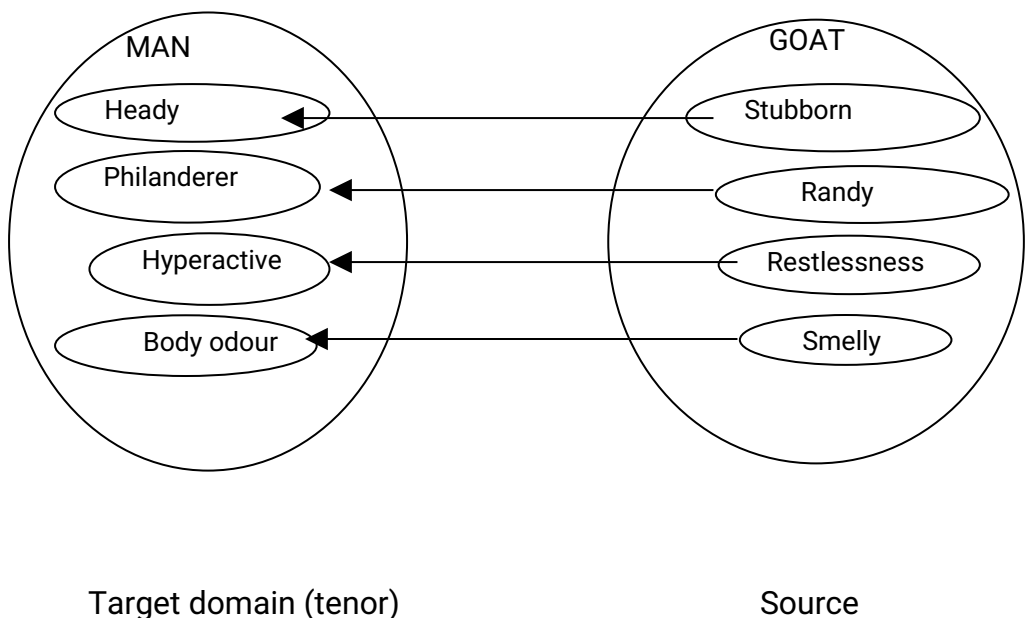
The metaphorical expression 'you have become a goat' generates 'you are a goat' which generates conceptual metaphor 'man is a goat'.

The conceptual metaphor has syntactic structure of SVC.

Man is a goat.

S V C

The conceptual domains in the metaphor are concrete entities. Both of them are animate: the concept in the target domain is a human while the concept in the source domain is an animal.



domain (vehicle)

Conceptual mapping reveals that man could be understood through some attributes he shares with a goat. Both 'man' and 'goat' have some features that can be mapped to generate the intended meaning of the metaphor. The features in the two concepts are sets of correspondence which reflect attributes that make it possible to conceive and interpret man in terms of a goat.

Correspondence

i. Heady ----- Stubborn

The major attribute of goat is stubbornness because it cannot be controlled. A goat is strong willed and always does whatever it is restricted to do. Man also can be heady and can refuse to accept any instruction or correction. A strong willed man always insists on his own decision whether it is right or wrong. This attribute equates man with a goat. No matter the kind of treatment or punishment given to heady people; they always do what is on their mind without thinking about its consequences.

ii. Philanderer ----- Randy

An he-goat is notorious for being sexually active. It is always ready and in the habit of mounting pressures on she-goat to satisfy its sexual urge. Man also shares this attitude of strong sexual urge with a goat. Man can be described as being a philanderer because of this attitude, especially those who have uncontrollable sexual desire. This has made it possible to conceive and interpret man in terms of a goat which is

randy in the metaphor.

iii. Hyperactive ----- Restlessness

The restlessness of goat can be used to describe a man who is hyperactive. Some people exhibit this feature by constituting a nuisance to those around them. This feature has a negative undertone. People who are hyperactive often get themselves engaged activities which they are not expected or permitted to do and can get them into trouble. Therefore, man can be understood in terms of a goat.

iv. Body odour ----- Smelly

An he-goat is quickly identified as smelly. It is easy to know that there is a he-goat around due to its smelly nature. People with foul body odour are often addressed as a goat. In Yoruba, there is a proverb that says 'here comes the he-goat; here comes smelling.' This feature further establishes that wherever and whenever a goat is used as a metaphorical vehicle in Nigerian context for man, it has negative implication.

In conceptual mapping of the features of the two concepts in the metaphor, man has been interpreted through features of a goat which are traceable to man. This mapping reveals that whenever a goat is used to refer man, it has negative connotation. This is found in Yoruba culture in particular and Nigerian cultures in general.

Summary of Findings

The study has reflected in general that film can be seen as an effective tool of communicating culture through language use. The metaphors

extracted are able to generate conceptual metaphors which are analysed through conceptual mappings. The metaphorical expressions found in the film are part of Yoruba cultural beliefs, which are also present in the cultures of other Nigerian ethnic groups.

Linguistic assumption of the conceptual metaphors analysed in the film is that the syntactic structure of the conceptual metaphors is made up of Subject + Verb + Complement (SVC). That implies that the metaphors are simple sentences which are often used in everyday conversation.

In the metaphorical expressions analysed above, the first and fourth metaphorical expressions employ concrete entities in both source and target domains. In the first metaphor, man is conceived and understood in terms of a star, a galaxy element. In the last metaphor, man is understood in terms of a goat, an animal. The second and third metaphorical expressions use concrete concepts in the source domain and abstract concepts in the target domains. An utterance is interpreted in terms of an egg in the second metaphor while destiny is interpreted in terms of personality in the third metaphor.

Conceptual metaphor theory employs in this study shows that metaphor has cultural and aesthetical values which add artistic effects to language use by investigating sets of correspondence in the concepts mapped to generate meaning.

It has been discovered through conceptual mappings that there are features which serve as correspondence between the two conceptual domains. These features help in the interpretation of the metaphors by showing the symmetry between the two concepts that generate

meaning of the metaphor. The mapping of the two concepts is understood based on cultural beliefs of the society from which the metaphor is produced. Therefore, context of culture is employed for effective interpretation of metaphorical expressions. As it has been demonstrated in the fourth analysis that a goat has different features that can be used to describe attitude of man, context of situation complements understanding and interpretation of metaphors. The immediate context in which the metaphorical expression 'man is a goat' is used determines the appropriate features that are applicable in the interpretation of the metaphor in order to derived the intended meaning. Metaphor can be misinterpreted if it is not conceived and interpreted in the cultural context and context of situation.

Conclusion

The use of metaphor in a Nigerian film has been explored to show that it is a tool of cultural communication through language use. Metaphor has been identified as one of the cultural tools that Nigerian films portray to the world through language use. It has also been established that conceptual domains in metaphor have features that serve as correspondence that help in interpretation of metaphor, and metaphor cannot be properly interpreted without cultural context and context of situation.

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