

The lexical and grammatical extensions of *gaba* ‘chest’ in Hausa

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Abstract

This paper studies the cognitive conceptualization of the body part term *gaba* ‘chest’ in Hausa language based on the *embodiment hypothesis*. The Conceptual Metaphor theory is used as the framework for analysis. The data in this paper was collected from various texts, from which expressions containing the term *gaba* were extracted. The expressions containing figurative usage of the term were selected and analyzed based on their domains of extension. The data shows that the term *gaba* has been extended into various domains of usage. It has also been grammaticalized into spatial and temporal domains. The results of the analysis further suggest that linguistic expressions of abstract concepts depend on syntactic influences within the phraseological units of the term.

Keywords: *metaphor, metonymy, embodiment, conceptual domain, grammaticalization*

1. Introduction

Hausa (Chadic, Afro-Asiatic) is arguably the largest West African language in terms of demography, and one of the most spoken African languages in modern times, second only to Swahili. In Nigeria, Hausa is spoken across the entire north not just as the first language of millions of people, but is also the regional lingua franca. It is also spoken by large populations in neighboring countries of Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Sudan, and Ghana.

Given its sociolinguistic significance, studies in Hausa language have been very robust over the past two centuries, producing tremendous linguistic and anthropological literature on the

language and its people. These studies, however, have been biased towards descriptivism, a model of linguistics that became the vogue of the 20th and 21st centuries. That means, most of the studies in Hausa, and indeed African languages were centrally structural, to the disadvantage of other linguistics models, especially the cognitive approach.

Although there is an obvious increase of interest in the cognitive study of language, with works such as Almajir (2013), Batic (2006, 2011, 2017), Batic and Baldi (2015), Pawlak (2009, 2014), Gwarzo (2015), Ibrahim (2018), Will (2019), Shehu (2018, 2019, 2020), among others, focusing on various cognitive aspects, it is evident from the depth and breadth of the existing literature, that there are still vital questions that are open for further cognitive research.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyze the semantic and grammatical extensions of the body part term *gaba* ‘chest’, thereby adding to the body of literature on Hausa embodiment and providing a case study and further data on the cognitive linguistic model, in general.

Hausa linguists categorize the language into seven regional dialects, which are divided into Eastern (Kano, Zaria, Bauchi, and Daura) and Western (Sokoto and Gobir), all in Northern Nigeria and Southern Niger. This is without disregard for emerging varieties in Ghana, Cameroon, and other neighboring countries. The scope of the data used in this study is limited to the Kano dialect, which approximates the so-called standard Hausa, often used in formal writing and the media.

The data used in this study were collected from two different mini-corpora. One of these is a corpus developed by Izabela Will. The mini-corpus contains hundreds of thousands of words collated from various texts, including novels, prose, newspapers, and religious texts.

The second source is the electronic version of the popular Hausa text *Magana Jari Ce* by Abubakar Imam (1937), provided by Nina Pawlak. For the purposes of ethics and best research practices, the use of these documents as sources of data was expressly authorized

by the compilers, who in turn, are believed to have sought the copyright approval of the authors of the texts before compiling or converting the documents.

A search of the term *gaba* yielded over a thousand hits on both copra, from which relevant expressions were selected for the purposes of this study. The selected expressions containing the term *gaba* were grouped based on their semantic usage, and are analyzed based on the cognitive conceptualizations, cognitive mechanisms and domains of experience understood from the figurative senses in which these expressions were used.

2. The Embodiment Hypothesis

Cognitive linguistics investigates the connection between human cognition and language, both at the mental and linguistic levels. Research in the field over the decades has yielded sufficient evidence on the role of the human body in linguistic conceptualization and expression. This phenomenon is studied under the *embodiment hypothesis*.

The role of the human bodily experience in linguistics was first stressed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and further developed by subsequent research within and beyond cognitive linguistics (see for instance, Gibbs, 2006; Kövecses, 2005; Kraska-Szlenk, 2014; Rohrer, 2007; Sharifian, et al., 2008; McPherron & Ramanathan, 2011, among others). The data and findings in the existing literature on various languages and cultures of the world provide substantial evidence of the validity of the *embodiment hypothesis* in terms of linguistic conceptualization and expression.

The theoretical foundation of the linguistic *embodiment* is known as *experientialism*, which assumes that the human bodily experience within the environment forms the basis of human linguistic conceptualization. Understandably, human experience has to be encoded *via* cognitive mechanisms that allow for the processing of these experiences within the human mental faculty, further aiding these refined experiences to understand various concepts

connected to the experiences, and to finally develop linguistic constructions to express these concepts.

There are, therefore, two levels of conceptualization: mental concepts and the linguistic expressions that instantiate and communicate these concepts. At this level, cognitive linguists talk of metaphor and metonymy, i.e. mental, cognitive processes that allow for human cognitive conceptualization and linguistic expression.

On the one hand, metaphor – as understood in cognitive linguistics – is a process in which one cognitive domain is understood in terms of another domain. In this process, the source domain A is *mapped* onto the target domain B in order that B is understood and expressed in terms of A. Metonymy, on the other hand, involves accessing a part of a conceptual domain *via* another part of the same domain.

Although bodily experience and cognitive mechanisms aid linguistic conceptualizations, they do not account for the variations in conceptualization models that exist among various speech communities. For, it has been noticed that whereas all humans have basically the same body structure, languages do not have the same forms and kinds of conceptualizations, because environment, and therefore, experiences, differ significantly.

The difference in experiences within the environment leads to cultural variations among speech communities, which in turn, accounts for the variation in conceptualizing and expressing various linguistic notions. This would mean that languages will not have the same pattern and systems of a linguistic *embodiment* despite the sameness in the physical human body.

The variations in linguistic *embedment* across languages is accounted for by *cultural conceptualization models* (cf. Sharifian, et. al., 2008), which by default encodes varied experiences in accordance with the unique culture of the speakers of a given language. That is why, for instance, a given body part term, say the *heart* which is found in all human bodies, would be conceptually exploited to understand and express varied abstract concepts, based

on the prevailing, distinct culture of the speakers of a given language. For instance, in English, emotions, such as ‘love’ are spoken of as contents in the ‘heart’, but the Indonesians think of, and say that these emotions are in the “liver”.

Thus, while the body provides a universal template for understanding and expressing abstract concepts, cultural conceptualizations account for the unique experiences of speech communities. It is in the prism of the *embodiment hypothesis* that this paper analyses the cultural linguistic conceptualization of *gaba* ‘chest’ in the Hausa language. The following sections discuss these conceptualizations based on the domains of usage.

3. The meaning and extensions of *gaba*

The word *gaba* is one of the few Hausa body part terms that are on the verge of losing their original, literal meanings. Even some first-language speakers of Hausa may hesitate to point at a single body organ called *gaba*, as they instantly would for other terms, such as *fuska* ‘face’, *baki* ‘mouth’, etc. Although many Hausa body part terms are polysemous, the initial meaning of the term *gaba* is almost out of use and is being replaced by the polysemy arising from embodied metonymies and metaphors.

Perhaps, this could be the reason that most Hausa dictionaries failed to connect this term with any single body part. For instance, Bargery (1934) defined the term *gaba* as “[t]he physical front of a person” followed by several other figurative meanings, such as its usage as adverbs, idioms, etc. Similarly, Newman and Newman (2022) started exactly with the same semantic entry, defining the term as “[f]ront of the body”, with extended meanings.

However, it is important to note that the use of the term to refer to the entire front part of the human body is figurative, in itself, as it is a function of the PART FOR WHOLE metonymy, as attested to in a few other body part terms, such as *baya* ‘back’ that has come to denote the whole angle of the human body where they are conspicuously located. This is more so that the front part of the human body consists of several conspicuously distinct body part terms,

each bearing its own distinct lexeme. Therefore, the question is: what is the immediate meaning of the term *gaba*?

The body organ called *gaba* is the ‘chest’. This initial meaning of the term can be seen in the idiom in (1a) which directly connects the term to the human ‘chest’. The gestural act of swearing/promising in Hausa and indeed other various cultures around the world is done by ‘beating the chest’, an act that has led to the idioms that denote these actions. The expression in (1b) further shows that the immediate literal sense of the term *gaba* is the “chest”, since the physiological feelings of fright is experienced at the chest.

1. (a) *ya bug-i Gaba*
 3SG beat-PAST Chest
 ‘he swore/bragged’
- (b) *Gaba na ya fadi*
 chest 1SG.POSS 3SG.M fall
 ‘I was frightened’
- (c) *ta yanke gaba-n-sa don zai kara aure*
 3SG.F Cut chest.GEN. because he’ll add marriage
 3SG.M.
 ‘she cut his dick because he was marrying another wife’
- (d) *wanke gaba baya-n jima’i...*
 wash chest back-GEN sex
 ‘[you] should genitals after sexual intercourse’

One of the most entrenched and widely used meanings of the term is in reference to the male and/or female genitals, as in (1c – d). This sense arises from euphemism, which is prevalent in the Hausa cultural-linguistic model. To avoid naming what is considered vulgar, Hausa employs less culturally taboo lexical items to circumvent taboo words.

Now, I would hypothesize that it is probably due to the increased use of the term *gaba* in euphemism – which is deeply entrenched in the speech community – that led to the shift in the meaning of the term *gaba* from the original literal sense ‘chest’ to the extended, figurative meanings ‘front’. Since the use of the term *gaba* will automatically be misconstrued for another *taboo* body organ, preference has further shifted to a more “decent” less “vulgar” word *kirji* to refer to the “chest”.

Furthermore, the term *gaba* ‘chest’ through various embodied conceptualizations, provides the base for a long chain of derivatives. Unlike English, Fulfulde and many other languages that exploit the physical position of the human “head” to conceptualize leadership and denote a leader, Hausa uses the “chest” for that purpose. This conceptualization emanates from the physical position of the chest and its metonymic extension to refer to the front part of the human body. The derivants in (2) derive from the term *gaba* ‘chest’ and are all related to the concept of “leadership”. Those in (2b – d) derive from the compound in (2a), whereas that in (2f) is the plural of the derivative in (2e).

2 (a) ***shu-gaba***

prefix-chest

‘leader’

(b) ***shu-gaba-nni***

prefix-chest-suffix

‘leaders’

- (c) *shu-gaba-nta*
prefix-chest-suffix
'to lead'

- (d) *shu-gaba-ntar (da)*
prefix-chest-suffix
'to make a leader'

- (e) *ja-gaba*
pull-chest
'leader'

- (f) *ja-gaba-nni*
pull-chest-suffix
'leaders'

While the semantic etymology of the prefix *ja-* in (2e – f) is clear, the prefix *shu-* in (2a – d) is not so clear. In this regard, my hypothesis would be that the morpheme *shu-* originated from the term *sha* 'drink', since in Hausa, *ci* and *sha* are terms used in the conceptualization of progress/development, and both terms are closely connected to the domain of leadership. As would be seen in the expressions in example (5), the phrase *sha gaba* indicates that someone has jumped to the front/ahead of another person, which therefore, could be a possible source of the derivative, *shagaba*. Overtime, the low, central vowel /a/ might have changed to the high, back rounded /u/ to become *shugaba* 'leader', due to some morpho-phonological reasons.

The term *ja* literally means ‘to pull’, and in Hausa, to lead is to pull something, as is said in sentences, such as *ya ja mu Sallah* [lit. he pulled us prayers] ‘he led us in prayers’, *ya ja karatu* [lit. he pulled reading], ‘he led [the] reading’, etc. The experiential basis for this conceptualization lies in the fact that someone who pulls something, say a rope, is moving ahead, while the object so “pulled” follows behind. This has been extended into the domain of leadership since a leader is understood to be ahead while the “followers” are behind.

3.1. Semantic extensions

Like other Hausa body part terms, *gaba* ‘chest’ has been extended into various linguistic domains. These extensions vary in terms of the foregrounding cognitive mechanisms and the domains of extension. The most profound metonymic extension of the term is perhaps found in the well-known expression in (3), where the term *gaba* ‘chest’ metonymically stands for the person, in what is known as PART FOR WHOLE metonymy. This expression contrasts with the English’s “face-to-face”, Fulfulde’s *gite-e-gite* [lit. eye to eye], among other distinct cultural conceptualization models. In this phrase, the term *gaba* ‘chest’ refers to the person, a usage that is extremely entrenched in the Hausa society.

3. (a) *gaba* *da gaba*
 chest and chest
 ‘face-to-face’
- (b) *su-n* *yi gaba da gaba*
 3PL.-GEN do chest and chest
 ‘they met one on one’

The most distinct, deeply internalized, and entrenched conceptualizations and semantic extensions are more evident from a phraseological perspective. While various embodied conceptualizations provide the cognitive basis for the extension of body part terms into various domains, some of the conceptual extensions of the term *gaba* are aided by the phraseological characteristics of the phrase. Thus, the preceding grammatical element in a phrase determines the conceptual domain, and therefore, the semantic sense in which the term is extended.

For the purposes of this paper, I call a phrase that contains and expresses a conceptual domain a *conceptual phrase*, while I refer to the system of expressing a concept through a phrase as against a single word or a sentence as *conceptual phraseology*. I consider this scenario as a case in which cognitive conceptualization depends on the cognitive mechanisms, i.e. metaphor and metonymy, but the linguistic expression of the concepts is solely dependent on the phrasal features, especially the precedent of the body part term.

For instance, in the expressions in (4), the term *gaba* ‘chest’ denotes progress or development. As would be seen, the term *gaba* ‘chest’ in these expressions is preceded by the verb *ci* ‘eat’, which when immediately followed by *gaba* ‘chest’, as in (4a) would refer to ‘progress/development’. This figurative meaning cannot be deduced from the term *gaba* in this context without the precedent *ci*. The cognitive basis for this mapping, however, is the conceptualization of the ‘chest’ as the “forward/front” of a moving human being. Given the conceptualization of the concept of ‘progress’ as “moving forward”, it follows naturally that *gaba* ‘chest’ is progress.

The use of the term *ci* ‘eat’ to denote “making” progress presents an entirely different, interesting cultural model. In Hausa “eating” is “making” anything. For instance, to *make love/intercourse* is *ci*, to *succeed* is *ci nasara*, to *betray* is *ci amana*, to *insult* is *ci mutunci*, and so on. Thus, the physical experience of “eating” has been mapped to understand and talk of “making” all forms of abstract, non-physical actions.

4. (a) *ci* ***Gaba***
eat Chest
‘make progress’
- (b) *ci* ***Gaba***
eat Chest
‘make progress’
- (c) *ya* *ci* *gaba* *da* *cewa...*
3SG.M Eat chest with saying
‘he continued by saying...’
- (d) *ci'* ***Gaba***
eat Chest
‘development’
- (e) *nema-n* *ci* *gaba* *na* *jama'a*
search-GEN eat chest for people
‘working for the development of the people’

When preceded by the verb *sha* ‘drink’, on the other hand, *gaba* ‘chest’ refers to “overtaking” either physically or psychologically. In Hausa, the term *sha* ‘drink’ is widely extended into the domain of “overpowering/winning” in contexts and contests, as would be seen in

expressions, such as *ya sha kansa* ‘he controls him’. This explains the conceptualization of this phrase to denote overtaking someone, either in physical movement or psychologically.

5. (a) *sha gaba*
 drink chest
 ‘overtake’

(b) *ya sha gaba-n-sa*
 3SG.M drink chest-GEN. 3SG.M
 ‘he is ahead of him’

(c) *ya gudu ya sha gaba-n-su da mota*
 3SG.M run 3SG.M drink chest-GEN-3PL.M with car
 ‘he sped and overtook them with a car’

When *gaba* ‘chest’ is preceded by *sa* ‘put’, however, its meaning and domain of extension would change. In the expressions in (6), *sa gaba* [lit. put chest] refers to “focus/attention”. Since *gaba* ‘chest’ has been conceptualized as the front, it is understandable that it is extended to refer to “attention/focus” since human attention is attributed to the front/forward direction. This conceptualization involves an ontological metaphor in which attention itself is understood as an object that could be put somewhere...at the front of an individual. Becoming the center of attention could also involve negative perception, where an individual who is made a center of attention is said to be hated by other people, as in (6c).

6. (a) *sa* *gaba*
 put chest
 ‘pay attention’
- (b) *abi-n* *da* *muka* *sa* *gaba*
 something-GEN with 3PL.POSS put chest
 ‘our focus’
- (c) *su-n* *sa* *ka* *gaba*
 3PL.GEN put 2SG.M chest
 ‘they are malicious against you’

In a construction where *gaba* ‘chest’ is preceded by the pronoun *na/ta*, its meaning and domain of extension would change to denote the concept “next” as evidenced in (7). The adjunctive pronoun *ta/na* is a direct referent to the subject of the phrase, as shown in (7b). This follows the mapping of the term *gaba* as the human front, and therefore, forward direction. Here, the orientational metaphor allows for the understanding of concepts in horizontal structure, where contagious concepts are understood to be next to one another, the further item being perceived in Hausa as the one being “in front” [i.e. *gaba*] of the other.

7. (a) *na* *Gaba*
 1SG.NEU.LOC. Chest
 ‘the next’
- (b) *shi* *ne* *na* *gaba*
 3SG.M is 1SG.NEU.LOC. chest
 ‘he is the next’

In summary, the data in examples (3 – 6) show that the term *gaba* ‘chest’ is extended into various conceptual domains through various metaphors and metonymies. It is evident, however, that the phraseological structure plays a vital role in the semantic and conceptual changes that this term undergoes. For instance, when *gaba* co-occurs with *ci* it extends into the domain of progress, while with *sa* it extends into the domain of focus/attention, and with *na* it connotes the notion “next” and with *kan* it extends into the domain of prominence and/or importance. Thus, in these phrases, the semantic extension is triggered first by the embodied metaphors, and then the choice of adjunct and preceding grammatical elements in the phrases are used as the tools for the connotations of the various target meanings.

3.2. Grammatical domains of extension

Apart from the lexical and figurative extensions of the body part term *gaba* ‘chest’ discussed in section 3.1., the term has evolved into grammatical markers that denote various grammatical concepts. These processes of grammaticalization are discussed, in turn.

3.2.A. The spatial domain

As the unidirectionality principle of the grammaticalization theory dictates, evolving grammatical markers are mostly lexical items, e.g. body part terms, being extended into the spatial world by naming parts of other non-human, inanimate objects (Heine and Kuteva, 2002). In example (9) for instance, a ‘chest’ is attributed to inanimate objects to denote their front parts, an extension allowed by metaphorical mappings.

9. (a) *gaba-n* *gini*
chest-GEN wall
‘the face of the wall’
- (b) *gaba-n* *riga*
chest-GEN shirt
‘the front part of a shirt’
- (c) *gaba-n* *makaranta*
chest-GEN school
‘the face of the school’

Over time, this usage moves further abstract by denoting surrounding environments, and thus, becomes prepositions. So, from naming front parts of objects, the term *gaba* ‘chest’ has been further grammaticalized to denote the locative notion *in front*. As would be seen in example (10), the term *gaba* refers to the locative notion equivalent to the English *in front* [of something], such as a house, as in (10a), a shop (10b) or a classroom, in (10c).

10. (a) *Mota-r-sa* *tana* *nan* *tsaye* *gaba-n* *gida*
car-GEN-3SG.POSS.M 3SG.M there stand chest-GEN house
‘the car is parked in front of the house’
- (b) *Ka* *tsaya* *gaba-n* *shago-n*
2SG.M stand chest-GEN shop-GEN
‘be at the front of the shop’

- (c) *Malami-n yana tsaye gaba-n aji*
 teacher-GEN 3SG.M stand chest-GEN classroom
 ‘the teacher is standing in front of the classroom’

The fact that *gaba* ‘chest’ refers to the notion “in front”, has led to the conceptualization of the term to denote the notion “in the presence” of someone or another person. This extension follows the physical experience where to be in someone’s presence is to be at the front of that person. Therefore, the grammatical notion of “presence” is denoted by this term as exemplified in (11).

11. (a) *a gaba-n-mu ya yi wannan*
 at chest-GEN- 3SG. do This
 1PL.POSS M
 ‘he did this in our presence’

- (b) *saboda ya ba da jini-n-sa gaba ga Imam*
 because 3SG give with blood- chest at leader
 GEN-3SG
 ‘because he was martyred in the presence of the spiritual leader’

Because of the distinct orientational metaphors in Hausa – which will not be discussed in any detail here – the term *gaba* ‘chest’ also denotes the locative notion *beyond/after* in terms of place and/or position. In horizontal orientation, a location could be before or after another location. In Hausa, the location of an object, which is located *after* another object or another location is denoted by the term *gaba*, as in (12a – b). Another sense generated in these

expressions equates to the notion “across, on the other side” of particular objects, such as a hill, as in (12c), or a river, as in (12d).

12. (a) *in* *ka* *wuce* *gaba* *kaɗan*
 if 3SG.M pass chest little
 ‘when move a little further’
- (b) *yana* *nan* *gaba-n* *gini-n* *makaranta-r*
 3SG.M here front-GEN building-GEN school-GEN
 ‘it is there right after the school building’
- (c) *gaba-n* *dutse-n* *nan*
 chest-GEN hill-GEN this
 ‘beyond, on the other side of that hill(rock)’
- (d) *yana* *gaba-n* *kogi*
 3SG.COMP chest-GEN river
 ‘he is on the other side of the river’

In a similar conceptualization model, the term *gaba* ‘chest’ denotes the concept “ahead”, as shown in (13a – c).

13. (a) *adalci ne a gaba da karimci*
 justice is at chest with kindness
 ‘justice is ahead of kindness’
- (b) *yana gaba-n-ka da aji daya*
 3SG.M chest-GEN- with class one
 2SG.POSS
 ‘he is one class ahead of you’
- (c) *almajiran Malam Zakzaky na gaba da su*
 students- teacher Zakzaky are chest with 3PL.
 GEN
 ‘the students of Shaik Zakzaky are ahead of them’

Given that *gaba* ‘chest’ has become a grammatical marker for the notion “ahead”, it is further deployed to denote the concept “senior/superior”. Note that its usage in example (13) relates to spatial concepts in vertical order of arrangement. The usage in example (14), however, is in relation to the chronological order of age, as shown in (14a), and the superior–inferior relationship, as in (14b).

14. (a) *gaba da shi yake*
 chest with 3SG. Is
 ‘he is senior to him’

- (b) *bi-n* *na* *gaba* *bi-n* *Allah*
follow-GEN 1SG.NEU.LOC. chest follow-GEN Allah
to obey a superior is to obey God’

3.2.B. The temporal domain

Based on its position as the front part of the body, and its extension into the locative domain *in front*, the body part term *gaba* has been further grammaticalized into the temporal domain to denote the concepts *later/future* depending on the linguistic expression. For instance, in the expressions in (15a – b), *gaba* denotes the concept that is equivalent to the English *later*, whereas in (15c – d) the term denotes the concept *future*, both of which basically refer to the time yet to come. This extension is based on the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor which allows humans to perceive and conceive time as approaching with the front being the lead towards the canonical observer (cf. Lakoff and Johson 1980).

15. (a) *gaba* *na* *nan*
chest 1SG.NEU.LOC. here
‘there are opportunities in the future’

- (b) *Sai* *nan* *gaba* *zai* *gan-ni*
until here chest he’ll see-1SG.POSS
‘he will see me later’

- (c) *Nan* *gaba* *zan* *Zo*
 here chest I'll come
 'I will come later'
- (d) *Nan* *gaba* *kadan*
 here chest little
 'in a short while [future]'
- (e) *Zamani-n* *da* *zai* *zo* *nan* *gaba*
 Period-GEN with it'll come here chest
 'the era that will come in the future'
- (f) *Zuwa* *gaba* *zai* *gane*
 going chest he'll chest
 'he will understand going forward'

Interestingly, the term *gaba* though used to denote “future” is also extended to mean a period preceding another period. This notion is interchangeably marked by the terms *goshi* ‘forehead’ and *gaba-nni* ‘towards’ [lit. chest]. Thus, the eve of any approaching period is referred to as *gabanni* ‘preceding’, as shown in (16). This conceptualization is related to first, the metonymic extension of the term *gaba* ‘chest’ to refer to the front part of the human body, and the subsequent metaphoric extension of the term unto inanimate objects, locative domain and then the temporal domain.

17. (a) *gaba*
chest
'a fathom'
- (b) *rijiya-n* *nan* *gaba* *uku* *ce*
well-GEN this chest three 3SG.OBJ
'this well is three fathoms deep'
- (c) *al'ummar* *gaba* *ɗaya* *ta* *gurbace*
people chest one 3SG.M decay
'the whole society has lost its values'
- (d) *ku* *shiga* *gaba* *ɗaya*
3SG.PL enter chest one
'you [all] enter at once'

4. Conclusion

The data in this paper shows that like many other body part terms, *gaba* 'chest' is metaphorically and metonymically extended into various semantic domains to denote abstract notions. The term *gaba* 'chest' is in fact on the verge of losing its immediate meaning due to the entrenched metonymic usage and the cultural influence of euphemism in Hausa.

This study suggests that apart from conceptual mechanisms, the phrasal structure is relevant in determining the semantic change in the extension of the term into the various conceptual domains of usage. Thus, the meaning of the term changes from one conceptual domain to another based on the meaning of its antecedent, a system referred to here as *conceptual*

phraseology. For instance, when *gaba* ‘chest’ extends into the domain of “progress” it is preceded by the verb *ci* ‘eat’, but when in the domain of “focus/attention” it is preceded by *sa* ‘put’, etc.

It has been shown, also, that the semantic extensions of the term have resulted in grammaticalization, in which case the term has evolved into a grammatical marker denoting various abstract grammatical concepts in various domains of usage, including spatial and temporal markers, and quantifiers. This shows that like other body part terms, such as *kai* ‘head’, *fuska* ‘face’, *baki* ‘mouth’, *ido* ‘eye’, etc. the term *gaba* ‘chest’ is extremely productive in conceptual mappings in Hausa.

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