

Literal and metaphorical usages of ‘eat’ and ‘drink’ verbs in Nzema communication

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Abstract

Eating and drinking form part of the daily activities of the Nzema. This paper investigates metaphorical extensions associated with the consumption verbs *di* ‘to eat’ and *no* ‘to drink’ in Nzema (Kwa, Bia). It seeks to explore domains in which the verbs are utilised metaphorically to relay everyday concepts and cognitive processes in the Nzema language. Data for the study comprise conversations collected from four respondents. The paper first presents a brief discussion on the components that comprise the central meanings of the verbs. The verbs and their metaphorical extensions are discussed under two major themes: Agent-oriented extensions and patient-oriented extensions. Under agent-oriented extensions, figurative usages that are based on the internalization of food as well as extensions based on the sensation of the agent undergoing the event are discussed. Extensions derived from the destruction of food during the process of consumption is discussed under the patient-oriented. The paper finds that in Nzema, the verb *di* ‘to eat’ is utilised metaphorically to convey ideas such as to arbitrate, seduce, take oath, misappropriate among others. The verb *no* ‘to drink’ conveys ideas such as to inhale or smoke, and to sponge. Remarkably, some metaphorical extensions of consumption verbs that are not reported in other African languages, such as extensions of eat for squabbling, for taking oath, for insinuating, for witnessing and for hunting, and the extensions of drink for sponging are present in Nzema.

Keywords: *Agent-oriented, consumption verbs, metaphorical extensions, Nzema, patient-oriented.*

INTRODUCTION

Nzema is a Volta-Comoe (or Southern Bia) language of the Niger-Congo language phylum of the Kwa language family spoken mainly in the southwestern part of Ghana and some parts of the La Côte d’Ivoire, both in West Africa. It consists of five main dialects namely; Dwɔmɔlɔ (Nzema West), ɛlɛmgbɛlɛ (Nzema Central), ɛvalɔɛ, Egila and Adwɔmɔlɔ (Nzema east).

The language, the people and the place are called Nzema (Nyame, 2019). Nzema is bordered to the West by La Côte d’Ivoire (also known as the Ivory Coast), to the East by the Ahanta, to the North by Aowin (or Anyi) and Wassa and to the South by the Gulf of Guinea. Some of the Nzema speaking communities in Ivory Coast include: Apolonu, Maama, Agyɛkɛ, Mouah (Mowa), Ngyeme, Noi (Noe), Akpanye, Anzeasawu, Manvea (Mafia), Bassam, Kakusuazo, Kpɔkɛti, Poso (Border town), Asue, Nzɔbɛnu, Mgbɔsɛya and Eboko (Nyame, 2019).

Consumption, that is, eating and drinking, are among the most essential aspects of life. They constitute the basic needs for the physiological and psychological development of living creatures. Eating food and drinking liquids thus represent universal practices amongst humans (Newman, 1997; 2009; Wierzbicka, 2009; Næss, 2009). They are basic requirements for survival and growth in everyday life and as such cannot be avoided. Usually, consumption verbs are verbs that are used to signify the process of ingestion through the oral cavity. Næss (2011) explains that even though eating food and drinking liquids are universal, their execution is not cross-cultural. The universality however lies only in the physical aspects of eating and drinking. That is, taking food or drink from outside the body and into the body using the mouth as a passage. Ye (2010, p. 375) reports that, “recent cross-linguistic investigation has pointed to both the regularities and variations in the way humans conceptualise the activities of eating and drinking.” This implies that

contrast exist in the way languages classify or distinguish consumption verbs. For instance, languages such as English make the distinction based on how the consumption takes place; while others, such as Navajo, do so based on the characteristics of the object being consumed (Rice, 2009).

In Nzema, however, the distinction lies both in relation to the object that is consumed and the manner in which it is consumed. Cross-linguistically, the acts of consuming foods and drinks provide a rich source for a variety of metaphorical extensions across languages due to the experiential reality associated with them (Williams, 1991; Newman, 2009; Jaggar & Buba, 2009; Song, 2009; Næss, 2009; Ye, 2010). Although there are some considerable amounts of research conducted on Nzema phonology, morphology, syntax and literature, very little is however done from a cognitive-cultural linguistic perspective. The very few studies on Nzema are the recent works of Yakub et al. (2022), Yakub and Agyekum (2022) and Yakub and Tomekyin (2022) which respectively studied body parts related idioms used as politeness strategy, euphemistic metaphors of death and semantic extensions of the verb *pe* 'to cut'. Apart from these, there is none, to the best of my knowledge, that has been carried out on the metaphorical extensions of eat and drink verbs in Nzema. This research seeks to fill the lacuna and also serve as an expansion of the existing literature in the semantic domain of eat and drink verbs. The current paper therefore aims to discuss the semantics and pragmatics of eat and drink verbs in relation to their literal and figurative usages in Nzema.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Newman (1997, p. 213), eating and drinking in English involve the movement of some food item into the mouth, where one experiences the taste and texture of the food item that has been consumed. He adds that in English, eating and drinking take several processes in the oral cavity. He describes eating as involving a situation where the food item is usually crushed and chewed with the teeth, tongue and the hard palate. Here, the teeth perform the most active function in the process of crushing foods into smaller units in order to ease swallowing. Newman and Aberra (2009, p. 255) affirm that "one or more of these facets can be relevant when it comes to motivating linguistic behaviors of the 'eat' verbs."

Based on Newman and Aberra's (2009) description, Agyepong, Amfo and Osam (2017) report that eat verbs, therefore, do not necessarily have to satisfy all the conditions. As will be shown in section 5, the ingestion of some Nzema foods such as *akɔnde*, 'fufu' and *pelakali*, 'whole starch food', do not involve the teeth in any way and therefore do not portray all the features of 'eat' verbs outlined in Newman and Aberra (2009). As the discussion will show, metaphorical extensions that are derived from Nzema 'eat' verbs are numerous just as they are in some Ghanaian languages such as Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam, 2017), a sister language of Nzema, Ewe and Gurenɛ (Adjei & Atintono, 2009), and other African languages such as Amharic (Newman & Aberra, 2009), Hausa (Williams, 1991; Jaggar & Buba, 2009), and Swahili (Sheikh & Wolff, 1981) and some Asian languages such as Korean (Song, 2009), Mandarin and Shanghainese (Ye 2010). Consider the example below.

- (1) *Be-li abele ne be-wie.*
 3PL-eat.PERF maize DET 3PL-finish.PERF
 'They have finished eating the maize.'

In example (1), reference is made to maize that have been roasted or boiled and are being consumed by a group of people. In this example, the process of eating must necessarily involve chewing followed by swallowing. The chewing is required because maize, by their texture, are in a solid state when roasted or boiled.

Drinking on the other hand involves the movement of liquid substance through the mouth and down the throat.

- (2) *Adwoba ε-nlo nza ne.*
 PN EMPH-drink.PERF wine DET
 'Adwoba has drunk the wine.'

As is the case in Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam, 2017), the activity of drinking in Nzema can further be semantically extended to depict the act of sucking either by a human being or an insect, as indicated in (3) below.

- (3) *Nretenrete ne ε-nlo belera ne mogya.*
 mosquito DET EMPH-drink.PERF lady DET blood
 'The mosquito has sucked the lady's blood.'

Newman and Aberra (2009: 256) argue that stinging and biting by insects are as concrete as humans biting

food and thus this meaning is not figurative. The process of stinging and biting by the agent is polysemous with the activity of the human agent eating. The meaning in (3) can therefore be understood to be an extension from the meaning of a person consuming something (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam 2017). These two consumption verbs evoke some form of “positive sensory experiences on the part of the consumer”, as reported by Newman and Abera (2009: 255).

METHODS

This qualitative research adopts an ethnographic approach to the study of consumption verbs in Nzema. An ethnography is the study of a particular people and how they live their life which includes their way of conversation, thus language usage. The data were collected between June 2023 and July 2023 in the Jomoro Municipality. Some of the data were collected from four native speakers through interviews. The ages of the consultants ranged between forty and sixty. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transferred onto a computer. The recordings were then transcribed and the examples used were assigned their various inter-linear glosses and translations. Some of the data were also gathered during arbitration at Egya Boadi’s (clan head) residence at Bonyere in the Jomoro District of Nzema. I sought the consent of the clan head and recorded the proceedings for the study.

In addition, I also relied on the competencies of two lecturers who speak and teach Nzema at the Faculty of Ghanaian languages, University of Education, Winneba to verify the data. The data were then categorised based on metaphorical themes of ‘eat’ and ‘drink’ that emerged, and took up the discussions under the relevant themes. In all, 70 expressions in which the usage of consumption verbs was prevalent were collected and out of which 20 were purposively selected for the discussion. The Leipzig glossing format was used for the inter-linear glosses in all the examples.

The paper is anchored on the tenets of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), and Newman’s (2009) categorization of consumption verbs. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 5) report that “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”. Conceptual metaphors usually depend on abstract concepts as target domain and a concrete concept as source domain, through which unfamiliar concepts are better explicated (Kövecses, 2002; Semino, 2008). According to Semino (2008, p.5), conceptual metaphors are systematic sets of correspondence, or “mappings” across conceptual domains, whereby a “target” domain is partly structured in terms of a different “source” domain. Newman (2009) categorizes metaphorical extensions relating to “eating” into patient-oriented and agent-oriented. Even though the distinction between the two categories is an insignificant one, it is useful for presenting the various target domain correspondences.

Regarding agent-oriented metaphorical extension, “eating” is understood as a process such that the eater is the consumer who experiences the sensation of taste, pleasure or displeasure; therefore, the focus of the whole process is the feelings that the consumer undergoes (Newman, 2009). When prominence is put on the agent of the “eating” process, there is a great deal of internalization present. That is, food is taken from the outside of the body, where it is visible, then to the inside, where it is no more visible. The second aspect of internalization is swallowing, in which the food is transferred from the mouth down to the stomach. However, when the effect of the “eating” process is focused on what is being eaten, such an extension is patient-oriented. When consumption takes place, what is ingested disappears and therefore becomes inaccessible. The very prominent feature of the “eating” process is the biting, chewing and cracking which converts the ingested food into digestible units.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As indicated in the introduction, consumption verbs are verbs that are used to signify the process of ingestion through the oral cavity. Verbs that can be subsumed under Eat and Drink in Nzema include *di* ‘to eat’, *no/twe/* ‘to suck’, *kposa* ‘to chew’, *ka* ‘to bite’ *me* ‘to swallow’, *tafe/fo* ‘to lick’ and *gele/bobo nu* ‘to crack’. These verbs signify different forms of eating and drinking. The consumption verb *di* ‘to eat’ is used to describe the process whereby living things take in solid food through the mouth. It is also used to indicate taking in one-pot meals such as *bekili*, *mraalekukue*, *mgbotleba* and *kumamgbhole* which are a mixture of both solid and liquid substances. The consumption verb *no* ‘to drink’ is used to describe processes involving the intake of liquid into the body. From the data gathered, metaphorical

extension of eat and drink verbs in Nzema can be grouped under two major categories, namely extensions based on internalization, which are mainly agent-oriented, and extensions based on destruction and/or elimination, which are patient-oriented.

Internalization [Agent-oriented]

Metaphorical extensions classified under this section involve an agent internalizing the theme. Thus, the agent (an eater) puts food into his/her mouth, chews and swallows it, and he/she gains nourishment from it. According to Agyepong, Amfo & Osam (2017, p. 68), "This type of extension can also be described as 'affected agent' in the sense that whatever is internalised by the agent achieves a certain effect (good/bad or pleasant/unpleasant) on the agent. These metaphors focus on the role played by the agent during the process." For our purpose, the internalization process involves the ingestion of food from outside of the body into the oral cavity. The food, which is seen to be concrete or visible is converted into something abstract or invisible. It is then masticated and sent from the mouth down to the stomach. These processes serve as the underlying condition for conceiving *di* 'to eat' and *no* 'to drink' as involving events that denote internalization. It is noteworthy also, that the internalization of food furnishes the agent with some sensory experiences such as taste, satisfaction, pleasure or displeasure etc. (Newman, 2009). The discussion begins with agent-oriented metaphorical extensions followed by patient-oriented metaphorical extensions.

Arbitration as eating

The process of settling disputes and restoring peace is conceptualised among the Nzema as "eating". In the Nzema socio-cultural milieu, resolution of matters of dispute is in the prerogative of the chief and elders of the community. The issue to be resolved, therefore, serves as the food to be ingested by the parties in dispute and the arbitrators. When the issue is resolved and peace is restored, all parties achieve a common satisfaction, although not every member will be fully satisfied with the outcome. The issue which caused misunderstanding and hatred is finally consumed and cannot be seen again.

- (4) a. *Edweke ne mɔɔ ɛra la ɔwɔ ke ye-di.*
 issue DET that come.PERF PART must be 1PL-eat
 'We must resolve the issue that has come up completely.'
 b. *Edweke ne mɔɔ be-li-le la Aka edee wɔ nu.*
 issue DET that 3PL-eat-PAST PART PN own at POST
 'Aka was not found guilty in the issue that was resolved.'

In (4a), the willingness of the arbitrators to resolve the issue that has come up in order to restore peace is metaphorically linked to people in dire need of food to kill their hunger. In (4b), Aka, who is the defendant is found not guilty after the issue was resolved.

Seduction as eating

Gullibility and seduction in Nzema discourse are a form of "eating". Thus, the mapping of eating onto the acceptance of ideas and believing information whether truthful or otherwise, is marked by the swallowing aspect of eating. When food is swallowed, it is transferred from where it is visible to another place in the body where it is no longer visible and accessible. It is worth noting that, here, "eating" is utilised metaphorically as "to swallow", rather than "to masticate" or "to bite". The latter usage would suggest mental disorder on the part of the theme. Eating by swallowing according to Newman (1997, p. 21), refers to a state of being naïve and therefore accepting whatever is told. This is demonstrated in (5) below.

- (5) a. *Dwenle edweke ne anwo kolaa na wɔ-a-lie wɔ-a-li.*
 think information DET about before then 2SG-PART-take 2SG-PART-eat
 'Think about the information before accepting it.'
 b. *Mma-maa ɔ-di wɔ adwenle na ɔ-le melebela.*
 NEG-allow 3SG-eat 2SG mind as 2SG-be deception
 'Do not allow him/her to mislead you for he/she is a deceptive person.'

In (5a), the speaker admonishes the listener to scrutinize the information given him/her before believing. The process of scrutinizing and believing is metaphorically linked to the processes involved in consumption of food, that is, first chewing to break into digestible units before swallowing. Usually, the effect of believing is satisfaction because

the individual is self-assured. In (5b) on the other hand, the listener is cautioned against gullibility. When the mind, *adwenle* is “eaten up”, the individual lacks the ability to think critically and assess information. This extension correlates with destruction as the human mind, *adwenle*, which is the food and therefore the patient in this context can be gobbled up and disappear.

Oath taking/swearing as eating

Oath taking or swearing is a common practice among the Nzema. It forms part of their judicial process, usually during an ordeal. Not only persons suspected of evil doing are made to take oath to prove their innocence, but also people whom power and authority have been entrusted such as kings, chiefs and elders of the society are also made to take oath to justify their readiness to exact their responsibilities.

- (6) a. *Saa te wɔ a ɛ-va-le ezukoa ne a ɛnee di amonle.*
 if NEG 2SG PART EMPH-take-PAST money DET PART then eat ordeal
 ‘If you claim that you are innocent about the thievery then swear to that effect.’
 b. *Ka ndane fa kile kɛ ɛ-ba-zonle wɔ ezuavole ne kpale.*
 say oath take show that 2SG-FUT-serve 2SG.POSS citizenry DET better
 ‘Take an oath to prove that you shall serve your citizens better.’

We observe from (6a) that the addressee is made to prove his innocence by swearing. In (6b) also, the addressee who is the new leader of the community is made to take an oath to attest that he/she shall not betray his/her subjects. It is believed that such an activity involves calling on God and other supernatural powers to bear witness to the truth of whatever one says or to witness that one sincerely intends to go by one’s words. In this regard, “swearing” or “oath taking” is conceptualised as the food which when ingested by an individual, yields the desiring effect. It must be noted that the “eater” is either nourished or malnourished by the “swearing” based on the outcome of the “eating”. This means that it is not always the case that the patient is affected, but also the agent due to his/her actions or inactions.

Misappropriation as eating

As can be observed from the table above, the Nzema verb *di* “to eat” has more agent-oriented conceptual metaphors than patient-oriented conceptual metaphors. Among the metaphors with “eat”, wrongful and fraudulent means of spending resources is “eating”. Another word which entails the structural metaphor misappropriation of resources is “eating” is depletion. That is, the resource is used up faster than it is anticipated. As the “eater” takes food into his/her mouth and breaks it into digestible units, the disappeared food is deemed to be depleted. Therefore, resources such as time, money and other resources if not utilised for the intended purpose and period, cannot merely be said to have been spent. Rather, the resources are deemed to be “eaten”, that is, they have been used up beyond expectation.

- (7) a. *Sukulu ehɔle dɔɔnwo di meke somaa.*
 school going many eat time too much
 ‘Long years of education is a waste of time.’
 b. *Nrenyia ne ɛ-li arane ezukoa.*
 man DET EMPH-eat.PERF government money
 ‘The man has embezzled state funds.’

The examples in (7a-b) illustrate how certain resources, *meke* ‘time’ and *ezukoa* ‘money’ are depleted. In (7a), a greater amount of the resource is consumed whereas the expectation is that a lesser quantity should have been sufficient. In (7b), the agent (government official) uses up funds in a despicable manner. He does so either without an authorization or in a way that is not expected. Although the agent derives pleasure from using state’s funds, the metaphor is understood as depletion rather than pleasure from the perspective of the consumer. Depletion of resources can also be linked to destruction. The fact that too much time is used on formal education, and that some amount of money is used either unaccounted for or without an authorization is what highlights the sense of waste and, consequently, the sense of destruction. Thus, among the Nzema, resources are conceptualised as having life which should be handled with much care.

Sex as eating

According to Newman (2009, p.19), sexual intercourse is a pleasurable experience in its original sense, and therefore closely linked to the mapping of eating onto the emotional domain. Sexual activity involves both physical (insertion of the male sex organ into the female sex organ) and psychological (feelings that is shared by both parties) internalization.

Among the Nzema, 'to eat' is a source concept for sexual intercourse, whose meaning has been lexicalized to refer to "having sex." Therefore, desire for sex is metaphorically linked to feeling of hunger which when satisfied, results in a feeling of joy. The metaphorical mapping between "eating" and "having sex" can be realized in Nzema through the following metaphorical expressions.

- (8) a. *Tayi se ɔ-kye Aama a ɔ-ba-li ye.*
 PN says 3SG-catch PN PART 3SG-FUT-eat 3SG.ACC
 'Tayi says he will have sex with Aama if he gets the opportunity.'
 b. *Azele nee Aka li-le be nwo.*
 PN CONJ PN eat-PAST 3PL self
 'Azele and Aka had sex.'

The examples in (8a-b) demonstrate that sexual intercourse is an activity between two parties. In (8a), *Tayi*, the agent, can be compared to a hungry "carnivore" looking for a prey to devour. This reflects the traditional Nzema perception that sex is basically for the pleasure of the male counterpart and that men are supposed to be the initiator. This mapping appears to suggest that the agent can only refer to a male referent, whereas the patient is always the female. The contrary is observed in (8b) where both parties *Azele* and *Aka* are seen to have equal control over each other in the sexual encounter. It is therefore not surprising that the female partner in the sexual encounter can also be in total control of the sexual process.

Winning or losing a battle/case as eating

Another structural metaphor related to "eating" in Nzema is winning or losing either in an argument or in a physical fight. In this metaphor, positive sensory experiences are linked to internalization of food items which in turn are mapped onto the pleasant or unpleasant feelings that an individual experiences as a result of winning or losing, as in the following examples.

- (9) a. *Be-bua-le edweke ne la Kofi li-le benle.*
 3PL-judge-PAST case DET PART PN eat-PAST victory
 'Kofi won the case following the court's verdict.'
 b. *Kodwo li-le fɔle ke ɔ-bo-le ɔ ye la.*
 PN eat-PAST guilty that 3SG-beat-PAST 3SG wife PART
 'Kodwo was condemned for beating his wife.'

From the examples in (9a-b), *benle* 'victory', and *fɔle* 'guilty' are envisaged as food consumed by the respective agents, *Kofi* and *Kodwo*. The image that the above expressions evoke is that of an eater ingesting something through the mouth. Thus, the words, 'victory' and 'guilty' are conceptualised as patients and consequently as direct objects of *di* 'eat', which undergo change and become invisible. Note that the resultant effect of the eating process is not the same; there is pleasure versus displeasure.

Squabbling as eating

Just as one gains pleasure and satisfaction from consuming food, venting one's spleen during a quarrel relieves the individual of every discomfort according to the Nzema. In a typical Nzema quarrel, the participants are at liberty to express their disgust and grievances, and that gives them satisfaction. Thus, depriving people of the opportunity to voice out their accumulated grievances is conceptualised as "eating" their happiness.

- (10) a. *Akuba nee ɔ gɔnwo ne ele-di butule.*
 PN CONJ 3SG friend DET PROG-eat quarrel
 'Akuba and her friend are quarrelling.'
 b. *Koame yemɔ butule ala a ɔ-di a.*
 PN 3SG quarrel alone PART 3SG-eat PART
 'Koame is fond of quarrelling.'

The examples in (10a-b) illustrate the extension of *di* 'to eat' to include engaging in a quarrel. In both examples,

the patient, *butule* ‘quarrel’, is ingested by the respective agents.

Pleasant/unpleasant experience as eating

According to Song (2009, p. 209), pleasant experiences such as joy, peace, love and unpleasant experiences such as hatred, pain etc., can be conceptualised as the internalization of food. Newman (1997, p.215) reports that, “we eat food which produces pleasant, agreeable taste and normally avoid food which is not pleasant to taste.” Song (2009, p.209) contends further, “we also eat food that can cause problems for our bodies (e.g., unhealthy food, unhygienically prepared food etc.). The outcome of the internalization of such bad foods may be unpleasant or even painful, but the internalization stage remains the same as in the case of the good foods.” Metaphorical extensions of *di* ‘to eat,’ under this subcategory convey one’s state of emotion be it pleasant or unpleasant. Agyepong, Amfo and Osam (2017, p.71) note that the interpretation of pleasant or unpleasant emotion depends largely on the object that the ‘eat’ verb co-occurs with. Consider the examples below:

a. Pleasant experiences

- (11) a. *Mɔɔ Mieza nwu-nle ɔ ze la ɔ-li-le feleko.*
 when PN see-PAST 3SG father PART 3SG-eat-PAST joy
 ‘Mieza rejoiced upon seeing his father.’
 b. *Adɔma ne ɛɛ-di nwɔhoa.*
 baby DET PROG-eat game
 ‘The baby is playing.’

Example (11) illustrates the internalization of pleasant experiences such as *feleko* ‘joy/happiness’ and *nwɔhoa* ‘game’ and the satisfaction derived from them. According to Agyepong, Amfo and Osam (2017, p.71), such experiences, usually, are accompanied by physical evidence of what has been internalised through gestures and facial expressions that show that the agents of the events are indeed satisfied. The agent in (11a), *Mieza*, rejoices upon seeing his father. The baby also derives pleasure from playing. Thus, *feleko* ‘joy/happiness’ and *nwɔhoa* ‘game’, are conceptualised as physical food that nourish the “eater.”

b. Unpleasant experiences

- (12) a. *Saa ehyia ka wɔ a ɛ-di nyane.*
 if poverty affect 2SG PART 2SG-eat pain/sorrow
 ‘When you are affected by poverty, you go through pains.’
 b. *Nyane ɛlile sekye nwonane.*
 pain/sorrow eating destroy body
 ‘Pain/sorrow causes leanness.’

Example (12) depicts the internalization of pain/sorrow; a feeling that is unpleasant to the physiological and psychological development of an individual. In (12a), the abstract agent, *ehyia*, ‘poverty’, is personified as halving the ability to cause pain. In (12b), however, *ehyia*, ‘poverty’, is the object whose internalization causes leanness.

Working as eating

A jobless individual cannot be said to be a happy person since survival mostly depends on hard work. This is supported by the popular Nzema wellerism in which the duck admonishes against indolence, but encourage hard work because of the satisfaction derived from it.

- (13) *Dabodabo se so saa ɛ-so a di.*
 duck say peck if 3SG-peck PART eat
 ‘Peck, enjoy the fruit of your pecking, says the duck.’

In (13), *so* ‘to peck’, is the activity birds do in order to feed. This activity (pecking), which requires much energy is mapped onto activities of humans that enable them to survive. Among the Nzema, work and its related benefits are conceptualised as “eating.” Words that are used to talk about work include *ekpa* or *gyima*.

- (14) a. *Kabenla di ekpa wɔ efiade ne anu.*
 PN eat work at store DET POST
 ‘Kabenla works in the store.’
 b. *Akuba di bange gyima.*
 PN eat bank work

'Akuba is a banker.'

In example (14), *ekpa* and *gyima* 'work' are the objects internalised by the respective agents, *Kabenla* and *Akuba* for desirable effect.

Insinuating as eating

It is usually common for an Nzema to wittingly and indirectly express his/her concerns about an issue without confrontation. This is done through indirection devices such as innuendo, sarcasm and satire. It is the duty of the referent(s) to interpret whatever that was said about them based on context.

- (15) a. *Saa be-sulo wɔ a yɛɛ be-di wɔ ngoame a.*
 if 3PL-afraid 2SG PART CONJ 3PL-eat 2SG.POSS insinuation PART
 'If they are afraid to confront you, they resort to insinuation.'
 b. *Kenle ko biala be-di kpavole ne ngoame.*
 day one INDEF 3PL-eat man DET insinuation
 'The man is insinuated every day.'

From example (15), *ngoame* 'insinuation', is seen as a possessed trait which other people can "eat", that is, talk about with spite. This seeks to imply that behaviors and deeds that can make others insinuate live in everyone since no one is impeccable.

Acquisition of property as eating

The process involved in the acquisition of property is also conceptualised as "eating" in Nzema. This involves instances where an individual inherits something from others. Usually, inheriting from another person is one easy way through which an individual can enhance his/her material wealth. The application of metaphors under this subcategory are sourced from the positive sensory experience that is linked to the internalization of food items that is mapped onto the pleasurable feeling that an individual experiences as a result of taking over ownership of something worthy. This is illustrated by the examples in (16) and (17), which evoke positive beneficiary sensory experience in the agents.

- (16) *C Aka li-le ɔ ze agya.*
 PN eat-PAST 3SG father inheritance
 'Aka inherited his father's wealth.'
 (17) *D Agya-lile yɛ fɛ.*
 inheritance-eating be sweet
 'There is joy in inheritance.'

In example (16), *Aka* inherits his deceased's father's property. This suggests that an inheritance is not something one directly works for, but an effortless means of increasing one's possessions. In (17), *agyalile*, 'inheritance' is metaphorically linked to something tasty that gives pleasure. Thus, internalizing the patient, *agya* 'inheritance', gives the agents certain amount of satisfaction.

Witnessing as eating

Among the Nzema, for an individual to be called upon to give a testimony means that he/she has observed an incident and has facts about what was observed. Note that unlike in the other extensions where elements that serve as food are first ingested from outside the body before going into the body for digestion to take place, the application of this metaphor implies that the food (fact or evidence) is already inside of the agent which he/she has to bring out and consume before some observers. When the food is eaten, the eater is relieved of hunger (anxiety or fear) and that provides him/her some amount of satisfaction.

- (18) a. *Be-vele Benle ke ɔ-hɔ-li dasele wɔ kɔɔto.*
 3PL-call.PERF PN that 3SG-go-eat witness at court
 'Benle has been called to testify in court.'
 b. *ɔ-hyia ke awie mɔɔ di dasele la noko ka nɔhale.*
 3SG-vital that INDEF who eat witness PART also speak truth
 'It is imperative that who bears witness also tells the truth at all times.'

Mutual understanding as eating

The verb ‘eat’ is also used metaphorically to denote mutual understanding between two parties as shown in (19) below. The semantic link which maps the source meaning ‘to eat’ onto the derived meaning ‘to understand’ resides in the conventional practice of greetings and responds. The semantic transfer which derives home the notion of mutual understanding from the notion of eating is therefore metonymical in nature in that shared greetings is to a larger extent refer to the understanding that is achieved. This type of extension is also reported on Babanki where mutual agreement is sealed through the breaking and sharing of kolanuts (see Akumbu & Kießling, 2021).

- (19) a. *Mieza nee Aka di.*
 PN CONJ PN eat
 ‘Mieza is in good terms with Aka.’
 b. *Ehwia nee Aya ε-n-li bieko.*
 PN CONJ PN EMPH-NEG-eat again
 ‘Ehwia is no longer in good terms with Aya.’

Destruction/elimination [Patient-oriented]

Images of criminality such as assault, murder, rape, kidnapping and destruction are particularly prevalent in this subcategory of metaphorical extensions. Newman (2009) posits that metaphorical extensions of “eat” for this classification is by virtue of the effect of the activity of eating and drinking on the food or drink that is consumed, that is, the thematic patient involved in the activity. Song (2009) also notes that the outcome of “eating” expressed by the verbs can either be a destruction or transformation of the thematic patient. He further argues that the extensions under this category involve a mapping from the domain of masticating, biting, and chewing food to various domains where some entity (the eater) affects another entity (what is eaten) negatively. The activity of the eater involves taking food into his/her mouth. The food is processed violently through biting and chewing into digestible units, as noted by Newman (2009). Agyepong, Amfo and Osam (2017) also note that “eat” related verbs under this subcategory can be metaphorically extended to either physical or psychological destruction. The extensions under this category involve all manner of vices that can harm an individual both physically and psychologically.

Engaging in criminal acts as eating

Acts that can traumatize an individual are conceptualised by the Nzema as *εtane*; illegal foods that should not be ingested. Therefore, people who commit such acts are disdained. Let us observe from the examples below.

- (20) a. *Be-hye Mieza ke ɔ-le-di εtane.*
 3PL-catch.PERF PN that 3SG-PROG-eat crime
 ‘Mieza has been arrested for committing a crime.’
 b. *Bomo ε-li ɔ hu εtane.*
 PN EMPH-eat.PERF 3SG husband wickedness
 ‘Bomo has been very wicked to her husband.’

From example (20a), Mieza is arrested for committing a crime, an act which is conceptualised as food that is illegal to eat. In (20b), Bomo is described as a wicked wife for causing harm to her husband. The kind of crime committed by the respective agents are not specified. However, it is obvious that whatever crime they were had the tendency of negatively affecting the patients, both physically and psychologically.

The presence of *εtane* ‘wickedness/crime’ clarifies it in the sense that it naturally connotes pain, suffering and ultimately death, which contribute to the physical or psychological effect that the actions have on the recipients of the actions. The impact of this derives not only from the metaphorical extension of *di* ‘to eat’, but also from the presence of *εtane* ‘crime/wickedness’, which is derived from the verb ‘to harm’.

The example in (21) also highlights the effect of the criminal activity on the patient. The victim of the rape action can be thought of as experiencing something bitter that connotes death, as rape involves physical struggles, vehement sexual intercourse, physical abuse etc.

- (21) *Be-do kakula ne bɔna be-li ye εtane.*
 3PL-throw.PERF child DET rape 3PL-eat.PERF 3SG.ACC wickedness
 ‘Some people have raped the child and have caused her serious harm.’

Hunting for animals as eating

Hunting is a recreative activity among the Nzema. Usually, traps are set at places where animal footmarks can be traced. Wild dogs are also used to hunt for animals. The outcome of the hunting whether it is an animal or a bird is what brings joy and satisfaction to the hunter. Note that the pleasure that is obtained from consuming food is metaphorically linked to happiness derived from the hunting activity. Thus, the hunter, who is the eater searches for food (animal or bird) and when he gets one becomes satisfied.

- (22) a. *Akye di ebɔle kye nane.*
PN eat hunting catch animal.PL
'Akye hunts for animals.'
b. *N-gakula ne mɔ kɔ-di ebɔle.*
PL-child DET EMPH go-eat hunting
'The children go for hunting.'

Metaphorical extensions of drink verbs

Semantic extensions that radiate from drink are based on two structural metaphors, that is, inhaling or smoking is drinking, and sponging is drinking. The metaphor smoking or inhalation is drinking is based on the extension of patients in liquids or gaseous form while the metaphor sponging is drinking is based on the interpretation of an animate patient that is drained of his or her wealth through fake love on the part of the animate agent.

Smoking as drinking

The extensions associated with inhaling or smoking involve the smooth, continuous, unimpeded intake of air. When *no* 'to drink' is used with patients that are gaseous in nature, which means to smoke.

- (23) *Yemenle Kofi ɛ-le-no abua.*
mr PN EMPH-PROG-drink pipe
'Mr. Kofi is smoking a pipe.'

In example (23), *abua* 'pipe' depicts the gaseous entity (smoke) which is ingested by Mr. Kofi. Here, the smoke that comes out of the pipe is the conceived food that gives pleasure to the agent.

Sponging as drinking

In Nzema communication, the verb 'drink' can be extended to mean sponging money off people particularly in a fake love relationship.

- (24) *Edwoba se ɔ-nre-gya Ebia noko ɔ-le-no ye.*
PN says 3SG-NEG-marry PN yet 3SG-PROG-drink 3SG.ACC
'Edwoba says she will not marry Ebia yet she is sponging money off him.'

In (24), Edwoba is conceived of as a parasite living on Ebia and sucking 'blood' from him. This extension is only applicable when one pretend to be in love just to gain an undue advantage over the other.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored conceptual metaphorical extensions of consumption verbs in Nzema discourse. The verb *di* 'to eat' is employed to express activities that are performed universally. Even though these activities are seen as universal, their performance vary across cultures. The verb *di* 'to eat' which has been discussed extensively in the literature as having several connotations occurs in several extensions such as to ingest, to consume, to win/lose etc. Some common cross-linguistic extensions of the verb *di* 'to eat' also exist. For instance, 'to eat' can be extended to include 'to cause physical injury or kill', as reported by Newman and Abera (2009, p.253), is found in Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam, 2017, p.74), Hausa (Jaggar & Buba, 2009), Ewe and Gurenɛ (Adjei & Atintono, 2009), and Amharic (Newman & Abera, 2009). It can also be extended to include 'to achieve mutual agreement or understanding', as reported for Babanki by Akumbu and Kießling (2021), is found in Nzema. As Adjei & Atintono (2009, p. 192) report, "there will be variations in the extent to which people from different cultural settings profile the interpretations of the metaphorical expressions. There is a strong relationship between a people's conceptual, environmental and cultural experiences and their linguistic systems which is shared across cultures." This explains why

some metaphorical extensions of eat and drink attested in other languages are absent in Nzema. For instance, extensions of drink for undergoing trouble and enduring painful experiences, as in Hausa (Jaggar & Buba, 2009), and for inhaling, as in Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam, 2017). On the other hand, insofar as eat and drink activities are conceptualised differently in different cultures accounts for the presence in Nzema of the metonymy squabbling as eating, oath taking as eating, insinuating as eating, witnessing as eating and hunting as eating, and the extensions of drink for sponging, which, to the author's knowledge, have not been reported for other languages.

Abbreviations used

PL	Plural
SG	Singular
1	First Person
3	Third Person
ACC	Accusative
CONJ	Conjunction
DET	Determiner
EMPH	Emphasis
FOC	Focus Marker
FUT	Future Marker
PRES	Present Tense
NEG	Negation
PART	Particle
PAST	Past Marker
PERF	Perfect Marker
PROG	Progressive Marker
POST	Post Position
PN	Personal Name
POSS	Possessive

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