

## The Value of Conceptual Mental Spaces in Structuring a Man as (*Endagera*) Food in Ekegusii

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### ABSTRACT

Food is useful in the transference of semantic aspects that are vital in the construction of masculinity in society. Consequently, foodsemic metaphors that aid in the conceptualization of *omosacha* (a man) are pervasive in Ekegusii. Metaphor use may, however, present difficulties in comprehension due to the various interpretations that may be assigned to each of them. The meaning of Ekegusii foodsemic metaphors may, therefore, be elusive to the native speakers of Ekegusii. The paper employs the principle of conceptual mental spaces to interpret Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor within the Cognitive Linguistics framework. The study adopts descriptive research design. First, the terms that are used to describe men in Ekegusii are identified by administering an interview schedule to 48 Ekegusii native respondents purposively sampled on the basis of gender. The data collected is then subjected to the Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU) in which four annotators are used to identify Ekegusii male metaphors. Through the MIPVU, 52 metaphors are identified. The paper then selects one metaphor that describes a man as food hence the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor for this study. The research reveals that the integration of the four conceptual mental spaces that include two input spaces, the generic space and the blended space is resourceful in structuring a man as a symbol of nourishment in Ekegusii. Moreover, the MIPVU is unveiled as a useful metaphor identification method that provides a clear guide in the establishment of precise metaphors for study. The study concludes that metaphors are integral components of communication and should be explained using the Cognitive Linguistics paradigm. The findings of the study will contribute to Linguistics especially the field of Cognitive Linguistics which is relatively new and has not been subjected to extensive research. In addition, the findings will be useful to metaphor scholars in comprehending Ekegusii male metaphors and culture.

### INTRODUCTION

The paper employs the Cognitive Linguistics (CL) framework to study the foodsemic metaphor used to structure *omosacha* (a man) in Ekegusii. CL is an approach to language which is based on our experience of the world and the way we perceive and conceptualize it (Faber, 2002). CL was founded in the late 1970s and early 1980s by scholars such as Ron Langacker, Len Talmy and George Lakoff among others to explain the idealized cognitive models like metaphor that are considered as deviant linguistic phenomena by the formal approaches to language (Ntabo, Nyarigoti & Gathigia, 2019; Ogal, Gathigia & Maitaria, 2019). CL was also developed as a protest to the Chomskyan generative grammar which, according to Barcelona and Valenzuela (2006), mainly focuses on the structure and form of language, thus, leaving out the importance of the study of meaning in linguistic theorizing. Langacker (1987), for example, notes that meaning is what language is all about and concentration on the structure and form of language rather than its meaning impoverishes the subject matter and distorts the intended

message. Ibarretxe-Antunano (2004) also notes that meaning is the main component of linguistic knowledge which forms part of general thinking and cognition. Meaning is, therefore, a product of a nexus which exists among the mind, language and social-physical experiences.

In Cognitive Linguistics (CL), language is also considered to be closely related with thought. Faber (2002) argues that CL does not view meaning as an output of a set of innate universals that are unique to a given language but as a reflection of embodied cognition. This implies that language is a more dynamic system that reflects our conceptual organization and representation of the world. According to Janda (2000), CL is principally based on the way our cognitive abilities understand the world and yield a consistent pattern across different linguistic phenomena all of which are meaningful. Our cognitive abilities normally integrate raw perceptual data about the world into a coherent mental image which yields the meaning of linguistic units such as metaphors (Faber, 2002; Jackendoff, 1983). CL also provides a framework on thought which enables us to uncover the mechanisms at work in high-level cognitive processing. CL

is, therefore, important in studying abstract linguistic units like the foodsemic metaphor which is employed to construct masculinity in Ekegusii.

Metaphor, which is the main focus of this paper, is considered a significant tool that aids in the comprehension of abstract notions through the concrete ones (Crespo-Fernández, 2013; Negro, 2014; Ogal, Gathigia & Maitaria, 2019). According to Gathigia (2014), the term metaphor is derived from two Latin words: “*meta*” that means “beyond,” or “over,” and “*pherein*” which implies “to transfer” or to “carry beyond” (p. 2). This means that metaphor is a fundamental tool which is used to understand one thing in terms of another. According to Faber (2002), metaphor involves conceptualizing or projecting one domain of experience in term of another one. The domain of experience which is concrete or physical is referred to as the source domain (SD) while the one that is less familiar or abstract is the target domain (TD). The attributes of the SD are usually mapped onto the corresponding ones in the TD to reveal the meaning a metaphorical expression. Lee (2001) also points out that the SD tends to be relatively concrete areas of experience while the TD are the more abstract ones. According to Faber (2002), we normally employ metaphors to understand abstract and less familiar phenomena or explain scientific or other types of specialized knowledge.

The present research also focuses on metaphor studies because as pointed out by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphor is present in everyday language. Moreover, Banaruee et al. (2019) note that metaphors are strongly established and highly conventional within language and they are useful in lubricating communication. This means that metaphor use normally spices up our conversation and, thus, captivates our communication. In addition, metaphor is a conceptual mechanism which is central in human language and thought. Some speakers might, however, miss out on the meaning of some metaphors. This is because metaphor use, as pointed out by Nyakoe (2014), may lead to difficulties in comprehension due to the various interpretations that may be assigned to each of the metaphors. Furthermore, some of the metaphorical interpretations may introduce properties which are not part of a speaker’s mental representation. As a result, the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor may be represented and interpreted differently by the native Ekegusii speakers. This study, therefore, evaluates the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor to determine the extent to which food structures masculinity in Ekegusii.

Gathigia, Orwenjo and Ndungu (2018) refer to the use of food metaphors as foodsemy. According to Kleparski (2008), food, which is classified as an object in the principle of Great Chain of Being metaphor (GCBM), is a significant mechanism of semantic transference of vital attributes from one domain of experience onto another one. The term foodsemy, therefore, refers to the transference of the corresponding conceptual mappings between the domain of food as the source domain (SD) and the domain of human beings as the target domain (TD). This is in line with Barcelona and Valenzuela’s (2006) proposition that metaphor is a cognitive mechanism whereby one experiential domain is partially projected onto

a different experiential domain so that the second domain is partially understood in terms of the first one. This paper seeks to establish how *endagera* (food) is used to metaphorically structure *omosacha* (a man) in Ekegusii. This is because metaphor, as pointed out by Pishghadam (2011) is important in accounting for an abstract concept in terms of the concrete one. In addition, owing to the experiential basis of food and considering that many of the metaphors are culture specific (Gathigia, Orwenjo & Ndungu, 2018; Kövecses, 2002), this paper investigates the phenomenon of masculinity based on the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor.

The motivation to explore who men are in relation to the entity of food is drawn from Ngumo’s (2014) argument that most members of society are socialized to view masculinity as an object of consumption. This claim is motivated by a man’s traditional role of provision of basic needs for his loved ones in the Gusii culture. Furthermore, masculine ideologies that enhance dominance of men over women are still strong in Kenya (Onyango, 2008). As a result, men are traditionally viewed as dominant and superior to women in Kenya and are, therefore, regarded as power wielders and decision makers. Various terms have been, therefore, designed to describe men based on their behaviour and actions in society. For example, Ngumo (2014) opines that society describes men in various ways based on their prestigious societal position and flaws. These terms, according to Shaydullina and Kang (2015), can be tested for metaphoricity hence the linguistic concept of male metaphors. An example is the foodsemic metaphor which is employed to describe a man as food in Ekegusii.

The principle of Great Chain of Being metaphor (GCBM) was used to categorise the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor into the object conceptual domain to aid in its analysis. The basic tenet of the GCBM is that all kinds of things in the universe constitute a hierarchical system in which every creature or thing belongs inherently and immutably to a certain level of the chain (Krikmann, 2007). Kieltyka and Kleparski (2005) also note that the basic GCBM is defined by attributes and behaviours arranged in a hierarchy. In the general outline of the GCBM, God occupies the apex position, then followed by the universe, the society, human beings, animals, plants, objects and natural physical things in that order (Fangfang, 2009; Ntabo, 2019). Fangfang (2009) further notes that a concept which belongs to a certain level of the system is understood in terms of another one that belongs to another level. This claim is validated by Aradi (2019) who provides that the levels of the GCBM, although rigid in their social embeddedness, are mentally permeable hence facilitating the comprehension of abstract categories. Higher levels of the entities such as human beings can, therefore, be understood in terms of lower levels like objects. In the present study, *endagera* (food), which is an object that occupies a lower level in the chain, is employed as a source domain to comprehend *omosacha* (a man) who is a human being positioned at a higher level in the hierarchy.

Ekegusii is a Bantu language spoken in Kenya. The native speakers of Ekegusii are referred to as Abagusii while the region where the language is predominantly spo-

ken is known as Gusii. Ogechi (2002) notes that Ekegusii is employed for inter-ethnic communication and it is closely related to Zanaki, Nata and Ngurimi in Tanzania and Igikuria in Kenya. Maroko and Morara (2016) provide that Ekegusii comprises of two dialects which are: *Rogoro* (Northern) and *Maate* (Southern) dialects. *Maate* dialect is spoken in the southern part of Kisii County while *Rogoro* is spoken in both Nyamira and Kisii Counties. Maroko and Morara (2016) further note that *Rogoro* is considered the standard variety because it is used as a medium of instruction to teach Ekegusii to pre-primary and lower primary pupils in the rural parts of Kisii and Nyamira Counties. Moreover, *Rogoro* is employed as a language of broadcasting in the Ekegusii FM stations. In addition, it is *Rogoro* dialect which is used in the Ekegusii hymns and Bible. The present research was carried out in Kisii County where both *Rogoro* and *Maate* Ekegusii dialects are spoken.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

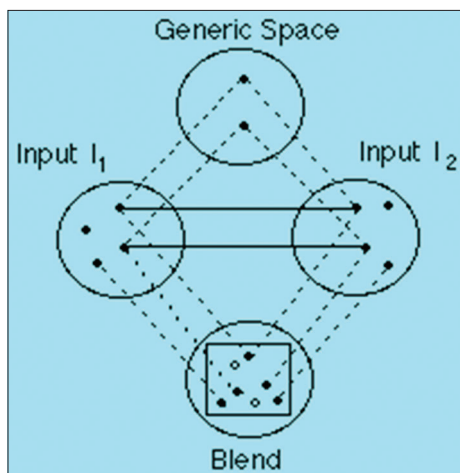
The paper employed Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT) to analyse Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor. The main proponents of CIT are Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner. CIT accounts for the integration of knowledge originating from different sources onto a single coherent unit referred to as a blend (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). The theory was further developed by Seana Coulson and Todd Oakley who provide that CIT is an unconscious activity which is resourceful in dealing with various semantic and pragmatic phenomena such as metaphor. In addition, CIT provides a framework that enables one to unveil metaphorical meaning by contrasting concepts that have no readily apparent connection or commonality on the surface (Morrison, 2003). The theory is, therefore, appropriate in constructing the meaning of metaphorical expressions which are made up of different concepts that do not have apparent connection or similarity on the surface.

The main tenet of CIT is that it depends on four conceptual mental spaces to reveal meaning. Ogal, Gathigia and Maitaria (2019) opine that a mental space is a small conceptual packet constructed as we think and talk for purposes of local understanding and action. The four conceptual mental spaces are: *two input spaces*, *the generic space* and *the blended space*. The concept of conceptual mental spaces, as pointed out by Džanić (2007) is a model for thinking, creating meaning and, therefore, comprehending the world around us. The four mental space model, as pointed out by Anudo (2012), can effectively account for phenomena that are not explicitly addressed by the mechanism of the two domain model in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Each of the four mental spaces is connected with one another and they can be modified as thought and discourse change. In addition, the mental spaces contain different information on the same elements but each space is composed of a representation that is logically organized (Coulson & Oakley, 2005; Ogal, Gathigia & Maitaria, 2019). This means that the elements within one mental space often have counterparts or information in other mental spaces which are connected by a set of correspondences. According

to Džanić (2007), these correspondences are referred to as projection mappings. CIT majorly relies on the projection mappings between the conceptual mental spaces and the context of use of a linguistic unit to develop the *emergent structure* which is the novel meaning of a metaphor.

The four conceptual mental spaces form an integration network referred to as the Conceptual Integration Networks (CIN) that is useful in aiding construction of metaphorical meaning. Anudo (2012) notes that the two input spaces correspond to the source and the target domains as provided by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory founded by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). This implies that the input space one is occupied by the source domain while the input space two the target domain in a metaphorical expression. This assertion is corroborated by Morrison (2003) who also notes that the two input spaces can be equated with the source and the target domains and they are often integrated into a third mental space known as the generic space. The corresponding information in the input space one and that in the input space two is projected to the third conceptual mental space known as the generic space. Coulson and Oakley (2005) posit that the generic space contains predominant information that is common to both the input space one and the input space two. In addition, the generic space enables the identification of counterparts in the two input spaces by being utilized as a *template* for the shared structure (Anudo, 2012; Naicker, 2016). The meaning of a metaphorical expression is revealed at the *blended space*. The *blended space* contains the prominent information shared by the two input spaces as projected by the generic space (Coulson & Oakley, 2005; Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). The blended space also contains new pieces of information which is described as the *emergent structure*. The emergent structure, which is information that is not contained in either of the inputs spaces, forms the meaning of a metaphorical expression.

It is worth noting that the formation of the emergent structure is also dependent on the three blending processes of completion, composition and elaboration. The blending processes often introduce essential information which is not present in the two input spaces. First, composition, according to Ogal, Gathigia and Maitaria (2019), is a process that relates elements in the two input spaces. This creates a contextual accommodation where an element is applied in totally different domains. Second, completion involves matching elements in the blend with information in the long term memory (Anudo, 2012). For instance, an accident may be matched with death. Completion, therefore, involves a lot of contextual inference in order to come up with novel meaning. Finally, elaboration concerns physical or mental simulation of the event in the blend into concrete picture in the brain hence unveiling the novel meaning of a metaphor (Anudo, 2012). The four conceptual mental spaces are, therefore, integrated with the blending processes to unveil novel metaphorical meaning. The conceptual mental spaces are usually represented in the form of a diagram. Figure 1 below highlights the movement of elements from the two input spaces to the blended space within the Conceptual Integration Network.



**Figure 1.** The conceptual mental spaces  
Source: Ogal, Gathigia and Maitaria (2019)

In Figure 1 above, the circles represent the four conceptual mental spaces which include: two input spaces, a generic space and a blended space. Elements are represented by the points in the circles. The lines stand for connections between the elements in different conceptual mental spaces. The dotted lines represent the projected mappings between one conceptual mental space and another. Turner (2010) posits that the circles which represent the conceptual mental spaces are “theoretical constructs” which are only considered as mnemonic aids (p.20). There are, thus, no circles in our brains.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is anchored within descriptive research design. Atmowardoyo (2018) defines descriptive design as a research method used to describe the existing phenomena as accurately as possible. The phenomena observed in descriptive research are already available. Atmowardoyo further notes that what a researcher in a descriptive research needs to do is to collect the available data through the use of research instruments such as interviews and systematically describe it. Nassaji (2015) also argues that since descriptive research is aimed at revealing what is available, a researcher should focus on accurately describing a phenomenon and its characteristics. An interview schedule was employed to collect the terms used to describe men in Ekegusii through 48 purposively sampled Ekegusii native respondents chosen on the basis of gender. The gender variable was considered significant because men and women, according to Astuti (2016), often use distinct terms to describe abstract concepts in society. Hendrick and Hendrick (1995) also argue that we normally form different perceptions about people, animals, plants and objects based on our gender.

The study used four annotators (including the researchers) to establish the metaphoricity of the collected data through the Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU). The MIPVU is a systematic and transparent method that provides a step by step procedure for identifying precise metaphors in both spoken and written discourse. The collected data was first translated into English. Secondly, a

word or an expression was annotated as a metaphor if its contextual sense contrasted with its dictionary meaning as provided by the MIPVU (Ntabo, 2019; Ogal, Gathigia & Maitaria, 2019). Thirdly, the data was also subjected to an inter-rater reliability test in which the four annotators assigned scores to the words or expressions that were considered metaphorical. In the inter-rater reliability test, a term was annotated as a metaphor if at least three annotators were in consensus. Therefore, a word or an expression was considered metaphorical if it scored at least 0.75 or 75% in the inter-rater reliability test. This means that each annotator was required to assign 0.25 or 25% to a word or expression that was considered metaphorical. Three annotators out of four were hence considered sufficient to qualify a term as a metaphor.

The paper identified 52 Ekegusii male metaphors through the MIPVU. One Ekegusii male metaphor that describes a man as *endagera* (food) (cf. Table 1) was purposively sampled for study because, as pointed out by Gathigia, Orwenjo and Ndungu (2018), the food domain is central in the transfer of semantic aspects of foodsemic metaphors which are significant in the comprehension of abstract concepts such as masculinity. Kleparski (2008) also notes that food is a widespread source domain that is useful in structuring various abstract concepts in society given its indispensability in human, animal and plant life. The foodsemy metaphor in this study was also categorized as an object metaphor based on the levels of the Great Chain of Being metaphor (GCBM).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study reveals that food can be metaphorically used to elucidate non-food items such as *omosacha* (a man) in Ekegusii. This is in line with Korthal (2008) who posits that food is an engine and source of metaphorical meanings that permeate our lives. Moreover, food, which is a source of sustenance and pleasure, is pervasively used to structure abstract concepts in society (Berrada, 2007). As a result, the act of eating or being eaten as food reveals the perceptions people have about the concept of masculinity in Ekegusii. The Ekegusii male metaphor in Table 1 below highlights the relationship between *omosacha* (a man) and *endagera* (food).

*Omosacha* (a man) is assigned metaphor (1) above because food, like a man, plays an indispensable role in our lives. For example, it is food that physically nourishes our body through the provision of nutrients that are essential for healthy growth and sustenance of life. Food is also vital in offering the body protection against diseases by boosting our immunity against ailments. Moreover, food is necessary in the provision of the energy that facilitates essential bodily functions such as breathing, sleeping and digestion among others. According to Wierniuk and Wlodarek (2013), most men normally engage in strenuous activities that require a lot of bodily energy to execute. This means that food is a very important need for human beings. Equating *omosacha* (a man) with *endagera* (food), therefore, suggests that most men are useful in undertaking important activities that pro-

**Table 1.** The inter-rater reliability scores for *Omosacha n' Endagera* (a Man is Food) Ekegusii male metaphor

No	Ekegusii	Gloss	Conceptual domain	Inter-Rater Reliability Scores				Total
1	<i>Omosacha n' endagera</i>	A man is food	Object	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.00

mote the growth and development of members of the society. Obwoye (2016) authenticates this claim by providing that most men usually indulge in agricultural activities that yield the food requirements for their households in Gusii. It is, therefore, acceptable to compare a man with food in Gusii.

In addition, making reference to a man as food suggests that a man is an object that can be literally eaten. For instance, some large predatory beasts such as lions can prey on human beings. An example is a pair of man eater lions that devoured men at the Tsavo area in the Coastal region of Kenya during the construction of the Kenya-Uganda Railway in 1898. The man eater lions killed several men for food using unique hunting techniques. There are also other wild beasts that actively hunt human beings which include: tigers, leopards, crocodiles and bears among others. Furthermore, a man is described as food because of the divine role assigned to men as providers of basic needs for their households. According to 1 Timothy 5:8, a man who abdicates his role of providing for his loved ones has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (the Holy Bible, 1982). This is comparable with the societal expectation of a man as a provider in Gusii. Otiso (2017) corroborates this assertion by noting that *omosacha* (a man) is socialized to gather food or wealth for his household in Gusii. The Ekegusii term *omosacha* (a man), according to Otiso, not only refers to maleness but also the role a man is expected to play in society. The noun *omosacha* (a man) is derived from the verb *gosacha* which implies to look for or gather food. This means that most men in Gusii are associated with food production activities such as engaging in agriculture in an effort to produce food for their households. The act of equating a man with food in Ekegusii is, therefore, justified.

Moreover, *omosacha* (a man) is also labelled as *endagera* (food) because most names of food items in Ekegusii are normally used in relation with copulation. For example, Nyakoe, Ongarora and Oloo (2014) note that the expression *koiya obong'ari* (to excavate a type of sweet honey) is metaphorically employed to insinuate that the act of sexual intercourse is appetizing, salivating and sumptuous. Nyakoe, Ongarora and Oloo also exemplify *komena oboke* (leaking honey) and *konywa amabere* (drinking milk) which instantiate coitus as a delicious food. Sexual intercourse, according to Nyakoe, Ongarora and Oloo is, therefore, conceptualized as eating each other. This suggests that there is a link between sex and food which has a significant influence at a linguistic level. Furthermore, Anudo (2012) argues that during copulation, both a man and a woman regard each other as food that can be "eaten" to satisfy one's physiological needs. This explains why *omosacha* is described as food in Ekegusii.

The Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor *omosacha n' endagera* (a man is food) was then subjected to the Conceptual

Integration Network (CIN) which is provided for by Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT) for analysis. The CIN consists of four conceptual mental spaces. The first two mental spaces are the input space one and the input space two that also correspond to the source domain (SD) and the target domain (TD) as provided by Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). This means that *endagera* (food) which is the SD occupies the input space one while *omosacha* (a man) who is the TD takes the input space two. This is then followed by fixed counterpart mappings (projected mappings) where the attributes of *endagera* (food) and the corresponding ones of *omosacha* (a man) are projected through CIT. For example, *endagera* which is classified as an object in the principle of Great Chain of Being Metaphor (GCBM) is projected to a man whose level in the GCBM is a human being. This reveals that entities in the lower levels in the GCBM such as objects can be used to account for those ones in the higher levels of the chain like human beings.

In addition, the nutritious role that food plays is mapped onto the significance of a man in society. Food is, for example, consumed to provide nutritional support to human beings. It contains useful nutrients such as: carbohydrates that give the body energy to work; proteins which enhance growth of body tissues and vitamins that protect the body against infections. A man is also a valuable family member who is expected to take the responsibility of leading, loving, serving, providing, nurturing and offering protection to his household. In Gusii, *omosacha* (a man) is culturally expected to serve as a provider and leader of his household. Otiso (2019) corroborates this assertion by noting that the word *omosacha* is not just a marker of sex but a gender role which is derived from the verb *gosacha* (to look for or gather wealth). This implies that a man is expected to appeal to the social, physical, spiritual, psychological and economic needs of his loved ones in Gusii.

Furthermore, the characteristic of food as a social phenomenon, in the input space one, is also projected to the understanding of a man as a social animal in the input space two. Food is a socializing agent that motivates people to come together to eat. Eating is usually considered a communal activity in many traditional and modern African societies. People eat together during ceremonies, parties and funerals among other functions. Human beings, therefore, socialize over food. A man is also revealed to live in a society which is made up of other human beings who share demographic aspects such as: geographical location, economic status, gender, language, level of education and religion among others. A man often forms relationships with other human beings through marriage, political, educational, religious and economic associations. This means that a man often finds happiness and satisfaction by coexisting with other human beings in society.

Also, the fact that some foods can be poisonous is mapped onto the callous, beastly, cruel and inhuman nature of some men who perpetuate gender based violence in Gusii. Some foods contain poisonous substances that can cause great harm to the consumers if taken in large quantities. An example of a poisonous substance is aflatoxins which are found in agricultural yields such as: maize, peanuts and cotton seeds among others. Some animal products also contain cholesterol that is a harmful component which can cause heart disease if its levels are high in the human body. Similarly, some men are revealed to be lacking tenderness for women as they cause unhealthy and toxic environment that results to devastation in Gusii. According to Nyamwega (2008), cases of domestic violence that adversely affect women physically, psychologically, economically and socially are rampant in Gusii. Corrective measures should, therefore, be designed and implemented to mitigate on this vice.

Finally, the association between food and human sexual intercourse is projected to a man's involvement in sexual activities. There is a link between food metaphors and coitus in Ekegusii. For example, Nyakoe, Ongarora and Oloo (2014) provide that most people regard sexual intercourse as *koria* (eating) in Ekegusii. In this regard, the sex partners view each other as *endagera* (food) that can be eaten to physiologically gratify one another. Winkler (2011) also opines that food is often associated with romantic love and sensuality. This explains why most food terms are associated with the human sex organs. For example, the food names such as: *eng'ende* (bean), *obokeye* (honey) and *amabere* (milk) among others are used to instantiate the female sex organ while *ritoke* (a banana) is euphemistically employed to describe the male sex organ in Ekegusii. Food is, therefore, a prelude to coitus since sex partners usually refer to copulation as food and eating in Gusii. Besides, food gives the body the stamina that facilitates good blood circulation system which is essential in copulation.

The matched information between the input space one and the input space two is then projected to the generic space which is the third conceptual mental space in the Conceptual Integration Network (CIN). Džanić (2007) notes that the information the two input spaces have in common is incorporated in the generic space. For the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor *omosacha n'endagera* (a man is food), the subject is, first, *endagera* (food) in the input space one and *omosacha* (a man) in the input space two; second, the food in the input space one is classified as an object while a man in the input space two is categorized as a human being based on the principle of Great Chain of Being Metaphor (GCBM). This means that entities in a lower level in the hierarchical order of GCBM such as objects can be employed to give an account of those ones in the higher levels like a human being; third, the indispensable role that food plays in our lives is correlated with the usefulness of a man in society; fourth, food is revealed to be a social phenomenon which is comparable with a man who is a social animal; fifth, some foods are noted to be toxic which is equated with some men who are revealed to be inhuman, callous, beastly and cruel

for engaging in domestic violence and; sixth, both food and a man have a strong association with human copulation.

The information in the generic space is then projected to the fourth conceptual mental space referred to as the blended space. Džanić (2007) provides that the blended space is connected to the generic space. Consequently, the structure in the generic space is incorporated in the blended space. The blended space also contains the emergent structure which forms part of the novel meaning of a metaphorical expression. Ogal, Gathigia and Maitaria (2019) argue that the background knowledge concerning the use of a metaphorical expression, general cognitive abilities of a language user and the information obtained from the discourse context of a metaphor is resourceful in determining the emergent structure. For the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor *omosacha n'endagera* (a man is food), the blended space is composed of the information projected from the generic space which include: subject, classification, role, social in nature, weakness, and the relationship between food and human copulation. The emergent structure is that *a man is a symbol of nourishment in Gusii*. This is in line with the revelation that although some men are irresponsible and can instigate gender based violence, most of them are significant pillars that mentor, provide and protect members of their households from harm. This conceptualization also validates Oti-so's (2017) proposition that it is *omosacha* (a man) who is culturally expected to toil and moil to provide and protect his loved ones in Gusii. Biblically, God has given a man (a husband) the role of leading, protecting and providing the needs of his household. For example, in Ephesians 5:21, a husband is mandated to love his wife and children through the provision of the physical, spiritual, social and emotional needs. Consequently, a man who is described as food in this study is one who appeals to the social, psychological, physical and emotional needs of his loved ones. Such a man is instrumental in the realization of a progressive, happy and fulfilled family. The fixed counterpart mappings for this metaphor are summarized in Table 2 below:

The three blending processes of composition, completion and elaboration are also pivotal in the revelation of the emergent structure for the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor. For example, the information in the input space one as well as that in the input space two is projected in composition. Composition is a cognitive model in which a relation from one input space is ascribed to a corresponding one in another input space. In addition, completion, which occurs when information in the long term memory is matched to the structure in the blend, is also used to divulge the emergent structure. In this study, for example, the relationship of both food and a man to human copulation is produced in completion. Finally, the meaning of the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor which is *a man is a symbol of nourishment in Gusii* emerges in elaboration. Elaboration, therefore, entails the physical and mental simulation of the event in the blend which leads to the formation of the emergent structure.

It is important to note that in the conceptualization for the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor, the central role and place of a

**Table 2.** Conceptual mental space mappings for *Omosacha n’Endagera* (a Man is Food) Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor

No	Input space one (Source domain)	Input space two (Target domain)	Generic space	Blended space
1	<i>Endagera</i> (Food)	<i>Omosacha</i> (a man)	Subject	Subject
1	Object	→ Human being	Classification	Classification
2	Food gives the body energy, facilitates growth and protection against ailments	→ A man is expected to love, provide and offer protection for his loved ones	role	Role
3	Some foods are toxic	→ Some men perpetuate domestic violence	Weakness	Weakness
4	Food is a social phenomenon	→ A man is a social animal	Society	Society
5	Food is often a prelude to sexual intercourse	→ Most men engage in copulation	Relationship between food and human copulation	Relationship between food and human copulation
	Emergent structure			<i>A man is a symbol of nourishment in Gusii</i>

man in Gusii is unveiled. It can be deciphered that a man is expected to support his family emotionally, spiritually, materially and physically. Furthermore, it is the duty of a man to protect his loved ones against external threats and safeguard the reputation and values of his family. He is also expected to lead his family in an exemplary manner by offering inspiration, mentorship and guidance.

Moreover, a man is conceptualized as a social animal in the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor. Like food, which is depicted as a useful social phenomenon, a man co-exists with other human beings in society. He enters into relationships, hence, cannot live alone in society. Traditionally, a man is expected to enter into wedlock with a grown up woman and sire. According to Akama (2017), children are considered as significant assets in Gusii because they serve the roles of continuing family lineages and preserving the cultural norms and family values among other roles. This means that the procreative capacity of a man is considered as one of his core roles in Gusii. A man’s vitality is, therefore, resourceful which motivates his description as food in Ekegusii. As a result, a man who fails to marry and sire is often marginalized in Gusii. In the modern days, human beings socialize in various ways that include: through social media, print and electronic media among others.

This study also reveals that some men engage in vices such as domestic violence which is comparable to the toxicity of some food in society. Nyamwega (2008), for instance, notes that cases of human rights abuse against women both within and outside households are common in Gusii. The injustices meted against women in Gusii, according to Nyamwega, include wife beating, female genital mutilation, rape, sexual harassment and dispossession of widows among others. Domestic violence should be shunned because it adversely affects women socially, economically, psychologically and physically.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings and discussions above, the paper concludes that *endagera* (food) is aptly employed to

explain who *omosacha* (a man) is in Gusii. The study also reveals that maleness in Gusii is constructed through a man’s capacity to appeal to the physical, social, spiritual and psychological needs of his household rather than through his sex. This means that masculinity in Gusii is constructed through the gender roles rather than the sex marker. In addition, the principle of conceptual mental spaces by Fauconnier and Turner’s (2002) Conceptual Integration Theory is appropriate in revealing how masculinity is structured as a symbol of nourishment in Ekegusii. The four mental spaces which include: two input spaces, a generic space and a blended space are integrated with the blending processes of composition, completion and elaboration to creatively reveal the relationship between food and *omosacha* (a man) in Ekegusii. Moreover, the Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU) is an effective method of establishing the Ekegusii foodsemic metaphor for study. This is because the MIPVU does not rely on unilateral introspection in the identification of metaphors. Therefore, metaphor, which is integral in human communication, should be explained using the Cognitive Linguistics paradigm.

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