

## Conceptual Mappings in Metaphors of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Lukabaras

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### **Abstract**

Metaphors have been utilized in framing the COVID-19 pandemic, a respiratory disease caused by the corona virus. However, understanding the cultural conceptualization of this novel pandemic becomes necessary when varied metaphorical frames have implications on the interventions to prevent the outbreak. The emergence of the pandemic in late 2019 not only provided a chance to investigate the metaphorical framing of this disease but also the experiential differences about the disease in varied sociocultural contexts and discourses. Thus, this article described the conceptual mappings in the metaphors of the COVID-19 pandemic in Lukabaras, a Bantu language spoken in Western Kenya. The study used a descriptive design and data was identified using Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP). The conceptual mappings in the data that was collected through key informant interviews, was analysed within the tenets and framework of the Conceptual Integrated Theory (CIT) by Fauconnier and Turner (2002). The findings revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic in Lukabaras was conceptualized through source domains such as people, animals, objects, events, actions, natural phenomena and states and conditions. It was established that the conceptual mappings in the metaphors utilized to talk about COVID-19 reflected the perception and attitude of the people towards the pandemic. Consequently, there was misinformation regarding the seriousness of the outbreak and this affected the measures put in place to prevent and contain the rampant spread of the pandemic.

**Keywords:** *Conceptual mappings, Metaphorical framing, COVID-19 pandemic, Conceptual Integrated Theory, Lukabaras*

## 1.0 Introduction

Conceptual metaphor is an important aspect of the human mind which structures human experience as well as unconsciously shaping human cognition, perception and action (Vakhovska, 2017). As such, human thought is metaphorical in nature, and the cognitive mechanism of metaphor is manifested in language. In this perspective, metaphors provide a lens in which our perceptions and conceptions of the world are constructed through cross domain mapping of attributes between different concepts (Vakhovska, 2017). According to Deignon (1997) a conceptual metaphor is a connection between two semantic areas, or domains: the target domain and the source domain.

Conceptual metaphors enable us to quantify, visualize and generalize about the abstract because they make use of source domains that we know well from our concrete experience. In a conceptual metaphor the target domain A is comprehended through a source domain B. The comprehension is based on a set of mappings that exist between elements of A and elements of B. Therefore, metaphors establish a conceptual link between a source and target concept such that the target domain is understood through a source domain (Deignon (1997); Lakoff & Johnson (1980); Vakhovska (2017); Lakoff (1993). The correspondences are constrained by different mapping scopes which help avoid the transfer of just any kind of feature from the source to the target concept (Ungerer, 2006).

Conceptual mapping is, therefore, systematic and what constitutes the conceptual metaphor is not any particular word but a cross domain mapping of the specific source concepts which contribute to given target concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The source domain does not contribute randomly selected material instead what is widely agreed upon regarding that source in the specific social cultural context (Kövecses, 2010). Given the aspects that participate in a metaphorical mapping, there can be as much knowledge from the source onto the target as is coherent with the image schematic properties of the target. Through the invariance principle, the knowledge that is not coherent with the schematic structure of the target concept is blocked. In this respect, the invariance principle consists of the part that shows what can be mapped from the sources and the part that shows what cannot be mapped and why (Kovecses, 2010). This involves metaphorical highlighting which applies to the target domain while the part that applies to the source domain is called metaphorical utilization. However, highlighting goes together with hiding. This means that when there are several aspects of a concept and the metaphor focuses on one of them, then the other aspects of the concept are hidden (Geeraerts, 2006; Kovecses, 2010).

The present study was guided by the tenets of the Conceptual Integration Theory by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) in which it is argued that analysis of metaphor requires analysis of elaborate integration networks based on mappings between the target domain and the source domain. According to the theory, conceptual metaphors are mental constructions and as such involve many mental spaces and mappings. The mental spaces are small conceptual packets which are constructed as we think and talk for purposes of local understanding and action. Lakoff (1993)

describes mental spaces as mental simulations characterizing an understanding of a situation that is real or imagined. However, Fauconnier and Turner (2002) argues that the mental spaces contain two input spaces, the cross-space mapping, the generic space and the blend. The input spaces are two such that input space 1 (source domain) projects on input space 2 (target domain); the cross-space mapping connects counterparts in the input spaces whereas the generic space maps onto each of the input spaces and contains what the inputs have in common. The blends arise in the networks of mental spaces and anything fused in the blend projects back to counterparts in the input spaces. For instance, for the blend to be established, the actions of the input spaces are compressed to form a structure that is less conceptually complex thus cognitively manageable.

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The participants were native speakers of Lukabaras, an ethnic group and cluster member of the Luhya macrolanguage in Western Kenya (Ethnologue,2022). The people who speak Lukabaras are known as the Kabaras and live in the northern part of Kakamega County. The data for this study was derived from metaphors collected among respondents aged (30-39 years) and (above 60 years) using Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) (Gibbs,2017).

## **2.0 Conceptual Mappings in Metaphors of the COVID-19 pandemic in Lukabaras**

The conceptualization of the COVID-19 pandemic was manifested through projections of source domains such as people, animals, objects, events, actions, natural phenomena and states to the target domain. In this view, the study identified seven generic metaphors of the COVID-19 pandemic in Lukabaras as; COVID IS A PERSON (*COVID no mundu*), COVID IS AN ANIMAL (*COVID no munyama*), COVID IS AN OBJECT (*COVID ne eshindu*), COVID IS AN EVENT (*COVID no muyimo*), COVID IS AN ACTION (*COVID ne shikholwa*), COVID IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON (*COVID ne shikholwa sha Nyasaye*) and COVID IS A STATE or CONDITION (*COVID ne liiba*). The conceptual mappings and set of correspondences in the metaphors were described and analysed following the notion of mental spaces in the Conceptual Integration Theory as discussed below.

### **2.1.1 COVID is a Person**

COVID was conceptualized as A PERSON ‘*omundu*’. According to Kövecses (2010), the human body is one of the most common source domains from which abstract concepts can be understood. For this reason, the attributes of the person that informed the metaphors of COVID in Lukabaras were based on the whole person and not parts of the human body. As such, the metaphor, COVID IS A PERSON was manifested as a person who was a strange visitor (*omucheni wamakana*), enemy (*omusuku*), spoiler (*bwononi*), troublemaker (*eshiniamuliro*) and harvester (*omuchesi*). Thus, the metaphor COVID IS A PERSON was a generic prototypical category that has several attributes. For this reason, Ungerer & Schmid (2006) argues that a person is an entity that is identifiable and manifests obvious differences at the basic level of naturally correlated attributes.

The conceptualization of a person as a whole, therefore, exhibits varied levels of relationships which contribute to how people perceive each other in their world of interactions. For instance, people can relate as friends, enemies, workmates or they are given certain attributes regarding their occupations, roles in society or general behaviour.

The findings inferred that from a person as a source domain, it was not every attribute that metaphorically mapped to COVID-19 as a target domain. In this view, the metaphorical scope of COVID IS A PERSON was limited to the conceptual experiences of COVID-19 pandemic that were reflected in the experiences of speakers of Lukabaras in their physical and social cultural context.

Furthermore, the metaphorical meaning focus represented in the metaphor was on the part of the metaphor that highlighted the attributes of the source that the speakers intended to utilize to show their conceptualization of the pandemic. For example, the metaphor COVID IS A STRANGE VISITOR, only highlights the part that portrays a visitor as strange based on the manner in which he or she behaves when they get in one’s home. For instance, the ill mannerism of failing to seek permission before entering one’s home or sharing greetings (*omulembe*) is culturally construed to mean that a visitor who flouts the common rules of courtesy is strange in character and can be a security threat. The conceptual mappings of the metaphor COVID IS A PERSON were analysed as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: The Conceptual Mappings of COVID IS A PERSON**

<b>Target Domain (COVID-19)</b>	<b>Source Domain (A PERSON)</b>
COVID	A person
COVID enters one’s body	A visitor gets in one’s home
COVID destroys one’s health	An enemy destroys relations
COVID disrupts activities	A person spoils another’s normal routine
COVID affects economic activities	A person causes strife among others
COVID claims lives through death	A person harvests crops

**Source: Fieldwork (2021)**

Table 1 displays the mappings of the target domain, COVID-19, to the source domains generated from a person. The study analysed the cross-domain mappings in the knowledge structures as guided by the principles of Conceptual Integration Theory. In light of this, the study first examined the source domains which were constructed in the input mental space1 and projected onto the target domain, COVID-19, which is constructed in the input mental space 2. As argued by

Fauconnier and Turner (2002), conceptual metaphors are the result of mental constructions that involve many spaces and mappings which include input mental space 1, input mental space 2, cross-space mapping and generic space.

The mappings of COVID-19 to a person yielded metaphors such as COVID IS A STRANGE VISITOR (*COVID no mucheni wamakana*), COVID IS AN ENEMY (*COVID no musuku*), COVID IS A SPOILER (*COVID ni bwononi*), COVID IS A TROUBLEMAKER (*COVID ne shiniamuliro*) and COVID IS A HARVESTER (*COVID no mucheesi*). From these metaphors, two types of mappings could be inferred as rich mapping and lean mapping. As established by Ungerer (2006), rich mapping involves projecting specific concrete source concepts onto an abstract concept.

On the other hand, lean mapping is where generic source concepts are projected onto an abstract concept. However, the source concept only projects a specific concept that is mapped to the target. For instance, the present study revealed that the metaphor COVID IS A PERSON generates specific attributes such as enmity through which COVID-19 is conceptualized.

Kövecses (2010) argues that the analysis of conceptual metaphors contains the notion of metaphorical entailment which allows mapping of additional knowledge from the source onto the target. This means that the knowledge which is not coherent with the target concept is blocked through the invariance principle giving rise to the part that is highlighted and the part that is hidden. It was deduced that other metaphors were generated from the source concepts onto which other target concepts were mapped. For instance, the source concept of a person who harvests provided additional knowledge of crops since that is what is harvested. The mapping of this knowledge to the target concept, COVID-19, implied that life is a crop that is 'harvested' by the pandemic hence the metaphor LIFE IS A CROP. Additionally, it was established that the metaphor ECONOMY IS A PERSON was projected from the source concept of a person who spoils. COVID-19 was also conceptualized as A PERSON who had interfered with people's livelihoods by causing strife particularly among married couples due to difficult economic experiences hence the metaphor COVID IS A TROUBLEMAKER.

### **2.1.2 COVID is an Animal**

The conceptual metaphor COVID IS AN ANIMAL revealed that we can differentiate various levels of generality based on a hierarchical relationship and the notion of class inclusion so that animals can be further subdivided into mammals, birds and reptiles (Unger & Schmid,2006). On this basis, the findings inferred that people have varied experiences with different animals in different sociocultural contexts depending on whether such animals are domestic or wild. For example, the findings of this study revealed that among the Kabaras monitor lizards were commonly found basking in bushes around riverbanks and could regularly disrupt cattle from drinking water (Sa Wabito, personal communication, August 19,2021). It was established that

these reptiles were known to be so scary and stubborn and no amount of noise or scare would have them go. In this view, the sources that informed this study revealed that in Lukabaras, a person’s adamancy was compared to a monitor lizard which social culturally was stubborn. The findings established that this attribute of monitor lizard was projected onto the target domain, COVID-19. However, the mapping did not generate multiple correspondence because it involved a generic source concept mapping onto an abstract concept. The generic source contributed knowledge that was predetermined by conceptual material that characterized the specific abstract target. It was observed that such projection is lean mapping since the metaphor COVID IS A MONITOR LIZARD (*COVID ne yimbulu*) did not yield several metaphorical entailments. The mapping of this metaphor was presented as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: The Conceptual Mappings of COVID IS AN ANIMAL**

Target Domain (COVID-19)	Source Domain (AN ANIMAL)
COVID	A monitor lizard
COVID affects people’s livelihoods	A monitor lizard disrupts cattle from drinking water
COVID is unyielding	A monitor lizard is stubborn

**Source: Fieldwork (2021)**

Table 2 reveals that the metaphor COVID IS A MONITOR LIZARD (*COVID ne yimbulu*) entailed the metaphor LIVELIHOOD IS A COW. From this metaphor, it is understood that just like COVID-19 apparently affected people’s livelihoods through restricted movements and gathering, socio-culturally, a monitor lizard disrupts a cow from drinking water among the Kabaras. In the same vein, COVID-19 was seen to be unyielding despite the efforts to curb its spread just like a monitor lizard is said to be stubborn even if it is scared. It was observed that the metaphorical scope of the source domain (monitor lizard) was limited to the part that only highlighted it as being adamant. According to the invariance principle, all the parts that were not coherent with the target domain were restricted. The parts of the metaphor that were utilized in the source domain were, therefore, those that represented aspects of the basic knowledge regarding a monitor lizard that is widely shared in the Lukabaras speech community.

**2.1.3 COVID is an Object**

The common sources from which the metaphor COVID IS AN OBJECT were derived included tools, insects, rock fragments, plants and heat. The specific aspects of conceptual mappings from

these sources manifested from objects such as weapon, hook, sting, cane, fire and pebble. The parts of the source concepts that were utilized related to the Kabaras’s experiences and use of the items in their social cultural setting. The highlighted parts of the metaphorical frame involved the aspects of the target concept that corresponded to the knowledge structure of the source concept. The findings, therefore, established that conceptual mappings in the generic metaphor COVID IS AN OBJECT were elaborated through specific metaphors such as COVID IS A WEAPON (*COVID ne shimanulwa*), COVID IS A HOOK (*COVID ne yingaka*), COVID IS COAL FIRE (*COVID ni kwamachenga*), COVID IS A PEBBLE (*COVID ne yimbaale*), COVID IS A CANE (*COVID ne shiboko*) and COVID IS A STING (*COVID no lubala*). The mappings were presented as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: The Conceptual Mappings of COVID IS AN OBJECT**

Target Domain (COVID-19)	Source Domain (OBJECT)
COVID	An object
COVID causes bodily harm	A weapon injures a person
COVID causes pain to the affected	A sting is painful
COVID has injurious effects	A hot fire burns fiercely
COVID is difficult to control	A pebble is difficult to crash
COVID claims lives indiscriminately	A hook catches whatever it gets hold of

**Source: Fieldwork (2021)**

From Table 3, the conceptualization of the target concept (COVID-19) as an OBJECT was realized through several mental constructions from various source concepts. It was revealed that this involved rich mapping because there was either a generic concept projecting onto an abstract concept or a specific concrete concept projecting onto an abstract concept. For example, COVID was generally conceptualized as an OBJECT. However, within the generic source concept there were several correspondences onto which the same target was mapped. The findings established that these multiple mental constructions of the same target gave rise to other metaphorical entailments that were hidden in the source concept. For example, it was observed that the metaphor COVID IS A WEAPON (*COVID ne shimanulwa*) only utilized the part in the source concept that highlighted the pain and harm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings, however, revealed that the conceptualization of physical items that are used as weapons varies depending on where they are used. For instance, a person brandishing a sword is said to be holding a dangerous weapon which would be metaphorically understood as A WEAPON IS ENMITY. This means if COVID IS A WEAPON (*COVID ne shimanulwa*) then it is

conceptualized as AN ENEMY as well. The findings inferred that if a weapon is handled without threatening peace and is used for purposes of protection then the metaphor A WEAPON IS PROTECTION manifests. However, this part is hidden in the conceptualization of COVID IS A WEAPON because the pandemic was not understood as an object for protecting oneself.

#### 2.1.4 COVID is an Event

COVID-19 pandemic was also conceptualized as AN EVENT. The sources of knowledge for the metaphor COVID IS AN EVENT included political events during the pandemic period and the clergy’s biblical interpretation of the emergence of the pandemic. From these, the findings established two metaphors, COVID IS POLITICS (*COVID ne siasa*) and COVID IS DOOMSDAY (*COVID ne sheli*). The conceptual mapping of these metaphors was a projection of a generic concept to an abstract concept. The source domain of political events was motivated by the fact that many political activities and public gatherings in the country were prohibited due to the COVID-19 pandemic prevention and containment protocols. As a result, it was observed that apparently the COVID-19 measures were used politically as a reason to disadvantage others. In view of this, the findings revealed that the COVID-19 discourse among the political class was understood as politics because they used the pandemic as reason to benefit themselves. In Kenya political activities and gatherings are characterized by humour, propaganda and deceit (Chau,2021 pp 213-216). The study observed that any information coming from the political class was thus taken casually since it may have been conveyed for self-gain or to the advantage of the politicians.

The study revealed that the mapping of doomsday to COVID-19 was attributed to what was described ecclesiastically as the signs of the end times or the coming of a distressing event that would result in a great catastrophe. The study observed that according to the beliefs among worshippers of various religions, the end of time would be characterized by strange diseases, illnesses, pandemics, earthquakes and other natural disasters (Holy Bible, NKJV, Mat;24:7). Such happenings would come along with loss of lives and widespread or total destruction. The COVID-19 pandemic was, therefore, conceptualized as one of the signs of the end times and a foreboding of doom to humanity. The mapping of *COVID no muyimo* (COVID as AN EVENT) was presented as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: The Conceptual Mappings of COVID IS AN EVENT**

Target Domain (COVID-19)	Source Domain (EVENT)
COVID	An event
COVID is a wave that is time bound	An event is temporal
COVID is quarantining the infected	Politics is playing tricks on people
COVID is a calamity	Doomsday is a universal destruction

**Source: Fieldwork (2021)**

The findings established that COVID-19 occurred in waves and the experiences of loss resulting from the pandemic varied from time to time. The pandemic was conceptualized as an event that would occur at a given time and last for a short period and then recur later. The findings revealed that those who were put in isolation due to COVID-19 infections were cases that would later confirm that they had not initially contracted the virus (Chau,2021pp 213-216). The findings revealed that it was believed that government was playing tricks about the seriousness of the disease. Such tricks were construed as playing politics through propaganda in order to achieve selfish goals. On the other hand, the source concept of doomsday was mapped onto the calamitous nature of COVID-19 to imply the ecclesiastical prophecies about pandemics in the context of end times.

**2.1.5 COVID is an Action**

From the generic metaphor COVID IS AN ACTION (*COVID ne shikholwa*), there were instantiations of metaphors such as COVID IS A BAIT (*COVID no bulilo*), COVID IS A HICCUP (*COVID ne shilikisa*), COVID IS HYGIENE (*COVID no busafi*) and (COVID IS A WARNING TO PEOPLE (*COVID ne wonyo khu bandu*).It was inferred from these data that the mappings of the source concept to the target concept involved multiple correspondences in which the parts of the source concept that were utilized manifested through activities that portrayed the actual knowledge projected onto the target. For instance, the concept of hygiene is carried out through activities such as hand washing, cleaning and dusting. In this view, it was established that the fight against the spread of COVID-19 required one to observe certain levels of hygiene which included washing hands and sanitizing. Furthermore, adhering to the hygienic measures was a sure way of curbing the pandemic. The conceptual mappings of COVID IS AN ACTION were presented as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: The Conceptual Mappings of COVID IS AN ACTION**

Target Domain (COVID-19)	Source Domain (ACTION)
COVID	An action
COVID is used to attract aid	A bait is used to lure a catch
COVID is controllable despite the effects	A hiccup can persist but be contained
COVID is less infectious in clean conditions	A hygienic person is free from infections
COVID results in great losses which is a foreboding of doom	A warning is signaled through actions that are distressing

**Source: Fieldwork (2021)**

COVID-19 was conceptualized as something that is done in order to attract some help from somewhere. As shown in Table 5, the source knowledge about a bait is projected onto the target concept of COVID-19 being used as a reason to attract aid. People believed that taking COVID-19 infected cases in quarantine and isolation were activities meant to portray the need for aid to handle the swelling numbers of infections. Furthermore, it was inferred from the findings that whereas curfews were imposed, movements restricted and public gatherings prohibited to curb the spread of the pandemic, these interventions affected economic activities and government had to seek foreign aid. The findings established that in Lukabararas, whenever one went for fishing and no catch was forthcoming, they had to use a bait to lure the catch. In this perspective, the findings revealed that the concept of using a bait was projected onto the knowledge of using COVID-19 as something that was used to appeal for foreign financial assistance.

**2.1.6 COVID is a Natural Phenomenon**

The findings established that from the generic metaphor COVID IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON there were metaphors such as COVID IS HAILSTORM (*COVID ni yamachina*), COVID IS LIGHTNING (*COVID no lweni*), COVID IS A DRIZZLE (*COVID no lunyilili*), COVID IS A WHIRLWIND (*COVID ne shimbulubusi*), COVID IS MIST (*COVID ne lifumbetsa*) and COVID IS A COLD (*COVID no muyeka*). It was observed that the source concept of natural phenomena denoted happenings that are beyond human control. The conceptual mappings in these metaphors were informed by the experiences that people in this sociocultural context go through. For instance, it was observed that the geographical region in which the Kabararas are found is characterized by rain that is sometimes accompanied with hailstorms, thunder and lightning (Shitikho Ngome, August,2021, personal communication). Furthermore, during the dry seasons between November and early February, there is usually whirlwinds particularly blowing from the Eastern part of Kakamega North towards the west. On the other hand, during rainy seasons there is mist and occasionally drizzles with a cold weather. It was observed that despite all these natural occurrences being beyond the control of man, they were perceived as ordinary experiences whose effects would not stop the daily activities of man. The correspondences in the COVID IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON was presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: The Conceptual Mappings of COVID IS A NATURAL PHENOMENON**

Target Domain (COVID-19)	Source Domain (NATURAL PHENOMENON)
COVID	A natural occurrence
COVID kills	Lightning strikes and can kill.
COVID destructs the economy	A whirlwind destructs movement and destroy structures
COVID dashes hopes of a future	Mist obscures vision

COVID causes distress

A drizzle drenches

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It was revealed that there was rich mapping since the correspondences in the knowledge structures involved both generic concepts and specific concepts projecting onto an abstract concept. The concept of a natural occurrence is mapped onto an abstract concept (COVID-19) to imply that people perceived the pandemic as something that was beyond human control. However, in the mental constructions of the abstract concept several other specific mappings are framed to manifest the experiences in the source concept. For example, the effects of COVID such as loss of lives is projected from the natural occurrence of lightning which can kill when it strikes. From this example, other metaphorical entailments such as COVID IS A PERSON (*COVID no mundu*) were manifested. It was observed that if metaphorically COVID IS LIGHTNING (*COVID no lweni*) and lightning kills then COVID IS A KILLER (*COVID no mwiri*). Thus, the study inferred that the notion of the pandemic killing occurred as something that was beyond human control.

**2.1.7 COVID is a State or Condition**

It was established that COVID-19 was also understood as a condition or set of circumstances that were prevailing at that time. As such the source concept of a state or condition yielded metaphors like COVID IS GRIEF (*COVID ne shibela*), COVID IS POVERTY (*COVID no butakha*), COVID IS HUNGER (*COVID ne yinzala*), COVID IS STRESS (*COVID ne liminikha lie tsinganakani*), COVID IS A DIFFICULT SITUATION (*COVID na mangayimwe*) and COVID IS CONDEMNATION (*COVID ne shinyasio*). The findings established that the examples of metaphors that were generated from the generic source of conditions were abstract concepts like poverty, hunger and stress. Therefore, it was inferred that the mapping of these metaphors involved lean mapping because it identified generic concepts projecting onto the abstract concept. The analysis was presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: The Conceptual Mappings of COVID IS A STATE/CONDITION**

Target Domain (COVID-19)	Source Domain (STATE/CONDITION)
COVID	A state or condition
COVID affects availability of basic needs	Poverty is a state of need and services
COVID affects the economy	Hunger is extreme lack of food
COVID causes loss of lives	Death is grief

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**Source: Fieldwork (2021)**

It was observed that the experiences people went through whenever there was loss of life due to COVID-19 were extremely saddening. Such moments were full of grief and those who were bereaved had to go through it without the presence of some of their close friends and relatives because of the COVID-19 measures hence COVID was conceptualized as a state of extreme grief. The projection of the grievous condition in the source concept to COVID-19 was attributed to the fact that funerals and burials during the COVID-19 period were restricted to a small number of mourners and the time of attending shortened. This situation left a greater feeling of loss since the bereaved were not consoled as it were in normal situations. Such a state was metaphorically expressed as COVID IS GRIEF (*COVID ne shibela*).

The findings also established that during the COVID-19 times, the economy was affected, and people lost their means of livelihood. There was sheer struggle by those who lost jobs to meet their basic needs and the times were difficult (Chau,2021pp213-216). The imposing of curfews and restriction of movement affected availability of some services especially in the hotel and transport industry (MOH,2020). The lack of basic needs and services was conceptualized as a state of poverty. Since this was occasioned by the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, the peoples' experiences of the situation were projected onto the pandemic. As such, this was metaphorically expressed as COVID IS POVERTY (*COVID no butakha*). Furthermore, due to the ban on social and public gatherings which included the closure of all public market places, there was scarcity of some essential food items such as beans and maize. This was perceived as a state of hunger because the supply of essential food stuffs from potential parts of the country was hindered due to COVID-19 pandemic. It was inferred that from such experiences COVID was conceptualized as a state of hunger.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

Speakers of Lukabaras utilized metaphorical frames in their discourse about the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the disease was a new phenomenon, the speakers conceptualized it through their basic experiences with organisms, objects, events, actions, natural occurrences and states and conditions. From these experiences, the conceptual metaphors identified were culture specific and could have other metaphorical entailments in other cultural settings. As such, it was only the relevant parts of the source domains that were mapped to the target domain (COVID-19). Through conceptual mappings, the study identified metaphors such as COVID IS AN ENEMY (*COVID no musuku*), COVID IS A WEAPON (*COVID ne shimanulwa*), COVID IS DOOM (*COVID ne sheli*), COVID IS A BAIT (*COVID no bulilo*), COVID IS MIST (*COVID ne lifumbetsa*) and COVID IS HYGIENE (*COVID no busafi*). However, the varied ways in which the disease was perceived and conceptualized affected the efforts to prevent the outbreak due to misinformation about the disease or even because the disease had been trivialized. The study concluded that such conceptualization has implications on crisis communication and management during disease outbreaks. Therefore, there is need to adequately equip community based health practitioners with language tools that enhance positive public response in times of risk communication.

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