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# Cognitive Stylistic Analysis of Namibia's 1904-1908 Nama-Herero Genocide through Fictional Narratives

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## Abstract

This study examines four Namibian Nama-Herero literary texts about the genocide in Namibia through the application of the cognitive stylistics framework. The texts analyzed are, Lauri Kubuitsile's (2016) *The Scattering*, Jaspar D. Utley's (2017) *Lie of the Land*, Rukee Tjingaete's (2017) *The Weeping Graves of our Ancestors* and Zirk Van den Berg's (2018) *Parts Unknown*. The four novels have been selected because they present the Nama-Herero genocide, which took place from 1904 -1908 during which over 65,000 Ovaherero and 10,000 Nama people perished, in what is known as the first genocide of the twentieth century. The study aims at probing how the use of cognitive stylistics can enhance readers' understanding of the narratives of the genocide depicted in these Namibian fictional texts. It follows a qualitative approach, with content analysis as the primary data collection method. It explores the creative writing techniques used to project genocidal narratives in these fictionalised stories. In addition to that, the use of conceptual metaphors to establish a connection between the reader and the text has also been explored. The study is guided by schema and trauma theories. Schema theory takes into account all the mental activities associated with tasks such as thinking, knowing, communicating and remembering. It helps both the writers and the readers to mentally reconstruct the events of the genocide, including the loss of life through brutal killings, rape, and livestock confiscation. Moreover, the study examines the depiction of genocidal trauma of the Herero and Nama through the application of trauma theory. The findings demonstrate that schema and trauma theories offer a framework for understanding the narrative construction of genocide in the selected texts. This approach not only deepens the understanding of the genocidal experiences encountered

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by the Nama-Herero but also highlights the role of language in conveying historical trauma.

**Keywords:** cognitive metaphor, cognitive stylistics, cognitive tools, fictional narrative, genocide, Nama-Herero genocide, schema theory, trauma theory

## Introduction

The study undertakes a cognitive stylistics analysis of the Nama-Herero genocide as depicted in Kubuitsile's (2016) *The Scattering*, Utley's (2017) *Lie of the Land*, Tjingaete's (2017) *The Weeping Graves of Our Ancestors* and Van den Berg's (2018) *Parts Unknown*. By examining four Namibian fictional works from a cognitive stylistics perspective (Sperber & Wilson, 1986), the themes and styles of the four texts have been explored to understand how cognitive tools and processes influence linguistic choices in the construction of collective memory and collective experience. One of the critical components in understanding the meaning of texts is context (Semino & Culpeper, 2002). Hamilton (2002), observes that there is a contextual line, which is concerned with historical or political issues that forms the context in which a literary text is produced and consumed. In light of this, the research analyses four selected historical fictional texts, with regards to their constructions and representations of the Herero-Nama genocide.

Strauss (2011) defines genocide as violence that is extensive, group-selective and group-destructive. Nandenga (2019) on the other hand, describes genocide as an act of brutality towards a targeted group, intended to destroy groups in specific territories under the perpetrators' control. Germany committed what is widely thought to be the first twentieth-century genocide in Namibia during its colonial rule - the genocide of the people of Herero and Nama (Melber, 2017). Although this genocide occurred over a century ago, its profound effects are still important today. In the years following Namibia's end of German colonial rule, the colonial amnesia of Germany towards the Herero and Nama population has been noticed and their narratives have remained on the edge of the nation's grand story (Abiatar, 2020).

The relationship between Namibia and Germany has been marked by intense exchanges about the meaning and the consequences of the colonial wars of the early twentieth century in the erstwhile German colony (Kössler,

2008). Between 1904 and 1907, South West Africa, experienced conflict with Germany (Correa, 2011). During that period, “Namibians were stripped of critical materialities and immaterialities, hence they were ‘decentred’ due to exposure to ‘dehumanising’ incidents” (Kandemiri et al., 2020, p. 11). Shortly after Namibia’s independence in 1990, the Ovaherero people began demanding for an apology and reparations from Germany (Kössler, 2008).

Nandenga (2019) observes that many were killed in combat, including during the Battle of Waterberg, while others died of dehydration in the desert while fleeing their own homes. Those imprisoned in concentration camps died of disease and exhaustion. A large number of livestock owned by the Herero was confiscated by the Germans. It has become a practice that the pain that Africans have endured over the past 500 years under western domination has been diminished in status because these historically lived experiences of suffering are reported as disturbances, massacres, and quite recently qualified as genocide, but never as the holocaust (Vambe, 2012).

Vambe (2012) emphasizes that the historical experiences in terms of politics, social and economic status of the Herero and Nama people, influence writers. Adedoja (2010) asserts that the social relevance of literature cannot be controverted, because literature cannot be divorced from social values. In this case, the selected novels, Lauri Kubuitsile’s *The Scattering*, Jaspas D. Utley’s *Lie of the Land*, Rukee Tjingaete’s *The Weeping Graves of our Ancestors* and Zirk Van den Berg’s *Parts Unknown* are examples of how the fictional authors portray the genocide of the Herero and Nama people between 1904 and 1908 through reconstructed fictional historical narratives.

This study is particularly interested in analysing how the language in the selected Namibian fictional works deals with the issue of representation of the genocide, more specifically on how the authors represent societal problems through a cognitive stylistics approach. Cognitive stylistics, mainly developed from the works of Wilson et al. (2003), mainly focuses on cognitive elements and concepts such as verbal irony, cognitive metaphor, image-schema, figure and ground, implicature, contextual effects and relevance.

The cognitive, schema and trauma theories, which are components within cognitive stylistics have been used as theoretical frameworks in this

study. The study explores cognitive metaphors, which contrast with a language which is literally non-figurative. The study sought to examine the cognitive processes such as thinking, knowing, judging and remembering. The aim is to understand how these cognitive tools influence the authors' linguistic choices in representing the 1904-1908 Herero and Nama genocide, and how these representations impact readers' interpretations of the texts.

### **Problem Statement**

The German colonial rule in Namibia, particularly Germany's engagement in war with the Herero and Nama people, is a contentious period of Namibian history that is still "simmering under the surface" (Krishnamurthy, [2018](#), p. 34), and "demands for reparation intensified over the years while calls for the expropriation of land and claims over ancestral land have also dominated land discourses in the country" (Abiatar, [2020](#), p. 2). The relationship between the former colonial power and the Namibian communities affected by its brutal colonial policies remains problematic, and interpretations of the past are still contested.

The individual and collective genocidal memories and trauma from the 1904-1908 mass killings continue to affect the Namibian people, after the end of German colonial rule in Namibia, especially the Herero and Nama communities. This enduring impact is evident in the prevalence of issues such as genocidal trauma, genocidal anger, genocidal memory, genocidal remembrance, genocidal communication, genocidal imagery, genocidal metaphor, and genocidal hatred, which need to be thoroughly studied. These problems have not been studied from a cognitive perspective. Thus far, the historical account of genocide does exist, but the psychological impact and trauma of these events have received limited attention.

This study investigates how cognitive stylistics influences our understanding of the manners in which the Herero and Nama genocide is framed in the selected fiction. According to Melber ([2017](#)), the collective memories and mental schema, in addition to trauma, torturing of people, rape, and gender-based violence, confiscations of people's properties by force, and exploitation of mineral resources among others are all connected to genocide. Such societal problems persist in contemporary Namibian society, where the legacy of genocide remains significant.

The ongoing debates on genocide, conflicts, the consequences of German colonial rule, its impact on the descendants of victims of the 1904-1908 genocide, Germany's historical responsibility, and ways, in which post-colonial reconciliation might be achieved, and confrontations over the past, need to be examined. Although genocide has been previously investigated (Abiatar, [2020](#); Kandemiri et al., [2020](#); Kossler, [2015](#); Melber, [2017](#)), there has been limited research on this topic within the Namibian context, especially from a cognitive stylistic perspective. "This is despite the fact that Namibia witnessed a genocide whose presence in the socio-political arena is still haunting the present world" (Nandenga, [2019](#), p. 3). In this regard, the present study aims to examine how genocide is represented in the four selected texts through the lens of cognitive stylistics framework.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following specific research questions:

1. To what extent does cognitive metaphor contribute to the understanding of genocidal memory in the four selected novels?
2. How is trauma related to genocide linguistically narrated and coded in the four novels, and how can these narrations and codes be understood through the cognitive stylistic framework?

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### ***Schema Theory***

The schema theory is defined as one type of schema, or background knowledge, a reader brings to a text. Schema theory is an explanation of how readers use previous knowledge to comprehend and learn from the text (Rumelhart, [1980](#)). According to An ([2013](#)), the term "schema" was first used in psychology by Barlett ([1932](#)) as "an active organisation of past reactions or experiences" (p. 201). Later, schema was introduced in reading by Rumelhart ([1980](#)), Carrell ([1981](#)) and Hudson ([1982](#)) when discussing the important role of background knowledge in reading comprehension. According to An ([2013](#)):

The fundamental tenet of schema theory assumes that written text does not carry meaning by itself. Rather, a text only provides directions for readers as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge. This

knowledge is called the readers' background knowledge (prior knowledge), and the previously acquired knowledge structures are called schemata. (p. 130)

The schemata of a reader are organised in a hierarchical manner, with the most general concepts at the top, and most specific at the bottom. According to schema theory, comprehending a text is an interactive process between the reader's background knowledge and the text. Efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge (An, [2013](#)).

Furthermore, Burke ([2005](#)) states that “the broadest view of Schema Theory takes into account all the mental activities associated with tasks such as thinking, knowing, communicating and remembering. Schema Theory must deeply embed in culture” (p. 198). Marszalek ([2012](#)) states that “interpreting any kind of literary text depends, to a great extent, on the reader's background knowledge and prior experiences. That is to say when reading a text, people's interpretation relies on their own knowledge of the surrounding world” (p. 119). The knowledge and experiences surrounding the Herero and Nama genocide qualify the above statement by Marszalek. Both the writers and the readers are able to mentally analyse what transpired during the genocide, considering the loss of life through brutal killings, rape, and livestock confiscation to mention just a few. The schema theory is very crucial as a theoretical framework for understanding how readers interpret texts about historical events based on their prior knowledge and experiences.

### ***Trauma Theory***

In addition to the above theory, trauma theory is also used in the study. Marder ([2006](#)) states that the word ‘trauma’ is an ancient Greek word, which means “wound”. The emergence of ground-breaking new work on trauma in literature and critical theory has made a profound impact both within and beyond the field of literature. Trauma refers to a person's emotional response to an overwhelming event that disrupts previous ideas of an individual's sense of self and the standards by which one evaluates society (Caruth, [1995](#)). Trauma theory, therefore, pertains to the study of literature on and about extreme difficulties and violence (Mlambo, [2013](#)). This study examines the genocidal trauma of the Herero and Nama through the application of trauma theory. This theory is relevant to the study as it

unpacks the traumatic events that happened during the 1904-1908 Herero and Nama genocide. It contributes to a deeper understanding of the texts under analysis. This theory is pertinent to be used in analysing genocidal texts as it will help explain the troubles faced by the Herero and Nama as well as the entire Namibians.

According to Caruth (1995) the most outstanding feature of trauma theory in literary studies is its representation of the transformation of the character ignited by an external, often horrifying experience, which illuminates the whole process of coping, surviving and coming to terms with the dynamics of memory that inform the new perceptions of the self and the world. This means that the horrific events as portrayed by the authors have major impact on the minds of the readers. The mental images through memories and remembering of past events are justified by the trauma theory. For Nandenga (2019), “the literary trauma theory is very critical to the study because it relates to literature about extreme and overwhelming atrocities that people go through and manage to survive. Traumatic experiences in fiction represent the horrors of life” (p. 32). The atrocities experienced by the Herero and Nama people not only affect the survivors but also influence future generations who encounter such traumatic experiences through literature.

Vickroy (2002) found that trauma narratives, although fictional, can convey traumatic experiences as authentically as survivor testimonies because of their experimental narrative techniques, where they not only represent trauma as a content or theme but they also incorporate the rhythms, processes, and uncertainties of trauma within the consciousness and structures of these works. When reading the selected novels from the trauma theory perspective, one brings the past experience into the present. The survivors of the Herero and Nama genocide continue to suffer because of their experiences. For Vickroy (2002), “these writers employ fictional techniques such as figurative language to represent trauma and its concerns with dissociation, shattered identities, and fragmented memories, thus making the traumatic experience more accessible and real to readers” (p. 25).

Nandenga (2019) further stresses that trauma has serious long-term negative consequences. Factors such as confusion, insecurity, abuse, racial inferiority, bullying, domestic violence and particularly painful and disturbing childhood experiences can induce trauma. In addition,



psychological trauma may be caused by catastrophic events like war, deception, treason and sexual abuse. However, different individuals react to similar events differently. In other words, not everyone who has had the same trauma is traumatised psychologically.

The study was guided by schema and trauma theories. The schema theory is defined as one type of schema, or background knowledge, a reader brings to a text. Schema theory is an explanation of how readers use previous knowledge to comprehend and learn from the text (Rumelhart, [1980](#)). Trauma theory pertains to the study of literature on and about extreme difficulties and violence (Mlambo, [2013](#)).

The schema and trauma theories were therefore used in the analysis of how language has been used in the four selected novels, paying attention to the experiences encountered by the Nama-Herero during the time of the genocide. The chosen frameworks provided the most appropriate answers to the research questions raised by this study.

### Methodology

The study is based on a qualitative research design. The qualitative approach was used in order to gain a deeper understanding of genocide as presented in Lauri Kubuitsile's *The Scattering*, Jasper D. Uteley's *Lie of the Land*, Rukee Tjingaete's *The Weeping Graves of our Ancestors*, and Zirk van den Berg's *Parts Unknown*. No respondents were used and no fieldwork was conducted for the study. Instead, the study concentrated on a literary analysis of the four selected texts. The novels were selected based on the fact that they all narrated about 1904-1908 Nama-Herero genocide. Due to the inherent similarities of these novels, the study was able to meet its proposed research question through the use of the purposively selected sample. Content analysis was conducted using the theoretical framework of Trauma Theory (Caruth, [1995](#)). The findings were extracted from the interpretation to formulate discussion, conclusion, and recommendations.

### Findings

#### Schematic Genocidal Trauma Experiences in *The Scattering*

The following narrative of events, terms and phrases from *The Scattering* are associated with the language of genocidal trauma. The German soldier began by issuing "sudden violence" before he "ripped the dress open and tore again at her petticoat underneath then went on to cut an

open wound on the young lady's breasts, the tall German slashed them with a knife - one, two" (Kubuitsile, [2016](#), p. 65). When he finished cutting the breasts open, "red strips appeared and dripped down each hand. The blood dripped down her hands and fell to the ground" (Kubuitsile, [2016](#), p. 65). After that he went on to rape the black Herero woman, "He lifted her dress and used his knife to tear away her pants, He pulled out his manhood, already stiff, and pushed it into her" (Kubuitsile, [2016](#), p. 65). When he finished raping her, he "took out his knife, grabbed her by the back of the head and sliced the knife across the skin of her neck. He jumped back to avoid getting soaked in her blood. She fell to the sand where the last of her life gurgled away" (Kubuitsile, [2016](#), p. 65). This traumatic experience can be analysed using cognitivism, which posits that when readers engage in reading such texts of violence, a mental image of brutality is reflected in their minds.

In this particular scene, traumatic language has been used to narrate a horrible encounter where six people witnessed the murder of a young woman. These were the murder victims themselves; Tjipuka and her child, including the three German perpetrators. It can be understood that the victim felt the physical pain when she had her breasts cut open by the German soldiers. Moreover, Tjipuka who also eye witnesses the murder event felt horribly traumatised. Although the child was very young, she saw the gruesome murder. Lastly, as it may seem, the three German soldiers enjoyed killing the young Herero woman, but they too would suffer from the effects of mental trauma following their actions.

Readers and the writer of the text are the second set of people who may have been traumatised by this type of violence and the graphic nature of the narrative.

### **Schematic Trauma of Death in *The Weeping Graves of our Ancestors***

Schematic trauma affects victims and those historically informed when they remember the death of their fellow tribesmen, family, friends, parents and generations, especially when these deaths occurred in unforeseen circumstances because of the armed struggle. There are incidents in the selected texts which resulted in the loss of lives. Death is, however, not a cause for celebration even if a soldier successfully kills an enemy. Humans mourn as a sign of grief when a person dies (Sprang & John, [2018](#)). The

excerpt below narrates how Mbakondja killed a German soldier in real-time and also narrates how a Herero young man named Kaherero died in combat.

Mbakondja pumped bullet after bullet into his body. This was out of frustration and anger. The impact jostled Klaus down the rocks and the grenade he was holding exploded into his own face. It was then silent again. Although the guerrilla leader and his unit were still holding out, their number had been reduced to a handful. (Tjingaete, [2017](#), p. 218)

The excerpt above narrates the experiences of trauma during the Herero-Nama genocide war as reported in the text *The Weeping Graves of our Ancestors* (Tjingaete, [2017](#)).

### **Mental Oppression in the text *The Lie of the Land***

Mental oppression is the psychological suppression of discharge and the invalidation of people's minds (Adewale et al., [2016](#); Nelson, [2013](#)). In colonial terms, mental oppression is the assumption that a certain group of people are not good enough, leading to the disregard of their contributions. The Germans used this concept when they first came to colonise the Deutsch Süd-Westafrika inhabited by the Ovaherero and Nama people. The term they mainly used for the local population was 'uncivilised savages'.

'Learning the language of the *savages* might well be a good thing as it will not be long before they fully accept German *civilisation* and our language. You must examine their *heathen tongues* before they vanish altogether.' He coughed or it might have been a laugh. (Utley, [2017](#), p. 5)

A mental sense of oppression is evident in the remarks made by *Reichkommissar* Göring when addressing Sam. This approach was employed by the colonial governments to convey their colonial subjects that they are worthless and inferior. The use of oppressive language in words like "uncivilised", "heathen" and "savage" were a weapon that could easily break the spirits of the Ovaherero and the Nama people. The Germans would reinforce mentally oppressive methods by committing violence and raping black women. The Germans also employed forced labour by taking young girls whom they deemed attractive and beautiful. They assigned them domestic duties to work in favour of the German madam while at the same time, they were used for sexual pleasure by the German men of the house.

Many children were born out of this immoral arrangement. These children exist today as the descendants of grandchildren of the Germans.

### **Physical Oppression in *Parts Unknown***

The excerpt below is a narrative about the violent intentions of a German sergeant in his quest to prove to other German residents in the South West Africa that he had all the military might to oppress the Ovaherero and Nama people. The Germans had already discovered that the best way to control local people was to bring in the well-trained soldiers with sophisticated ammunition of the time.

‘On my command,’ shouted the sergeant who had awaited them on the jetty. ‘Attention!’ He walked down the row of men, intently peering at each, while they looked past him at an imagined object straight ahead, an invisible target in the whirlwind mist... the settlers have seen reports of battles lost and soldiers killed. As we know, we broke the main Herero forces at Waterberg last year, but some are still fighting. In the South, Witbooi’s and Marengo’s Nama bands are out murdering and stealing. (Van den Berg, [2018](#), p. 165)

The excerpt above presents full evidence that the Germans had come to South West Africa to impose physical oppression on the land and its people. A German sergeant, inspecting a parade where Siegfried was assembled along with other soldiers, expressed discontent about the resistance of local indigenous populations. They believed that the only way to break the Herero and Nama resistance was through physical violence, using German might to destroy the local people. The Herero had adopted a guerrilla warfare strategy in which they appeared as ordinary civilians during the day but transformed into fighters at night. These were ordinary men without any military training, unlike the German-trained soldiers who held ranks like commander, general and lieutenant.

### **Discussion**

Genocidal narratives are stories about the intentional killing of a significant number of individuals from a specific nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group. Although fictionalised, the study observes that all four authors used genocidal narratives deliberately to expose the intentional ethnic killing of Namibian people because they are of a different race or for political reasons. This section discusses the

findings of the study. This is achieved by drawing relevant scholarly literature to support, compare and contrast the findings.

Literary creativity is associated with imaginative writing of fictionalised literary texts (Cetkovski, [2017](#); Harper, [2022](#); Izyenda, [2018](#); Oguche & Omojuyigbe, [2022](#); Yoshihara, [2021](#)). The present study determined that the four texts explored literary creativity through the use of cognitive metaphor, genocidal trauma, and mental and physical oppression. The findings revealed that creative writing techniques were used to project genocidal narratives in the telling of genocidal fictionalised stories.

In agreement with Al-Ali et al. ([2016](#)) that a cognitive metaphor is a figurative language that contrasts with literal, non-figurative language, the study found that metaphors are seen not as a literary form but as a deviations from some supposedly literal language. Furthermore, in agreement with Glotova ([2014](#)), the study revealed that cognitive metaphor was used to project and expose the extent of the genocide killings that were committed by the Germans in the four literary texts.

Ordinary human beings generally do not take pleasure in killing fellow humans unless they are evil-spirited or have extreme hatred towards people belonging to different races or those with differing opinions. One of the observations from the study is the mental challenges of the individual who instructed his soldiers to carry out the killings. As such, the military only kills at the instruction of their commander, who was General von Trotha in the case at hand.

The study established that the Germans used crime and punishment to colonise what was then German South West Africa. One of their plans was to exterminate the local Ovaherero and Nama populations as a form of punishment for their resistance to occupation. The Herero revolted and killed over 100 Germans during the resistance movement. The ruthless German commander named von Trotha requested permission from the German Kaiser at the time and he began to execute extermination orders against the Ovaherero people. According to Clark ([2006](#)), von Trotha gave orders to capture and execute Herero men, while the women and children flocked to the desert, where they starved and died of thirst. Von Trotha argued that there was no need to make an exception for the Herero women and children because they "contaminated the German army with disease" (von Joeden-Forgey, [2021](#)). Another form of punishment was to starve the

Ovaherero and Nama people at Shark Island where there were freezing temperatures. Crime and punishment can be woven into this study as a component of trauma. The Germans felt that the Ovaherero resistance to the occupation was a crime and therefore punished them by death. Under normal rules of war, an offender is punished by going through the judiciary system where a judge is assigned to find and balance the punishment that suits the crime (Feinberg, [2019](#)). If a person is found to be guilty, they are sent to prison or required to pay a certain amount of money as a fine. Given that the crime suits a prison sentence and serving, the offender can possibly return to society as a transformed and corrected person. However, the Germans saw it fit to kill the Ovaherero as a form of punishment that was equal to their resistance to German occupation.

According to Corr et al. ([2018](#)), life and death can be attributed to the balance schema because there is a constant struggle for human beings to remain alive, yet death is an inevitable eventuality. In *The Scattering* (Kuibutsile, [2016](#)), black men experienced death because of their resistance to white colonial rule. The Germans knew very well that if they do not acquire power, material wealth, supremacy and imposition through force, they would not succeed in their mission to colonise the then German South West Africa. Being very aware, they also had some kind of fear because the local indigenous tribes frivolously resisted the occupation. There was a general sense of rebellion between the Germans and the Ovaherero people. The main reason was that of colonisation. The Germans had come to take over control of the Ovaherero and the rest of the Namibian people. They intended to enforce their laws to control a foreign land. The Ovaherero did not like this but hated the infiltration and German occupation because they confiscated their cattle and grazing land. Novengi wrote a letter to announce the death of Tjirwe because he resisted German rule. A balance is reached in this event because Tjirwe may have accepted forced labour or physical beating, thereby avoiding death. The fact that he revolted and fought against Kurtis, resulted in Kurtis pulling a gun to shoot Tjirwe. He was killed because he resisted enslavement. Therefore, there is a strong balanced relationship between life and death in the text. Both the Germans and the local indigenous people of Namibia struggled to balance life and death because the Germans were seeking control by all means possible while the Namibians resisted it by all means possible.

## Conclusion

This study examined four genocidal fictional texts that reflect and narrate events of the Nama-Herero genocide that happened in what was then German South West Africa between 1904 and 1908. Although fictionalised, some of the events may reflect a true reality of what transpired during the genocide period. The purpose of this study was to evaluate themes and the literary style of language used in fictional texts. The four texts examined in this study were Kubuitsile's *The Scattering*, Utley's *Lie of the Land*, Tjingaete's *The Weeping Graves of Our Ancestors* and Van den Berg's *Parts Unknown* through the theoretical explications of cognitive stylistics.

The first research question asked about the ways in which cognitive metaphor contributes to the literary creativity of the manner in which the genocide is projected in the four novels. Evidence from the findings concluded that this question was addressed. This was achieved by the examination of cognitive metaphor, genocidal trauma, and mental and physical oppression. A number of creative writing resources such as novels, memoirs, plays were used to project genocidal narratives in the telling of genocidal fictionalised stories.

The study concluded that the authors of all four texts used an array of military language to tell the genocide story. Military language is a type of code that is used to communicate inside a particular group within the military, between the military and outside that particular group or used to narrow down the meaning of specific words. This language can dispel ambiguity to differentiate words. In simple terms, the language functions to transmit implicit messages without making an error. Some of the words used in the military are borrowed words. These terms are the phrases and language used by military organisations and people as a distinct group. They help to depoliticise, dehumanise, or otherwise abstract debate about its activities from an actual depiction, as distinguished by their use in military doctrine.

The last question of the study was in relation to the ways in which trauma and genocide are linguistically narrated and coded in the four novels, and how these narrations and codes are understood through the cognitive stylistics frameworks. These are psychological or emotional memory flashbacks that come to the reader as a response to a deeply distressing situation. Emotional, physical and psychological violence and political

schemata found in the texts, includes political beliefs or how the reader understands politics and the purpose for the need to believe in their political choice towards freedom. This includes the choice and debate on which political side to side with. The study concluded that genocide memory schemata in the texts were used to bring back memories in remembrance of events that led to the killing of the Ovaherero people. In addition to that, oppression schemata in the texts were established. These are the patterns in the readers' mind of prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or exercise of authority, inclusive of cruel treatment and deprivation of access to freedom. The study also concluded that narratives of survival schemata were used to narrate survival stories that were handed down from one generation to another. These also tell how the Ovaherero people escaped overcoming difficult conditions for them to survive the genocide.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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