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Some Basic Digestive Stages and Metaphorical Extension of Hausa Ingestion Verbs

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Abstract:

As in many languages, Hausa has a lexical verb of ingestion Ci, meaning, eat. Not only in Hausa, this consumption verb has been identified as a source of metaphorical mappings into a variety of semantic domains with basic correlates rooted in a real-world experience (Williams, 1991). The paper provides an explanation of some basic digestive acts, viz. ingestion, digestion and absorption, and the various metaphorical mappings which each of the components gives rise to in Hausa. Finding shows that the varieties of experiences of life such as enjoyment sufferance, success, etc. can be conceptualized as something to be consumed.

Keywords: eat, ingestion, metaphorical extension, source domain, target domain

1. Introduction

The digestive system is a group of organs working together to convert food into energy and basic nutrients to feed the entire body (www.google.com.ng). Some of the basic digestive stages to be utilized in the analysis in this paper are ingestion, digestion and absorption. Ingestion is a term which refers to the consumption of a substance by an organism. In animals, it normally is accomplished by taking in the substance through the mouth into the stomach-such as through eating or drinking. While digestion is the process by which ingested material is broken down into a form that can be absorbed and assimilated into the body tissues, absorption is the uptake of fluids or other substances by the tissue of the body (Adamawa state government, 2006; Ramalingam, 2011).

The term *metaphor*, as the etymology of the word reveals, means transference of some quality from one object to another. From the times of ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric, the term has been known to denote the transference of meaning from one word to another (Galperin, 1977). Chapman (1973) observes that metaphor makes analogy by compression of the simile so that the implicit ground of likeness is not verbalized.

Ingestion verbs are verbs that refer to act of eating and drinking. Eating and drinking are basic acts in ordinary human experience and concepts relating to these acts are sources for metaphorical ways of describing a great deal of events in Hausa.

2. Concepts of Metaphorical Extension

A metaphorical extension is the extension of meaning in a new direction through popular adoption of an original metaphorical comparison. It refers to the widening of meaning in lexical item, thus opposed to the process of narrowing. Metaphorical extension is almost a universal and natural process in any language undergone by words in general. This global process is not even perceived in everyday usage as meaning changes. Metaphorical extension can be illustrated using the word, *dog*. If someone had acquired the response *dog* in the presence of several different types of dogs and then saw a *fox* for the first time and said *dog*, that would be an example of metaphorical extension. The response form is collected by the many features a *fox* has that are the same as many of the relevant features of a *dog*. Meaning extension is used in the classification of types of semantic change. It refers to the widening of meaning in a lexical item, thus opposed to the process of narrowing.

The extension of a concept, idea or sign consists of the things to which it applies, in contrast with its comprehension or intension, which consist roughly of the ideas, properties, or corresponding signs that are implied or suggested by the concept in question. In semantics, the extension of a concept or expression is the set of things, it extends to, or applies to, if it is the sort of concept or expression that a single object by itself can satisfy.

All living languages are in a constant state of evolution. Metaphorical usage is an important driving factor in that process of evolution; the blending of concepts within metaphor leads to the diversification of the reference of words used metaphorically. It can occur that a metaphorical usage becomes conventionalized. This, in turn, leads to shifts in the meanings of those words. Metaphorical usage can occur in a variety of forms, including metonymy, synecdoche and euphemism. Thus, metaphorical extension is a linguistic expression where one or more words are used for a concept outside of its normal concept (Lackoff and Johnson, 1980). It is, indeed, a cognitive behavior that involves expanding the capacity of word or concept by increasing a smaller or greater part of it (Geeraerts, 2006).

3. Theoretical Framework

This section expounds how metaphor serves as a cognitive device that is employed in the interpretation of meaning. The theory adopted in analyzing the Hausa ingestion verbs in this paper is the conceptual metaphor Theory discussed by Lackoff and Johnson (1980, 1983 and 2003). Cognitive linguists in persons of Lackoff and Johnson (2003) and Kovecses (2008 and 2010) assert that conceptual or cognitive metaphor refers to the understanding of one idea (source domain) in term of another (target domain). While the source domain is the conceptual entity from which metaphorical expressions are drawn, the target domain is the conceptual entity that we try to understand through the use of source domain. What this means is that, to effectively explain the target domain, one will have to understand the organizational structures of the source domain which are fundamentally concrete in nature.

To know a conceptual metaphor is to know the set of mappings that applies to a given source-target pairing. A mapping is the systematic set of correspondences that exist between constituent elements of the source and the target domain. In fact, many elements of the target concepts come from source domain.

4. Methodology

Unstructured interview and administration of open-ended questionnaire were employed in collecting data for the analysis in this paper. Ten informants were randomly selected and each was administered a questionnaire containing ten questions to respond to. The informants comprise males and females, within the age range of 25 to 70 years.

The type of questions asked are on metaphorical extensions. They are of open format nature as they do not possess predetermined set of responses (Abdulwahab, 2016). Thus, respondent is free and at liberty to answer whatever he/she feels right. In the case of interview, the elderly ones among the respondents who are considered archive of the language were asked the Question: what can you say on metaphorical extensions of Hausa ingestion verbs?

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

The data are presented and analysed simultaneously in this layout: Hausa ingestion verb, literal meaning, understood meaning and analysis. Throughout this paper, the domain of 'eat' will be the source domain; the target domain, as will be seen are four, namely: success domain, sufferance domain, enjoyment domain and experience domain.

5.1. Success Domain

Success is an accomplishment of what one wants to achieve. It is, hereby, looked upon and conceptualized as something to be consumed. Example of this mode of conceptualization is provided below:

	Expression	Literal Meaning	Understood Meaning
i.	Ci fara	Eat white	To be lucky
ii.	Ci gari	Eat town	To be victorious
iii.	Ci gauta	Eat bitter tomato-like fruit	To be successful
iv.	Ci igiya	Eat rope	To get promotion
v.	Ci kwallo	Eat football	To win in competition

What is common in terms of meaning to the above Hausa metaphorical extension is that all sing the song of success. The term *success* is what binds the metaphorical extensions together.

The systematic set of correspondences that exist between the constituent elements of the source 'eat' and the target 'success' domains can be explained thus: ingestion corresponds with the initial attempt at pursuing a goal. Usually, people think and plan on how to succeed in different fields of human endeavours. For example, a person may think of how to excel in education, business, politics, sports, etc. such thought and plan correspond with ingestion, which involves intake of food, followed by mastication, involving, primarily, the teeth and tongue. Digestion which changes food status, especially, solid substance equates with someone becoming absolutely absorbed and engaged practically in pursuit of a goal. Absorption which has to do with body nourishment equates with the eventual success and its sustenance.

5.2. Sufferance Domain

The act of undergoing pain or grief can be described as sufferance. Suffering in pain, misery or adversity, is hereby, conceived as something to be eaten, as is shown below:

	Expression	Literal Meaning	Understood Meaning
i.	Ci kwakwa	Eat coconut	To suffer
ii.	Ci tafiya	Eat journey/trekking	Go on long journey or trek
iii.	Ci kuka	Eat cry	Excessive cry
iv.	Ci duka	Eat beating	Thorough beating

Starting a journey, crying or receiving canes/lashes correspond with ingestion. When the journey/trekking and beating become severe, the condition of the affected person glaringly changes. This practical transformation corresponds with digestion. Arriving at a destination after the rigour of long trek, stoppage of crying and beating respectively, construe with absorption, which indicates nourishment of faces after being subjected to stern conditions and fatigue.

5.3. Enjoyment Domain

Enjoyment is the state or process of taking pleasure in something. It is in this context, perceived as something to be ingested, digested and absorbed. This type of perception is provided, thus:

	Expression	Literal Meaning	Understood Meaning
i.	Ci daji	Eat sweetness	Enjoying every pleasantness
ii.	Ci moriya	Eat benefit	Enjoying every benefit
iii.	Ci duniya	Eat the world	Enjoying every comfort
iv.	Ci daula	Eat the empire	Enjoying great wealth

Testing of pleasantness, benefit, comfort and wealth in the first instance correspond with the process of ingestion. This level is characterized by two main factors: caution and hope. Usually, people are often cautious regarding any new encounter they experience in order to avoid failure. Thus, hopeful that the new-found enjoyment will be sustained. Becoming engrossed in, and engulfed by every joy correspond with digestion. The satisfaction expressed as a result of the continuous sustainability of the enjoyment equates with absorption.

5.4. Experience Domain

Experience is the process or fact of personally observing, encountering, or undergoing something generally as they occur in the course of time. In this context, experience is mentally visualized as something to be consumed the way food is. Example:

	Expression	Literal Meaning	Understood Meaning
i.	Ci ganye	Eat leaves	To gain new experience
ii.	Ci wake	Eat beans	To be pregnant

In Hausa culture, someone who has moved from the rural area to the urban centre is considered to have eaten leaves, i.e., gain new experience. Normally, villages have different setup, organization and outlook from the towns and cities. While the former has simple organization, the latter have advanced and sometimes complex structure.

The start of pregnancy and the first contact with the city map with ingestion. Ingestion which marks the beginning of the overall process of digestion correspond with the beginning of conception or someone going to the city for the first time. The gradual development of pregnancy to maturity with its attendant pain and agony, as well as, the difficult process of acclimatization by a villager who goes to the city correspond with digestion, the biological process that breaks down ingested material.

Acclimating or habituating to a new environment by the villager, and an instance of childbirth correspond to the uptake of fluids or other substances by the tissues of the body.

6. Conclusion

The consumption verb- *eat* has proved to be a productive, hence, significance source domain in many languages across the world. The preceding discussion has provided a brief summary of metaphorical mappings which rely upon the Hausa lexical item-*Ci*, meaning, *eat* as a source domain.

Furthermore, the aforementioned discussion has served in documenting and stressing the richness of the conceptual mappings between the eating domain and other domains in Hausa. The other domains identified by the paper are success domain, sufferance domain, enjoyment domain and experience domain.

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