

An Analysis of the War Metaphors Used in Spoken Commentaries of the 2004 Edition of the Premier Soccer League (PSL) Matches in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Soccer commentaries on television are characterised by metaphor-carrying language and expression. After introducing the Interactionist Theory of Metaphor and the classic Cognitive Metaphor Theory, this article analyses how soccer commentators make use of war metaphor when describing live soccer matches. Based on a qualitative analysis of spoken commentary during the 2004 edition of Premier Soccer League (PSL) matches in Zimbabwe, the article proceeds to establish the kind of war metaphors that are typically used in live Zimbabwean broadcasts of soccer matches in English, and how certain metaphors interact with each other within the commentary. The analysis is grounded in the theoretical framework suggested by Ghadessy's Component Model (1988). The study argues that the players, their emotions, their character traits, actions on the pitch, the spectator's behaviour and the description of results translate into a war scenario as a result of the commentator's use of metaphor.

Introduction

There is an undeniable theme of war in soccer, a sport popularly known as football in many parts of the world. Soccer, like war, is a competitive sport where there is normally a clear winner and loser, strategic thinking, team work, preparedness, spectator behavior, glory of winning and shame of defeat. The sport is a physical contest making it almost inevitable for allusions to war, metaphors of battle and strategy by professional commentators.

George Orwell, writing at the end of the 1939 to 1945 infamous World War Two, dramatised orgies of hatred prevalent in soccer and concluded that sport is frankly mimic warfare or war without shooting. He was concerned about the violent street battles, vulgar nationalism and vicious fights between rival fans, which accompanied football matches. The frequent use of war metaphors in the media and aggressive tendencies by spectators who have to be separated often by barbed wire fencing or baton wielding

police, highlight the argument. Football stadia, and in particular the playfields, are transformed into battlefields and this makes it difficult for sports commentators to avoid militarising the language. War and sports become indistinguishable in the minds of commentators.

Soccer has been the spark that ignited conflicts or even reinvigorated diplomacy. Reference is often made to the 1969 epic match between El Salvador and Honduras where the Salvadorian victory was followed by the burning of the Honduran flag and widespread acts of hooliganism. According to Foreman (1994), failure to apologise by the government of El Salvador resulted in the "Football War" which claimed 5000 casualties. There was also the 1986 World Cup semi-final soccer match between England and Argentina played against the backdrop of the Falklands War. England lost to Argentina on a goal aggregate of 2-1 after Diego Maradona scored spectacularly by the infamous "Hand of God". There were vociferous protests by the English side for in their minds; it meant losing the second version of the war they had won in 1983. Argentina celebrated since revenge had been exacted so to speak. Soccer matches between Germany and England have also been known to evoke emotions grounded in previous military clashes particularly the so-called world wars. After losing to Germany in one of the epic clashes, England's Paul Gascoigne was devastated and remarked that the defeat would not have been as painful if it had been inflicted by any other European country in the tournament than their mortal enemy. Soccer matches between Turkey and England have been considered a reincarnation of previous military clashes, hence, the high emotions and tensions. Indeed, teams often use their past military conflicts as inspiration to beat their rivals, and this demonstrates the close connection between soccer and war. However, the 1998 World Cup, widely expected to unleash violent episodes, turned out to be an asset in the healing of wounds and diplomatic relations between the two erstwhile political enemies.

Derby soccer matches deal with contests between fans and players of clubs occupying geographical halves of the city or location, and these are naturally explosive and breath-taking. Martial terminology is prevalent in derby matches that take place around the globe. Some of the most famous derbies are the North London derby between Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur, Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates in South Africa, FC Barcelona and Espanyol in the Spanish league, Celtic and Rangers in Scotland, Boca Juniors and River Plate in the Argentine capital of Buenos Aires and the legendary Milan derby between AC Milan and Internazionale. The Zimbabwean premier league is no exception as club matches involving Harare teams CAPS United and Dynamos, and Bulawayo teams, Highlanders and Amazulu, are fierce emotive derbies which trigger inevitably, use of martial language. Therefore, the vocabularies of war and sports may be commonly used sources of metaphor.

Professional commentators who work in conjunction with analysts do live broadcasting of matches on television. The analysts are primarily former players, similar in background and function to the retired generals and colonels who tell us how to watch the war. To make the match interesting and exciting, very vivid language full of metaphors is used.

The present article is motivated by the desire to establish more information about the war metaphors used specifically in the live broadcasts of television matches. To achieve this, the organisation of this article is as follows; firstly, the researcher presents Max Black's Interaction Theory of Metaphor (1962) and the classical Cognitive Metaphor Theory developed by Lackoff and Johnson (1980). Secondly, there is characterisation of the corpus demonstrating fully the elicitation methods and model of analysis adopted. Thirdly, there is presentation of the findings and discussion. Finally, the article draws up a concise summary and conclusions.

Theoretical Framework

Traditional approaches to metaphors specifically from Aristotle onwards addressed the concept at the level of individual utterances, regarding it as an aberration or anomaly in that the meaning of an utterance is something other than the logical literal truth of that utterance. Metaphors were largely perceived as rhetorical ornaments, borrowed terms or even words substituted for other words or a form of analogy used to increase persuasive effect. They are, in this case, stylistic devices added to the pure and simple meaning. In the 20th century, the advent of scholars led by Ivor Richards argued that metaphors are not simply stylistic devices but a critical component of meaning generation in human communication. Richards (cited in Ricoeur, 1978) proposed that metaphors are viewed in terms of tenor and vehicle which can be simplified to mean original vis-avis the borrowed term. In other words, tenor is what is said or thought about. What it is compared to, becomes the vehicle. A statement or expression exploiting metaphor uses some words metaphorically while the rest are used non-metaphorically. Focus here is on a word whose presence constitutes the ground for considering the statement metaphorical. This then distinguishes metaphors from riddles, proverbs and allegories where all the words are used metaphorically. Therefore, it is possible to isolate the metaphorical word from the rest of the sentence. The word focus then designates this word while frame designates the sentence, reinforcing Ivor Richards' argument that metaphor arises from tenor and vehicle joint action. Metaphor is not vehicle alone but the whole made up of two halves.

Interactionist Theory of Metaphor

The interactionist theory developed by the philosopher, Max Black's (*ibid*), which is an elaboration and progression of the work of Ivor Richards,

argues that metaphors are substituted for an absent literal expression taken in a sense that is different from its proper normal meaning. Max Black's (*ibid*) assertion is that two expressions, literal and metaphorical are equivalent and that the metaphor can then be translated by means of an exhaustive paraphrase. It then follows that metaphor does not introduce new information, but is merely an ornament for discourse giving the hearer the joy of surprise, of disguise or of imagistic expression. The assertion can be illustrated as follows:

Man is a wolf.
The player is a conqueror.

In the above examples, the focus 'wolf' and 'conqueror' operate not on the basis of current lexical meaning but by virtue of opinions and preconceptions to which a reader or hearer in a linguistic community is committed. To call a man a wolf and a player (footballer) a conqueror is to evoke the lupine system of associated commonplaces. In this connection, one speaks of the wolf or conqueror metaphor suppressing some details and emphasising or reinforcing others. Thus, Ricoeur (*ibid*: 86) observes,

.... metaphor selects, emphasises, suppresses and organises features of the principal subject by implying statements of the subject that normally apply to the subsidiary subject.

Cognitive Metaphor Theory

The cognitive metaphor approach, which essentially regards metaphor as a conceptual and linguistic phenomenon, derives from Lackoff and Johnson's (1980) famous publication, *Metaphors We Live By*. The scholars argue that most of our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature. Thus, metaphors are integral and not peripheral to language and understanding. Metaphoric processes are defined as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (*ibid*: 50). What we think, what we experience everyday and what we do is much a matter of metaphor. Communication is based on the same conceptual system we use in thinking and acting and language provides the evidence for what that kind of system is.

The scholars identify three basic types of conceptual metaphors which are structural, orientational and ontological metaphors.

Structural Metaphors

Structural metaphors, are by far, the most common type where there is a comparison of concepts, thereby requiring the hearer to transfer one basic

domain of experience to another basic domain. In the context of the current research, we shall think in terms of war domain vis-avis soccer domain. The classic example given is that of argument as war metaphor which entails reframing the argument discourse in terms of physical conflict or war. Structural metaphor brings to the fore the notion that metaphors are not merely linguistic, but relate our experiences of different concepts, making all metaphors a result of how we view the world. Fundamentally, selection of metaphors we live by, consciously or unconsciously entails choice and creation of reality. Other oft quoted metaphoric examples are, 'Life is a journey', and 'Time is money', where sense is made out of what goes on around us by thinking metaphorically.

Orientational Metaphors

The orientational metaphors are based on orientation in space. There is no structuring of concepts in terms of another here. Instead, there is organisation of the whole system of concepts with respect to one another, for instance, health is up whereas illness is down. There is, of course, no logical reason why 'up' is positive and 'down' negative. The metaphors are culture dependent. They show a spatial relationship between the human subject and something in the world. In the world of soccer, there are a variety of orientational metaphors which mainly serve to rate and judge a particular performance of a footballer, strength in general, success, mental or even physical fitness at a particular point in time.

Ontological Metaphors

Abstract experiences such as events, activities, emotions and ideas are revealed in terms of concrete substances and processes by means of ontological metaphor. Intangible entities become entities which makes it possible to categorise, group and quantify them. They are also characterised as container metaphors in that something is presented as having an inside and an outside. Activities, actions and emotions which are otherwise non-physical objects are transformed into physical objects with definite boundaries. Animating objects otherwise known as personification is also an example of ontological metaphor. In the context of this article, we shall think in terms of the ball as focal point of events unfolding on the field of play and how this object is animated.

War Metaphors

Metaphors of war conceptualise most kinds of sport. War metaphors are not only used as far as description of players, their emotions and the actions on the football pitch are concerned although, these are, of course the dominant image recipient fields. It can be argued that the whole tournament,

footballers, their emotions, their characteristic traits, actions on the pitch and activities of spectators are transformed into a war scenario through the commentary.

There are literally hundreds of war or military metaphors used in everyday speech and writing. Lackoff and Johnson (*ibid*) note that these metaphors have become part of language over a hundred years since people tend to draw upon experiences in one area of life in order to fire fresh insight and understanding into experiences in another. Examples are given of sailors who have brought language from the sea to the land and farmers have also adapted language from the land. Soldiers have also had vivid, sometimes, traumatic experiences during military duty that they have then applied that language and expressions to non-military situations. The use of militaristic language helps to make communication more colorful and precise.

We shall, therefore, apply the conceptual metaphors to the language used in the spoken commentaries but first, let us describe the data gathering methodology.

Methodology

The data gathering process spanned over a period of eight months (the entire soccer season) concentrating exclusively on the Zimbabwean 2004 edition of the PSL selected games. The competitive league is made up of 16 clubs with fixtures on a home-away basis. The matches had to be selected since not all of them had a live broadcast on television. It is only high profile matches, particularly derby encounters, that had television coverage while other fixtures scheduled on the same day and time only got broadcast on radio stations, Spot FM and Radio Zimbabwe. This research used data from the English commentaries, brief match analyses and post-match analyses of match highlights only. In all, data were collected from 19 PSL matches.

The detached observation strategy was employed where the researcher watched the live coverage of the match, actively listening to the accompanying commentary and analyses. It was possible to watch the activity and record the data obtained from the commentaries. The major limitation though was that the researcher tended to be so much engrossed and emotionally attached to specific matches to the point of missing out useful data. This dilemma is adequately expressed by Floyd's (1988) observation that the entertainment syndrome inhibits active listening where the listener (researcher) is captivated by flowery language used by the speaker (commentator), subsequently missing out critical variables. After this experience in the first match recorded, which was a high profile encounter, the researcher subsequently used a tape recorder which he

played continuously at convenient times after the match to guarantee objective analysis.

Ghadessy (1988) studied the language of sports in general and developed a model of analysis encompassing participants, events, and place and time components. For soccer, the participants are the footballers, the referee and assistants. This can be broadened to include coaches since they have a direct bearing on proceedings on the sports field and spectators as well whom the researcher believes enliven play through motivating and strengthening the players' resolve. Football fans create the atmosphere of tension through dance, song and skirmish. It is hard to imagine a match played in the absence of fans yet accompanied by vivid commentary rife with allusions to war. The object of play, which is the ball, determines the event component. What the participants, who occasionally function as the subject, do to the ball and instances of ball (object) animation, create the critical event component. The place component addresses the various parts of the playing field and the entire stadium. Time component captures aspects relating to when the game of football is played and how long it lasts. This component also includes the comments, predictions and perceptions with a time bearing. This article elaborates the basic component model to include the results dimension so that organisation becomes tidy and coverage more comprehensive. These five basic components constitute the general framework within which the researcher proposes to qualitatively analyse war metaphors in soccer.

It should be made abundantly clear that data were gathered specifically from the live broadcasts. The researcher deliberately ignored press reports whose build up to particular derby matches was generally electric. Although press reports provide useful information on soccer in general, the research concentrates exclusively on what was happening on the field of play and specifically the language characterising it. This was done in order to provide an objective analysis as far as possible. Incidences of violence or otherwise which are not cited by the professional commentators on the respective matches are beyond the scope of this study.

Findings and Discussion

Evidence from the data gathered reveals that tension filled high profile premierships games such as the "Battle of Zimbabwe" showdowns between Dynamos and Highlanders, "Battle of Cities" clashes between CAPS United and Highlanders and the Harare derby (Battle of Harare) between Dynamos and CAPS United attracted more than a fair share of military metaphors. Most of the premierships matches were low key and hardly covered in the live commentaries. Lack of tension and generation of an electric atmosphere in most of the encounters were largely due to the unprecedented talented

player exodus at the inception of the league season to the more lucrative South African league.

The war metaphor of battle in soccer appears frequently with common collocations; “explosive battle,” “epic battle,” “Herculean battle” and “private battle.” ‘Battling’ in football highlights the intense competitive spirit, the fighting spirit between clubs which underscores the observation that, “many of the things we do in arguing (competing) are partially structured by the concept of war” (Lackoff and Johnson, *ibid*: 04). Here, the cognitive approach to metaphor renders the contest explicit in that a phenomenon at a high and abstract level of thought has experiential areas being conceptualised metaphorically with coherent realisations at the level of words or linguistic expressions. Comparison is at the heart of metaphor as elements and semantic features in one concept area — the source domain in this case **BATTLE**, is mapped onto another concept area — the target domain which is **SOCCER**. Therefore, metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason.

Battle of Zimbabwe showdowns epitomised clashes between football giants, Dynamos, affectionately called Dembare, whose support base is predominantly among the Shona; and Highlanders, popularly known as Bosso, which draws the bulk of its support from amongst the Ndebele speaking people. The two clubs are based in Harare, the capital city and Bulawayo, the second largest city, respectively. Why the contest between the two most widely supported clubs in the country should be regarded as struggles for control of the nation is subject to speculation. Some people argue that this situation is probably a reflection of the recruitment strategies and support bases of the two political parties, Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) that waged the protracted liberation war, perceived by the generality of the population to be along ethnic lines. The parties concentrated mainly among the Shona and Ndebele speaking people, respectively. Similarly, others hold that contests between the two clubs evoke bitter memories of pre-colonial clashes between the two ethnic groups whose reincarnation is taken to the sports field. This is a simplistic view in that the support bases of both teams cut across the tribal and regional divide. More significantly, player composition also transcends the tribal divide. It is apparent that the battle of Zimbabwe in soccer is a farce. Similarly, describing the epic clashes between the two clubs as “blood and thunder affair” borders on melodrama. In both home-away fixtures, there was of course no spilling of blood whose occurrence could have presented soccer as a sublimated and formalised kind of war.

The battle of Zimbabwe is characterised as an “explosive encounter”, with one commentator bitterly complaining that players and fans should not treat the matches as a “war game,” but a family affair, ironically saying it is an encounter in which the winner takes no “prisoners.” It is interesting

to note, here, that martial approach is being discouraged by the commentator who proceeds, consciously or unconsciously, to militarise language. What is apparent is that football is a war just on a small scale. There were allegations of violent street battles, which accompanied the matches where the possibility of blood spilling was then high. These are, of course, scenes beyond the scope of cameras and live broadcasts, hence, irrelevant to this study.

Finally, battle of cities marked the fierce competition between the two leading teams, Highlanders and CAPS United, from Bulawayo and Harare, respectively, who throughout the season were rivals vying for domination of the premiership log. It was depicted as a war situation in which one city had to triumph over the other. As for the battle of Harare, there was a derby of perennial rivals, CAPS United occasionally referred to as the "green army," and Dynamos who sought domination over the other. The battles were the high profile games, which are naturally the largest sources of the war metaphors, presented within the framework of the component model, which follows.

Participants

Footballers are the first set of participants whose character traits, namely, emotions and attitudes, are presented in a way that makes soccer a serious and aggressive activity. Firstly, most of the premiership footballers are identified by nicknames depicting combat. Featuring prominently among these are, "Bomber" and "Silent Assassin" presumed to wreak havoc, leaving behind what commentators called a "trail of destruction." However, this was not to be as both footballers failed during the entire season to score goals for their respective teams in open-play. The "Silent Assassin" only managed to convert one goal in a dead-ball situation. This amply demonstrates that metaphors of war are used to make the language more interesting and to address the viewer and listener on an emotional level. The notion of exaggeration in metaphor use is also apparent.

Due to the unprecedented talented player migration to other professional leagues in the region and beyond, professional commentators occasionally bemoaned lack of defensive prowess of "commando," a "warrior" (the foreign based senior national team player). Allusions to commandos who in the Zimbabwean context, are an elite formation of the national army, underscores the "... culture-specific realization..." property in metaphors, (Moon, 2004:198). This translates to the culture dependent variable, a critical aspect in orientational metaphors. There are a number of players in the local premiership frequently referred to as "warriors" since they are the local based contingent of the senior national team. It is also worth noting that the entire group of players in the army-sponsored club, Black Rhinos,

were frequently addressed by the metaphor “soldiers,” notwithstanding the civilian element in team composition. In the final “Battle of Zimbabwe” encounter, Dynamos footballers, who briefly delayed the match kick-off demanding payment of outstanding bonuses, were dismissed by commentators as a bunch of “mercenaries,” meaning soldiers of fortune. So, the soldiers of fortune sought payment first before engaging in a battle!

Corpus evidence demonstrates much about metaphor — in particular, how frequently lexical items are fossilised in certain phraseological structures. The unified way of conceptualising footballers metaphorically is realised in many different linguistic expressions, which we shall highlight in the following examples:

1. Cables lack a **gunman** to put away the chances.
2. The visitors have enough **ammunition** to put away chances.
3. Dynamos need venom and **arsenal** to perform a giant **killing** act.
4. The club **hit man** is a huge disappointment.
5. The **marksman** is injured.

Examples 1, 4 and 5 use structural military metaphors for players who are meant to lead their respective teams in scoring goals. Football is valorised as warlike although in reality, footballers do not possess weapons or ammunition. They do not explode, and they are not enemies at all who kill each other as suggested in example 3. By using the metaphors, commentators are giving martial qualities to players who presumably work on the pitch with the lethal precision and ruthless efficiency of a professional soldier. Examples 2 and 3 allude to availability of enough depth in terms of gifted players and with the obvious suggestion that their role on the pitch is more of combatants than footballers.

Players on the sports field are assigned specific roles whose description uses vocabulary which can be a common source of war metaphor. There are “defenders” who are also frequently referred to as “rearguard” with the responsibility of “fortifying positions” or thwarting opponents from scoring. They jealously guard their respective goalposts so that goals are not conceded.

Corpus data demonstrates typical collocates of metaphorical usages of defender, which are: brave defender, defensive pillar, defensive stalwart and defense prowess, all of which suggest warfare. Drawing from martial terminology, there are players who “spearhead attacks”, also known as “strikers.” They are said to be “licensed to kill” and are accused of “plundering” on the long “march” forward”. We see clearly, here, how competing players become opponents who attack positions and defend their own, lending credibility to the argument that what we do in competing is partially structured by the concept of war. Common collocations of striker are: lethal striker, militant striker, bulldozing striker, forceful striker, predatory striker and supercharged striker.

Interestingly, roles of players display a grammatical pattern frequently used in the language of soccer which is Subject-Verb-Object, in which the players function as the subject and only occasionally as object, a position which is frequently occupied by the ball. Strikers in soccer display martial qualities in that they “launch attacks,” “counter attacks” and “raids” and “run riot” frantically searching for goals. There is no love lost between defenders and strikers, for, according to the commentators, they are locked up in a “duel” as the dangerous raids place the former under “siege.” Inept footballers, especially strikers, are said to have forgotten their shooter boots or are accused of “sleeping on duty.” It is a war situation in which defenders are occasionally called upon to “rescue” the goalkeeper from the “marauding” strikers. Scoring an opening goal is equated to drawing “first blood.” Often times goalkeepers concede goals when they are caught “off-guard.”

Finally, one crunch defender nicknamed Van Damme renowned for his acrobatics on the field of play is paid to:

6. Venture into all **wars** and come out of **wars** unscathed.

This amply demonstrates the phenomenal work rate of the defender and even more significantly, illuminates the startling connection between war and sport. It would appear that the distance between soccer and war metaphor is so small that the vocabularies mix without clashing.

Technical departments led by coaches fall within the participant categorisation. The coaches are said to employ “strategies” which are simply formations commonly, 4-4-2 and 3-5-2, showing the arrangement of defenders, midfielders and strikers respectively. For instance, in the first formation four players are reportedly “marshalling the defence” with four midfielders and two out right strikers. The adoption of wrong strategy by the team is frequently cited as reason for failure. The corpus reveals that coaches direct “operations” from the touch line and “command their charges”, urging them to be more spirited, especially in situations of a “stalemate” or deadlock. The role of coaches in soccer passes for that of a commander in military establishments as confirmed further by reference to how they urge on their “lieutenants” to be more spirited, especially “captains” and the “rank and file” of teams. So tension filled are the high profile matches that an emotionally charged coach protests furiously as he advances menacingly towards the referee for disallowing his team’s goal. The military situation is further heightened, according to a match analyst, by the behaviour of yet another coach who, renowned for “tantrums and belligerent” attitude, sprinkles urine and powder in the face of an opponent player. The veracity of this claim could however not be authenticated as cameras in this match only showed a player lying in agony with the alleged assailant walking away not amused. Significantly, one observes that coaches are a critical component in the generation of this sublimated and formalised

kind of warfare. In reality though, one witnesses the mythology of athletes as warriors and coaches as generals or strategists.

Referees and their assistants constitute yet another set of direct participants. Interestingly, in the matches studied, there was occasional reference to an army “general” reputed for issuing out, “marching orders” to errant footballers on the pitch. The marching orders meant expulsions from the match as opposed to the drills in military circles. It is also important to note that by profession, the referee in question is a soldier but, of course, not at elite level of general but corporal, which, in a way, underscores the notion of generalisation in metaphor use.

Spectators, otherwise known as fans, are a critical dimension of the participant categorisation that is frequently referred to as the 12th player in the commentaries. They root behind their teams with fierce zeal and passion. They render the atmosphere war-like through dance, song and skirmishes. A football team of 11 players in a home fixture enjoys an added advantage from what commentators called its “legion” of supporters. There is reference to “camps” amongst supporters who create the carnival atmosphere and rally behind factions in team management. In times when team performance is dismal, fans hurl abuses and, sometimes, “missiles” at coaches, calling for their heads.

Cameras occasionally picked scenes of dance and song among the fans. The fans chanted military or revolutionary songs prominently, such as,

7. *Zimbabwe ndeyeropa baba*
Zimbabwe ndeyeropa remadzibaba
 (Zimbabwe is blood, father)
 (Zimbabwe is ancestors’ blood)
8. *Yave nyama yekugocha, baya wabaya*
 (It’s now meat for grilling, stab at will)

Music is the barometer of the mood of people such that when they sing they recapture memories and find themselves back in wartime, enduring, striving and carrying on. According to Pongweni (1982), revolutionary songs helped to instill grim determination among all actors in the revolutionary process, with freedom fighters drawing tremendous inspiration from these songs. The songs refurbished their spirits and morale, exhorting the combatants to fight on until final victory. The chanting of revolutionary songs at soccer matches creates the electric atmosphere and reminds fans and players of the splendid comradeship of the liberation war which kept the spirit going through the darkest chapter of the country’s history.

Irate fans generate a military atmosphere by throwing around debris and “missiles” on the field of play and at each other. The missiles in question are largely oranges, tomatoes and water or urine filled plastic

containers. In all matches, it is not live missiles in the form of say, explosives or bombs being traded for. In any case security at points of entry flush them out. The use of the military metaphor serves to dramatise the intense rivalry between competing teams' fans to the extent of one camp desirous of eliminating the other. The fans are belligerent, combative and, indeed, warlike in an otherwise social encounter.

Rival fans from two big teams in the same city who are normally fierce rivals, teamed up in an "unholy alliance" to frustrate the ambitions of another premiership giant from a different city with potential to scoop the championship title. Alliances are undoubtedly, a critical part of military discourse as evidenced by their proliferation in major wars especially the First and Second World Wars. Erstwhile political foes or even nations ideologically polarised, are recorded in history as forming unholy alliances which loosely translated to incompatible relationships. A common example is the unholy alliance of Russia with Austria and Prussia after the Napoleonic wars and institution of the Congress System. To this extent, metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience and are not randomly assigned, (Lackoff and Johnson: *ibid*). Thus, soccer commentator's forays into metaphors provide illumination or new insight. Stossel (2001) argues, though, that metaphors gloss over complexity, or trample over important distinctions. For instance, in the so-called unholy alliances, it was a question of a handful of passionate rival fans hugging, but this was interpreted to mean there was an alliance. Interestingly, when the unwanted premiership giant cruised to victory, wild celebrations were evident on the bays resulting in the commentator's remark that the alliance had disintegrated. One wonders if alliances are so feeble. Additionally, it would appear that metaphors have a propensity for exaggerating reality.

Events

The ball determines the events on the field of play. While the participants function as the subject and only occasionally as the object, what participants do to the ball or to one another on the field of play creates events as the second component. In a game of soccer, the ball is the object of play in that things happen to it. Ghaddesy (*ibid*: 41) notes, "The grammatical consequence of this observation is that the ball is the object of a transitive verb." Commentators used "shield" frequently as an example of such a verb. In this case, a player in typical military combat protected the weaker part (the ball) from being exploited by the opponent. After shielding the ball, defenders in typical military fashion are in the habit of "launching" the ball forward to midfielders or strikers. "Shoot" and "strike across," are common war metaphors used in the commentaries to express the interaction between a player and the ball.

The ball unleashed ferociously and subsequently travelling at a devastating speed is said to have too much “firepower.” Such a ball is frequently referred to as, “bullet,” “volley” and “shot.” The ball, owing to its speed and power, is said frequently to be a bullet or a shot and proceeds to assume human qualities in that it flies across the face of a goal, falling a matter of inches wide. With reference to the Cognitive Metaphor Theory, the *ball* and *shot* comparison are within the realm of structural metaphor with *shot* animation transcending into the ontological metaphor terrain. It is a war metaphor cutting across types of conceptual metaphors. Badly positioned strikers take “speculative shots” on goal with the ball subsequently “ricocheting” against left, right or upright posts. In typical military combat, bullets frequently ricochet when intended targets are missed. Interaction between a player and the ball is equated to that of a soldier and bullet, thereby reinforcing Lackoff and Johnson’s (*ibid*: 5) assertion that, “The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”.

One interesting observation in the language of soccer is the use of certain words (nouns) that are derived from corresponding verbs of which *shot*, *strike* and *battle* are common examples. These words (metaphors) are used more frequently as nouns than verbs. The possible explanation for this is that the metaphors can be pre-modified. For instance, shot is pre-modified by words such as *ferocious*, *thunderous*, *blistering*, *instinctive* and *speculative*. Strike is pre-modified by *lethal*, *incisive* and *awesome*. Battle is pre-modified by *epic*, *Herculean*, *explosive* and *private* with “mother of battles,” which is used in high profile encounters discussed, above. In all situations, the pre-modifiers make the respective war metaphors more precise and colorful. Emphasis on the use of nouns instead of verbs provides the opportunity to use the subjective kind of language in that the words express the opinion of the commentator on an event in the match. A comparison of different commentators’ evaluation of the same event would certainly be revealing, for allegiance or otherwise to specific clubs may explain the commentator’s discourse.

Place

There is a group of words frequently used in relation to the various parts of the playing field, which constitute the third component of the game of football. van Ek (1979) posits that sport is free time entertainment but commentaries paint a gloomy picture of soccer, an otherwise outdoor sport that takes place on the sports-field. Instead, there is allusion to “battlefield” with “battle lines” marked. Battle lines are marked when the teams are ready to kick-off. Before match kick-off, both teams occupy their respective halves and positions with “daggers drawn out.” Defenders under immense

pressure from marauding strikers occasionally “blast” the ball into “no man’s land.” Soldiers on the western front during the First World War had experiences of the trench warfare where, in between, there was the no man’s land, that is, territory not belonging to either of the combatants. Bitter memories of the catastrophic war are evoked in an otherwise social encounter. Strikers reportedly “invade enemy territory” while one stadium (Maglas) where the home team rarely loses a match is said to be an “impregnable fortress.” In high profile games, Harare, a stadium, is occasionally referred to as, “fields of fire,” with commentators bitterly complaining that one requires protective clothing to mitigate harm from raining missiles. In typical military formation, defenders in football “hold fort” and keep the strikers “at bay” whereas strikers frequently venture into the “enemy zone” in search of goals. Like in typical military contact, a team under immense pressure is occasionally said to be “losing ground” while the opponent would be “gaining ground”. The words “losing” and “gaining” realize conceptual metaphors morphologically in their etyma in that they mark failure and success as part of their original meanings.

Time

The use of vocabulary items dealing with time establishes the fourth component of time where focus is mainly on how long the game lasts. There are normally two equal halves of 45 minutes. Intense competitive struggles normally take place towards the end of the second half referred to in the commentaries as the “dying minutes” in which teams score “last gasp” equalisers. There is frequent reference to teams, which succumb to “a sucker punch” after failing to withstand the “onslaught” and subsequently lose the encounter. There are occasions in the match especially towards the end when commentators say they put “heads on the block” declaring that the match is sealed. The commentators would be sticking out their necks as it were, making tough predictions.

Results

Soccer ends in a draw, “victory” or “defeat.” Commentators occasionally alluded to “stalemate” or “deadlock,” using war metaphors to describe draw situations. Evenly balanced teams jealously guard against conceding goals or are simply content with a draw result typical of teams in the middle of the premiership log which allegedly “share the spoils” in the final analysis. Matches are said to be “hanging on a knife edge” when the possibility of upsetting the applecart is high. Underdog teams, which beat major teams, are said to have performed a “giant-killing act” or performed a “scalp” on a falling giant. A series of poor results by Dynamos, a former champion, is presented as “fall of a dynasty” and this was to be followed by

a spate of draws, which made the commentators nickname the coach, “king of draws.” Talk of dynasties and kings in soccer lend credence to the argument that there is an undeniable theme of war in soccer. After leading the opponent for the better part of the match, a team “surrenders” the lead to the other.

The data used in this analysis refer to comprehensive defeat of opposition teams by the military metaphors; “massacre,” “crushed,” “smashed to smithereens,” “vanquished,” “routed,” 5 nil “demolition,” “nail in the coffin,” and “dead and buried,” only for the teams to emerge and play other fixtures, thereby highlighting the notion of hyperbole in metaphor use. The war metaphor permeates sports discourse and this carries a number of connotations. In the literal world, war ideally ends in the death of the enemy. In the world of sports (soccer) discourse, however, the people who die in war are not enemies but the players themselves. The ultimate champion, dubbed “green army” are said to be “heroes” after taking an unassailable lead with two remaining fixtures. Are heroes really found on the field of play? Towards the end of the soccer season, teams at the bottom of the log “fight bruising battles” against each in a desperate bid to avoid the “dreaded chop” with celebrations erupting on the sports-field after some of these teams “survive” relegation by producing favorable results. There is frequent allusion to the need for the losing teams to go back to the drawing board if they are to avoid being “casualties” in subsequent fixtures. Comprehensive defeat especially of one team (Motor Action, otherwise known by its fans as Mighty Bulls) reputed to have the dubious distinction of losing encounters with very wide margins, was frequently said to be a “disaster” and even a “tragedy”. In one such encounter with the ultimate champion, fans of the latter waved placards with the inscription;

9. *Chiropa tinoda kuchigocha.*
(The liver, we want to roast it).

It would appear there is confusion between war and football, for teams do not skirmish, convene hostilities or engage in a conflict, but simply play competitive games. There is normally a clear winner and loser, a clear end to the game, strategic thinking, team work, preparedness, spectator rowdiness in the terraces, glory of winning and shame of defeat, which are, indeed, the necessary ingredients for an ideal war. War metaphors reflect the competitive, serious and aggressive nature of this sport.

Summary and Conclusion

This article has presented an overview of the Interactionist and Cognitive Metaphor Theory. The research draws mainly from the conceptual approach

to metaphor whose types were given as structural, ontological and orientational metaphors. It was established that the language of soccer is rife with allusion to war. The undeniable theme of war in football is attributed to the intense competitive spirit between the contestants which leads to one side triumphing over the other.

Footballers' emotions, character traits, actions on the pitch, strategic thinking by technical departments, activities of the ball, glory of winning and shame of defeat; spectator behavior on the terraces and description of results were transformed into a war scenario through commentary. An otherwise simple social activity is transformed into a battle by means of language. The impression created and fostered by the commentators, alongside analysts throughout the entire 2004 premiership, was that soccer is formalised war on a small scale. "Battle of Zimbabwe", "fortresses", "position fortifying", "marauding strikers", "invasion of territories", "missiles" and "massacres" are some of the references drawn from martial terminology which reflected the aggressive nature of the sport. In reality, it was observed that while the proliferation of war metaphors in soccer heightened the electric atmosphere in particularly high profile matches, they tended to gloss over complexities and largely exaggerated the social contests. Frankly, in soccer there are no combatants and no massacres as dramatised eloquently by the professional commentators. War metaphors in football tend to go overboard in terms of their description. Given the fact that this study was restricted to spoken commentary, the researcher recommends that a comparative study of verbal and written commentaries of soccer matches be undertaken, given the distinct possibility of linguistic variation in these discourses.

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