Metaphorical extensions of ‘eat’ ⇒ [OVERCOME] and ‘drink’ ⇒ [UNDERGO] in Hausa

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The consumption verbs ci ‘eat’ and shaa ‘drink’ in Hausa are rich sources of metaphorical extensions into a variety of cognate semantic domains (Gouffé 1966; Williams 1991). Prototypical ci ‘eat’ metaphors encode overcoming/control of a patient or theme by an animate/human agent (and part experiencer) functioning as subject, e.g., mun cii sù ‘we beat (ate) them’. Metaphorical transfers of shaa ‘drink’ usually have an undergo interpretation with a non-agential experiencer subject, e.g., sunaa shân wâhalâa ‘they are suffering (drinking trouble)’. Thus, the metaphorical overcome and undergo outputs are often maximally distinct in meaning, and these correlations are directly inherited from their differing physical/ontological properties: the eat act entails a higher degree of subject agentivity/ontological manipulation and object affectedness, and is higher in transitivity than the drink act.

1. Introduction

Hausa, an important SVO Chadic/Afroasiatic language spoken to the west of Lake Chad in West Africa, has two lexical verbs of ingestion/consumption – ci ‘eat’ and shaa ‘drink’ (also used for consuming soft fruit). These verbs typically occur in monotransitive clauses where the grammatical subject is animate (human) and combines the semantic roles of both agent and experiencer of the action denoted by the verb, e.g.,

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2. Transcription: ā(a) = Low tone, ā(a) = Falling tone, High tone is unmarked; aa, ii, etc. = long, a, i, etc. = short; d = laryngeal implosives, k = ejective, ṭ = apical tap/roll, c and j = palato-alveolar affricates. Abbreviations: F = feminine; FUT = future; IMPFV = imperfective; IO (m) = indirect object (marker); M = masculine; NEG = negative; PFV = perfective; PL = plural;
1. ṇa ə ci əyābə
    1sg.pfv eat banana
    ‘I ate a banana.’

2. ẓn shaa ruwaː
    fut.1sg drink water
    ‘I’ll drink (some) water.’

As in many languages, these bodily consumption verbs are also sources of metaphorical mappings into a variety of (sometimes overlapping) semantic domains with basic correlates rooted in real-world physical experiences. In this regard, studies such as Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999), Johnson (1987), Heine (1997), Gibbs & Steen (1999), and Talmy (2000) provide an explication of the link between human conceptualization, categorization, and the nature of the spatio-physical world we inhabit, and Lakoff & Johnson’s (1980) study is especially relevant in documenting the function and pervasiveness of metaphor and metaphoric categories (in English). With specific regard to metaphorical extensions of ‘eat’ and ‘drink’, whose primary senses are physical, the key question to be answered is: do these two verbs have intrinsic properties which generally exclude each other in metaphorical expressions, and if so what are these properties?

Turning to Hausa, there are two previous studies on ci ‘eat’ and shaa ‘drink’ – Gouffé (1966) and Williams (1991) – and these works, in particular that of Williams, consider some of the same language facts as we do here, and so represent the starting-point for our analysis. Gouffé’s (166: 99ff.) proposed features account has “physiological” ci ‘eat’ expressing an “exercised” role in metaphorical transfers, and shaa ‘drink’ has an ‘undergone’ interpretation, with all such functions subsumed under an umbrella concept he termed “appropriation”. This division basically corresponds to our “agentive subject” vs. “affected subject” dichotomy respectively (as presented below). Williams (1991) argues that Gouffé’s features provide an incomplete explanation of the various metaphorical extensions of the two verbs, and instead he proposes a “radial categories” model (after Lakoff 1987) which assumes that “the various meanings of these two verbs in idiomatic expressions need not have any particular, specific meaning in common” (p. 331), i.e., Williams is essentially a “splitter”, Gouffé more of a “lumper”. Our own semantic classification overlaps partially with Williams’ (and Gouffé’s) model, but differs by showing that a significant number of eat/drink metaphors in Hausa do in fact correlate ontologically with the core meanings of these two bodily consumption verbs, and so have a non-arbitrary, real-world grounding. Although the metaphorical senses are diverse and the divergence increases along

sg = singular; sinctv = subjunctive; 1/2/3/4 = first/second/third/fourth person. # = semantically anomalous.
a continuum – cf. Gouffé’s reference to “chaos des faits” (p. 106) and Abraham’s (1962: 136–38, 793–94) more than 20 subheadings each for ci and shaa – we believe that Williams’ account is unnecessarily complicated, and that valid semantic generalizations are possible, even at the cost of some oversimplification. Our account also represents a refinement of earlier approaches in that we present a more precise characterization of how the syntactic functions and semantic roles of core arguments line up in ci ‘eat’ and shaa ‘drink’ expressions in Hausa.

All the naturally-occurring data in this paper have been rigorously cross-checked for acceptability. Where we encountered inter- and intra-speaker variation and occasional uncertainty in usage – a common problem in metaphor analysis – we decided to go with the mutually supportive majority choices which were accepted by Malami Buba (the second author) (see also Williams 1991 for dialectal variation). Gouffé (1966), we note, relies heavily on data from two earlier dictionaries – Bargery (1934: 154–56, 918), essentially repeated in Abraham (1962: 136–39, 793–95) – but a number of the ‘eat’ and ‘drink’ metaphors they cite are neither used nor even recognized by the speakers we consulted. It is also significant that almost all the ‘eat’ and ‘drink’ Hausa metaphors have direct analogues in Bole, a closely related West Chadic language (Ibrahim Maina Waziri, p.c., 2008).

2. The hypothesis

Despite the fact that the (animate) subjects of both ci ‘eat’ and shaa ‘drink’ combine agential and experiencer roles, they align with different ontological perceptions, so when operating in metaphorical contexts they often select different complement (direct object) arguments, their syntactic subjects often fulfil different semantic roles, and they typically express different but still intuitively verifiable senses. We say ‘often, typically’ etc. because, as is often the case with semantic extensions, the base ⇒ metaphor target mapping is not a perfect one-to-one match, i.e., the two verbs are not always mutually exclusive in their distribution, and in some cases they can be interchangeable for some speakers (§5.1). In spite of this, from a cognitive viewpoint, the basic semantic cut which can be abstracted away in the metaphoric domain is formulated in our working hypothesis (3) as follows:

(3) ci ‘eat’ ⇒ OVERCOMING = [+CONTROL]
    shaa ‘drink’ ⇒ UNDERGOING = [−CONTROL]

Examples (4–5) illustrate canonical eat- and drink-metaphors:

(4) mun cii sù
    1PL.PFV eat 3PL
    ‘We really beat (ate) them.’ (e.g., in a game)
(5) ‘yan-wàasanmù sun ci kwâf
players.of.1PL 3PL.PFV eat cup
‘Our players won the cup.’

(6) sunàa shàn wàhalàa
3PL.IMPFV drinking.of trouble
‘They are really suffering trouble/difficulty.’

(7) mun shaa raanaa yàu
1PL.PFV drink sun today
‘We’ve really suffered (have drunk) the sun today.’

Examples (4–5) and (6–7) differ sharply and obviously in their meanings. These distinct metaphorical elaborations are not accidental, but are deducible from the differing primary senses of the two verbs, reflecting differing conceptualizations of their physical properties (see also Wierzbicka 1982: 774ff., Newman 1997; Newman in this volume). The unifying principles, based on real-world knowledge and perception, also provide a plausible and coherent explanation for the various collocations (see also Yusuf 1984 for some collocational uses of *shaa*).

Both *ci ‘eat’* and *shaa ‘drink’*, in their central consumption usages, occur in single-participant clauses with animate (human) eater/drinker subjects which are at the same time agents and experiencers of the eat/drink act, i.e., both verbs take “affected subjects/agents”. (As noted by Naess (this volume) the effect on the object/theme (food/liquid) is of little or no importance in contrast to the impact on the agent/experiencer, i.e., satisfying hunger, quenching thirst, etc.) When extended metaphorically, the roles are still determined by the head verb meaning and the prototypical pattern is identical – single-participant clauses with human subjects and inanimate themes/objects (exx. 5–7), or two-participant expressions with a human patient who undergoes the action (ex. 4). However, the semantic properties of the verb and complement argument mean that the roles of the respective subjects now diverge. The subject referents retain their experiencer roles, and *ci ‘eat’* (= metaphorical ‘overcome, win, conquer’, etc.) inherits its agential subject, but the subject of *shaa ‘drink’* now takes on a non-agential (= ‘undergo, suffer, endure’ etc.) interpretation, i.e., the two outputs are maximally distinct in meaning.

To account for this agential/non-agential semantic opposition, we propose that the core extended meaning of *ci ‘eat’* denotes: (a) OVERCOMING/CONTROL/MANIPULATION etc. of an inanimate theme (ex. 5) or patient (ex. 4) by an animate (human) agential subject which is also an experiencer; and that (b) this is a natural reflex of the physiological properties of the eating action itself which entails maximal, high-impact manipulation of the object (solids), which undergoes a physical transformation, a perceptible change of state. The basic *eat* construction therefore combines a relatively high degree of (subject) agential activity with a
similarly strong degree of “object affectedness” (see Newman 1997; this volume, and §3 below). The default derivative sense of shaa ‘drink’, in contrast, is one of a non-volitional sentient (human) subject undergoing/enduring etc. an experience or sensation (the thematic object/stimulus), i.e., non-control, and again this sense is ultimately inherited from the physiological characteristics of the base verb activity – the act of drinking entails minimal impact on the object (liquid), combining a reduced level of agential input with a relatively low degree of object affectedness (see §4).

Since both verbs take “affected subjects/agents”, as such they are both less than prototypically transitive (see also Naess in this volume). However, as noted above, ‘eating’ is more forceful than ‘drinking’ which is a more passive activity, so they are not symmetrical, and it is these distinctive features which motivate and explain the derivative metaphorical usages of eat ⇒ overcome and drink ⇒ undergo in Hausa. Metaphorical shaa is especially common in adversative contexts, usually to the exclusion of ci, e.g., mun shaa raanaa yàu ‘we’ve really suffered (drunk) the sun today’ (1pl.pfv drink sun today) is felicitous, but not the semantically anomalous #mun ci raanaa yàu. In such expressions with shaa ‘undergo’, the experiencer role is aligned with the subject which has patient-like properties, and the theme (‘sun’) is the stimulus. Conversely, metaphorical ci regularly occurs in constructions where the subject is strongly and primarily agential, where the object has the

3. Both verbs also exceptionally permit morphological causatives (so-called “Grade 5” verbs), which otherwise only apply to base intransitives. Thus: ci ‘eat’ ⇒ ciyar/cii (dà) ‘feed (animals), support, subsidize, shaa ‘drink’ ⇒ shaa(ya:r) (dà) ‘water, give water to (animals)’. They share this restricted derivational patterning with a specifiable subset of transitive verbs expressing cognition, perception, communication etc., which can also be causativized, e.g., sanii ‘know’ ⇒ sanar (dà) ‘inform’, and the necessary generalization is that all of the above verbs behave like inactive-intransitive verbs in respect of causativization. Examples: nàa ci àbìnci ‘I’ve eaten (food)’ ⇒ causative dà mèe zàn ciì dà iyàallinaa? ‘what can I support my family with?'; cf. (a) inactive-intransitive Audù yaa taashi ‘Audu got/woke up’ ⇒ causative nàa taa dá Audù ‘I got/woke Audu up’; and (b) with the base cognition verb sanii ‘know’, Sarkii yaa san làabaarùn ‘the chief has ascertained the news’ ⇒ causative nàa sanar~ dá Sarkii làabaarùn ‘I informed the chief of the news’.

This co-distribution is attributable to the fact that both verbs are semantically complex, i.e., the animate (human) agential subject of both ‘eat’ and ‘drink’ fulfills the dual role of an experiencer or affected subject, exactly as it does with inactive cognition verbs like ‘know’ ⇒ causative ‘inform’, ‘understand’ ⇒ ‘explain’, etc. (Amberber 2002 refers to this process as “coindexing” of the agent and goal arguments). The co-patterning of verbs of ingestion/consumption and cognition/perception in causative constructions is well-documented cross-linguistically, e.g., in related Afroasiatic languages like Amharic and Berber, and in south Asian languages (see Haspelmath 1994: 159–61, Dixon & Aikhenwald 2000: 64ff., Amberber 2002; Shibatani & Pardeshi 2002; Naess, this volume).
situational role of theme or a human patient, and where *shaa* would be inadmissible, e.g., *mun cii sù* ‘we beat (ate) them’ (1PL.PFV eat 3PL), but not #*mun shaa sù.*

These examples satisfy our working definitions as formulated in (3) and the correlations are direct and understandable (bearing in mind that the boundaries are not always clearcut). The correlations are also consistent with a number of the Hopper and Thompson (1980) diagnostics for transitivity. Since *ci* in its source ‘eat’ sense, entails both a higher degree of agental involvement and a greater measure of physical/kinetic activity directed at its object than does *shaa* ‘drink’, so *ci*-clauses rank higher than *shaa*-constructions on the transitivity scale. Neither verb is *maximally* transitive (as noted above), but *ci* ‘eat’ is *more* transitive than *shaa* ‘drink’. Table 1 summarizes the salient semantic facts:

### Table 1. Hausa ‘eat’ and ‘drink’: Prototypical syntactic functions and semantic roles in metaphorical extensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base meaning</th>
<th>S = A/E</th>
<th>O affected</th>
<th>Metaphor</th>
<th>S = A</th>
<th>S = E</th>
<th>O = P/T</th>
<th>O = STIM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘eat’</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes++</td>
<td><strong>OVERCOME</strong></td>
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<td>A++</td>
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<td>‘overcome’</td>
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<td>‘dominate’</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘drink’</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td><strong>UNDERGO</strong></td>
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<td>‘undergo’</td>
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<td>‘suffer’</td>
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</tbody>
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Key: A = agent; E = experiencer; O = object; p = patient; s = subject; STIM = stimulus; T = theme
++ = relatively high value for semantic role

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4. In the interests of completeness, we list several lexically-determined exceptions to the canonical usages. In *naa ci kurè* ‘I made a mistake’ (1SG.pfv eat mistake), *ci* occurs even though the subject is clearly not volitional. Conversely, idiomatic *taa shànnye shi* ‘she bewitched him’ (3SG.pfv drink up 3MSG), with a derivative form of *shaa*, has an agental subject, as it does in the collocational *taa shaa kàn matsalàr* ‘she solved the problem’ (lit. ‘she drank head of problem’), in addition to *yaa shaa mini kài* ‘it irritated me/got on my nerves’ (lit. ‘it drank to/for me head’), where the subject is the causer or stimulus. In the context of our own explanatory model, such idiosyncratic variation, though marginal, remains unexplained. One of the limitations of metaphor methodology is that definitions rarely, if ever, provide necessary and sufficient conditions for category membership, and Hausa is no exception (see also §5.1).
3. **PROTOTYPICAL CI = OVERCOME (CONTROL/DOMINATION):**

‘eat, consume, devour’ ⇒ ‘overcome, conquer, overpower, take over, destroy’, etc.; **subject = agent (+ EXPERIENCER) OR CAUSER, OBJECT = THEME OR PATIENT**

In order to organize the corpus into approachable categories, we begin with the simplest and clearest cases – metaphorical contexts where only ci is admissible and so is in sharp contrast. There are several closely related metaphorical clusters in which only ci ‘eat’ is licensed, typically with ‘overcoming’, ‘winning’, ‘conquering’, ‘taking (over)’, ‘acquiring’, etc. semantic predicates, and we group these cognate control/domination functions under the cover-term **overcome** (cf. Williams 1991: 332–33).⁵ The examples below illustrate canonical ci-based metaphors – single-participant clauses with human agents (also experiencers) as clausal subjects, and either inanimate themes (representing a material object or abstract entity) or human patients as object arguments. The representative examples we cite, some of them idiomatic, are based on the judgements of Malami Buba (the co-author) and our other Hausa-speaking consultants (allowing, as ever, for possible idiolectal and localized differences).

8. **zän ci kwalaƙàr kà**
   **FUT.1SG eat collar.of.2MSG**
   ‘You’ll regret it.’ (lit. ‘I’ll eat (i.e., grab) your collar.’)

9. **zaa tà ci jaƙàr ‘àbààwàa**
   **FUT 3FSG eat exam**
   ‘She will pass the exam.’

10. **maa ci caaca**
    **1SG.PFV eat gambling**
    ‘I won (at) gambling.’

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5. There is a parallel relationship in the formation of English binomials, where Benor and Levy (2006: 239ff.) show that the ordering in complementary pairings can be determined by, *inter alia*, a real-world “power” constraint which places the more central (powerful) element in first position, e.g., ‘eating and drinking’, ‘cat and mouse,’ ‘man and boy’, etc. The fixed phrase **mùn ci mùn shaa mùn yi bànkàs** ‘we’ve eaten, drunk and are completely stuffed’ (1PL.PFV eat 1PL.PFV drink 1PL.PFV do being stuffed) illustrates. The ordering of such conjoins in English is therefore governed by similar real-world constraints as the occurrence of eat and drink metaphors in Hausa – eating requires a larger measure of potency, intensity and control and so typically expresses ‘overcome, conquer’ etc. in metaphors, and this relationship is analogous to the binomial sequencing requirement that the more powerful element normally occurs initially. The same (or similar) underlying extralinguistic constraint motivates distinct but related linguistic phenomena.
Example (11) adds a human patient to (10):

11. *naa cii shì caaca*
    1SG.PFV eat 3MSG gambling
    ‘I beat him (at) gambling.’

12. *dáalìbìì yaa ci littaqfiì*
    student 3MSG.PFV eat book
    ‘The student read the book thoroughly.’

13. *dàn sarkiì zài ci sàrautàaa*
    son.of emir FUT.3MSG eat kingship
    ‘The emir’s son will get/secure the kingship.’

Examples (14–15), *inter alia*, nicely illustrate the control/overpowering dimension (being overpowered by a river, human mastery over iron ore):

14. *kòoggìì yaa cii shì*
    river 3MSG.PFV eat 3MSG
    ‘He drowned.’ (lit. ‘The river ate him.’)

15. *yanàà cìn tamaa*
    3MSG.IMPFV eating.of iron ore
    ‘He’s a blacksmith.’ (lit. ‘He is eating iron (ore).’)

16. *wasu bàràayììí sun ci kàasuwaa jiì jìì*
    some thieves 3PL.PFV eat market yesterday
    ‘Some thieves cleaned up (in) the market yesterday.’

17. *mun ci rabin hanyàaa*
    1PL.PFV eat half.of way
    ‘We’ve completed half the journey.’

18. *an cii mù tàarañ nair-àà dubuù*
    4PL.PFV eat 1PL fine.of naira thousand
    ‘We’ve been fined one thousand naira.’ (lit. ‘One has eaten us fine of … ’)

19. *màazzà dà màataa duk zaa sù ci mòoriyañ wannàn maagànnìì*
    men and women all FUT 3PL eat benefit.of this medicine
    ‘Men and women all will gain the benefit of this treatment.’

20. *’yan-wàasanmù sun ci kwâf*
    players.of.1PL 3PL.PFV eat cup
    ‘Our players won the cup.’

(*cìì, the verbal noun of *ci ‘eat’, can also mean ‘goal’ in football*)

21. *maayèè yaa ci kùrwàr juarììdö*
    sorcerer 3MSG.PFV eat spirit.of boy
    ‘The sorcerer has taken over the boy’s spirit.’
22. *zaa mú ci nasaààaa*
   *FUT 1PL eat success*
   'We will succeed.'

23. *Yaa ci naamàanaa*
   *3MSG.PFV eat meat.of.1SG*
   'He talked about me behind my back.' (lit. 'He ate my meat.')

24. *yaa cii mîn àlbàsàaa*
   *3MSG.PFV eat 1SG.IO onion*
   'He queered my pitch.' (i.e., 'spoiled my chances')
   (lit. 'He ate my onion,' i.e., He interfered by approaching someone with a matter before I could)

25. *kaa ci laadan kuturuu*
   *2MSG.PFV eat money.of leper*
   'You’ve taken on the task (so you should see it through).'
   (lit. 'you have eaten the money of the leper, i.e., you (the barber) have taken the leper’s money so you must shave his head)

26. *mun ci kwaakwàa*
   *1PL.PFV eat coconut*
   'We’ve had a hard time.' (lit. 'We’ve eaten coconut,' which is hard and so difficult to eat)

Example (27) illustrates the related 'appropriation' sub-domain:

27. *yaa ci kudîn jàmaàaa*
   *3MSG.PFV eat money.of people*
   'He embezzled the people’s money.'

Example (28) contains the complex verb *cîm mà (= cii mà)* with the semantically analogous meaning 'accomplish, fulfil':

28. *naa cîm mà buuriinaa*
   *1SG.PFV eat 1OM ambition.of.1SG*
   'I fulfilled my ambition.'

Ci can be used for (usually aggressive) sexual conquest:

29. *Musaa yaa ci yaarinyàr*
   *Musa 3MSG.PFV eat girl.the*
   'Musa had sex with the girl.'

The clausal subject can be the inanimate (non-agential) causer of an action or event, in which case the consequences are typically negative, e.g.,

30. *wannàn shirin zài ci kudîi dà yàwàa*
   *this plan.the FUT.3MSG eat money with much*
‘This plan will eat up/consume lots of money.’

31. ruwaa sun ci gârri
   water 3PL.PFV eat town
   ‘Water has flooded the town.’

32. taa ci gidaa
    3FSG.PFV eat home
    ‘It (e.g., the plan) has backfired.’ (lit. ‘She has eaten home.’)

33. ciwôo/yunwàa nàa ciinaa
    illness/hunger IMPFV eating.of.1SG
    ‘The illness/hunger is eating (at) me.’

In (34) the derived polysynthetic (“Grade 4”) form cinyye ‘destroy (eat up)’ (< ci) is unusual in that ci (and shaa) normally only occur in their base monomorphic form in metaphorical transfers (cf. also exx. 28, 84–85).

34. wutaa taa cinyye gidaa kûrmus
    fire 3FSG.PFV eat up house completely
    ‘The fire consumed/destroyed the house completely.’

As proposed in §2, ci ‘eat’ has developed this metaphorical control reading because the extralinguistic physical activity itself involves: (1) the application of causal force and direct manipulation in the crushing, biting, chewing etc. (with teeth) of (2) heterogeneous atomic substances which (3) thereby undergo an observable physical transformation. Lakoff & Johnson (1980: 69ff.) characterize such actions, i.e., human agents consciously inducing a physical change of state on the part of the theme (or patient), as “prototypical” examples of “direct causation”.

A sub-set of the overarching overcome domain entails the use of ci with an abstract complement noun such as ‘trust’, ‘honour’ to indicate the destruction or degrading of a positive human attribute, e.g., where ‘eat honour of X’ = ‘humiliate X’. Once again this abstract extended meaning is not arbitrary, but is motivated by the ontological fact that food is destroyed in the act of eating. The resulting expression therefore has a negative/malefactive interpretation, e.g.,

35. daalibi g yaa ci ir’ilin maalàminsà
    student 3MSG.PFV eat honour.of teacher.of.3MSG
    ‘The student humiliated his teacher.’ (lit. ‘… ate the honour of his teacher.’)

36. kaa ci àmaanàataaa
    MSG.PFV eat trust.of.1SG
    ‘You have betrayed (eaten) my trust.’

37. kâr kà cii mín zařàfìi
    NEG 2MSG.SJNCTVEAT 1SG.IO time
    ‘Don’t humiliate me.’ (lit. ‘Don’t eat my time.’)
Cf. too the *ci*-headed metaphor with *fuskàaa* ‘face’ as the complement noun in:

38.  
_Muusaa yaa ci fuskàà âbookinsà_  
Musa 3MSG.PFV eat face.of friend.of.3MSG  
‘Musa humiliated his friend: (lit. ‘... ate the face of his friend.’)

Notice that most of the *ci* (and *shaa*) metaphorical expressions exemplified so far occur with a (preceding) Perfective tense-aspect marker (*INFL*), and many of them are in fact illustrated with a Perfective form throughout this paper. This co-occurrence is especially common when the metaphor contains an (animate) experiencer, and probably relates to the fact that such constructions typically denote resultative change-of-state occurrences, where the Perfective aspect encompasses the transitional phases affecting the experiencer. Thus, suffering (lit. ‘drinking’) the sun induces a change-of-state to fatigue, exhaustion etc. on the part of the experiencer, and winning (‘eating’) a prize results in a transitional change of emotion, psychological state, etc. in the agent/experiencer.

There are, however, environments where *ci* can be used (in verbo-nominal *ci* form) with an Imperfective aspect to express a stative meaning, usually denoting undesirable/aggressive human characteristics, e.g.,

39.  
_yanàa ciin mutunciin mutàanee_  
3MSG.IMPFV eating.of dignity.of people  
‘He offends (eats) people’s dignity.’

40.  
_sunàa ciin zaali_  
3PL.IMPFV eating.of oppression  
‘They are oppressive.’

41.  
_yanàa ðà ciì ðà zuuci_  
3MSG.IMPFV with eating within heart  
‘He is impatient.’ (lit. ‘He has eating within heart.’)

42.  
_sunàa ciì ðà gùmin leebùroòinsù_  
3PL.IMPFV eating with sweat.of labourers.of.3PL  
‘They are exploiting (and prospering from) their labourers.’  
(lit. ‘They are eating with sweat of their labourers.’)

There are also a number of common lexical compound NP’s containing various derived forms of the base verb *ci* where, depending on the noun object, the extended meaning inherits either the ontological destructive or achievement construal of the act of eating/devouring (see also Ahmad 1994: 146, and McIntyre 1995, 2006: Chap.6). Examples:

*cin-àamaa* ‘betrayal’ (eating.of-trust), *cin-fuskàaa* ‘insult, humiliation’ (eating.of-face), *cin-hancii* ‘taking bribes’ (eating.of-nose?), *cin-mutunci* ‘humiliation’ (eating.of-dignity), *cin-rài* ‘boredom, agony’ (eating.of-mind), *cin-zaalii* ‘bullying,
oppression, unjust treatment’ (eating.of-justice?); cii-dà-cètoo ‘fraud by trusted person(s)’ (eating-and-rescuing, referring to aid agency fraud); cii-dà-karfii ‘hard task’ (eat-with-strength), cii-raani ‘dry-season work’ (eat-dry season).

Derivative (short-form) agential nouns, formed with a ma- prefix + a long low tone vowel on the stem, e.g., ma-ci, can occasionally be used in metaphorical contexts, e.g., maciì òàmanàà ‘traitor’ (eater trust), as can the related formation with agential mài ‘doer of’, e.g., mài cin òàmanàà ‘traitor’ (doer of eating.of trust). (See §4 for similar formations with shaa.) The more productive (expanded) agential formation (also with the ma- prefix) can also be used, e.g., maciyin òàmanàà ‘traitor’ (eater.of trust). These usages are highly restricted however (see also Yusuf 1984: 345ff.).

Proper names (nicknames) can also instantiate the metaphorical meaning, e.g., Cii-gàri (conquer-town, given to a person with the Muslim name ‘Ibrahim’). Another common extended usage is in the phrasal verb ci gàba ‘continue, proceed’, composed of ci and the locative adverbial form gàba ‘in front’ (lit. ‘eat in front’) – with alignment of subject and agent again. Note too cin-gashin kài ‘(achieving) independence’ (eating of-roasting.of self, i.e., you are free to ‘roast your own meat’), where the accomplishment semantics of the verbal noun are determined by the meaning of the following NP in the compound – ‘independence’ imposes this selectional restriction.

In metaphorical contexts, ci ‘eat’ (but not shaa ‘drink’) is labile and can also occur in one-argument intransitive constructions with inanimate non-agentive subjects, expressing either a successfully completed resultative action (= Perfective, ex. 43) or an ongoing dynamic process (= Imperfective, exx. 44–45, complement of agential mài ‘doer of’ in 46):

43. maagànii/baaba ayaa ci dà kyàù
tmedicine/indigo dye 3MSG.PFV eat well
‘The medicine/indigo dye has worked (eaten) well.’

44. kàasuwaa tanàà cii
market 3FSG.IMPFV eating
‘The market is in full swing.’ (lit. ‘… is eating.’)

45. fìtilàà tanàà cii
lamp 3FSG.IMPFV eating
‘The lamp is burning (eating).’

46. gwannmati mài cii
government doing eating
‘The government in power (eating).’

Although such examples are restricted, this ambitransitive property of ci is somewhat anomalous, and there is no transparently obvious connection with the literal
sense. One would expect shaa ‘drink’ to exhibit the same dual transitivity, especially as, in contrast to ci ‘eat’, it combines reduced agentivity with lesser impact on its theme/object in transitive clauses.

4. prototypical shaa = undergoing: ‘drink’ ⇒ ‘undergo, suffer, endure’, etc; subject — experiencer, object — stimulus

When shaa ‘drink’ is extended metaphorically to mean ‘undergo, suffer, endure’, selective restrictions require that the first argument (the surface subject) must be a sentient animate being (normally human) capable of carrying the experiencer role, and the second argument (formally the direct object) usually expresses a sensory experience which induces the state (the stimulus), e.g., ‘trouble,’ ‘difficulty,’ ‘(excessive) heat,’ etc. The complement stimulus in the shaa-predicate can be a sensory noun or a common (concrete) noun, and the experience/emotion is typically (though not exclusively) negative-oriented. We assume that this construal follows from the extralinguistic fact that the animate subject experiencer has little or no control over the situation or emotional/psychological state, a property ultimately motivated by the ontological nature of drinking, i.e., minimal physical manipulation of a homogeneous liquid substance. (Cf. though Hook & Pardeshi in this volume for examples of the converse – eat verbs developing an undergoing sense in some Indo-Aryan languages.) Compare these properties with maximally distinct ‘overcome, control’ etc. extensions of ci ‘eat’, where the subject is either an agent or an (inanimate) causer, e.g., ‘river’ in (14).

Stereotypical and unambiguous examples of shaa-metaphors with nonvolitional subjects and object stimuli, some idiomatic, are provided in (47–55) (where appropriate, we have included the degree adverb ‘really’ to capture the intensification entailment):

47. sunàa  shàn  wàhalàà
    3PL.IMPFV drinking.of trouble
    ‘They are really suffering trouble/difficulty.’

48. yaa  shaa  kaashii
    3MSG.PFV  drink  shit
    ‘He had a hard time of it.’ (lit. ‘He suffered (drank) shit.’)

49. mun  shaa  raanaa  yàà
    1PL.PFV  drink  sun  today
    ‘We’ve suffered the sun today.’

50. mun  shaa  hàsaañìàa
    1PL.PFV  drink  serious loss
    ‘We’ve suffered a serious loss/blow.’
51. ɗaalibai sun shaa siuufuutin maalàminsì students 3pl.pfv drink telling off.of teacher.of.3pl
‘The students got a real telling off from their teacher.’
(lit. ‘… they drank telling off …’)

52. jàakìi yaa shaa kaayaa yàu donkey 3msg.pfv drink loads today
‘The donkey has suffered (carrying) loads today.’

53. taa shaa banzaa
3sg.pfv drink uselessness
‘She got off scott-free.’
(lit. ‘she drank uselessness; i.e., there’s nothing that can be done about it)

54. sun shaa jinin jikinsù
3pl.pfv drink blood.of body.of.3pl
‘They were really terrified.’ (lit. ‘They drank the blood of their bodies.’)

55. dànn-kòokawàa yaa shaa kàsaà wrestler 3msg.pfv drink earth
‘The wrestler hit the ground.’ (i.e., has been defeated, lit. ‘… has drunk earth.’)

In (56) the subject ‘Bala’ is non-volitional (he is the accidental causer of the crash
but also suffers the consequences), and the object is a concrete noun:

56. Bàlla yaa shaa moottàr wani
Bala 3msg.pfv drink car.of someone
‘Bala (accidentally) hit (drank) someone’s car.’

In (57) the external stimulus is daadìi ‘enjoyment, happiness’, and the experience
is positive: 6

57. yàaraa sun shaa daadìi
children 3pl.pfv drink happiness
‘The children had a really good time/enjoyed themselves.’ (lit. ‘… drank
happiness.’)

A cognate metaphorical function of shaa involves its extension to denote a process
of taking in, incorporating or absorbing (Newman’s term “internalization” probably
covers this domain). In this alignment, shaa takes an inanimate subject theme,
i.e., the entity which undergoes the change in state, and the object argument is

6. The default exeriential/sensory verb in Hausa is ji, which has a wide range of cognate
meanings, e.g., ‘feel, smell, perceive, hear, understand’, and where the subject aligns with the
experencer role. It heads the central ENJOY verb ji daadìi ‘feel enjoyment/enjoy oneself.’
the activity or material entity which is the source/cause of the change (through unspecified agential action). Examples:

58. **mootàa taa shaa guugàa**
car 3SG.PFV drink polishing
‘The car is bright and shiny.’ (lit. ‘… has drunk polishing.’)

59. **wàndoo yaa shaa guugàa**
trousers 3MSG.PFV drink ironing
‘The trousers look nicely ironed.’

60. **riigaràkà taa shaa bulàa**
gown.of.2MSG 3SG.PFV drink washing blue
‘Your gown looks really nice.’ (because ‘It has drunk …’; i.e., you have washed it in washing blue)

61. **tufaqifì sun shaa jìkìi**
clothes 3PL.PFV drink body
‘The clothes have worn out.’ (lit. ‘have suffered (drunk) body.’)

Hausa also uses **shaa ‘drink’ to express inhaling air and smoking**, e.g.,

62. **zàn fìta shàn iske**
fut.1SG go out drinking.of air
‘I’m going out for some fresh air.’ (lit. ‘… drinking of air.’)

63. **kin dainà shàn taabàa?**
2SG.PFV stop drinking.of tobacco
‘Have you stopped smoking?’ (lit. ‘… drinking of tobacco?’)

Cf. too the nominal compounds headed by some form of **shaa**: **shàà-gààri ‘wastrel’** (drink-flour), **shàà-jìjì ‘type of undershirt’** (drink-sweat), **shàà-kidì ‘guitar string’** (drink-strumming), **shàà-sànda ‘ridge of plaited hair’** (drink-stick), **shàà-taleetàlë ‘roundabout route’** (drink-roundabout), and the nicknames **Shàà-dàarii ‘drink-cold’** = name given to a child born in the cold season, and **Shàà-yàbo ‘poplar’** (drink-praise) (Ahmad 1994: 157–58). Shaa can (like ci, §3), sometimes occur in agential formations with a metaphorical sense, e.g., **mashàà wàhalàà ‘sufferer of trouble’** (drinker trouble), **mashàà ruwàa ‘rainbow’** (drinker water), **màì shààn iske ‘one who goes for a stroll (takes the air)’** (doer of drinking.of air).

4.1 **Shaa ‘drink’ ⇒ quantificational ‘do X frequently, regularly’**

Polyfunctional **shaa ‘drink’** has become grammaticalized as a degree verb expressing the quantificational notion ‘regularly, continuously, frequently, a lot.’ Syntactically it is parallel to aspectual verbs, and takes a complement consisting of a subjectless nonfinite clause with a verb, verbal noun or activity noun. If there is syntactic
embedding then both the matrix and nonfinite embedded clauses have same-subject control (Jaggar 1977; Jaggar, 2001: 546ff., Williams 1991: 335). As a quantificational verb, shaa occurs in expressions indicating multiple/habitual occurrences of an event or situation, where the subject is a volitional agent. Depending on the pragmatics of the situation, the reading can be ‘to excess’. Examples:

64. yaa shaa zuwåà nàà
   3MSG.PFV drink coming here
   ‘He comes here regularly.’ (lit. ‘He has drunk coming here’)

65. mun shaa kallon talàbijin
   1PL.PFV drink watching.of television
   ‘We’ve watched a lot of TV.’

66. naa shaa jíí
   1SG.PFV drink hearing
   ‘I’ve heard (it) so many times.’

67. naa shaa gayàà makà
   1SG.PFV drink tell 2MSG.i.o.
   ‘I’ve told you so many times.’

Cf. too the idiomatic usage with an adverbial complement:

68. mun shaa bambam
   1PL.PFV drink different
   ‘We differ substantially.’ (e.g., in our views, lit. ‘We have drunk different.’)

When the complement contains an emotional stimulus, e.g., an involuntary bodily response, the subject assumes the role of non-controlling experiencer, e.g.,

69. taa shaa dàariyaa/kuukaa
   3FSG.PFV drink laughing/crying
   ‘she laughed/cried a lot’

70. yàaraa sun shaa daaddì
   children 3PL.PFV drink happiness
   ‘The children had a really good time.’ (lit. ‘… drank happiness.’)
   (more commonly ji daaddì ‘enjoy oneself’, ‘feel enjoyment’)

Example (71) illustrates metaphorical extensions of both verbs:

71. Audù yaa shaa cin baashii
   Audu 3MSG.PFV drink eating.of debt
   ‘Audu is always in debt.’ (lit. ‘Audu has drunk eating debt.’)

This metaphorical mapping of ‘drink (water)’ onto a quantificational ‘do X frequently’ sub-domain is not random, but is plausibly motivated by a conceptualization
which associates the common non-bounded features (Williams 1991: 333ff. uses the
term “diffuse” to capture this feature). Specifically, the conceptual relationship links:
(1a) the intrinsic non-bounded properties of a mass substance like water (any sub-
division is still water), plus (1b) the experiential correlation with quantity and the
unobstructed ingestion of the liquid, with (2) the equivalent non-bounded duration
of a sequence of multiple frequency events (see also Wierzbicka 1982: 774ff., Hudd-
dleston & Pullum 2002: 118ff., and Newman in this volume). A semantically analog-
gous quantitative construction uses the verbal noun shàa as an additive in numerals
11–19, e.g., goomà shàa shìddà ‘16’ (lit. ‘ten drinking six’).

In some cases the shàa-construction seems to be on the boundary between
a quantificational ‘do X a lot, continually’ and the metaphorical ‘undergo, suf-
ferr X’ reading detailed above, i.e., where the clausal subject could be construed
either as the volitional agent of an activity or the non-volitional participant. In
such cases, the role of the subject essentially depends upon the lexical seman-
tics of the complement and/or the manner in which the event is conceptualized.
With a dynamic process noun such as aikii ‘work(ing)’, for example, both con-
struals are possible – thus, we can gloss naa shaa aikii yàu (1sg.pfv drink work
today) as either ‘I’ve worked a lot today’ or ‘I’ve suffered work today’, where the
undergoing sense is not clearly separable from the quantificational reading, and
where the interpretation is heavily dependent on situational pragmatics. If we
select a more negative experience noun, however, then an undergo/suffer reading
becomes progressively more natural, e.g., with gwàgwàrmayàa ‘struggle, strug-
ggling’ as in mun shaa gwàgwàrmayàa dà mutàannee (1pl.pfv drink struggle/strug-
gling with people), the salient reading would be ‘we have suffered (in) struggling
with people’.

5. IDENTICAL ENVIRONMENTS WHERE CI OVERCOME [PUNCTUAL]
+ X CONTRASTS WITH SHAA UNDERGO [DURATIVE] + X

For the most part, metaphorical ci and shàa are mutually exclusive. There are a
few exceptions however, and where selectional restrictions allow, they can take the
same predicate argument (= X above). In such cases, the two variants usually have
contrasting interpretations which are inherited from the differing primary senses
and so are consistent with the mappings we have proposed, i.e., ci [OVERCOME, +
CONTROL] vs. shàa [UNDERGO, – CONTROL]. Thus, ci meaning ‘overcome’ is a punc-
tual verb, and ci-predicates typically express bounded achievements; shàa in its
derived ‘undergo’ sense, on the other hand, is a durative verb, and shàa-predicates
basically denote unbounded processes, a meaning component which is also a
property of the quantificational function of shaa (see §4.1). Using the Hopper & Thompson (1980) parameters, *ci* ‘eat’ [+ PUNCTUAL] is prototypically higher in transitivity than *shaa* ‘drink’ [- PUNCTUAL], and this correlation lines up with the earlier observation that *ci* ‘eat’ is also more agentive, more kinetic and affects its object more radically (§3). Examples:

72. sun *ci* yaakii
   3PL.PFV eat war
   ‘They won the war.’

73. *sun* shaa yaakii
   3PL.PFV drink war
   ‘They have endured the war (for some time).’

In (72) the subject of *ci* ‘win (eat)’ is a volitional agent, and the act of winning the war has a terminal point – it comes to an end when the war is won, so the war is itself bounded. Because (72) expresses a singular situation, it could not therefore take an unbounded duration adjunct such as ‘for three years’, i.e., *#sun ci yaakii hař na tsawon shèekaràa ukkù* ‘they won the war for three years’. In (73), on the other hand, the subject of *shaa* ‘endure (drink)’ is as much an experiencer as an agent, and the process of undergoing/enduring the war is perceived as durative and unbounded, reflected in the fact that *sun shaa yaakii hař na tsawon shèekaràa ukkù* ‘they have endured the war for three years’ is perfectly acceptable. Because of its more robust agential/control properties, moreover, *ci* ‘eat’ (but not *shaa* ‘drink’) can freely combine with a preceding matrix clause in which the verb expresses the notion of intention, commitment, i.e., where the subject-referent is assumed to be in control, as in (74):

74. *sun* kafèe sai *sun ci yaakii*
   3PL.PFV be determined until 3PL.PFV eat war
   ‘They were determined to win the war.’

Substituting *shaa* ‘drink’ in (74), however, would produce the semantically anomalous expression in (75):

75. *#sun kafèe sai sun shaa yaakii*
   3PL.PFV be determined until 3PL.PFV drink war
   ‘They were determined to endure the war (for some time).’

Further punctual/durative contrasts are illustrated in (76–79).

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7. Williams (1991: 330) does not propose an explicit semantic characterization of this function but some of his English glosses are at least suggestive.
76. *yaa ci duuniyàa*
   3MSG.PFV eat world
   ‘He’d seen and done it all (good and bad).’

In (76) the *ci*-metaphor expresses a strongly agential punctual occurrence with a terminal phase, implying that the experience has been a single distinguishable phase which is now terminated (one salient interpretation is that the subject referent has in fact died). In (77), on the other hand, we have a low-degree agent *shaa*-construction which is stative-like, entailing no distinct phases:

77. *yaa shaa duuniyàa*
   3MSG.PFV drink world
   ‘Se has had a long life.’

Example (78) expresses a “singulary” punctual situation (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 119), i.e., a one-off event with *ci*:

78. *nàa ci kàroò dà suu*
   1SG.PFV eat encounter with 3PL
   ‘bumped into them.’

In contrast, the corresponding *shaa* metaphor in (79) encodes multiple instances of the same event:

79. *nàa shaa kàroò dà suu*
   1SG.PFV drink encounter with 3PL
   ‘I bumped into them regularly.’

Example (79) with *shaa*, unlike the *ci*-version, could also co-occur with the Imperfective aspect, e.g., *inàa shàn kàroò dà suu* ‘I bump into them regularly’ (1sg.impfv drinking.of encounter with 3pl).

Finally in this section, the *ci-expression* in (81) is telic, implying, for example, that the subject has taken punishment which is now terminated:

80. *yaa shaa wùyaa/wàhalàa*
   3SG.PFV drink trouble/difficulty
   ‘He suffered trouble/difficulty.’

81. *yaa ci wùyaa/wàhalàa*
   3SG.PFV eat trouble/difficulty
   ‘He suffered trouble/difficulty.’ (but has paid his dues)

5.1 Possible neutralization: metaphorical *ci + x = shaa + x*

The last dimension of this finely-nuanced continuum shades into the preceding one, the principal difference being that the characteristic $[\pm \text{CONTROL}]$ correlations
are neutralized (at least for some speakers), leaving a non-canonical residue of metaphorical expressions which can take either verb without any effective meaning difference. In the first set the surface subject is a volitional-agential, so we would predict (wrongly!) that only ci should occur, but shaa is perfectly acceptable, and the two variants seem to be more or less interchangeable, e.g.,

82. yaarinyàa taa ci/shaa adoo
girl 3FSG.PFV eat/drink decoration
‘The girl got really dressed up.’

Both verbs combine collocationally with the lexical noun kāi ‘head’ to express the agential notion of ‘winning over (person),’ or ‘(re)solving a problem,’ e.g.,

83. daalibii yaa ci/shaa kān lissaaftii
student 3MSG.PFV eat/drink head.of maths
‘The student solved the maths (problem).’

Examples (84–85) include the semantically equivalent derivative (‘Grade 6’) forms ci-woo (< ci), and shaa-woo (< shaa) (cf. ex. 34):

84. zaa mii ciwoo/shaawoo kān wannàn âlâmârîn
FUT 1PL eat/drink head.of this matter.the
‘We will resolve this matter.’

85. mii ciwoo/shaawoo kânsû
1PL.PFV eat/drink head.of.3PL
‘We won them over.’ (lit. ‘We ate/drank their head.’)

The second set, where both outputs are essentially non-control/undergo, is more idiosyncratic, but we note here for completeness. In this case, ci/shaa substitutability, though relatively uncommon (contra Abraham 1962: 793), seems to be admissible particularly when the complement contains a stimulus noun expressing an unpleasant or negative experience/emotion, i.e., adverative [subject = experiencer] contexts where the animate (human) subject has little or no control over the experience, and where we would predict that only the [shaa ‘drink’ ⇒ undergo] pattern should occur. This is in fact the strongly preferred or indeed required construction for most speakers, but some can use ci ‘eat’ as a lexically-determined (secondary) alternative, and this variation indicates that there are different ways of conceptualizing situations in addition to variation in the lexical properties of these verbs. Substitutability does not appear to be total, however (contra Williams 1991: 330), since some speakers who do allow both verbs feel that in the shaa ‘drink’ versions the emphasis is on the durative (‘continual’) nature of the activity (as in §5), and/or that the use of ci ‘eat’ is more punctual/terminal and/or equates with a more casual and informal style of speech. If there are any systematic meaning differences
they are very subtle, however, and any attempted characterizations are vague and
general at best, so we leave clarification of this variation for possible future investi-
gation. For present purposes, therefore, we simply list some of the more common
examples with just a single English equivalent for each pair.

86. mun ci/shaa zamaa yàu  
1PL.PFV eat/drink waiting today
'We've suffered a long wait today.'

87. yaa ci/shaa duukàa  
3MSG.PFV eat/drink beating
'He's taken a beating.'

88. taa ci/shaa zaagii  
3FSG.PFV eat/drink abuse
'She suffered abuse.'

Finally, both verbs (with shaa again preferred by most/all speakers) can be used
to express the process whereby materials take/absorb dyes (see also exx. 58–61 for
similar 'absorb' metaphors):

89. zanèe yaa ci/shaa baabaa  
cloth 3MSG.PFV eat/drink indigo dye
'The cloth has taken/absorbed the indigo dye well.'

6. Summary

Eat/drink-based metaphors in Hausa present a plethora of subtly distinguishable
but relatable meanings. In this exploratory account we have organized the various
metaphorical elaborations of ci ‘eat’ and shaa ‘drink’ into approachable categories and
explained their distribution, showing that the extensions are not randomly assigned,
but in general form reasonably coherent and principled sub-systems. The boundaries
are sometimes fuzzy, however, and the residue of idiosyncratic and dialectal variation
has forced us to regularly turn to “prototypical” instances, where we have demonstra-
ted that the meaning transfers are directly and naturally grounded in physiologi-
cal realities. Thus, in metaphorical contexts ci canonically expresses the notion of
overcoming (control and manipulation) because the real-world act of eating
involves a strongly agential subject applying high-impact manipulation to a strongly-
affected object (food) – it is prototypically more transitive than ‘drink’. undergo shaa,
in contrast, has a reduced degree of control/manipulation, because the act of drink-
ing involves a lesser degree of both agential intervention/force and of impact on the
object (liquid) – it has weaker transitivity. An interesting semantic consequence of
the transfers is that, in canonical cases, the respective metaphorical overcome vs. undergo meanings are maximally distinct. We have also documented the quantificational (‘do X frequently’) function of shaa, alongside the basically durative sense of its metaphorical undergo usage, two semantic extensions which are plausibly related and attributable to the fact that shaa-predicates often denote unbounded on-going processes, in contrast to metaphorical ci ‘win, defeat, etc.’ which is basically a punctual verb compatible with bounded achievements. These various correspondences are not accidental – humans utilize metaphorical concepts to understand and express abstraction through the medium of experiential concretes.

Abbreviations

Transcription: â(a) = Low tone, á(a) = Falling tone, High tone is unmarked; aa, ii, etc. = long, a, i, etc. = short; ɓ, d = laryngeal implosives, k = ejective, r = apical tap/roll, c and j = palato-alveolar affricates. Abbreviations: f = feminine; fut = future; impfv = imperfective; io (m) = indirect object (marker); m = masculine; neg = negative; pfv = perfective; pl = plural; sg = singular; snsctv = subjunctive; 1/2/3/4 = first/second/third/fourth person. # = semantically anomalous.

References


