

## Comparing the exile and return memories of Namibian women in the Namibian autobiographies

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### Abstract

*This article compares the expressions used to recount the memories of women who lived in exile with those born and raised in exile from a predominantly cognitive stylistics image schema theory. The linguistic expressions compared were obtained from the four Namibian autobiographies namely Tshiwa Troudie Amulungu's in Taming my elephant, Fousy Shinana-Kambombo's Southwest Africa to Namibia, in My personal struggle, Valentina Nghiwete's Valentina: The exile child and Lucia Engombe's Child No. 95: My German African Odyssey. The autobiographies were examined by comparing how basic image schema such as SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, BALANCE, CONTAINER, and LINK can be used as a cognitive tool in dissecting the exile experience, understanding abstract linguistic expressions and meaning as well as explaining the impact of exile experiences on second generation refugees in a post-independent Namibia. The article concludes that the majority of linguistic phrases used in autobiographical narrations were found to be based on the four-image schema either at the concrete or at the abstract levels. Further, the article concludes that all the autobiographies examined have used figurative languages based on the various image schemas theory.*

**Keywords:** balance schema, cognitive stylistics, container schema, image schema, link schema, source-path-goal schema

### Introduction

Namibian literature swiftly acquired popularity even though there were few literary works written in Namibian languages before political independence in 1990. For instance, Melber (2018) on the dearth of Namibian literature states that it focused on social realities with a concentration on individual life stories of the liberation struggle prior to independence and personal memoirs and reflection on political and social developments after independence. According to Krishnamurthy and Vale (2018), the rise in popularity of autobiography or life writing in Namibia has resulted in cathartic works by providing victims' views and helping them to tackle questions of identity and belonging, leading in self-discovery journeys. Few of Namibia's numerous literary works have been analysed using applied linguistics sub-disciplines such as cognition, pragmatics, and feminism (Hafeni & Woldemariam, 2019). The cognitive sub-discipline examined several works in the poetry, novel, and short story genres, while those that investigated the autobiographical genre did it from a literary standpoint. It is against this background that the four autobiographies, *Valentina: The Exile Child* by Valentina Nghiwete, *Child No. 95: My German – African Odyssey* by Lucia Engombe, *Southwest Africa to Namibia: My Personal Struggle* by Fousy Shinana–

Kambombo and *Taming my Elephant* by Tshiwa Trudie Amulungu were purposefully chosen to address the gap of analysing Namibian autobiography in English through a cognitive stylistics' theoretical framework.

In recent years, many stylisticians have abandoned traditional stylistics in favour of cognitive stylistics to analyse and interpret literary works. Cognitive stylistics, according to Semino and Culpeper (2002, p. ix), is a rapidly emerging area "at the interface of linguistics, literary studies, and cognitive studies." Cognitive stylistics enables systematic linguistic study based on theories that connect linguistic choices to cognitive structures and processes that support language formation. According to Burke (2004), cognitive stylistics is becoming increasingly popular among academics in both literature and linguistics departments. Its popularity is largely due to the introduction of cognitive linguistics as an effective approach for studying grammar and metaphor. Similarly, Maalej (2015) claimed that stylistics goes beyond the descriptive phase and into the interpretative phase. According to Werth (1999), cognitive linguistics provides scholars with a "more human" linguistics, i.e., a view of language as a phenomenon intimately related to human experience (cited in Maalej, 2015, p.

2). Cognitive stylistics scholars contend that applying cognitive stylistics to nonfiction helps in understanding human thinking. The use of cognitive stylistic principles and methodologies in literary studies provide tools at the interface of linguistics and psychology (Glotova, 2014). Reading processes and cognition have emerged as important research areas in stylistics. By incorporating the human mind, cognitive stylistics opens up a new area of literary research that considers the mind when conducting stylistic analysis (Ghani, 2016).

### **Statement of the problem**

Autobiographical texts are made up of a diverse set of linguistic patterns that are moulded and organised as narratives and are imbued with human experience and memories. Although the autobiographical genre employs natural language in natural contexts and can provide examples of raw data from language in use, it remains on the periphery of applied linguistics and academic inquiry. The problem is that without studying the autobiography genre from a linguistics perspective, autobiographies are analysed from a literature perspective, which treats the literary text as a fossilised historical artefact - as the fully formed product of artistic genius - rather than as an act of creation that is a collaborative process between author and reader, ignoring the cognitive processes that go into writing and reading. This might lead to misconceptions and misinterpretations of the messages presented in autobiographies. Thus, applying cognitive stylistics to the four autobiographies leads to a greater comprehension of both the writer's and reader's minds, allowing for not only analysis of real-world experience, but also comparing and contrasting personalities, habits, and events.

### **Research objectives**

This article presents the study of the linguistic choices used to narrate the exile and return experiences of women in the four selected autobiographies by analysing the embodied experiences, thoughts, and language of the four autobiography writers from a cognitive linguistic perspective. This article aims to:

- study how basic image schema can be used as a cognitive tool in conceptualising the pre-independence experiences in four autobiographies.

- analyse how image schemas can be used to understand abstract linguistic extensions and meaning in the four autobiographies.
- explore the impact of exile on second generation exiles in a post independent Namibia through a cognitive lens as presented in the autobiographies.

### **Literature review**

#### ***Embodied image schema as a cognitive tool***

Cognitive Linguistics claims that the meanings of language are embodied, meaning that the speaker's body experience activates the verbal phrases that transmit the meaning(s) to the hearer (s). In other words, language is not an abstract cognitive faculty that exists independently of other human cognitive processes; rather, our language emerges from our daily and real experiences. Thus, the meaning of words and sentences, the meaning of linguistic structures at any level, are not just a set of universal abstract features or un-interpreted symbols; on the contrary, they are activated and motivated directly to our bodily, social, physical, or social experiences (Thang, 2009). Equally, for Phiri (2021) the words signify a spontaneous response in natural sense. Johnson (2008) explains that the embodiment theory focuses on how humans with shared, generic bodily structures engage recurring relatively stable aspects of their shared environments, giving rise to patterns such as directed movement, containment, balance, forced motion, up-down, front-back, right-left, and other general structures of our ongoing encounters with our physical surroundings. Image schemas are the names given to these patterns. In a separate study (Johnson, 2005) proposed that these image schemas have their own logic that may be extended to abstract conceptual realms and this logic is the foundation for making inferences about abstract entities and operations. Polkinghorne (2014) explains that the source of a person's narrative schema is his or her own embodied actions, and because humans have a common type of body, people from different cultures and historical periods share a common narrative schema, and that one's narrative schema can provide a structure for understanding stories from various times and places. Image schemas provide coherence and order to concepts in language.

### ***Using image schemas in creating new abstract extensions***

Image schemas are utilised not only to shape bodily components of experience, but also to metaphorically project perceptual and motor knowledge into highly abstract domains. The conceptual metaphor is an analytical tool employed in cognitive linguistics that is intimately related with the work of Lakoff and, to a lesser degree, Johnson (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Conceptual metaphors are cognitive frameworks that enable us to conceptualise and comprehend one conceptual area in terms of another. The English metaphorical terms 'heavyhearted' and 'light-hearted', for example, reflect the conceptual metaphor of the heart as the seat of emotion.

Research in cognitive linguistics has revealed how conceptual metaphors govern our most basic understanding of ourselves and our surroundings. A conceptual metaphor is not a linguistic expression, but rather a mental concept that allows us to generate a plethora of metaphorical linguistic statements based on it. Kövecses (2010) summarises this relationship efficiently: "We can state the nature of the relationship between the conceptual metaphors and the metaphorical linguistic expressions in the following way: the linguistic expressions (i.e., ways of talking) make explicit, or are manifestations of, the conceptual metaphors (i.e., ways of thinking)".

### ***The impacts of exile on second generation returnees***

Studies done on the subject of exile have established that "exile" is a multifaceted concept and thus requires a radical definition, re-interpretation and modification, as it has moved away from a strictly political definition to include a wider cultural and economically driven displacement.

The literature of displaced people invariably depicts situations in which the stability of the self is frequently questioned. Braakman and Schalenkoff (2007) discovered that children born and/or raised in Western countries do not feel the same connection to their homeland as their parents do (or at least not as strongly), and they are closer to host country values, as a result, returning to one's home country frequently entails a new uprooting for them. In addition, when young children arrive in their supposedly home country after being in exile, they are disoriented and in shock, facing a strange land, culture, and language, without the support of

family and friends. Unfortunately, many secondary literatures on the topic of exile have ignored the experiences of second generations who were born and/or spent their formative years in exile, according to De Sas (2014).

### **Theoretical framework**

Image schema, a part of cognitive stylistics, is a theory that connects cognitive and bodily structure. It investigates how meaning, cognition, and rationality emerge from and are conditioned by patterns of our bodily experience (Wei, 2006). Although the word image schema is not new, building on the ideas of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), it first appeared concurrently in *The Body in the Mind* (Johnson, 1987) and *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* (Lakoff, 1987). The theory is used by analysing the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL (S-P-G) schema, the LINK schema, the BALANCE schema, and the CONTAINMENT schema as outlined in Johnson's *The Body in the Mind*, to analyse different aspects of the women's experiences. The S-P-G theory was used to analyse physical and mental/psychological journeys, the LINK schema was used to analyse the social, cultural, and personal relationships, kinship and ties to people and places. The BALANCE schema was used to analyse the physical and metaphorical pressure, physical or metaphorical counteracting forces i.e., justice-as-a-balance, while CONTAINMENT schema was used to study physical, abstract, or metaphorical boundaries, enclosed areas or excluded areas.

### ***A Cognitive Stylistics Study of the Selected Autobiographies***

*A comparison of physical embodied image schemas*

#### **A. CONTAINMENT schema**

On daily basis humans encounter many containers in the broadest sense such as "inhaling air INTO the lungs and exhaling it OUT of them," "squeezing toothpaste out of the tube," and "pouring coffee INTO a cup." People's minds construct an image schema of a container based on bodily experience. According to Basson (2008), the CONTAINER image schema operates beneath the level of our conscious awareness, that is, humans will share a general understanding of what it means for something to be located within a container and will understand at least part of this without a container (or hearing or

reading the word in a particular context) will activate the CONTAINER schema as central to our understanding. The bodily container is concrete, physical, and therefore the basis for a CONTAINER image schema. This particular schema structures our regular recurring experiences of putting objects into and taking them out of bounded area. All four women spent time in different SWAPO camps during their exile. In both Angola and Zambia, SWAPO operated three types of camps: refugee camps, military training camps, and transit camps (Williams, 2015). Civilians, including children and non-combatant women, were housed in refugee camps. The majority of new arrivals in exile spent time in refugee camps before being sent to training or school. Pregnant women were sent to refugee camps to give birth, particularly female soldiers, students, and those deployed to various missions around the world. Nghiwete was born in a Kwanza-Sul refugee camp, where her soldier mother had been moved to await her child's arrival. Similarly, Shinana-Kambombo describes being transferred to the Kwanza-Sul camps twice to wait for the birth of her children. She was working at a vegetable farm in Gustrow, Germany Democratic Republic (GDR), when she became pregnant for the first time (the former East Germany) and she was working at Otava Publishing in Helsinki, Finland, the second time.

A second point in common is that the children, in this case Nghiwete and Engombe, spent their lives in refugee camps: Engombe in Zambia and Nghiwete in Angola. Engombe was later sent to the GDR, where she spent the next nine years in exile before being repatriated to Namibia in 1989. In exile, Amulungu and Shinana-Kambombo were more mobile, as they were frequently despatched on missions in different countries. Shinana-Kambombo and Amulungu both worked in Lusaka during their exiles with Amulungu working as a French Language teacher at the United Nation Institute for Namibia (UNIN) and Shinana-Kambombo worked at the SWAPO Printing Press, which printed *The Combatant*, a SWAPO bulletin published in exile. Children resided in one place for an extended length of time, whereas adults were constantly on the move. During her nine-year tenure in Angola, Nghiwete only lived in two camps: Kwanza-Sul and Lubango. Engombe, on the other hand, was only at the Nyango refugee camp before being sent to the GDR. Amulungu and Shinana-Kambombo, on the

other hand, were always moving. Amulungu lived in eight different countries upon crossing the border into Angola, including Zambia, where she studied and worked, Angola, where she temporarily lived while awaiting her next assignment, France, where she studied for her two diplomas, Yugoslavia, where her first husband was studying, and several African countries where she conducted research on government housing programmes. Shinana-Kambombo lived in Zambia and received her basic military training there before going to Nigeria to further her secondary school and finally working at the SWAPO Printing Press in Lusaka. Later, she stayed in various Angolan camps for maternity leave and sometimes to await her next assignment. She worked in East Germany as well as Helsinki, Finland.

### **B. SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema**

The SOURCE-PATH-GOAL emerges from a variety of bodily experiences, such as when a person starts moving from one point towards another along some path with the intention of reaching a specific destination. The SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema is also embodied whenever we reach out to grab hold of an object (i.e., reaching from a starting point, moving along a path, reaching, and grabbing the object) or when we move our eyes from focusing on one object in the world across to another. Common linguistic expressions such as "John walked from home to the store" are understood as conveying a SOURCE-PATH-GOAL meaning. This schema consists of four structural elements:

- A SOURCE (a starting point)
- A DESTINATION (end point)
- A PATH (several contiguous locations which connect the source and the destination)
- A DIRECTION

The underlying logic of the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, according to Lakoff and Turner (1989), consists of a movement from a source to a destination along a path via intermediate points on the path, and the further along the path a person is the more time has passed since he began. Although Engombe was born in Namibia and Nghiwete in Angola, they both had no personal recollections of their 'motherland' Namibia and relied on the constructed notion of home as told by adults,

so they began their physical journey while in exile and had no motive to be there; they simply found themselves there. Likewise, Amulungu and Shinana-Kambombo fled Namibia, but for different reasons. When Amulungu and Shinana-Kambombo went into exile, they were both high school students in mission schools. Shinana-began Kambombo's journey began at Odibo St Mary Anglican mission school, whilst Amulungu's began at Anamulenge Catholic mission school. They both went into exile by walking across the Namibian-Angolan border. When they arrived at the SWAPO camps, they both got basic military training in different locations before being sent to school, Amulungu to UNIN in Lusaka and Shinana-Kambombo to Federal Government Girls' College in Nigeria.

Although the journeys as a whole are not significant, certain aspects of the journeys are. The PATH component of the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL structure plays a crucial role in these physical journeys. A PATH, according to Lakoff and Turner (1989), is a series of continuous places that connect the journey's source (the starting point) and destination (the objective). Nghiwete, for example, had to pass through Eendede on her way from Kwanza-Sul to Lubango with her mother. While passing through Eendede, they were confronted with a raw scene of an attack on Angolan citizens by UNITA. They found "*the road covered in blood, with dead bodies of civilians plastered all over the road,*" "*their cars and trucks burning,*" and "*dead bodies burning*" (p. 57). Their convoy had to drive off the tarred road because it was covered with dead bodies and burning cars. Another example that can be explained using the same effect is an excerpt from Shinana- Kambombo's autobiography (p. 49), in which she describes how she was treated when travelling from Helsinki to Luanda and passing via Paris.

Amulungu and Shinana-Kambombo began their exile in Namibia, but Engombe and Nghiwete began in Zambia and Angola, respectively. Although Shinana-Kambombo made the conscious decision to leave, Amulungu was coerced to leave, when she and her classmates were awakened by armed soldiers and made to cross into Angola. Although she did not know the motive of her journey, the path they will take, or their destination and the means of getting there because someone planned their journey for them, the reader is able to comprehend their journey using the subconscious knowledge of

the S-P-G schema. Shinana-Kambombo, on the other hand, chose to go into exile as she was unhappy at her uncle's house and their "school was a target by South African forces for using English as a medium of instruction". Unlike Amulungu, Shinana-Kambombo knew what to expect from such an endeavour: she was aware of the significant risk of being discovered and caught by the South African army when attempting to cross the border. So, unlike Amulungu, her journey had a beginning, middle, and an end, as well as the reason for embarking on the journey.

Another distinction is the reasons given for children wanting to leave refugee camps in exile and live in Western countries. Engombe was ecstatic at the idea of travelling to Germany as she desperately wanted to escape the starvation in Nyango, writing, "*Finally, I was allowed to leave Nyango. Away from a place where I was always hungry and often so scared*" (p. 23). Nghiwete, on the other hand, was excited to be chosen to travel and stay abroad because she wanted to get a good education abroad, as she explained:

I was happy to be among those chosen to go and was excited at the opportunity to go and study in Europe like some other exile kids that I had heard about. This was an opportunity of a lifetime and even at that young age of six/seven years old; I was determined to seize the moment (p. 60).

#### *Comparisons of abstract linguistic extensions*

##### **A. CONTAINMENT image schema**

The CONTAINMENT image schema is one of the most fundamental schemas used in abstract reasoning. The image schema CONTAINER is made up of three structural elements: an interior, an exterior, and a border, which cannot exist without the other: an interior cannot exist without an exterior and a boundary; an exterior cannot exist without an interior and a boundary; and a boundary cannot exist without an interior and an exterior. According to Johnson (1987, p. 21), one of the most ubiquitous aspects of our bodily experience is our interaction with "containment and boundedness." This occurs because we are intimately aware of our bodies as three-dimensional containers into which we put certain things like food, water, air, and so on, and out of which other things like food and water wastes, air, blood, and so on emerge. We are constantly physically contained by our surroundings, by the objects that surround us.

The CONTAINER image schema is thus the result of repeated, kinaesthetic experiences of bodily containment. It is this awareness that allows us to use and understand abstract concepts structured on this notion, such as "lost in thoughts" and "fell in love," where the concepts of "thoughts" and "love" are modelled on the body as a container, and the states of "thoughts" and "love" are modelled on the concept of content that can be contained in the containers.

Humans place a high importance on the ability to impose boundaries or territorial concepts. Even when there is no natural physical border that can be thought of as defining a container, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose that individuals build bounds - marking off the territory so that it has an interior and a bounding surface - whether it be a wall, a fence, or an abstract line or plane. This concept appears in all four autobiographies. Engombe, for example, writes that she was "*engrossed in her lovesickness*" and "*out of breath*"; Nghiwete writes that she "*sat in suspense*" and that her mother "*went into labour*"; Amulungu writes that she "*was in a big mess*" and that she "*struggled to find a way out of the situation*," and Shinana-Kambombo writes that she "*had a name in mind*" and "*I am in good health*." Lovesickness, breath, suspense, labour, mess, situation, mind, and health do not have a natural physical tangible border, but the writers were able to impose one on them so that they can be understood in the form of containers. In abstract terms, the body can be viewed as a container that aids comprehension and reasoning. This view is founded on a broad experience of bodily confinement. Engombe and Nghiwete used language concepts formed by this phenomenon in their autobiographies. This element of the CONTAINER image schema, in which human bodies are referred to as containers, one of which is full of life and the other of which people desire to gaze inside, was used to structure the usage of expressions like "a nice lady who was full of life" and "I was out of breath." Similarly, many physical components can be viewed as containers for various abstract concepts. This is evident in Engombe and Nghiwete's autobiographies, where they employ terms like "*her full lips smile gently*," "*I decided to take matters into my own hands*," "*the look in her eyes*," and "*my motherly friend looked deep in my eyes*" in their narrations. This phenomenon is often used to describe the mentioned body

component in English. Looking someone "deep in the eyes" is widely used to show seriousness in a situation and having a certain look in the eyes refers to a type of face expression that expresses a specific feeling.

In CONTAINER image schema, phrases like "full of fear" and "full of life" are common. These expressions are used to describe a person's fear or vitality. The concentration of a substance in a container determines its intensity. In other words, a high level of emotional intensity in the container coincides with a large volume of the substance. So, when using terms like "full of fear," as Engombe does, the higher the intensity, the more substance is in the container; and the lower the intensity, the less substance is in the container. Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson contend that there are few human instincts more primal than territoriality. And defining a territory, putting a boundary around it, is a quantitative act. Humans, rocks, and land areas are all bounded objects with sizes and depths. As a result, they may be quantified in terms of the amount of substance they contain. People are said to be "*in a complete mess*" and "*in a big mess*" as a result of this element of the CONTAINER image schema, and someone can look "*deep*" into someone's eyes.

## **B. LINK image schema**

The LINK image schema expression's early impressions and experience are that we are biologically tied to our mothers before birth via the umbilical cord. Thus, the LINK image schema consists of two or more elements connected by a connecting mechanism (Johnson, 1987) and structures many of our social relationships. The first resemblance is that all four ladies used Oshiwambo (their mother tongue) words in their autobiographies. There are similarities in the closeness and comradeship shown in all four autobiographies. All four writers' lives in exile were intertwined with SWAPO, and the purpose of freeing Namibia from apartheid South Africa was the catalyst for that relationship. Based on the concept of family, the four women had various types of connections with their mothers and biological families. Amulungu and Shinana-Kambombo were both raised in full-fledged family households in Namibia. Growing up, they both had a particular affinity with their mothers and fathers. Nghiwete and Engombe were raised in diametrically opposed environments. Engombe was alienated from her biological family as a

child. Engombe was born in Namibia and moved to Zambia with her mother and brothers when she was two years old to join her father. Her father returned to Namibia after being labelled a traitor by the SWAPO leadership and imprisoned; Engombe was sent to Germany (GDR), her brother Martin was raised by their aunt in Zambia, her sister Jo was sent to a hostel, and Pena was taken in by a foster family while their mother was sent to study in Moscow, Russia. She lost her family and her roots, and she had not had a traditional upbringing. While she longed to reconnect with her mother, circumstances prevented her from doing so, as the "Cyrillic letters" of the Russian language "stood" between them even when they wrote to one another. Engombe's mother had become a stranger to her after leaving her family for the GDR, and when they were reunited, they had nothing to say to one another.

Nghiwete had a close relationship with her mother. Although she was briefly left in the care of comrades and relatives while her mother went to study, they were reunited and lived in Lubango until their repatriation to Namibia in 1989. She was fortunate to have her mother in such circumstances, as some children were raised by foster parents, some did not know who their biological parents were, and still others realised upon repatriation that the person they thought was their mother was not. Although Nghiwete only met her father once in exile, he kept in touch with her and sent her photographs often. Her mother also made a point of introducing her to her and her father's relatives so she could get to know them.

Another type of link covered in the four autobiographies is the connection to places. Amulungu and Shinana-Kambombo have deep ties to Namibia, having been born and raised there. Their childhood memories bound them to Namibia, and when they crossed borders and went into exile, they both left their parents and siblings behind. Due to these relationships, they were unable to establish a sense of 'home' anywhere in exile. Engombe and Nghiwete had no ties to Namibia. Instead, they were attached to the places they grew up believing were their homes. Politics, independence, and the end of apartheid meant little to Engombe because it forced her to travel to Namibia, a country she had no ties to other than the fact that her parents being born there. She had no idea what was waiting for her there: "*I absolutely wanted to go to Namibia, to my estranged motherland,*

*but what awaits me?"* Nghiwete expressed a similar emotion, stating that despite growing up hearing so much about Namibia and working for Namibia through SWAPO, she was hesitant to move to Namibia permanently, "*because the only home I really knew was Angola*" (p. 93). Nghiwete's remark below, in essence, summarises the exiles' relationship with the concept of home:

Adults celebrated at the news that the war was over, overjoyed that this time it was going to happen. They were happy to finally go back to their homes, after years of living in exile. Most of them had not seen or communicated with any of their loved ones in Namibia since they'd fled the apartheid regime, but everything seemed to be happening a little too fast for me and other exile kids who couldn't quite share in the "going back home" excitement as the news came that we would soon be leaving. Namibia was not home; exile was our home, and the only home we had ever known (pp. 95 - 96).

### C. BALANCE image schema

The balance image schema is based on the idea that positive states and activities are perceived as retaining or regaining one's equilibrium, whereas negative states and actions are seen as lacking or losing balance. Being ill is interpreted as losing equilibrium, whereas recuperating is understood as retaining or regaining balance. Phrases like "*regaining my well-being,*" "*heal again,*" "*life was back to normal,*" "*responsibilities were back in my mind,*" "*student life was normal again,*" "*I was a normal again,*" and "*recover*" all imply that something was there but had been lost in the process and has now been regained. These assertions are found in all four autobiographies. Amulungu, Nghiwete, and Engombe use the concept of balance to describe how order was maintained in various exile facilities. This is based on the notion that order is required for balance to prevail, and those who do not comply must be punished to prevent further imbalances. Exile required a high level of organisation in order to make it easier to defend the exile population, as the SWAPO society was easily penetrated by enemy spies. This is demonstrated by the case of Nghiwete's teacher, who was suspected of spying for the South African army. To prevent spies and traitors from infiltrating, individuals suspected of doing so were arrested and sent to

the dungeons. In certain circumstances, criminals were sentenced to heavy manual labour, like in the case of Engombe's mother, who was sentenced to chop down trees for reading a prohibited newspaper.

Punishments administered by the liberation movement, SWAPO, to maintain balance had an effect on other camp members. While the leaders kept the camp balanced by punishing those found to be destabilising the camps, other people were negatively impacted by such actions and, as a result, lost their balance. For example, Engombe's mother was pulled away from her children for a lengthy period of time to do hard labour, her children suffered since they had no one to care for them, causing Engombe to become ill. Also, when Nghiwete's language teacher was jailed for leaving the camp without following proper protocol, the children were left without a teacher.

#### **D. SOURCE-PATH-GOAL(S-P-G) image schema**

The SOURCE-PATH-GOAL structures abstract movement in the same manner that real journeys are structured. The narrative of all four women's journeys is told in chronological order from their births to where they were at the time their autobiographies were published. Their origins can be considered their birth, and they followed a path. They went through a number of stages along the way that shaped who they are as women, including the exile experience. Their current setting is not their final destination, as one's life journey ends only when they die, but rather one of many stops along the path. The older they become on these paths, the closer they get to their destinations, which are their deaths. Individuals' life objectives may be considered as their life's purposes, which lead them down the many paths they choose.

Another abstract concept included in the four autobiographies that might be interpreted in a similar way is exile as a journey. Although these women entered exile at different points in their lives and had quite varied exile experiences, the S-P-G paradigm can be used to analyse their exile experiences. Their origins can be traced back to the time of their exile. Their exile lives might be considered as paths and directions they have travelled. S-P-G influences our concept of "purposeful activity" in addition to organising "movement." These themes can be used to understand the liberation struggle, which is also a constant theme in the

four autobiographies. The liberation struggle qualifies as a 'purposeful activity' because it was performed with a defined objective in mind. The goal of this determined effort was to challenge South Africa's colonial apartheid oppressors, who had refused to leave Namibia peacefully after numerous failed peace talks. The ultimate goal of this endeavour was to liberate Namibia and allow it to become an independent state, through a military confrontation. This is evidenced by statements in autobiographies such as "*the aim was to free Namibia through the barrel of the gun*" (Shinana-Kambombo), "*we will liberate Namibia through the barrel of the gun*" (Amulungu), and "*the struggle had been long and bitter, and came with a huge loss, but victory was now theirs*" (Nghiwete).

#### *The impact of exile on second generation women*

As indicated by the autobiographies analysed, exile has diverse effects on individuals. Returning to Namibia was a joyous occasion for Amulungu and Shinana-Kambombo, the first generation of exiles, because they were finally returning to their home country, for which they had made several sacrifices. Although they were unprepared for what lay ahead for them in the new independent country after many years in exile, they had families and communities to return to, as well as hopes of living in a free Namibia to fulfil. The same cannot be true for second generations whose families and communities lived in exile with them. Returning to Namibia was like going into exile for children and young people born and raised in exile, such as Engombe and Nghiwete, since they were forcibly ripped from what was familiar to them and plunged into the unfamiliar. Nghiwete's mother and the Luanda camp community were all she knew, whilst for Engombe, the other children she travelled to GDR with and their caretakers were her family, and living in German was all she knew, thus returning to Namibia had a significant influence on their lives:

- Returning to Namibia was a new experience. While Nghiwete had her mother to guide her, Engombe had to navigate her relocation on her own; her mother did not understand her, and her father was a member of an opposition party that fought against the organisation that raised her, and



the support system in exile was broken, leaving each to survive on their own.

- While Nghiwete was much younger and had fewer expectations, Engombe was disappointed by what she found: the environment and vegetations were not as she had been led to believe, and the standard of living was deplorable and lower than what she had become accustomed to in the GDR and did not reflect what she and others had been told in exile.
- Engombe and Nghiwete were both taken aback by Namibia's food, language, and manner of life.
- Despite being taught that they were elite of the new Namibia and needed to be prepared to fight for their country, Engombe felt betrayed, lied to, and abandoned by SWAPO when she arrived in Namibia and was left to her own devices.
- Traumatized children from exile were not offered psychiatric assistance but were turned over to parents or relatives who were strangers to them and who were not entirely equipped to deal with or accept children who had experienced exile.

### **Discussions**

This paper's key thesis was that the embodied image schema can be successfully applied to narrative and conceptualise human experiences such as those found in autobiographies for understanding. The article established that embodied experiences manifested themselves at the cognitive level in terms of image schemas; thus, concepts like BALANCE, S-P-G, LINK, and CONTAINER are meaningful because they derive from and are linked to our interaction with other people and our environment, as noted by Johnson (1987). The overall autobiography narratives were discovered to be based on the S-P-G since they are all constructed as a journey, which is the basis of the S-P-G (Cognarts & Kravanja, 2012; Polkinghorne, 2015; Tsaroucha, 2020). The women's experiences are told in chronological order, beginning with their births, and ending with where they were when their autobiographies were published. According to Forceville (2006), this is a third manifestation of the S-P-G schema, which figuratively follows a path from a beginning to a finish via many developments. The journey structure helped to conceptualise physical and abstract journeys undertaken in exile such as educational journeys, matrimonial journeys

and childbearing journeys, etc. All four authors were forcibly removed from their "homeland" and "community," a typical problem shared by all exiles and refugees. This study, however, showed that each woman's experience in exile was unique. According to Rumbaut and Rumbaut (2005), exile is not a uniform journey, but several, and cannot be captured by a single vision, but many, reflecting the various vantage points and framings of different selves, and indeed of the same self across time, in circumstances that never stay the same.

The SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image schema distinguishes between motions that fail to achieve a goal and those that are carried out to achieve a goal, and as Johnson (1993) asserts, the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema is the foundation for human sense-making of both literal and figurative journeys. As a result, this study agrees with previous research that going on a journey, whether abstract or physical, is a common higher-level narrative construction established by the event sequence structure (Gibbs & Steen, 1999; Kövecses, 2005). What distinguishes the many journeys, whether abstract or physical, from the current study's findings is that the narrators were not in most cases responsible for the preparation of the journeys they undertook, both physical and abstract, but rather had theirs organised by SWAPO. The use of "exile" and "SWAPO" as containers in which people were contained can be compared to three-dimensional spaces with inside and outside domains. This schema was utilised to conceptualise the language forms used to describe the non-spatial boundaries associated with living in exile and within SWAPO, such as codes of conduct, rules and regulations, comradeships, duties, and unity. It also allows for the conceptualisation of numerous linguistic forms conveying thoughts, emotions, and metaphorical expressions and comprehended through Taylor's concept of confinement (Taylor, 2012).

Furthermore, LINK image schema gave conceptualisation of how exile experiences weakened or strengthened biological family relationships and brought to light other types of links and connections shown in autobiographies, such as the ideas of comradeship and friendship in exile. For Phiri (2021, p. 48) comradeship and friendship would be one desirable outcome that brings closeness which provides enough justification for its network formation and incentives it provides to the available form in cases of

women autobiographies in Namibia. As biological ties grew distant in exile, comradeship, and the spirit of a common goal solidified bonds as individuals relied on one another for survival. Several historians have identified and explained how exile camps fostered highly different social interactions among inhabitants, including pride in new military abilities, and empowered positions for women (Akawa, 2014; Alexander & McGregor, 2004; West, 2000; Phiri, 2021). The BALANCE image schema was effectively utilised to demonstrate how people and the exile community navigated and overcame multiple problems. For instance, the notion of balance gave a more in-depth conceptualisation of how social equilibrium was maintained, and difficulties were handled.

Further, the article discusses how narratives of the homecomings of exiled children differed from those of adults. While adults returned to their families and places of origin, individuals born and/or raised in exile and attached to their exile locations faced a dilemma because they had no homes to return to in Namibia. Equally, while adult exiles chose to identify themselves as Namibians, second generation exiles were forced to do so because their parents were born or originated in Namibia. The highlighted themes contextualize enough justification to stronger relations and manifestation of comradeship and friendship relations between those in exile and those born in Namibia.

### Conclusion

The embodied image schema was used to investigate how the four authors narrated their various experiences using the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, LINK, BALANCE, and CONTAINER image schematic structures, as well as how the same schematic structure can be used for both the conception and perception of the autobiographies as image schema theory can provide better, more trustworthy literary interpretations (Freeman, 1995, 2002). The article discusses the narrations of all four autobiographies that are based on the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema, which is aimed at accomplishing one's personal goal or a common goal, such as the freedom of the country. It can also be determined that the autobiographies' narration included different alterations to the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema, and that its application had grown beyond personal bodily activities to include mental and thinking actions. The authors used

linguistic phrases based on the CONTAINER IMAGE SCHEMA to communicate their day-to-day experiences as they navigated their everyday lives in various locations such as camps and host countries. Linguistic terms based on this image schema were also discovered to characterise the intensity of the writers' feelings and emotions.

Using the LINK IMAGE SCHEMA, this paper discussed the differences in perceiving Namibia as home or motherland between the first- and second-generation exiles. Adult women were primarily linked to Namibia through relatives, birthplaces, culture, and childhood experiences, while younger women were more attached to the places they grew up in and the people who surrounded them throughout their formative years, even if they were not related to them by blood, kinship, or tradition. Furthermore, the study discovered that the majority of language terms employed is based on the BALANCE IMAGE SCHEMA, usually from an abstract or figurative standpoint; yet this image schema structure was mostly utilised to talk about overcoming cultural shocks, sicknesses, and injustices. All four autobiographies contained the theme of reinforcing positive feelings and behaviours. It is also used to comprehend narratives about seeking justice and fair treatment, maintaining order and discipline in camps, fighting, and overcoming illnesses, going through and overcoming personal challenges, and contributing to the restoration of peace and freedom in Namibia.

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