

THE CONCEPT OF COOK AND EAT: A SEMANTICS ASPECT OF COOK AND EAT VERBS IN EWE

Emmanuel Dogbey

Department of Ewe Education,
College of Language Education, Ajumako
University of Education, Winneba
edogbey78@gmail.com

Abstract

*The discourse of this paper is on properties of meaning surrounding COOK and EAT verbs in Ewe. Cooking and eating are crucial activities undertaken by flora and fauna species. These phenomena are universal, easily perceptible and basic in human classifications. Conceptualizing COOK and EAT is subjective and differs across languages and contexts. The Ewe language uses descriptive sets of rich mechanisms to establish meaning and its variants. The concept of COOK and EAT have fine-grained meaning relations on events and contexts, defining their performances. A cursory look is also taken on swallowing verbs which are negligible end products of eating. The study finds **da** and **du** respectively depicting 'cook' and 'eat' in Ewe and there are verbs that elicit other cooking and eating forms under each. The concepts show 'we cook to eat and we eat cooked foods' as we describe the processes, manner and other factors defining cook and eat actions. The cooking and eating verbs describe the medium and process in which the 'cooking' and the 'eating' take place. Detailed discussions on the concepts and relations about cooking and eating in Ewe reveal the presence of precise and specific verbs establishing the meanings. Exploring syntactic constructions and effects of the verbs reveal descriptive and typological perspectives persuading their meanings. The data drawn is by elicitation from two adult respondents each from four major dialect regions of the Ghana Ewe groups (Anlo, Avenor, Tongu and Evedome). These native-speakers were consulted using recorded cook and eat video scripts and still pictures from the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 Department of Ewe Education Students' Week Celebrations in the University of Education, Winneba.*

Keywords: Concept, semantics, cook and eat, intelligibility, verbs, telicity

Introduction

The concepts surrounding verbs interrogated in this paper are about cooking and eating in Ewe. Eating and cooking constitute an important interrogative domain worthy of attention across language studies. This meaning domain or semantic field considers only the cooking and eating processes not how the food was prepared before the cooking processing; however, it embodies foods that are eaten raw without any 'cooking' process. Cooking and eating verbs are used in this paper to designate actions that portray the class of verbs that describe a cooking process that is taking place in or out of a liquid medium and eating involving mastication or swallowing and drinking. The classification of the verbs is on describing cooking events with shallow, whole or not involvement of liquid but other media and eating involving mastication, swallowing and drinking processes. The concept of using an instrument in the eating and cooking processes spells the nature of the prepared food and how it must be eaten. Both cooking and eating processes are chemical changes, hence are irreversible. There is a total change of object forms when cooking and eating processes are experienced.

The paper focuses on cooking and eating terms and considers the medium of cooking and manner of eating. The study adopted a psycho-conceptual methodology of data collection using video clips and still pictures depicting different scenes of cooking and eating events. The deep concepts surrounding the meaning of cook and eat events in Ewe require the use of very explicit verbs to describe meticulously the differences they exhibit and refer to. In this discussion, the paper aims at deepening our understanding of the concept of cook and eat in the Ewe language, its entailments, relations and components in meaning.

Purpose of the study

This study is purposed to explore the telicity of the semantics of verbs used for Cook and Eat events in Ewe and how they are derived and interpreted.

Research questions

- i. How are Cook and Eat events elicited in Ewe?
- ii. How are the meanings of Cook and Eat events conceptualized and interpreted in Ewe?

Method and data

The study employed an experimental methodology using the cook and eat video stimuli to elicit data from eight native-speaker consultants. The use of two speakers from the purposively selected Ewe dialect groups in Ghana was to help validate the term as well as identify any variations in the verbs with regard to the type of food, how it is cooked and eaten across the dialect lines. In all, the elicitation occurred on 19 short video clips. This means, data were largely derived from the elicitation of responses from the eight native-speaker participants using these video clips. The video clips portrayed and presented a description of cooking and eating events involving the use of (water, oil, sand, dry pan, naked fire, hot air or smoke, oven, or use instruments like the hand, spoon, spatula, stirrer and others. etc.). The elicitations are descriptions of the actions depicting cook and eat and the state changes observed.

The elicitation process was descriptively carried out where each participant was to, first of all, observe the action and describe it as depicted in the video clips. The participant was to again provide the appropriate expression or terminology that singularly be fitted the description of the scene or the event. The researcher and the participants held detailed discussions on the serendipity and suitability of one verb over the other regarding the cook or eat scene. Features that enumerated the scenes

to adopt, and accept a given verb for a peculiar scene of cook and eat were also interrogated and explained. This gave out a gamut of other culturally specific and acceptable verbs that denote cook and eat events to be elicited by the participants through vivid descriptions that supplemented what was observed in the video clips. These relevant verbs or the descriptions provided information on other contexts where the verb can occur. This also provided a fundamental basis on events where the verbs are believed to have originated from then employed into cook or eat or distributed to function in that other event.

The analysis indicated some of these specifications. Expressions from the researcher's native speaker intuitions also provided ample data on COOK and EAT. Some of these expressions were crossed checked in discussions with the consultants. Secondary data sources from Ewe dictionaries and works of scholars in Ewe (Adjei, 2012; 2014, Amegashie 2008; Duthie 1996) provided a valuable corpus of supplementary data for the study.

Results and the Discussions

The discussions on cooking or cook in this study regarding verbs that depict this event did not consider the preparation of the ingredients before the cooking action was carried out. The researcher limited the event or scenes of the action of cooking after all the ingredients were prepared and made set for the 'actual' cooking to occur. As indicated in the introduction of this study, cooking which is the practice or skill of preparing food by combining, mixing, kneading and heating ingredients using naked fire, oil, heat, vapour or hot air among others is described by different verbs culturally accepted in Ewe. This section of the study discusses the meaning properties verbs that elicit the semantic form of the verb as a process of cooking or its concept in a defined medium.

COOK verbs

Cook verbs and their meanings in Ewe are signified by the medium of preparation and the syntactic factors that enumerate them. This enshrined the verbs to function in context. It also gives a vivid account and of the environment for their descriptions. These descriptions substantiate that the verbs and their actions are culturally fixed, fit and exist in the language. It also satisfies the assumption that the grammatical features of a language are not studied in isolation but in sentence order. This helps in revealing their contextual efficacy, functional specificity and feasibility in describing an event. Semantically, one of the most important meaning components identified on the verbs is that the meanings inherently revolve around the process medium of the cooking and the name of the finished product. The use of instruments such as a spoon, ladle, frying pan, griller, oven and others to perform the cooking remains negligible. The medium refers to liquid, conventional, vapour or any form of an air current.

Thus, the medium of cooking elicits the culturally accepted verb and specifies its semantic implications. The medium is conceptually acquired and right the verb is mentioned, native speaker competence informs on the medium of the cooking and what it inherently marks, hence is left out in the expression. This feature significantly differentiates the various cooking terms elicited by the verbs. Another factor is whether the use of the verb involves the use of fire in the cooking. It is surprising to find some cooking processes as those not involving fire though it is generally conceptualized in many languages that cooking processes are always associated with fire. Verbs of cooking also occur within transitive, ditransitive and intransitive constructions as well as in passive or middle construction reading. Example (1) is a transitive construction and an agent can be introduced referring to an instrument used in performing the cooking but the end product of the cooking is mentioned as the object. This fixed structure remains and the name of the end product of depicting what is

cooked is always mentioned. Let us take note that (2a) is not acceptable in Ewe because of the type of construction expressed in the sentence is not intransitive, it is a middle construction. Ewe avoids middle constructions. Nevertheless, the construction (2b) is intransitive and it is acceptable because of the presence of the affirmative particle *kple* which informs on the type of instrument used in the cooking. In this context, the construction is understood to have been caused by an unexpressed agent in an intransitive clause.

(1) *E- ða akple*
 3SG cook akple
 ‘S/he cooked akple.’

(2) a. **Akple -e ða*
 Akple INT cook
 ‘Akple cooks.’

b. *E- ða akple kple ati*
 3SG cook akple with stick
 ‘S/he cooked akple with a stick.’

The third factor is an indication of whether the food is completely cooked or not. This inherently involved the application of fire.

3. *E- ða akple wò -bi*
 3SG cook akple PRON cooked well
 ‘S/he cooked akple well.’

The fourth factor is also the resultant state of the cooking whether it cooks well, bad or whatever.

4a. *E- ða akple wò -fiã*
 3SG cook akple PRON burnt
 ‘S/he burnt the akple .’

Other verbs that describe the state of the cooked food are *gbɔ* (uncooked), *wɔ tsi* (watery), *to ku* (full of pellets).

4b. *E- ða akple wò -gbɔ*
 3SG cook akple PRON burnt
 ‘S/he burnt the akple .’

There are different verbs used to describe cooking events in Ewe based on the medium of cooking. The following examples (1 to 7) present the summaries of some of COOK verbs with their meanings followed by the discussion of their semantics.

1. *ða* [dã]: ‘cook’ (to cook). The verb functions as a generic term for cooking; however, it refers to cooking specifically in water through the application of fire. It could be cooking of things in dough forms, grains, or in slices using water as the primary medium. The verb applies to all forms of boiling processes. Foods cooked (boiled) in water which uses this verb include the cooking of rice in any form (balls, plain, jellof, etc), *akple* (a local staple food for Ewes

prepared from corn flour or doughs of corn or cassava mixed with corn), slices of yam, sweet potatoes, cocoyam, maize and others. Boiling water, herbs and vegetables also uses the verb *ɔa*. Considering the use of the verb in sentences, what is cooked is used as the object of the verb making the verb occurring within transitive forms mostly in the language than intransitive forms.

- a) *ɔa* *akple* (cook akple)
- b) *ɔa* *mɔli* (cook/boil rice)
- c) *ɔa* *te* (cook/boil yam)
- d) *ɔa* *gbe* (cook/boil herbs)
- e) *ɔa* *tsi* (boil water)

It is observed that when the verb is used intransitively, it changes to *bi*, giving a meaning of the completeness of the cooking or the food is cooked and ready to be served and for consumption. It might be acceptable to say *akplea ɔa* (the akple cooks), *tea ɔa* (the yam is cooked), *tsia ɔa* (the water is cooked), *ɲɔɔ ɔae* (the sun/sunlight cooked it) and others but native speaker competence in the language is displayed through the use of the verb *bi*. In this regard, *akplea ɔa* becomes *akplea bi* (Akple is well cooked and ready for consumption. *mɔlia ɔa* becomes *mɔlia bi* (the rice is cooked) either than that it will just refer to the rice is boiled. It can be boiled but not cooked completely for consumption. *tea ɔa* becomes ‘*tea bi*’ (the yam is cooked) and *tsia ɔa* becomes *tsia bi* (the water is cooked).

To boil something or when a liquid begins to boil, it is denoted by the use of the verb *fie* in the language. For instance, *tsia fie* (the water boils or is boiling) *koklozia fie* (the egg boils or is boiling) does not mean *koklozia bi* (the egg cooks or is cooked). The movement of the sea waves is also expressed as the sea is boiling (*Atsiafua fie / Atsiafua le fiefiem*). Though the progressing form of verbs in Ewe is expressed as *lem* and *nɔm* to for present or past events marking respectively, the concepts boil as expressed mean the boiling is still in progress without the use of the progressive form. Here, the speaker conceptualizes and interprets *tsia fie* and *tsia le fiefiem* with same meaning concept. It is worth stating that steaming and boiling use the same verb term *ɔa* in Ewe. Let us also clarify that warming and heating are not cooking processes but somehow post-cooking processes in some instances and are not described among cooking terms and verbs in Ewe. This ruled out temperature terms and verbs used to express temperature from cooking verbs in this paper. The same applies to the fact that when a liquid or food on fire begins to boil, it is expressed as ‘*ɔe luloe*’ (begins to boil) but does not mean the food cooked (‘*ɔa*’ or ‘*bi*’).

2. *tɔ [tɔ]*: The verb signifies cooking but in the liquid medium of using oil or in the solid medium of using soil in a pan or empty heated pan.
 - a) *tɔ bli* (roast maize)
 - b) *tɔ azi* (roast groundnut)
 - c) *tɔ bli le ami me* (roast maize in oil)
 - d) *tɔ lã* (fry fish or meat)
 - e) *tɔ te* (fry yam)
 - f) *zɔ gari* (roast gari)

Unlike in Ewe where the patient (the food item) determines the conceptual medium in which the cooking is taking place to the speakers as in oil, in soil fetch in a bowl or a plain bowl, in English, the verb (fry, roast) conceptualizes the medium of the cooking and uses the patient as a complement

in the transitive construction. In English, fry generally means cooking in oil while roast refers to cooking in a plain bowl or a bowl filled with an amount of soil. Ewe roast food items like groundnut, maize and other cereals and legumes in hot soil in bowls over fire. In Ewe, the verb *tɔ* stands for both frying and roasting and native speakers elicit the medium when the food item is mentioned. In examples (d) and (e) the native speaker identifies the medium (as oil) right the patience (object) is mentioned. The native speaker intuition directly knows that the cooking is taking place in oil but in (a) and (b), the speaker intuition is eliciting the medium as either in soil or plain bowls. The expression in (f) directly identifies the medium as in plain bowl but in (c), there is a contention as the medium can be either oil, soil or plain bowl hence a specificity is declared as the medium of cooking is mentioned (the maize is roasted in oil).

The use of ‘*tɔ*’ is always expressed to mean frying or roasting. However, frying in this context always signifies deep frying or complete immersion in hot oil. Foods fried in Ewe include yam, potatoes, meat, fish, *kaklo* (doughs or puddings of corn, cassava, beans, maize etc) and the roasted ones include grains of maize, groundnut, beans and other cereals. The verbs occur transitively and intransitively in sentences. When an amount of soil is put in a bowl over fire and maize or groundnut is poured into it and roasted or an empty bowl is heated over fire and maize or groundnut is roasted in it, *tɔ* is used to elicit that event.

3. *me* [*mè*]: The verb *me* indicates a method of cooking in a fire, in heat or over a fire or heat.

The verb is used to indicate grilling, baking and roasting or literally as burning food in the naked fire. The semantic interpretation of this verb according to native-speaker-understanding occurs only if used transitively. The intransitive usage will depict the same concept of cooking over or in heat or fire but not the culturally accepted form among the speakers.

Me abolo (Baked bread)

Me te (roast yam)

4. *yiyi* [*yìyì*]: This verb categorically indicates cooking food by smoking. Smoking of fish, meat and others demand the use of the verb *yiyi* in Ewe.
yiyi lã (Smoked fish)
5. *fo* [*fò*]: The food preparation method that uses the verb *fo* is that which involves preparing liquid foods and foods in the plasma state.
 - a) *fo detsi* (prepare soup)
 - b) *fo koko* (prepare porridge)
6. *fie tsi*: this refers to the parboiling of food items.
 - a) *fie tsi lã* (parboil fish/meat)
 - b) *fie tsi agbitsa* (parboil garden egg)
7. *to*: refers to pounding. Fufu (pounded cooked cassava or cooked cassava or yam mixed with cooked plantain or cocoyam and pounded together).

EAT Verbs

The verbs depicting acts of eating in Ewe also bear the generic term “*ɔ̀*” and as stated earlier as COOK verbs. A thing, whether edible, wearable or whatever is in existence is generically denoted as *nu*; so *ɔ̀ ɔ̀ nu*, *ɔ̀ nu*, *do nu* literarily refers to cook a thing, eat a thing and wear things respectively across contexts. The eat verbs in Ewe display several semantic and syntactic factors which showcase their meanings and gratify them for context-specific roles. One specific property of EAT verbs in Ewe is that they do not require obligatorily instruments to substantiate their meaning. However, the

hand is conceptualized as a special natural tool associated with eating. Apart from the hand, a spoon is also used or the food is drunk from the cup. The description of these manners of EAT events; either with a spoon, hand or sipping directly from a cup or if one is eating the food by himself or being fed are elicited by different verbs as found in the discussions in this section.

In Ewe, the concept of EAT verbs embeds swallowing, however processes of eating attract the use of verbs such as *ka* (cut/bite with teeth a small portion), *dɔdɔ* (to lick), *dɔ* (to taste), *gbugbo* (to suck in), *lã* (to cut in substantially larger parts) and *mi* (to swallow). Speakers describe the manner of eating using cut verbs to qualify eating events; *lã* (to cut a solid vertical thing into two separate portions), *sẽ* (to cut into two), *tso* (to cut to separate at a fast speed), *ha* (to cut and eat fast). All these involve the use of the hand as an instrument, but the instrument is not an important part of the semantics of the eat verb.

The meaning of the eating focuses on the manner but not the instrument. Additionally, causative agents are not required to elicit the meaning of the verb. The manner of eating can be described spontaneously using verbs associated with the EAT events and their concepts. One other important area of the deriving meaning of EAT verbs is about the state of the objects being eaten. Solid and liquid are the main states of food observed in Ewe. The same class of verbs used to portray the eating of liquid foods is used to elicit the eating of foods in the plasma state. Such foods include soup, porridge, tea or yogurt and others. In their syntactic states, they function both transitively and intransitively. The verbs and discussion of their semantics are as follows:

Ewe Eat verbs on solid foods

1. *dɔ* [dù]: (eat) the verb denotes eating by mastication of solid foods
dɔ akple: (eat akple)
dɔ mɔli: (eat rice)
dɔ te: (eat yam)
dɔ atike: (chew medicine)

Other verbs in English that have the same meaning as *dɔ* in Ewe to mark mastication include graze, chew, gnaw and others. Medicines can be in liquid or solid states hence the solid ones are chewed. However, the verb *no* is used for medicines in capsule, liquid and plasma states (see example 7)

2. *dɔ* [dɔ́]: (*taste*) this refer to eating by a small part of food to sense its palatability.
3. *dɔdɔ*: (*lick*) indicates using the tongue to taste the palatability of a food item.
4. *gbugbo* [gbūgbɔ́] : (*suck*) this is to use one's lips to such a solid surface or to extract liquid from an object.
5. *mi* [mi] (swallow) indicate the engulfing of soft or solid foods which do not need mastication.

The verb *mi* is used to elicit the eating of a common food called fufu among the Ewe people. It is often made from cooked and pounded cassava, yam, plantain and cocoyam. Syntactically, all these verbs need a causative agent to function in the subject position before the intransitivity is portrayed.

- 6.a) *Akple -e wò- dɔ*
Akple -INT 2SG- eat
 's/he eats/ate akple'/It is akple s/he ate (has eaten)
- b) *Mɔli - e wò -dɔ*
mɔli -INT 2SG- eat
 's/he eats/ate rice'/It is rice s/he ate (has eaten)

Ewe Eat verbs on liquid and plasma foods

Foods found in liquid and plasma states are commonly elicited with the verb *no* (to drink). Some liquid foods among the Ewes are soup, porridge, milk, and water. Water is a special food among the Ewe people and in some communities, one must drink water right after washing one's face in the morning. The verbs function transitively and intransitively

7. No tsi (drink water)
No detsi (drink soup)
No dzogbɔ (drink porridge)
No anyitsi (drink honey)
No atike (drink medicine)

The transitive forms of the verbs occur as in example 6. Other verbs that signify the eating of a liquid or plasma food are given below:

8. Kplɔ tsi (sip water)
Kplɔ detsi (sip soup)
Kplɔ dzogbɔ (sip porridge)

The eat verb *kplɔ* describes the process of drinking liquid with the lips (sipping). When an instrument such as a tube is used to sip or siphon a liquid, the verb changes to *yɔ*.

9. *do* [dó]: this EAT verb is used when the beneficiary of the eating event is different from the agent who is acting. We can say when someone is feeding another person, the EAT verb *do* is used. The use of the verb *do* shows that the person or agent is not eating by himself/her self/itself. But if the person is eating the porridge or taking the liquid food by him or herself, *no* [nò] is the verb used. The following examples show the differences.
 - a. no dzogbɔ (drink porridge)
 - b. do dzogbɔ (na ɖevi)
'feed porridge' (to a child).

For example (a), the agent is the same as the beneficiary and drinks the porridge by herself but in example (b), the beneficiary is different from the agent. It is found as the only culturally accepted to use the verb for only foods in the solid and plasma states but not for liquid states. The food is conceptualized to be eaten with hand (fingers) or with spoon. When the food is in the liquid and plasma states and the beneficiary of the eating event is different from the agent or the perpetrator of the action, the verb *kpe* [kpé] is used. In this sense the cup is put at the lips/mouth of the beneficiary to feed from. An instrument like hand or spoon can be used in the feeding process.

- c. kpe tsi (feed water)
kpe detsi (feed soup)
kpe dzogbɔ (feed porridge)

The verbs here can be used intransitively and the structure will appear like the one in the example

The syntax of COOK and EAT verbs in Ewe

I will discuss a little on the syntax of COOK and EAT (E & E) verbs in this section. The syntactic properties of the COOK and EAT verbs concerning their lexico-semantic structure present cross-

linguistic literature on verb semantics, verb functions and structures. According to Atintono (2019) and Adjei (2014), there are aspects of meaning encoded in the lexical semantics structure of a verb. Atintono asserts that this determines the types of arguments and the thematic relations holding meanings between them. These also define the relevant syntactic structures that the verb can occur with. It holds an argument that the semantic properties of COOK and EAT verbs encode the relevant information to determine the syntactic structures occurring with the verbs. This confirms a unique syntactic structure of the language where a constituent order elicits who does what to whom. Here, the doer (agent, subject) comes first followed by what is done (the verb), followed by the one to whom it is done (the object) and may at times be followed by a recipient action.

The C & E argument in Ewe is also found supporting serial verb construction or the concept of serializing verbs. Atintono (2005:57) refers to the serialization of verbs as a phenomenon that submits a sequence of verbs or verb phrases occurring in a clause but expressing a single event, as well as sharing the same subject without necessarily sharing the same object. The verb-serialization system in the Ewe language is a mono-clausal construction and C&E verbs also conform to it. These verbs also present a system in which a series of finite verbs occur without any connector and indicates a syntactic dependence unit. Adjei (2012; 2014) observes that some serial verb constructions have serializing connectives that link verbs. For instance, ‘ hé ’ is used for marking or constructing sequential or simultaneous relations and ‘ v̄a ’ is used for purpose relations or relations of purpose. In the serial verbs system of Ewe, all the verbs use the same subject which is expressed only once, and each verb can occur with its own complements and adverbial modifiers to define a transitive or intransitive structure. The agents, instruments and beneficiaries found in the data analysis of C&E verbs lend a support to this in this study.

Adopting the assertions of Guerssel et al. (1985), this paper generalizes that different participatory privileges are enabling C & E verbs to exhibit a syntax of causative/inchoative alternations in their distributions. Scholars (Ameka & Essegbey 2007; Amegashie, 2004; 2008; Bohnemeyer, 2007; Duthie 1996) have seen this as a point of reference for a cross-linguistic discussion of argument structures and this study found it useful to employ it on C& E verbs. In the views of Haspelmath (1990:90; 2010) causative/inchoative verb alternation is about the same basic ongoing situation of change of state but differs only in that causative verb meanings. In this study, it includes an agent or medium (water, oil, soil, vapour) which is causing the situation (the cooking state/term and process).

It is observed in this study that causative/inchoative is not applicable to EAT verbs but to COOK verbs only, However, it is interesting to find that the verb form in the inchoative construction or structure changes to the culturally accepted one *bi* as expressed in (c) below.

10. a. Nyɔnu la ɖa agbeli (The woman cooked rice *causative*)
- b. Agbeli la ɖa (The cassava cooked *inchoative*)
- c. Agbeli la bi (the cassava is cooked)
- d. Agbeli lae nyɔnu la ɖa (the cassava was cooked by the woman)

Another observation is that the verb form in (a) is transitive and that of (b, c, d) is intransitive. It is prudent to also note that (a, b, c) present active voice while (d) presents passive voice. The interpretation of (d) gives a perfect translation of the passive voice form. It invites the use of intensifier (-e) and the subject noun with its determiner as in example (11)

11. Agbeli la-e nyɔnu la ɖa
 Cassava DET – INT woman DET cook
 ‘The cassava was cooked by the woman’

Though the voice function in English contributes to the differentiation of the inchoative verb forms from the causative, this is not the case in Ewe. Atintono (2019) exemplifies with an observation on some languages and states that languages such as Russian have specialized verb forms used for constructing structures showing differences in basic and derived inchoative forms. He asserts, citing (Haspelmath, 1993:81;2010) that the causative and transitive verb *rasplavit* ‘melt’ in Russian is the basic form and the inchoative *rasplavit’-sja* ‘melt’ which is intransitive is derived from it. We can put forth an argument here that the semantic properties of C&E verbs influence the syntactic structure of the verbs. Also, the semantic properties of these verbs are determined by manner, process, medium and not instrument or agent. There seems an established notion of heat or fire when the concept of cooking comes into play and the notion of mastication and swallowing when the concept of eating comes into play. One can make a general remark about the syntax of Ewe that the language permits transitive and intransitive constructions but does not mark passive and middle constructions as in English. Passive forms are long descriptions involving much syntactic structure (see. It is cassava the woman cooked).

The semantic classes of COOK and EAT verbs described in this paper have it that part of their lexical-semantic structure portrays a chemical change. The change is brought about by the medium that provides an environment for the object to occur or be affected and be described by the verb. In the case of EAT verbs, it is observed that the hidden concept of swallowing surrounding EAT events validates the mouth as the setting. Foods are eaten in the mouth then get swallowed. If any other instrument is used apart from the mouth and its organs such as teeth and tongue, the event is described as *tu* (grind). Hence machines and tools such as mills grind (*tu*) and animals eat (*ɔ*). Eating and grinding involve a kind of breaking down and mastication processes but the objects involve, animate things and machines also help elicit the verb to be used.

Towing the line of Haspelmath (1993:90) and Haspelmath (2010) who says that transitive verbs correspond to the causative agent while the intransitive align with the inchoative, we can observe that the data shows that the C&E verbs participate in the causative-inchoative alternation and occur within transitive or intransitive constructions. The transitive status of these verbs is found in constructions that require a subject agent to perform the event on a patient or object which is the food item. These verbs also present information about the manner, nature and medium through which the effect is experienced. In some cases, the specific medium is mentioned to ascertain that the verb can occur in a different medium but the process will be described as such or the medium determines the concept of the verb and the patient to use as in (d) and (2a, 2b, 2c, 2d).

12. a. Tɔ bli le ami me
‘Roast maize Pp oil PP
Roast maize in oil
- b. Tɔ bli le ke me
‘Roast maize Pp soil PP’
‘Roast maize in soil’
- c. Tɔ bli le agba me
Roast maize Pp bowl PP
‘Roast maize’
- d. Tɔ lã
‘fry fish/ meat’

- e. Nyɔnu la tɔ bli
 Woman DET roast maize
 ‘The woman roasts maize’
- f. Nyɔnu la tɔ lã
 Woman DET fry meat/fish
 ‘The woman fries meat/fish’

A subject can be introduced as in (12e) and (12f) as the agent participating in the event on the patient. The medium also informs on effects meted onto the patient to attain the change of form; that is roasted, toasted or fried. Here, we can say the verb form labile and does not show any changes but the medium and patience elicit the changes for the accepted descriptions. The syntax of C& E verbs is found to be lexical-semantic structures requiring an agent to perpetrate the action, media to designate the environments of the action and a patient who must suffer the effects of the event so as to reflect or record a change of state or form in its shape.

Conclusions

The paper discussed the telicity of the semantics of COOK and EAT events in Ewe and their syntactic typology. The C&E verbs present a typology where the medium and the patient determines the verb meaning to the speaker. The elicited verbs on cooking are identified as cooking in water, in oil, in over, over a fire and with hot air over water or coal fire. Also, the EAT verbs are classified on whether they advocate the employment of mastication or its absence. Also, the state of the object being eaten again influences the choice of the verb, thus, if the food item is in the liquid or plasma state or is in the solid or powdery state. Both C&E verbs are found in transitive and intransitive constructions as well as in passive constructions. It is found that they do not necessarily require the use of an instrument, hence instruments such as fire, spoons and sticks are count negligible in the descriptions and do not contribute to the semantic properties.

Another important discovery is that the verbs of C&E events provide very specific descriptions of different cooking and eating events and these verbs provide further insights from the Ewe data. It elucidates that the semantics of C&E verbs and their choices in contexts are not affected by dialectal contacts. This challenges future researchers to investigate if new verbs, especially of COOK and EAT, can be found in the language in the advent of globalization and cross-cultural foods. It also calls for interrogating the metaphors of cook and eat events in Ewe.

Recommendations

Exploring the concepts describing actions and meaning is helpful in eliciting words as well as developing vocabularies in languages. This study recommends a conceptual exploration behind actions for effective interpretation and derivation of meaning. For effective language acquisition and interlingua study of linguistic forms across languages and dialects, the study recommends conceptual interplay to facilitate easy transfer and consolidation of learning expectations. Language documentation and language typological researchers are expected to explore the conceptual semantic bases for the effectiveness of their works. Researchers in literature, culture and anthropology are to explore the terminologists, concepts and ideas behind words, actions, and expressions in stories, practices and the entire way of life of a people. This will help in appreciating and resolving conflicts. It is believed that there is a story behind any form of action, behaviour and conduct of a person, hence exploring the concepts behind all life activities of a person and how they are described for meanings is laudable for effective elicitation and interpretation.



REFERENCES

- ▶ Adjei, F. A. (2012). *Temperature System of SiyasE and Ewe*. Selected Proceedings of the 41st Annual Conference on African Linguistics, ed. Bruce Connell and Nicholas Rolle, 104-116. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- ▶ Adjei, F. A. (2014). *Children's use of nyá constructions in Ewe*. *Journal of West African Languages*. Volume 41, Number 1
- ▶ Ameagashie, S. K. (2004). *Evegbe ɲɔɲɔa*. (Writing Ewe. Afiao: Victus Pub.
- ▶ Ameka, F. K. & Essegbey, J. (2007). Cut and Break verbs in Ewe. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 18-2: 241-250.
- ▶ Atintono, S. A. (2005). Serial verb constructions in Gurene: An overview. In G.S.K. Adika and Kofi Ackah (eds), *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 16: 55-71.
- ▶ Atintono, S. A. (2019). The semantic properties of separation verbs in Gurene. *Journal of West African Languages*. Volume 46, Number 1.
- ▶ Bohmeyer, J. (2007). Morpholexical transparency and the argument structure of verbs of cutting and breaking. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 18(2), 157-177.
- ▶ Duthie, A. S. (1996). *Introducing Ewe Linguistic patterns*. Accra: Ghana Univ. Press.
- ▶ Haspelmath, M. (1990). "The grammaticization of passive morphology". *Studies in Language* 14.1:25-71.
- ▶ Haspelmath, M. (1993) "More on the typology of inchoative/causative verb alternations." In: Comrie, Bernard & Polinsky, Maria (eds.) *Causatives and transitivity*. *Studies in Language Companion Series*, 23: 87-120.
- ▶ Haspelmath, M. (2010) "Framework-free grammatical theory." In: Heine, Bernd & Narrog, Heiko (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of grammatical analysis*.341-365.
- ▶ Lawson, R. M. (2008). *Evegbe fe tutuɔ*. (*The Structure of Ewe*). Afiao: Victus Pub