The semantics of an Oromo adposition of verticality

the case of *irra* 'on/over'

By

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Abstract

This paper is about the semantics of one of the Oromo adposition of verticality, namely *irra*, 'on/over'. In cognitive linguistics it is argued that lexical items exhibit category of meaning whereby a single lexical item can have a primary meaning which gives rise to various extended meanings. This meaning extension is obtained by the virtue of Conceptual Metaphor.

With the assumption that meaning is encyclopaedic instead of dictionaric, and words are polysemic by nature, it has been discussed that this Oromo adposition yields a number of metaphorical meanings which result from the primary spatial senses. Data obtained from introspection supplemented with elicitation have been analyzed and it has been found that *irra* as its primary sense designates a trajector located higher than a landmark in contact or without contact with each other. And in the case of the absence of contact between a trajector and a landmark, the trajector is conceived to be within the potential reach or sphere of influence of the landmark. From this primary spatial meaning of the adposition, various extended meanings have been systematically derived in light of the Theory of Conceptual Metaphor.

Thus, it has been shown that the Oromo postposition *irra* is a highly polysemous lexical item. From primary meaning of relating a trajector located higher than a landmark, a number of abstract metaphorically extended senses can be systematically derived from the proto-scene.

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List of symbols and abbreviations

abs	absolutive
conv	converb
f	feminine
foc	focus
gen	genitive
impr	imperative
ins	instrumental
ipv	imperfective
jus	jussive
lit.	literal meaning
m	masculine
neg	negation marker
nom	nominative
p	plural
pas	passive marker
pl	plural marker
pv	perfective
redup	reduplication
s	singular
sing	singulative marker
capital letters	concepts/conceptual metaphors
1s	first person singular
2s	second person singular
3sf	third person singular feminine
3sm	third person singular masculine
?	anomalous expression

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Language

Oromo is a Cushitic language, belonging to the Afro-asiatic phylum (cf. Bender et al. 1976:14, 43). Approximately 20 to 25 million people speak Oromo as their native language in Ethiopia, in Kenya and along the Somali coast (Griefenow-Mewis and Tamene 1994:13). In addition many Ethiopians speak Oromo as a second language. The vast geographical distributions of the Oromo-speaking area and intense cultural and language contacts with the surrounding peoples have led to the formation of several dialect areas (cf. LIoret 1994, Stroomer 1987, both cited in Dabala and Meyer 2003:161). Wellega Oromo, also called Mecha (cf. Grimes 2000:117), is an Oromo dialect spoken in the former administrative region of Wellega in Western Ethiopia. This work mainly deals with the variety of Oromo spoken in Wellega.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Ethiopian languages in general are still known for being relatively understudied; most of them even lack adequate recording and description (Girma 2003:2). Even works on relatively well-studied languages, such as Oromo, predominantly concern sound patterns, morphology and syntax. For Oromo there has been negligible study of semantics in general and Cognitive Semantics in particular.

Spatial adpositions generally relate entities on the horizontal or vertical axis. Tyler and Evans, citing (Langacker 1987; Talmy 2000), state that English has developed subsets of spatial particles whose proto-scenes privilege certain orientational axes or dimensions.

One of the most highly developed of these subsets involves the vertical axis (Tyler and Evans 2003:109).

Prepositions that involve the vertical axis have been studied in detail for English and it is expected that Oromo will provide a valuable contrastive perspective. In Oromo, as in English, these spatial particles are expected to be highly polysemous because vertical elevation of a physical entity correlates with various other aspects of human experience. The Lakovian approach to metaphor, for example, has a lot to do with the correlation between vertical elevation and increase in quantity. Metaphors like MORE IS UP, LESS IS DOWN, etc. emerge from our experiential correlation with the physical world of verticality. This in turn extends metaphorically to concepts culturally related to vertical highness or lowness. Thus spatial particles, whose primary function is to relate a trajector to a landmark, also function metaphorically to describe non-spatial metaphorical meanings. A *trajector* is an entity that stands out as the entity which is concerned with locating, characterizing or assessing, whereas a *landmark* is another entity that stands out as the one with respect to which the trajector is assessed or evaluated. In other words, a located element in focus is called the trajector, and a locating element in the background is called the landmark.

This study then, is an attempt to analyze the polysemy networks of Oromo adpositions (postpositions), in particular the adposition of verticality *irra*, describing the relationship between the spatial scenes and non-spatial metaphorical extensions of meanings which derive from the primary senses of the adposition.

1.3. Objective of the study

1.3.1. General objective

This study aims at investigating how abstract metaphorical senses are conceptualized in terms of experientially grounded spatio-physical senses through analysis of conceptual metaphor as viewed in the light of cognitive semantics, rather than as a poetic or ornamental device in literature.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

This study proposes to analyze the polysemy network of one of the Oromo adpositions of verticality, *irra*. Its primary aim is to examine the spatial scenes manifested by this Oromo adposition of verticality and the systematic ways in which they give rise to non-spatial scenes in light of cognitive semantics. The thesis will answer the following questions.

a) What are the semantic functions of the Oromo adposition of verticality *irra*?

b) Is there a principled way of establishing the relationship between spatial scenes and non-spatial scenes as regards the adposition *irra*?

c) What are the cognitive models that relate the primary sense of the adposition to its extended meanings?

1.4. Significance of the study

Evans & Tyler (2004b), citing (Bloomfield 1933; Frank 1972; Chomsky 1995), state that traditional accounts have represented the total semantic range of adpositions (English prepositions, for example) as largely arbitrary and difficult to characterize. Consequently, pedagogical treatments have often suggested memorization as the best strategy. Cognitive Linguistics, on the other hand, offers an alternative perspective, suggesting that the differences in expressing spatial relations found across different languages can be accounted for in non-arbitrary ways and that the distinct meanings associated with a particular adposition are related in systematic, principled ways.

Thus it has been argued that this systematic, motivated account of the range of conventional meanings associated with a single preposition, i.e. a semantic network, cuts down considerably on the amount of arbitrariness and hence reduces the need for rote learning on the part of the second language learner. Furthermore, because the model draws heavily on the experiential basis of meaning and represents the extended senses as arising from observations of the external, spatio-physical world, it reflects the learners' own experiences with the world. Understanding the extended senses as being experientially motivated and coherent with the learners' own observations of the world would seem to make these senses easier to acquire.

Thus, from the applied and practical point of view, this study may be of benefit to the preparation of pedagogical grammars of the Oromo language. From a theoretical point of view, it will hopefully provide additional insights into the semantics of spatial particles in

Ethiopian languages (not only Oromo but others as well) and pave the way for further research in the same area.

1.5. Research methodology

The collection and analysis of data involved introspection supplemented with elicitation. Prior to going to the research site, a group of Oromo adpositions involving verticality were selected and then one specific postposition of verticality was targeted on the basis of its popularity in studies of other languages like English, under the assumption that the Oromo case would yield some valuable contrastive perspectives. After using introspection to select the specific postposition and some expressions it is involved in, collection of further metaphorical expressions proceeded by means of elicitation.

Three groups of resource persons were selected for this purpose. The first group consisted of four educated men (bachelor's degree and above) whose native language is the variety under study. This group was first given sample expressions and an orientation on the difference between spatial senses and metaphorical extensions. They were then requested to produce all possible expressions involving *irra,* both literal and metaphorical. The group was selected under the assumption that their higher educational status would enable them to think critically about the metaphorical expressions and to reflect insightfully on their relationship with literal spatial expressions.

The second group consisted of four high school students (two male and two female) who were requested to produce possible expressions containing the lexical item *irra*, both from their own introspection and by elicitation from their friends. This group was needed simply

to obtain additional data that might be different from data collected from the researcher's introspection and the first group. The data collected from both of these groups was compiled together for further critical discussion with the first group of informants; highly similar senses were lumped together, and senses that were judged to be nonce formations or to have resulted from language contact were ignored.

Finally, the data listed from the researcher's introspection and the above two groups was presented to a third group of informants for further cross-checking and refinement. This third group consisted of three elderly monolingual farmers. After cross-checking the data with this group and rejecting expressions which were judged doubtful in conventional usage in the variety under consideration, the refined data was analyzed in light of theories of cognitive semantics.

1.6. Organization of the thesis

The study is organized into four chapters. The first chapter (the present chapter) deals with introductory aspects of the research such as background, statement of the problem, objectives, significance, and research methodology.

The second chapter presents a guide to the Cognitive Linguistics enterprise and to Cognitive Semantics in general and spatial semantics in particular. It introduces metaphor in cognitive linguistics, and particularly Conceptual Metaphor Theory. It also touches upon notions such as polysemy, construal and image schemas in relation to spatial semantics.

The third chapter is devoted to the analysis of the spatial particle *irra*. It comprises two main sections. The first one deals with spatial senses of the postposition in relation to the various types of the trajectors and landmarks it operates on. The second section presents the analysis of the metaphorically extended meanings, discussing their relationship with the spatial senses.

The final chapter wraps up the discussion, summarizing the most important points and making generalizations on the different senses of the Oromo postposition *irra* following the hypotheses of *Experiential Correlation* and *Conceptual Metaphor.*

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is intended to provide a road map to cognitive linguistics in general, and cognitive semantics and spatial semantics in particular. It also gives a brief discussion of the theories used in this paper, with the purpose of acquainting the reader with important aspects of the research. The chapter presents an overview of cognitive linguistics, cognitive semantics, spatial semantics, metaphor and polysemy.

2.1 Cognitive linguistics: Assumptions and commitments

There are two key commitments shared by cognitive linguists. These are the 'generalization commitment' and the 'cognitive commitment'. These underlie the orientation and approach adopted by practicing cognitive linguists, and the assumptions and methodologies employed in the two main branches of the cognitive linguistics enterprise: cognitive semantics and cognitive approaches to grammar (Evans and Green 2006:27).

Cognitive linguists assume that there are common structuring principles that hold across different aspects of language, and that an important function of linguistics is to identify these common principles. In modern linguistics, the study of language is typically separated into distinct areas such as phonology (sound), semantics (word and sentence meaning), pragmatics (meaning in discourse context), morphology (word structure), syntax (sentence structure) and so on. However, given the 'generalization commitment', cognitive linguists reject the idea that the 'modules' or 'subsystems' of language are organized in significantly divergent ways, or indeed that distinct modules or subsystems even exist.

Categorization, polysemy and metaphor are used to give an idea of how apparently distinct language components can be seen to share fundamental organizational features (see Taylor 2002 for detail on linguistic categorization). Polysemy, the phenomenon whereby a single linguistic unit exhibits multiple distinct related meanings, has traditionally been restricted to the area of word meaning (lexical semantics). Cognitive Linguists, to the contrary, argue that polysemy is not restricted to word meaning but is a fundamental feature of all of human language. As Evans and Green put it, '... the 'distinct' areas of language all exhibit polysemy. Cognitive linguists therefore view polysemy as a key to generalization across a range of 'distinct' phenomena, and argue that polysemy reveals important fundamental commonalities between lexical, morphological and syntactic categorization' (Evans and Green 2006:36).

Cognitive linguists also see metaphor as a central feature of human language. One important feature of metaphor is meaning extension, whereby metaphor gives rise to new meaning. Cognitive linguists argue that metaphor-based meaning extension can also be identified across a range of 'distinct' linguistic phenomena, and that metaphor therefore provides an argument in favor of generalizing across the 'distinct' areas of language (for examples of metaphor in the lexicon and syntax, see Evans and Green 2006:39-40).

Thus, the 'generalization commitment' leads to a search for principles of language structure that hold across all aspects of language.

The 'cognitive commitment' represents the view that principles of linguistic structure should reflect what is known about human cognition from other disciplines, particularly the other cognitive sciences (philosophy, psychology, artificial intelligence and

neuroscience). In other words, it follows from the 'cognitive commitment' that language and linguistic organization should reflect general cognitive principles that are not specific to language (Evans and Green 2006:40). Accordingly, cognitive linguists reject the modular theory of mind, whereby the human mind is organized into distinct 'encapsulated' modules of knowledge, one of which is language.

Attention (profiling in language), categorization (fuzzy categories) and metaphor constitute three lines of evidences to explain the 'cognitive commitment'.

A very general cognitive ability that human beings have is attention, together with the ability to shift attention from one concept of a scene to another. Similarly, language provides ways of directing *attention* to certain aspects of the scene being linguistically encoded. This general ability, manifest in language, is called profiling (Langacker 1987; Evans and Green 2006; Friedrick and Schimid 1996).

Categorization is considered to involve fuzzy categories, which are characterized by the fact that they contain members that are more or less representative of the given category. This results in a set of members related by family resemblance rather than a single criterial feature or a limited set of criterial features possessed by every member of the category. Generally, according to the cognitive framework, the same principles that hold for categorization in general also hold for linguistic categorization (Lakoff 1987; Evans and Green 2006; Taylor 2002).

2.2. Cognitive Semantics

According to cognitive semantics, conceptual systems grow out of bodily experience, and are grounded in perception, body movement, and experience of a physical and social character (Johnson 1987, cited in Navarro-Ferrando 1998). Thought can also be imaginative, since those concepts that are not directly grounded in experience employ metaphor, metonymy and mental imagery (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

Johnson (1987), as well as Lakoff (1987), lay the foundation for this conception of semantics whereby the most significant level of human interaction, namely the physical domain, is considered to be the basic level. According to their view, our experience is preconceptually structured at a level where gestalts for general overall shapes exist that are relatively rich in structure. They argue that experience is structured in a significant way prior to, and independent of, any particular concepts realized by means of these gestalts. As far as any internal structure can be identified in gestalts, the gestalt as a whole is psychologically more basic than its parts. Both Johnson and Lakoff describe some of these gestalts under the name of *image schemas*, and suggest several content domains which they can be referred to. Thus, for Lakoff, the CONTAINER image schema that defines the predicates IN and OUT would work as the basis for understanding the body as a container. The PART–WHOLE schema is transferred to domains such as families, teams, organizations, marriage, etc. The CENTER-PERIPHERY schema gives us the difference between important things or matters, understood as central, and less important or secondary matters, considered to be peripheral. The SOURCE-PATH schema gives the model for viewing purposes in our daily life as destinations of a journey.

Other image schemas are: PROXIMITY–DISTANCE, which determines close and distant relationships; FRONT–BACK orientation; LINEAR order; UP–DOWN; etc. According to Lakoff, these image schemas are so deeply grounded in common human experience that they constitute universal pre-linguistic cognitive structure. Many of the schemas clearly derive from the most immediate of all our experiences, our experience of the human body. These image schemas lead to primary conceptualizations in the domain of physical experience and will define the primary use of words.

The internal structure of word meaning is not autonomous, but exists against a background of our general assumptions about the world (socio-cultural beliefs included), and word meaning is frequently prototype–based rather than being composed of checklists of feature (Coleman and Ray 1981, cited in Navarro-Ferrando 1998:66). The prototypical use of a word will generally fit some normal, frequently encountered case, while deviation from that case results from fuzzy boundaries of the category. Cognitive semanticists argue that the conventional meaning associated with a particular linguistic unit is simply a 'prompt' for the process of *meaning construction*: the 'selection' of an appropriate interpretation against the context of the utterance. By way of example take the word *safe*. This has a range of meanings, and the particular meaning that we select emerges as a consequence of the context in which the word occurs. To illustrate this point, consider the following set of examples discussed by Fauconnier and Turner (2002), against the context of a child playing on the beach.

a. The child is safe.

b. The beach is safe.

c. The shovel is safe.

In this context, the interpretation of (a) is that the child will not come to any harm. However, (b) does not mean that the beach will not come to harm. Instead, it means that the beach is an environment in which the risk of the child coming to harm is minimized. Similarly, (c) does not mean that the shovel will not come to harm, but that it will not cause harm to the child. These examples illustrate that there is no single fixed property that *safe* assigns to the words *child*, *beach* and *shovel*. In order to understand what the speaker means, we draw upon our encyclopedic knowledge relating to children, beaches and shovels, and our knowledge relating to what it means to be safe. We then 'construct' a meaning by 'selecting' a meaning that is appropriate in the context of the utterance.

The prototypical use of a word will generally fit some normal, frequently encountered case, while deviation from that case is caused by fuzzy boundaries of the category.

2.3. Cognitive lexical semantics

One important consequence of Lakoff's theory of Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs) was the impetus it provided to the cognitive semantic treatment of word-meaning, an area known as *cognitive lexical semantics*. Cognitive lexical semantics takes the position that lexical items (words) are *conceptual categories*; a word represents a category of distinct yet related meanings that exhibit typicality effects. Thus, Lakoff argued that words are categories that can be modeled and investigated using the theory of ICMs. In particular, Lakoff argued that lexical items represent the type of complex categories he calls *radial categories*. A radial category is structured with respect to a prototype, which as the "best"

representative of the category represents its conceptual center; other, less prototypical members of the category are seen as "radiating" away from this center. The various category members are thus related to the prototype by convention, rather than being 'generated' by predictable rules. As such, word meanings are stored in the mental lexicon as highly complex structured categories of meanings or *senses*.

The idea underpinning Lakoff's approach was that a lexical item like *over* constitutes a conceptual category of distinct but related (polysemous) senses. Furthermore, these senses, as part of a single category, can be judged as more prototypical (central) or less prototypical (peripheral). This means that word senses exhibit typicality effects. For instance, the ABOVE sense of *over* in example (a) below would be judged by most native speakers of English as a 'better' example of *over* than the CONTROL sense in example (b). While the prototypical ABOVE sense of *over* relates to a spatial configuration, the CONTROL sense does not.

a. The picture is over the mantelpiece.

b. Jane has a strange power over him.

The intuition that the spatial meanings are somehow prototypical led Brugman and Lakoff (1988), and Lakoff (1987), to argue that the CONTROL sense of *over* is derived metaphorically from the more prototypical spatial meaning of *over*.

2.4. Metaphor

According to the view adopted in cognitive linguistics (Lakoff 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999), many of the ways in which we think and act are fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Metaphor has been understood as "deviant" language by Generative Linguistics, where meanings of words are bundles of necessary and sufficient features, and there are clear-cut boundaries between semantic categories. Combination of words in Generative Grammar hinge on the compatibility of the feature specifications of the component forms, compatibility being formalized purely in terms of selection restrictions.

However, as Navarro-Ferrando (1998:81) (citing Reddy 1993; Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff and Turner 1989; Lakoff 1993; Kövesces and Szabo 1996; Lakoff and Johnson 1997) puts it, cognitive semantics does not view metaphor as a speaker's violation of rules of competence. Rather, metaphor is a means whereby ever more abstract and intangible areas of experience can be conceptualized in terms of the familiar and concrete.

In the cognitive linguistic view, metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain (Kövesces 2002:4). Examples of these include when we talk and think about life in terms of a journey, about arguments in terms of war, about love in terms of a journey, about theories in terms of buildings, about ideas in terms of food and many others.

A conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains, one of which is understood in terms of the other. A conceptual domain is any coherent organization of some part of experience. Thus, for example, we have coherently organized knowledge about journeys

that we rely on in understanding life or love (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Kövesces 2002). The conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another conceptual domain is called the *source domain*, while the conceptual domain that is understood in this way is the *target domain*. Thus, life, arguments, theory, love, ideas, and others are target domains, while journeys, wars, buildings, food, and others are source domains. The target domain is the domain that we try to understand through the use of the source domain.

Let's take the LOVE IS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor and lay out a set of correspondences, or mappings, between constituent elements of the source domain and those of the target as it appears in (Kövesces 2002:7).

Source: JOURNEY	Target: LOVE
the travelers	⇒ the lovers
the vehicle	⇒ the love relationship itself
the journey	⇒ events in the relationship
the distance covered	⇒ the progress made
the obstacles encountered	⇒ the difficulties experienced
decision about which way to go	⇒ choices about what to do
the destination of the journey	⇒ the goal(s) of the relationship

Metaphorical expressions belonging to the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor include (ibid: 5):

Look *how far* we've *come.*

We're *at a crossroads.*

We'll just have to go *our separate ways.*

We can't *turn back* now.

I don't think this relationship is *going anywhere.*

Where are we?

We're *stuck.*

It's been a *long, bumpy road.*

This relationship is *a dead-end-street.*

We're just *spinning our wheels.*

Our marriage is *on the rocks.*

We've gotten *off the track.*

This relationship is *foundering.*

2.5. Spatial semantics

Linguists, psychologists and philosophers have long observed the importance of space and spatial experience for both language and thought (cf. Tyler and Evans 2003).

The cognitive linguistic basic assumption that meaning is embodied is well evidenced by the nature of the spatio-physical experience of human beings. That is, the spatio-physical properties of the world of humanly perceived experience are fundamental to human cognition. This then suggests, as Tyler and Evans (2003:23) put it, that "...lived human experience is ultimately constrained and determined by the nature of the bodies we have including both physiology and neurological apparatus". This leads naturally to the notion of the embodiment of experience.

The basic assumption is that as humans, we segment our perceptions of the world and the way we experience it into spatial scenes. These spatial scenes are believed to result from entities in the world –which exist independently of human beings – being perceived, then analyzed and understood in ways which are wholly dependent upon the kind of neural architecture of the human brain, the particularities of the human body and the way these bodies interact with the world. This claim is elucidated by means of an example: a cup sitting on the table (Tyler and Evans 2003: 27-28). The spatial scene encoded linguistically by the above sentence is constructed conceptually when a cup and a table are understood as sharing a particular spatial relation in which there is direct contact between the cup and the table, and functionally the table supports the cup. This kind of conceptualization of spatial scene is considered to be derived from the basic human understanding of gravity, the knowledge that certain surfaces can prevent an item such as a

knowledge that certain surfaces can prevent an item such as a cup from falling to the ground, and an understanding of the physical properties of the entities involved.

An adposition designates a conceptual spatial relation between a trajector and a landmark, which is conceived as constituting an abstract *spatial scene*. Conceptual content can be abstracted away from specific spatial scenes, giving rise to a highly abstract and schematized representation, which we term a *proto-scene*. A proto-scene can be equated with the primary meaning associated with a particular adposition, and thus includes information relating to the trajector and landmark, as well as the spatial relation mediating the two.

In addition to the spatial configuration between a trajector and a landmark, the concept expressed by an adposition also involves a *functional element,* which arises as a consequence of the particular spatial configuration between the trajector and the landmark (Tyler and Evans 2001a, 2003; Vandeloise 1991, 1994). For example, when a vertical adposition relates a trajector to a landmark in such away that the trajector is located on the landmark, it can be inferred that the trajector exerts pressure on the landmark and gets control of and becomes a burden on it, cf. ex. (a) below. The landmark, on the other hand, becomes the controllee and the bearer of that burden. The concepts of 'getting control of' and 'being a burden' are examples of functional elements. Similarly, when an entity is located inside a bounded landmark, as a consequence of this configuration, the trajector can be obscured from vision and the functional element of safety can be inferred, as in ex. (b).

a. The fat man is on the table.

b. The baby is in his room.

2.6. Metaphor and spatial meaning

With respect to spatial semantic categories, certain aspects of the basic physical domain are highlighted in order to understand and create abstract domains. What is transferred by a metaphorical mapping is the internal relations or the logic of a cognitive model. A metaphor is a mapping of the structure of a source model onto a target model. We rely on models of the concrete world to conceptualize abstract phenomena. Our conceptualization of models of abstract categories is grounded in our more concrete experience with people, objects, actions, and events. In the analysis of the metaphorically extended meanings of the Oromo adposition *irra*, this is the mechanism which leads to the abstract usage of the spatial particle.

According to Navarro-Ferrando (1998: 92), in the characterization of the abstract usage of adpositions there are two basic assumptions:

1. The general class of objects, organisms and people are used as source models for other abstract categories.

2. Basic image schemas are used for the spatial conceptualization of abstract domains.

One abstract model can result from a combination of several concrete models when mappings are performed. The choice of linguistic expression is highly context-dependent, and must be carried out actively by the reader/ hearer. In the case of adpositions, when these are used in a figurative sense, what we have is a metaphorical mapping from physical

space onto conceptual space, since conceptual space is understood in terms of conceptual image schemas plus a metaphorical mapping. Conceptual image schemas based on spatial experience are understood directly; they provide the conceptual basis for uses of prepositions in the physical domain and are extended metaphorically to structure other domains.

2.7. Polysemy

It is common for a single word to have more than one meaning. In some cases the meanings are unrelated, like the two meanings of *bank*: the place where money is put and the land along the edge of a river. These are called instances of *homonymy.* In other cases, the senses are related, indeed often in such a close and systematic way that we don't notice at first that more than one sense exists at all. Take the word *window*, for example. It can refer either to an opening in a wall or to the glass-filled frame in that opening. Such cases are instances of *polysemy.* They are cases where one lexical item has a family of related senses.

Lakoff (1987) argues that the classical theory of categories does not do very well on the treatment of polysemy. In order to have a single lexical item, the classical theory must treat all of the related senses as having some abstract meaning in common — usually so devoid of real meaning that it is not recognizable as what people would normally think of as a meaning of a word at all. Moreover, an "abstract meaning" cannot (nor is it intended to) distinguish among polysemous senses. And where there are a number of related senses that have no single property in common, the classical theory is forced to treat such cases as homonymy, in just the same way as it treats the case of the two words *bank*. Finally, the

classical theory has no adequate means of characterizing the situation where one or more senses are "central" or "most representative" (Lakoff 1987: 416).

2.8. Review of literature

Though Oromo was committed to writing in the mid-19th century, descriptive research work on the language began only very recently. Baye (1986:9) categorizes the work done heretofore into the following three types:

i. Word lists and / or dictionaries.

ii. Pedagogical grammars.

iii. Descriptive sketches.

Commenting on these works, Baye (1986:10) says that the approach of studies of type (i) and type (ii) is 'traditional'; and type (iii), "as the name suggests, is not scientifically deep work".

Although there have been developments in the study of Oromo in recent years, these works are confined to phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and dialectology using the various formal approaches to linguistics, recent work being largely based on the theories and assumptions of Generative Grammar.

Work on the semantics of Oromo has so far been minimal. Adpositions in particular have not been studied well. However, there are some works that have made reference to the

adpositions of Oromo, including Baye (1986), Gragg (1976), and Griefenow–Mewis (2001), among others. Baye (1986) is a syntactic work and as such is concerned with the behavior of adpositions in larger constructions such as phrases and clauses. The other authors simply list the Oromo adpositions with English glosses and give some Oromo examples. So it is possible to say that none of these works has focused on the meanings / semantics of the adpositions except Dabala's (2006b) work on the semantic network of some postpositions in Oromo. In this work, Dabala presents the semantics of some Oromo adpositions of verticality based on data from the Mecha dialect. He identifies six adpositions of verticality in Oromo, namely, *irra* 'on', *jala* 'under', *gararraa* 'above', *gajjallaa* 'below', *ol* 'up' and *gad* 'down'. He gives examples of the basic spatial scene of each postposition and a few metaphorically extended meanings.

The present study attempts to give detailed a semantic description of the Oromo postposition of verticality *irra,* in light of cognitive semantics.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SEMANTIC STRUCTURE OF *IRRA*

3.1. Spatial senses

In this chapter, the various schemas of the prototypical spatial senses of *irra* will be discussed in relation to the nature of the landmarks and trajectors which this Oromo adposition operates on. Although in the most prototypical sense, *irra* designates a trajector higher than the landmark on vertical axis, due to differences of construals and perspectives there exist deviations from this general conceptual schema.

The Oromo postposition *irra,* which roughly corresponds to '*over*' or '*on*' in English, designates a group of relationships between a certain trajector and landmark. In the proto-scene of this adposition the trajector is located higher than the landmark. The adposition also has extended senses, however, which result from the interaction of the adposition and the nature of the landmarks or verbs with which it occurs. In this respect, I side with Taylor (2002), Tyler and Evans (2001), and Evans and Tyler (2004b), who attribute the multiple senses of a preposition in part to the nature of trajectors or landmarks and verbs rather than to the preposition only. This is opposed to the position of Lakoff (1987), who attributes the different senses to the preposition per se, regardless of the particular landmark, trajector and verb involved.

For instance 'over' is presented as having both a 'higher than' sense in example (a) below and a distinct 'above-across' sense in (b) (Lakoff 1987).

a. He spread the cloth over the table.

b. The cat jumped over the wall.

The 'above-across sense' which Lakoff considers to be distinct from other senses is argued by Lakoff to be prompted by the preposition *over*. He also suggests that certain prepositions encode "movement". For instance, he argues that the central spatial sense associated with o*ver* constitutes a 'dynamic' above-across meaning element. Lakoff explicitly claims that this sense encodes a "path" along which the trajector travels.

Evidence for this analysis comes from examples such as the following, given in Evans and Tyler (2004b:3)

a. The cat jumped over the wall.

b. The UFO flew over the city.

A central issue raised by the claim that *over* has a "movement" above-across sense associated with it is whether any preposition encodes motion with accompanying trajectory information. In this respect, as will be explained with evidence from Oromo, I take the side of Evans and Tyler who argue that the preposition *over* does not encode motion. Rather, a motion reading can follow from the nature of the activity being engaged in, the nature of the trajector, and/or the nature of the landmark. That is, the complex conceptualization which arises is due to integration of sentential elements as interpreted through our knowledge of the world. Hence the

information which results in a "dynamic" reading is distributed across the sentence, rather than being solely due to the preposition.

Let us analyze the following examples.

(1) Fard-i dallaa-rra utaal-e[1]

horse-nom fence- over jump-3sm:pv

'The horse jumped over the fence.'

(2) ?Fard-i gaara-rra utaal-e

horse-nom mountain-over jump-3sm:pv

? 'The horse jumped over the mountain.'

(3) Xayyaarr-i Bishooftuu-rra darb-e

plane-nom Bishoftu-over pass-3sm:pv

'The plane passed over Bishoftu.'

[1] I have used the Latin-based Oromo orthography to transcribe the examples in the paper. The orthography is similar to the IPA. In the data, length and gemination are shown by transcribing double vowels and consonants respectively. The palatal affricate voiceless sound is symbolized by 'ch'. The palatal nasal sound is symbolized by 'ny'. The palatal affricate voiced is symbolized by 'j'. The ejective velar sound is symbolized by 'q'. The palatal ejective is symbolized by 'c'. The alveolar implosive is symbolized by 'dh'. The palatal semivowel is symbolized by 'y'. The alveolar ejective is symbolized by 'x' (this is quite different from IPA usage). The glottal stop is symbolized by ''.

(4) Konkolaataa-n keenya har'a Bishooftuu-rra darb-e

car-nom our today Bishoftu-over pass-3sm:pv

lit. 'Our car passed over Bishoftu today.'

'Our car passed via Bishoftu today.'

According to Lakoff, the case for attributing a 'dynamic above-across' sense to *over* in examples such as (1) above relies on the implicit reasoning that a spatial scene is being conceptualized in which a horse starts from a position on one side of the fence and comes to be in a position on the other side and that there is nothing in the sentence, other than the preposition *over*, which indicates the trajectory followed by the horse; and as a trajectory is entailed by a moving entity, it must therefore be *over* which prompts for an above-and-across trajectory. However, I argue along the lines of Evans and Tyler that simply because the trajectory is not explicitly denoted by a specific linguistic form (formal expression) does not entail that such information is otherwise absent from the interpretation and hence must be attributable to *over*. On this view, all elements that are salient in the interpretation of a scene would have to be coded linguistically.

In short, rather than representing the 'spatial' meanings of adpositions as carrying detailed information about each scene being described, including whether or not there is a trajectory and therefore that the trajector is capable of undergoing motion along this trajectory, it has been argued that they prompt for schematic conceptualizations—termed by Tyler and Evans (2003) 'proto-scenes'—and are interpreted within the particular contexts in which they occur. Thus,

motion (and the trajectory which an entity in motion entails) is prompted for by the verb, and by what we know about trajectors like *horses* (in the above example, their goals), and by landmarks such as *walls* or *fences* (as impenetrable barriers to forward motion), and of course by the spatial configuration (including the resultant functional element) denoted by the adposition itself. In other words, the different senses are the combined result of the nature of the landmark, the trajector and the action involved, in addition the adposition, rather than only of the postposition *irra* in Oromo or the preposition *over* in English. The knowledge we have about horses and mountains, and about the action of jumping, makes example (2) anomalous. By the same token, the difference of sense between examples (3) and (4) results from the nature of the trajectors, *plane* and *car*; otherwise the landmark is the same, and the adposition relating the landmark and the trajector is likewise identical. That is to say it is predominantly the different conceptualization that we have about planes and cars that brings about the different senses. In the Oromo case, the adposition *irra* does not in itself indicate whether there is contact between the trajector and landmark, nor the trajectory entailed. These are determined by the nature of the action involved, i.e. the kind of verbs the adposition collocates with and the kind of trajector involved.

3.2. Conceptual schema for *irra*

3.2.1. General conceptual schema

As remarked, Cognitive Linguistics claims that concepts are formed based on our experience with objects and on the contact of our bodies with those objects. Thus the initial impetus for the gestalt of the Oromo postposition *irra* as a spatial relational concept is based on bodily

experience and on perceptual space (Navarro-Ferrando 1998). To begin with, all objects in any situation have surfaces, and these surfaces are perceived all the time, no matter how the objects are construed by the speaker in a situation at a particular moment. Therefore, the mere surface cannot constitute the basis of a distinctive concept which is to be in opposition and contrast with other concepts. In this case, the concept for *irra* cannot consist just of the surface configuration of the landmark, for all landmarks of all relational concepts have a perceived surface (in the physical domain). *Irra* in its prototypical sense designates a trajector located higher than landmark. Contact or absence of contact between this trajector and the landmark, however, depends on the nature of the verbs it collocates with.

Thus, for the conceptual schema of this lexical unit the following configuration is posited:

1. The trajector of *irra* is an entity which may or may not be in contact with the landmark. When there is contact between the trajector and landmark, the trajector of *irra* is an entity that can be conceptualized as capable of self-motion control, or whose motion is controlled by using the landmark. One side of the trajector (the resting side) faces or is directed towards the landmark in order to achieve that control, which is accomplished through contact of the resting side of the trajector and the outside part of the landmark. Therefore, the trajector uses the landmark for self-support, or the situation is construed in such a way that the trajector finds a rest status, a standing position, or its natural or canonical position, by using the landmark as a tool for support, i.e. motion control. In this canonical support situation, the trajector benefits from the relationship expressed linguistically by *irra* so as to avoid falling down, for instance.

Consider the following expressions.

(5) Kitaab-ni xarapheezaa-rra jir-a

book-nom table-on exist-3sm:ipv

'The book is on the table.'

(6) Simbirroo-n muka-rra qubat-te

bird- nom tree-on land-fem-3sf:pv

'The bird landed on the tree.'

(7) Mucaa-n siree-rra raf-te

baby- nom- bed-on-fem-3sf:pv

'The baby slept on the bed.'

In the above examples, the trajector's position, where the *book* the *bird* and the *baby* appear, puts emphasis on the fact that motion control relative to the trajector is maintained by means of resting, or standing with the help of the landmark the *table*, the *tree* and the *bed*. That is, the resting side of the trajector is in contact with the accessible side of the landmark and the trajectors get self-support or motion control.

When the same postposition *irra* is used with motion verbs and trajectors that involve lack of contact between trajector and landmark, however, a different relational concept is expressed, as in the following example.

(8) Fard-i dallaa-rra utaal-e

horse-nom fence-over jump-3sm:pv

'The horse jumped over the fence.'

Here, the idea of motion control or support is not conveyed because the trajector *horse* traverses the landmark *fence* and comes to rest on the other side of the fence.

2. The landmark is an object that offers an accessible side for use as support by the trajector. This side is an external part, the outside of the object. The prototypical case consists of the upper horizontal surface of objects or the earth as such, since these provide easy support for other entities, but this is by no means the only possibility. The relationship may be construed as the trajector and landmark existing in some natural or culturally acquired position in relation to each other.

Examples:

(9) Tolaa-n kursii-rra taa'-e

Tola-nom chair-on sit- 3sm:pv

'Tola sat on a chair.'

(10) Caalaan keenyan irra-tti irakat-e

Chala -nom wall on-goal lean-3sm:pv

'Chala leaned on (onto) the wall.'

In the above examples, in contrast to the prototypical case (9) where the trajector rests on a horizontal landmark's surface (chair), the landmark (wall) in (10) is perceived as a different configuration, i.e. a vertical landmark but still one which provides an accessible side as a support to the trajector, Chala.

3. According to the force dynamic configuration of the relationship (kinetic space) the trajector and landmark positions in relation to each other mutually define a common axis along which their relationship can adopt a certain directionality. For the *irra* 'on' relation, that axis is defined by the resting side of the trajector as well as by the trajector's orientation towards the landmark. This is prototypically the vertical axis with respect to the human canonical position as standing on the ground, since the human resting side is defined by the soles of the feet. So, the axis of motion (the directionality of the relative position) is defined by a line which is perpendicular to the earth. The pressure exerted by the trajector is prototypically exerted downwards. Therefore, the prototypical direction of movement along this vertical axis will follow the axis downwards. However, it can happen that the trajector is not resting according to this prototypical direction in the actual construal of a particular situation. If so, a rotation of this imaginary line can occur. The resulting axis will then no longer be vertical, since it must

preserve its relative perpendicularity with regard to the resting side of the trajector. So we have expressions like the following.

(11) Titiisni keenyan-rra qubat-te

fly-nom wall-on land-3sf:pv

'The fly landed on the wall.'

(12) Titiis-ni kornisii-rra qubat-te

fly-nom ceiling -on land-3sf:pv

'The fly landed on the ceiling.'

In the above examples, the axis has been rotated, but the relative position of the *fly* still remains with its resting side towards the *wall* or the *ceiling.*

4. The interaction between trajector and landmark also represents an inferable functional configuration (in social space): functionally, it is the trajector that holds control of the situation. If one of the participants is to hold control over the other, the controller will be always the trajector of *irra*, and the landmark will be the 'controllee'.

5. Trajector and landmark are generally conceived as sharing the same scale. Thus it is hard to construe a situation where a needle is on a mountain, as in example (13) below; the scales are simply incommensurate.

(13) ?Limmoo-n gaara sana -rra jir-a

needle-nom mountain that -on exist-3sm:ipv

'The needle is on that mountain.'

Nevertheless, sometimes the scope of predication of the landmark may be larger (even much larger) than the scope of the trajector. In the following example a single man as trajector is related to the landmark 'the earth'.

(14) Biyyalafaa kana -rra -tti nama akka keetii hin agarr-e

earth this -on-goal man like you neg see-1sm:pv

'I have never seen a man like you on this earth.'

3.2.2. Shifts of the conceptual schema

In the basic conceptual schema, as mentioned already, a common element which is already easily perceived in early childhood is the fact that support exists in a relationship between the trajector and the landmark. From the landmark point of view, the trajector is a burden, and from the trajector point of view the landmark is a supporting entity. This conceptual schema, however, may suffer certain modifications due to perceptual shifts of perspective or profile. Thus we can have the following alternative construals:

a. Rotated schema: A non-horizontal surface is the supporting side of the landmark. Contact is still present and the trajector maintains motion-control of itself. Therefore, the relationship

SUPPORT is fully present in contexts where a rotated conceptual schema of support is instantiated. This sense occurs with nouns referring to entities that offer non-horizontal external parts for support of other entities, such as *walls, trees*, the *human body*, *doors*, etc., where verbs of the *hang* type constitute the prototypical verbal context.

Examples:

(15) Suuraa baayyee-tu keenyan-irra jir-a

picture many-foc wall-on exist-3sm:ipv

'There are many pictures on the wall.'

(16) Fannoo guddaa laphee isaa-rra jir-a

cross big chest his -on- exist-3sm:ipv

'He has let a big cross hang down on his chest.'

(17) Titiisatu hidhii isaa-rra jir-a

fly-foc lip his-on exist 3sm:ipv

'It is a fly that is on his lips.'

b. Axial support: This is the case where the support is an axis which sustains the trajector.

Examples:

(18) Dachee-n falaka isii -rra naanoof-ti

earth-nom orbit her -on revolve-3sf:ipv

'The earth rotates on its axis.'

(19) Qubeelaa guddaa quba-rra-a qab-di

ring big finger on-source has-3sf:ipv

'She has a big ring on her finger.'

c. Part of the trajector is landmark: Here the landmark is a part of a building, a part of the human body (legs, heels, stomach, etc.), and in general that part of something which is in contact with the actual supporting place. A certain reflexivity is implicit in the verbal action.

Examples:

(20) Tolaa-n of-irra quphan-e

Tola-nom himself-on sit-3sm:pv

'Tola sat on himself.' (i.e. squatted down)

(21) Harree-n of irra gangalat-ti

donkey-nom itself on roll-3sf:ipv

'The donkey rolls over itself.'

We can also have cases where the trajector constitutes a flaw which is part of the landmark.

Examples:

(22) Goddanisa-tu fuula isaa-rra jir-a

scar -foc face his -on exist-3sm:ipv

'There is a scar on his face.'

(23) Uraa guddaa-tu surree kee -rra jir-a

hole big -foc trousers your -on exist-3sm:ipv

'There is a big hole in your trousers.'

(24) Karmoommuu-tu miila koo-rra-tti ba'-e

wart -foc leg my -on-goal go out- 3sm:pv

lit. 'Wart went out onto my leg.'

'A wart appeared on my leg.'

The basic schema and deviations from this schema have been discussed above. The details of the various types of landmarks that the postposition *irra* operates on will now be presented below. With regard to this postposition, various distinctions can be made as to the nature of the landmarks. The landmark is indicated by the complement of *irra*.

a) Horizontal position on an elevation: here *irra* indicates that an object is situated in a mainly horizontal position in contact with or supported by an elevation serving as a foundation. The landmark (complement of *irra*) may denote parts of buildings and of other structures considered as elevations: *mountains*, *hills*, *rock*, *road*, *paths* and places or areas slightly raised in relation to their immediate surroundings.

(25) Tolaa-n gaana -rra ba'-e

Tola-nom mountain-on ascend- 3sm:pv

'Tola ascended onto the mountain.'

(26) Caalaa-n tulluu-rra ba'-ee lallab-e

Chala-nom hill-on ascend-conv call out-3sm:pv

'Chala ascended onto the mountain and called out.'

(27) Ijoollee-n karaa-rra kubbaa taphaat-aa jir-ti

children-nom road-on ball play-conv exist-3pf:ipv

'The children are playing ball on the road.'

b). Position on a horizontal surface: *irra* is also used to indicate that an object is situated in contact with or supported by a mainly horizontal base, not an elevation, and not considered as bounded on its outer sides or as forming an enclosure. *Irra* is used with complements representing: the earth as a planet, or other heavenly bodies, large or small stretches of the solid surface of the earth like *land*, *continent*, *ground*, *soil*, etc. and parts and forms of the water that covers much of the earth, like sea, lake, river etc.

Examples:

(28) Faranjii-n ji'a -rra baa-t-e jedh-an

white man-nom moon -on ascend-3sf: pv say-3p:pv

'They said that the white man ascended on the moon.'

(29) Biyya abba koo-rra-tti -an tuffat -am -e

country father my-on- goal-1s despise –pas-1s:pv

'I am despised in (on) my (own) father's country.'

(30) Loon maasii -rra deem-e

cattle farmland -on go-3sm:pv

'The cattle went on the farmland.'

(31) Bidiruu-n bishaan-irra deem-ti

boat-nom water-on go-3sf:ipv

'A boat goes on water.'

c) Position on non-horizontal surface: it is not important whether the contact is from above or from elsewhere. *Irra* indicates the surface of application or point of suspension with which the object maintains contact. The landmark may be an object surface, or a human or animal body.

(32) Funyaan kee-rra-a dafqa haxaa'-i

nose your on- source sweat wipe-2sm:impr

'Wipe the sweat from on your nose!'

(33) Dugda-rra-tti baat-e

back –on -goal carry-3sm:pv

'He carried on (his) back.'

(34) Biinbii-n keenyan-irra qubat-te

mosquito-nom wall-on land-3sf:pv

'The mosquito landed on the wall.'

(35) Qamalee-n muka-rra jir-ti

monkey-nom tree-on exist-3sf:ipv

'The monkey is on the tree'.

(d) *Irra* may be used to indicate the location of an object on the surface and forming part of the surface. It is used to express that something is engraved, written, drawn or painted, or with complements denoting the human or animal body, or part of it.

(36) Suuraa-n nami-ccha-a fuula 22-rra jir-a

picture-nom man-sing-gen page 22-on exist-3sm:ipv

'The man's picture is on page 22.'

(37) Dugda isaa rra-a madaa guddaa qab-a

back his on-source wound big have-3sm:ipv

'He has a big wound on his back.

(e) *Irra* may also be used to indicate location in front of a background without any contact.

(38) Fuula koo-rra-a deem-i

face my on-source go-2sm:impr

lit 'Go away from on my face!'

'Go away from me!'

(39) Na -rra -a deem- i

me- on – source go- impr

'Go away from on me.'

(f) Irra may also indicate location close to the landmark without any contact.

(40) Balballa-rra-tti na eeg-i

Door- on –goal me wait-2s:impr

'Wait for me on (at) the gate.'

(41) Mann-i Caala-a karaa-rra jir-a

house-nom Chala-gen. road-on exist-3sm:ipv

'Chala's house is on the road.'

(42) Tolaa-n mana koo-rra darb-ee deem-e

Tola-nom house my- on pass- conv go-3sm:pv

lit. 'Tola went passing over my house.'

'Tola went passing by my house.'

(g) *Irra* may also indicate relative position of a trajector in relation to the landmark being considered. It defines the position of one object in relation to another, with complements like side, hand, right and left etc.

(43) Mana Tolaa xiqqoo ol deem-t-ee harka mirgaa-rra-tti argatt-a

house Tola little up go-2sm-conv hand right-on-goal find-2sm:ipv

'Tola's house, you go up a little and find it on the right hand side.'

(44) Balbala isa harka bitaa-rra jiruu-n gal-i

door that hand left-on exist-path enter-2sm:impr

'Enter by the door that is on the left hand side.'

3.3. *Irra* with other adpositions

Irra can combine with other postpositional morphemes that induce additional relational meanings. These add information on the direction of the trajectory such as source, goal and path. Such morphemes are *–a* 'from', –itti 'to' and *–n* 'by (via)'.

When *irra* is used with *–a*, it collocates with motion verbs that denote movement away from the landmark or indicates that the entity (physical or abstract) ultimately makes a movement away from the landmark. Generally, a potential movement is perceived away from the landmark under consideration. Similarly, when *irra* is used with *–itti*, it collocates with verbs that denote movement towards the landmark implying a point on a surface and emphasizing

contact between the trajector and the landmark and limiting the final destination to the landmark. When *irra* is used with the morpheme *-n*, finally, it denotes a trajectory using a landmark as a means to end a movement, with or without contact, depending on the nature of the trajector and the action involved.

Examples:

(45) Muka-rra-a utaal-ee dhagaa-rra-tti kuf-e

wood-on-source jump-conv rock-on-goal fall-3sm:pv

'He jumped from on a tree and fell down on a rock.'

Here, the *–a* emphasizes the source of the trajector 'he', whose original position was the landmark *muka* 'wood', and *–tti* similarly emphasizes the trajector's final position (the goal) as being on another landmark *dhagaa* 'stone'.

In a similar way, in examples (46) and (47) below *–a* emphasizes the source of the trajectors under consideration, whereas *–tti* in (48) indicates the goal of the trajector. The morpheme *-n* in examples (49) and (50) gives additional relational meaning regarding the path of the trajectors.

(46) Jimma-rra-a ka'-ee Finfinnee-tti gal-e

Jimma-on-source start-conv Finfine-goal enter-3sm:pv

'He started (his journey) from on (i.e. at) Jimma and entered Finfine'.

(47) Waaqa-rra-a bu'-e

sky-on-source descend-3sm:pv

'It/he descended from heaven.'

(48) Bokkaa-n na-rra-tti caam-e

rain-nom me-on-goal stop fall-3sm:pv

'The rain (began falling on me) (and) stopped falling on me (while still I was in the rain).'

(49) As-irra-a-n darb-e

here-on-source- path pass-3sm:pv

lit. 'He passed by over here.'

'He passed this way.'

(50) Dallaa-rra -a-n utal-e

fence-over-source-path jump-3sm:pv

lit. 'He jumped by over the fence.'

'He jumped over the fence.'

3.4. Metaphorical senses of *irra*

In this section the various metaphorically extended senses of the Oromo adposition *irra* are discussed. This is done by explaining how the physical spatial senses give rise to metaphorical meanings.

Dirven (1993) argues that prepositions exhibit extensions of meaning from the spatio-physical domain and, furthermore, that such extensions do not occur in a haphazard way. Below, an attempt is made to show how the characterization of the proto-scene, in conjunction with the principle of experiential correlation, accounts for the patterns of non-spatial uses of the Oromo postposition *irra.*

3.4.1. The 'more' sense of *irra*

The principle of experiential correlation posits that two distinct events which frequently co-occur can become associated at the conceptual level (Tyler and Evans 2003). As noted earlier, one of the most ubiquitous experiential correlations is that there is a direct correspondence between a change in vertical elevation and a change in amount. It was also discussed that *irra,* in its spatial uses, codes prototypically for a trajector which is located higher than the landmark; in other words, its proto-scene involves vertical elevation of the trajector in relation to the landmark. Thus, it is a likely candidate for developing non-spatial meanings involving increased amount or 'more.'

This kind of concept is argued to arise from regular observations of distinct events co-occurring in the world. After repeated observations of co-occurrence or correlations in experience, the distinct events can become associated at the conceptual level. Due to these natural co-occurrences and correlations in actual experience, speakers come to conceive one event in terms of the other. Such experiential correlation is reflected in language. For instance, we often observe an increase in amount co-occurring with an increase in elevation: thus when more of a liquid (increased amount) is added to a container, the level of the liquid rises (increased elevation). The close conceptual association between increased amount and vertical elevation is reflected in the utterances discussed below.

Examples:

(51) Lakkof-ni barattoota daree tokko-o nama 40-rra darb-uu hin qab -u

number-nom students section one-gen person 40-over pass-conv neg has-3sm:jus

'The number of students in one class should not exceed over 40.'

(52) Kana-rra waan-an sii-f godh-u hin qab-u

this-over anything -I you-for do-1s neg have-1s:ipv

lit. 'More than (over) this, I do not have anything to do for you.'

'I can't help you any more.'

In example (51), the limit for the number of students in one class is believed to be 40. In the physical domain when a trajector is located on a landmark, it is higher than the landmark. The trajector can pass above the landmark without contacting it, but in that case its elevation will increase. Similarly, the number of students exceeding 40 is conceptualized as increase in the vertical elevation. Abstract entities like *number* and *support* are understood in terms of physical domains. In example (52), the trajector (I) has given the possible support to the landmark (you) to the maximum and the elevation does not rise any more. In both cases, and of course in some other cases, the postposition *irra* serves to code the vertical elevation or the increase in the amount of something. That is why Jonhson and Lakoff (1987) posited conceptual metaphors like:

MORE IS UP; LESS IS DOWN.

3.4.2. The addition sense

Besides coding vertical elevation corresponding to increase in amount, *irra* similarly serves to conceptualize addition of something onto a previous quantity. From experiential correlation, we know again that adding an entity onto another entity typically brings about vertical elevation and hence increase in quantity: when an additional entity or quantity is added to the original amount of a physical entity, the height or level of that entity often rises. In other words, in experiential correlation, vertical elevation and quantity are correlated in our experience. Because *irra* can be construed as relating a trajector which is physically up with respect to a landmark, and vertical elevation correlates in experiential terms with greater quantity, an implicature associated with being *irra* 'over' is of having more of some quantity.

This experience can be extended to abstract domains like *happiness*, *love*, *sadness* etc. In this case, to emphasize the previous quantity as being the goal for the amount being added, the morpheme *-itti* 'to' collocates with *irra*.

Examples:

(53) Waaq-ni gamachuu-rra-tti gammachuu sii-f haa dabal-u

Lord-nom happiness-over-goal happiness you-pos jus add-3sm:jus

'May the Lord add for you happiness onto happiness.'

(54) Dhukkaaba isaa-rra-tti gadd-i dabalam-ee jiruu isaa dukkaneess-e

illness his-on –goal grief-nom add-conv life his darken-3sm:pv

'Grief added onto his illness darkened his life.'

3.4.3. The sequence sense

Besides designating addition, the concept of vertical elevation correlating with increase in amount can in turn give rise to a slightly different sense involving the concept of sequence in the process of adding something to something one after the other. Thus, it is common to use expressions like:

(55) Tulluu-n Caalaa-rra-tti dhalat-e

Tulu-nom Chala-on-goal born-3sm:pv

lit. 'Tulu was born on Chala.'

'Tulu was born after Chala.'

The above example thus designates both the numerical increase in size of the family and the sequential fact that *Chala* is the elder brother of *Tulu* and not the other way round.

3.4.4. The preference sense

In this sense, that which is higher is conventionally understood as being preferred to that which is lower.

Examples:

(56) Inni shaayi-irra buna filat-a

he:nom tea-over coffee choose-3sm:ipv

'He would prefer coffee over tea.'

(57) Inni kubbaa millaa-rra kubbaa saaphanaa jaallat-a

he:nom ball foot-over ball basket like-3sm:ipv

lit. 'He likes basketball over soccer.'

'He likes basketball more than soccer.'

Here, the preference sense derives from that fact that being physically up in experiential terms can implicate greater quantity, which generally is preferred to lesser quantity. There is a further experiential pattern in which being physically up is associated with positive states. In English, for instance, being physically up is associated with positive states such as happiness (e.g., *He's feeling up today*), being awake (e.g. *Is she up yet?*), etc, while being physically down is associated with being unhappy (e.g., *I'm feeling down today*) (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

3.4.5. The comparative sense

The fact that being physically high is associated with positive states also yields a sense of superiority. That is, something physically up is better than something physically down. Thus, *irra* serves to compare two entities, whether physical or abstract, in determining the superiority of one in relation to the other. This sense is clearly quite similar to the preference sense.

Examples:

(58) Tolaa-n waa bayyee-n Caalaa-rra wayy-a

Tola-nom thing many-path Chala-over better-3sm:ipv

'Tola is better than Chala in many things'.

(59) Tolaa-n caalaa-rra cimaa dha

Tola-nom Chala-over strong is

'Tola is stronger than Chala'

(60) Tolaa-n hojjaa-n Caalaa-rra jir-a

Tola-nom height-ins Chala -over exist-3sm:ipv

lit. 'Tola is over Chala by height.'

'Tola is taller than Chala.'

(61) Sobaa-n jirat-uu-rra du'aan-n dhabam-uu wayy-a

lie-ins live-inf-over death-ins disappear-inf better-3sm:ipv

'It is better to die and vanish than to lie and live!'

3.4.6. The control/ dominance sense

Another experiential correlation associated with vertical elevation is the phenomenon of control or power. In this sense, the trajector must be within reach of the landmark so that the trajector exerts influence or control over the landmark. Concerning this claim, Tyler & Evans (2003: 101) state that for most of human history, when one person has been in physical control of another person, control has been experienced as the controller being physically higher. In physical combat, the victor or controller is typically the one who finishes standing in the up position; the loser finishes on the ground, physically lower than the controller. Hence, an important element of how we actually experience control is that of being physically higher than that which is controlled. Further, within the physical domain, the physically bigger (up) often controls the physically smaller (down). Evans and Green also state that in the animal kingdom,

a widespread signal of submission and of the acknowledgement of power or status is for the less dominant animal to put itself in a position in which its head is physically lower than the head of the dominant animal. In experiential terms, then, control and vertical elevation are well correlated (Evans & Green 2003:102).

In the discussion of the spatial sense of *irra*, it was posited that when a trajector is located on a landmark, the trajector gains control of the landmark and exerts pressure on it. In this sense the trajector should be in contact with or at least potentially in reach of the landmark.

In terms of socio-physical experience, we understand control in terms of physical proximity or sphere of influence, with one entity being physically higher than the other entity. In the simplest terms, someone who has physical control over us is often physically proximal, and can thus physically constrain our actions, i.e. force our compliance. Thus, there is a long-established experiential correlation involving the controlling entity being higher than but still in physical proximity to the element being controlled.

Examples:

(62) Amantoon-ni seexana-rra-tti humna qab-u

believers-nom Satan-over-goal power have-3pm:ipv

'The believers have power over Satan.'

(63) Tulluu-n Caalaa-rra jir-a

Tulu-nom Chala-over exist-3sm:ipv

'Tulu is over Chala.'

Here, the trajectors *amantoonnii* 'believers' and *Tulu* are not physically located higher than the landmarks *seexana* 'Satan' and *Chala*. Rather, the interpretation involves some kind of control prompted for by virtue of the trajector being superior to the landmark, similar to the way a physical trajector exerts pressure on a landmark and gets control of it.

We have said that to have the control sense, the trajector should be potentially in reach of the landmark. The anomalousness of the following expressions using the postposition *gararraa*, which roughly means 'above', strengthens the claim, as the postposition *gararraa* 'above' precludes physical proximity or sphere of influence and hence cannot designate control.

Examples:

(64) ?Amantoonni seexana gararraatti humna qabu

'The believers have power above Satan.'

(65) ?Tulluun Caalaa gararraa jira

'Tulu is above Chala.'

These examples are anomalous under the control or power reading. However, example (65) is acceptable if the intention is a literal physical location of the trajector *Tullu* above the landmark *Chala*.

Inverting the direction of the trajectory in the control/ dominance reading results in the loss of power/dominance. Recall that when *irra* is used with the morpheme *–a*, it collocates with motion verbs whose path is away from the landmark, making the trajector (physical or abstract) follow a trajectory away from its initial position to a different location. In the control/dominance sense, then, the initially controlling element loses its 'position of dominance' because it has moved away from that position.

Examples:

(66) Caalaa-n angoo-rra-a bu'-e

Chala-nom power-on-source descend-3sm:pv

'Chala descended from on power.'

Here, the trajector 'Chala' follows a trajectory away from the landmark 'power', thus designating the loss of power by the trajector. This can be compared to example (67) below where the same trajector maintains the control or power sense because it is directed towards the landmark and so exerts power over it.

(67) Caalaa-n angoo-rra ba'-e

Chala-nom power-on ascend-3sm:pv

'Chala ascended onto power.'

In the same manner, concepts like *responsibility* as in (68) below, and similar expressions, are perceived as landmarks on which a trajector that is directed toward them gets control of them, and a trajector which is moving away from the landmark loses the control.

(68) Tolaa-n ittigafatamummaa-rra-a ka'-e

Tola-nom responsibility-on-source stand-3sm:pv

lit. 'Tola stood up from on responsibility.'

'Tola resigned from his responsibility.'

We can also see gender dominance (i.e. male dominance) expressed with *irra* in the following examples where *irra* 'over' collocates with the husband's loss by death occurring as if it were a physical loss originating from over the wife. By the same token, *jala* 'under' collocates with the wife's loss by death as if it were a physical movement of the wife originating from under the husband.

Examples (69) and (70), respectively, show this relationship.

(69) Abbaa mana-a-tu ishee irra-a du'-e

father house-gen-foc her over-source die-pv

lit. 'Father/ master of the house died from over her.'

'She lost her husband by death.'

(70) Haadha mana-a-tu isa jala-a du'-e

mother house-gen-foc him under-source die-pv

lit. 'Mother of the house died from under him.'

'He lost his wife by death.'

3.4.7. The repetition sense

Repetition is conceptualized in terms of a trajector moving on a certain landmark in such a way that an action is carried out by repeating the movement on the same landmark. This kind of trajector and landmark can also be related by *irra*. When used in this sense, *irra* collocates with the specific verb *deebi'uu* 'to go back/come back', which contributes to the sense of repetition.

Examples:

(71) Hojii mana-a kee irra deebi'-ii hojjedh- u

work house-gen your over go/come back-conv work- 2s:impr

lit. 'Do your homework by going back/ coming back over (it).'

'Do your homework over!'

(72) Waa'ee dubii sana-a irra-ded- deebi'-ee isaan akeekachiis-e

about matter that-gen over-redup-go/come back -conv them warn-3sm:pv

lit. 'He warned them about the matter by going or coming back over it again

and again.'

'He warned them about the matter again and again.'

Example (72) involves reduplication of the verb *deebi'uu* as *ded-deebi'uu*, emphasizing the multiplicity of the repetition.

As Tyler and Evans (2003:105) note, the repetition sense is limited to complex conceptualizations involving a particular set of process verbs. Specifically, the repetition sense will only occur with processes (prompted for by the verb) that can readily be conceptualized as iterative and/or voluntary (i.e. under conscious control).

Sentences involving this sense prompt for a conceptualization of a wheel or cycle, since a turning wheel seems to be naturally evoked by the notion of repetition. The repetition meaning component associated with *over* and so with *irra* may also be the result of iterative application of a process of turning (i.e. a 180-degree arc of rotation is repeated such that the trajector passes through 360 degrees, thereby returning to its original starting point).

Examples:

(73) Tulluu-n of-irra garagal -ee deem-e

Tulu-nom self over turn-conv go-3ms:pv

lit 'Tulu went turning on himself.'

'Tulu went back.'

(74) Harree-n of-irra gangalat-ti

donkey-nom self over roll-3sf:ipv

'The donkey rolls over itself.'

In Oromo, we have said that the repetition sense of *irra* always collocates with the verb *deebi'uu* 'to go back/come back', which strengthens the cyclical nature of the process and hence repetition. Thus, we have *irradeebii*, which literally means 'to go back or come back again', to refer to an action which is repeated. In this sense, *irra* is a component of a compound word *irradeedeeb-* 'to repeat', and so it can also be used as a verb or noun denoting the act of repeating.

More examples:

(75) Dubbii-n isaa irra-ded-deebii qab-a

speech-his over -red.going/coming back have-3sm:ipv

lit. 'His speech has going/coming back over it.'

'His speech has repetitions'.

(76) Irra deebi-ee hojjat-e

over go back-conv work-3sm:pv

lit. 'He did it by going over it'

'He did it over.'

Thus, the metaphorical repetition sense derives from the situation that physical trajectors can follow a certain trajectory to some end point on or over a landmark and then repeat the process.

3.4.8. The 'passing over' schema

In the physical spatial sense, as already noted, when *irra* collocates with certain motion verbs it designates a trajector passing over a landmark which is within the potential reach of the trajector. In an expression like *simbiroon manarra dabarte* 'The bird passed over the house' the trajector 'bird' is conceived as being higher than the landmark but still in the sphere of influence of the landmark. This sort of spatial sense gives rise to various extended meanings involving abstract trajectors and landmarks. In such cases we can talk of senses such as *skip*, *transfer*, *forgiveness*, etc. Consider the following examples.

(77) Guddinn-i barana-a na-rra darb-e

promotion-nom year-gen me-over pass-3sm:pv

'This year's promotion passed over me.'

Here, an abstract trajector like *promotion* is presented as passing over a landmark conceived as if it were a physical entity.

(78) Utaalloo-n si-rra-a na-tti darb-e

common cold-nom you-over-source me-goal pass-3sm:pv

lit. 'A cold passed from on you to me.'

'I caught a cold from you.'

(79) Waaqayyoo-n cubbuu isaan-ii irra darb-e

God-nom sin they-gen over pass-3sm:pv

lit. 'God passed over their sins.'

'God forgave them.'

In the above examples, abstract trajectors like *guddina* 'promotion', *utaalloo* 'common cold', and *waaqayyo* 'God' are perceived in the same way we perceive physical trajectors like birds passing over physical landmarks like houses. In the extended meanings, the landmarks (*me,*

you and *sin)* are perceived to be within the potential reach of the trajectors mentioned. Lack of contact between the trajectors and the landmarks gives the intended metaphorical meanings, which basically arise from a physical trajector passing over a physical landmark without having contact with it but with the landmark still being in the sphere of influence of the trajector. *Forgiveness*, for instance, is conceptualized in example (79) as a trajector passing over a landmark without having contact with it. Thus, we can posit a conceptual metaphor TO FORGIVE IS TO PASS OVER; the trajector 'God' passes over the landmark 'sin' without touching it. That is, passing over the sin yields the concept 'forgiveness.'

3.4.9. The temporal sense

In this section, we see that *irra* can also mediate a temporal relation between a trajector and a period of time.

Examples:

(80) Qormaan-ni dafinoo-rra ta'-e

exam-nom Monday-on happen-3sm:pv

lit. 'The exam happened on Monday.'

'The exam is on Monday.'

(81) Sa'aa sagal-irra-tii na eeg-i

time nine-on -goal me wait- 2sm:impr

lit. 'Wait for me on 9 o'clock.'

'Wait for me at nine o'clock.'

In these examples the trajector is conceptualized as being manifested through time, and hence as co-occurring with the temporal landmark, *Monday* and *o'clock.*

The temporal sense of spatial particles is argued (Tyler and Evans 2003:38) to have been derived from a tight experiential correlation between distance and duration. When a trajector, for instance, traverses an extended landmark such as a *hill*, a greater length of time is required than when traversing a non-extended landmark. That is, the greater the distance traversed, the greater the amount of time required in order to do so.

In Oromo, *irra* mediates a temporal relation between trajectors and temporal landmarks only for specific landmarks. That is, it collocates with relatively shorter periods of time, more precisely with specific days and hours considered as points of time rather than as duration of time. When the temporal landmark is extended and covers a relatively longer period of time, it is conceived as a CONTAINER rather than a POINT and hence takes another postposition, *keessa* 'in' instead of *irra* 'on, over', thereby supporting a conceptual metaphor like TIME IS A LOCATION IN SPACE, be it a POINT or CONTAINER in space.

Examples:

(82) Torban dhufu keessa dhuf-a

week to come in come-3sm:ipv

'He comes in the coming week.'

If we use the same expression but using *irra*, we feel the anomalousness of the expression below; it is not normal to be 'on' a container.

(83) ?Torban dhufurra dhufa

'He comes on the coming week.'

We can further compare examples (84) and (85) below, contrasting the acceptability of the former with the anomalousness of the latter, due to the (in)compatibility of the landmark with the postposition under consideration.

(84) Fulbaana keessa roob-e

September in rain-3sm:pv

'It rained in September.'

(85) ?Fulbaanarra roobe

'It rained on September.'

3.4.10. The state sense of *irra*

Irra can also mediate a relation between human experience(s) and a particular state. It relates to semantic arguments that have to do with time-restricted activities and actions which involve being currently active; that is, it selects semantic arguments which relate to states which normally hold for a limited period of time. Moreover, states encoded by *irra* are in most cases volitional as compared with states encoded by *keessa* 'in' which, in some sense, are non-volitional and are not relatively restricted to a certain period of time.

Examples:

(86) Hojii-rra jir-a

work-on exist-3sm:ipv

'He is on duty.'

(87) Barumsa- rra jir-a

Education-on exist-3sm:ipv

'He is on education.' (He is being a student.)

However, if we use *keessa* 'in', instead of *irra* 'on', in the above examples, the expressions become anomalous.

In the above examples, the landmarks (*hojii* 'duty', *barumsa* 'education') are activities which the trajector volitionally brings to an end. This can be compared with state sense of *keessa* 'in', which encodes states that tend to be non-volitional. Nevertheless, *irra* can also be used for non-volitional activities, as in example (88) below.

(88) Gadda- rra jir-a

grief on exist-3sm:ipv

'He is on grief.' (He is grieving.)

So, both *irra* and *keessa* can apparently be used interchangeably in the case of non-volitional activities whereas *irra* dominantly yields acceptable expressions in case of volitional activities. Thus, using *irra* instead of *keessa*, for instance in examples (89-91) below, does not affect the meaning of the expressions.

(89) Rakkina keessa jir -a

trouble in exist-3sm:ipv

'He is in trouble'

(90) Yaaddoo keessa jir-a

thought (worry) in exist-3sm:ipv

'He is in worry.'

(91) Haala gadhee keessa jir-a

condition bad in exist-3sm:ipv

'He is in bad condition.'

But, how can this state sense of *irra* be derived from the proto-scene?

In the prototypical lexical concept for *irra*, when it serves as 'on' as discussed earlier, it involves a relation of contact or proximity to the surface of the landmark, with the functional consequence of being supported or upheld by it. In addition, in many scenarios a consequence of contact is that the figure which comes into contact with a particular surface becomes functional by virtue of that contact; removing the contact precludes 'functional action'. The STATE lexical concept associated with *irra* relates to adjectives or nouns of action which involve a particular state which can be construed as temporarily 'active' or 'functional'. Thus, 'states' encoded by *irra* are often temporally circumscribed: they endure for as long as the trajector is 'on' the landmark.

From the conceptual metaphor point of view, states are conceptualized as locations: schematically, STATES ARE LOCATIONS.

3.4.11. The taking-sides sense/ defense sense of *irra*

Here taking-sides is meant for the purpose of defense: the trajector is located on a landmark and assumes the location for the purpose of control or defense of the landmark.

Examples:

(92) Tolaa-n Tulluu-rra gor-e

Tola-nom Tulu-on turn-3sm:pv

lit. 'Tola turned on Tulu.'

'Tola defended Tulu.'

From the functional point of view, when a trajector is located on a landmark, the trajector gets control over the landmark and the landmark gives support. When the trajector and landmark use the control and the support in mutual manner, the trajector defends the landmark as the trajector is physically higher than the landmark.

From the experiential point of view, in many instances an entity is placed over another entity for the explicit purpose of protection. That is, an entity which is relatively higher protects the one below it from any harm that may come from above. That is why we need a roof for the house, a hat for the head, etc.

Only if the trajector is actually presented as being higher than the landmark do we get the defense reading, and not if the landmark is presented as being lower than the trajector. These two scenes are literally equivalent. But we cannot get the defense reading if we say:

(93) Tulluu-n Tolaa jala gor-e

Tulu-nom Tola under turn-3sm:pv

'Tulu turned under Tola.' (intended meaning: Tola defended Tulu)

3.4.12. The obligation or responsibility sense

As remarked, when *irra* mediates between a trajector and a landmark, the landmark is conceived as a support and the trajector is conceived as a burden. From this *burden-support* relationship various metaphorically extended meanings can be inferred. In this way the obligation or responsibility sense of the postposition *irra* arises.

Metaphorically, human beings are conceived as supporting their responsibilities and obligations, and the responsibilities and obligations as being burdens on them. Hence, we have the metaphor RESPONSIBILITIES ARE BURDENS.

Examples:

(94) Bor deem-uu-tu si-rra jir-a

tomorrow go-inf -foc you-on exist-3sm:ipv

lit. 'To go tomorrow is on you.'

'You must go tomorrow.'

(95) Ittigaafatamummaa guddaa-tu si-rra jir-a

responsibility big-foc you on exist-3sm:ipv

'There is a big responsibility on you.'

In the above examples, the landmark *si* 'you' acts as support for the obligatory act *deemuu* 'to go' and *ittigaafatamumma gudda* 'big responsibility' respectively, as if these were physical burdens that have control over the landmark.

However, we can have a different construal if the responsibility holder is conceived as having control over his responsibilities. The landmark now becomes the trajector: the responsibility holder is 'on top of' his responsibilities. In this case, we obtain a control or power reading from the expressions, as in the examples below:

(96) Ummat-ni Tolaa angoo-rra baa-s-an

people-nom Tola authority-on ascend-caus-3p:pv

lit. 'People caused Tola to ascend onto authority.'

'The people put Tola into power'.

(97) Aangoo guddaa -rra jir-a

authority big -on exist-3sm:ipv

'He is on big authority.'

Stating from both the support and the burden point of view, various conceptual metaphors arise by virtue of which many expressions can be explained. Let us discuss the support senses first.

3.4.13. The support senses

Help offered or received from people or other entities, or resources used to carry on some action or process, can readily be conceived as support for an action. In this section, several conceptual metaphors will be singled out that are responsible for various metaphorical expressions.

A. HELP IS SUPPORT

(98) Guddin-ni biyya-a gargarsa ala-a qofa-rra-tti hunda'-uu hin qab-u

development-nom country-gen help external-egn only-on-goal base-inf neg have:neg

lit. 'A country's development should not be based only on external help.'

'A country's development should not be based only on foreign aid.'

In the above example, foreign aid is considered a support for the development of a country. That is, 'development of a country' as trajector is conceived as if it were physically over 'foreign aid' as a landmark—the landmark as a support and the trajector as a burden.

The same holds true for expressions like the following, where a *father* puts the responsibility for taking care of his son on the landmark *si* 'you', which is expected to offer 'support' for the 'burden' trajector, *mucaa*.

(99) Waa'ee mucaa koo si-rra-tti-n dhis-e

about son my you-on-goal-1s leave-1s:pv

'About my son, I left it (= the matter) on you.'

B. RESOURCES ARE SUPPORT

(100) Jireenyi loonii marga-rra-tti hundaa'-a

life cattle grass-on-goal base-3sm:ipv

'The life of cattle is based on grass.'

Here, the life of cattle is based on the resource 'grass', which acts as a support for the well-being of the trajector. The idea is expressed spatially as if the trajector 'life of cattle', as a burden, were over the landmark 'grass' that supports the burden.

C. CAUSES ARE SUPPORT

The cause which produces an effect or result may be expressed linguistically as the base that supports the result.

Examples:

(101) Malaammaltummaa-rra-a-n kan ka'-e ari'-am-e

corruption on-source-path that rise-3sm:pv dismiss- pas-3sm:pv

lit.' He was dismissed (for the reason) that rose from on corruption.'

'He was dismissed because of corruption.'

Here 'corruption', which is considered as the cause for 'dismissal', is expressed as the support ('on corruption') for the result.

D. MEDIA metaphor as support

Communication (words, language...) travels supported by radio waves, sound waves, telephone lines, etc.

Examples:

(102) Raadiyoo-rra-a-n dhaga'-e

radio-on-source-path hear-1s:pv

lit. 'I heard (it) from on the radio.'

'I heard it on the radio.'

Here the medium ('radio') is presented as the support for the message. The air is also conceived a supporting medium, as in the following example.

(103) Sagant-ichi qilleens-arra ool-e

program-sing. air-on occur-3sm:pv

lit. 'The program occurred on the air'

'The program was on the air'.

3.4.14. The burden senses

A. Negative feelings and other PSYCHIC PHENOMENA ARE BURDENS

(104) Tolaa-irra soba kaa'-an

Tola:abs-on falsehood put-3p:pv

Lit. 'They put on Tola falsehood.'

'They accused Tola falsely.'

Here, *falsehood* is conceptualized as a burden laid on the landmark *Tola*. By the same token, in the expression below, the trajector Satan is conceived to be on the landmark *him*.

(105) Seexana guddaa-tu irra jir-a

Satan big-foc on exist-3sm:ipv

'There is a big Satan on him. '

But it is not always the case that to obtain the burden reading of the expression, only the trajector can hold control of the situation. As already discussed, this control may instead be attributed to the landmark. This is the case when the location of the trajector on the landmark comes about involuntarily, as in the following expressions.

(106) Tolaa-n dhukkuba cimaa-rra bu'-e

Tola-nom disease strong -on fall-3sm:pv

'Tola fell on strong disease.'

(107) Tulluu-n busaa-rra-a fayy-e

Tulu-nom malaria-on-source recover-3sm:pv

lit. 'Tulu recoverd from on malaria.'

'Tulu recovered from malaria.'

Spatially speaking, the trajector *Tolaa* or *Tulluu* is positioned on the landmarks 'disease' and 'malaria', but does not hold control of the situation: 'to fall on disease' (or falling in general) is an unintentional or disfavored action.

B. EXPENDITURES ARE BURDENS

According to this metaphor, taxes and other expenditures are understood as burdens (trajectors) which people (as landmarks) support.

Examples:

(108) Tolaa-n horii baayyee uffata-rra-tti baa-s-e

Tola-nom money much clothes-on-goal out-caus-3sm:pv

lit. 'Tola put out a lot of money on clothes.'

'Tola spent a lot of money on clothes.'

(109) Qaabeeyna isaa cidha –rra-tti fix-e

property his wedding -on-goal finish-3sm:pv

'He used up his property on the wedding.'

(110) Qaraxa guddaa na-rra-tti murteess-an

tax big me-on-goal decide-3p:pv

'They decided on me a big tax.'

C. PENALTIES ARE BURDENS

Judicial penalties and other kinds of punishments are expressed (in a very obvious way) as if they were burdens imposed on people. These include imprisonment, sanctions, and other similar punishments. These penalties are conceived as trajectors that are 'burdens' on the landmarks which are expressed as 'supporters'.

Examples:

(111) Hidhaa waggaa lamaa isa irra-tti murteess-an

imprisonment year two him on -goal decide-3p:pv

'They decided two years imprisonment on him.'

(112) Biyy-oota lamma -rra qorqobbii kaa'-an

country-pl two -on sanctions put-3p:pv

'They put sanctions on two countries.'

(113) Adabbii guddaa Tolaa-rra-tti mur-an

punishment big Tola-on-goal cut-3p:pv

'They put a big punishment on Tola.'

D. DEPENDENCY IS A BURDEN

An entity which is dependent on another entity is expressed in terms of being a burden on the supporter (landmark).

(114) Warra koo- rra- tti ba'aa ta'-uu hin barbaad-u

parents my -on -to burden be-inf neg want-1s:ipv

'I don't want to be a burden on my parents.'

(115) Dugda nama-a-rra jiraach-uu barbad-a

back person-pos-on live-inf want-3s:ipv

'He wants to live on someone's back.'

In (114) parents are understood as supporting bases for the trajector as a burden, as if it were physically located on the landmark and exerted pressure on it. By the same token, in (115) 'back' as a landmark is considered as giving support to the burden 'he', as a trajector located on the landmark

CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Cognitive linguistics argues that conceptual structure is crucially shaped by our human perception of and interaction with the real world and that language is a reflection of human cognitive structure. Accordingly, given the premise that experience and human neuro-anatomical architecture (i.e., the world we inhabit and the nature of our bodies) give rise to meaning, it seems highly unlikely that conceptual representations should be structured in the first instance in terms of abstract semantic features or any other kind of propositional representation. Rather, concepts derived from sensorimotor interaction with the world may be more appropriately modeled in imagistic terms. Such representations are termed *image-schematic* structures.

As also discussed, an adposition designates a conceptual spatial relation between a trajector and a landmark; the relation is conceived as constituting an abstract spatial scene. Conceptual meaning can be abstracted away from any specific spatial scene, giving rise to a highly abstract and schematized representation, which is termed a *proto-scene*.

The proto-scene of the postposition *irra* is that it designates a trajector which is higher than a landmark. Taking this primary sense as basic, various spatial construals can be posited due to the variable nature of the trajectors and landmarks involved in a given scene. These give rise to a variety of spatial configurations which in turn provide the basis for conceptualizations of metaphorically extended meanings.

When an entity is located higher than another entity, two kinds of pictures may come to our minds: the two entities can be in contact or not in contact with each other. English *on* prototypically involves contact, while *over* prototypically involves lack of contact. In Oromo these two senses fall together. *Irra* can be conceived as designating both contact and non-contact, depending on the kind of verbs it collocates with (i.e., verbs that necessitate contact or lack of contact). When it relates trajectors and landmarks involving contact, it gives rise to various functional conceptualizations. From a topological point of view, the trajector's resting side is situated on the accessible or outer side of the landmark. According to the force-dynamic configuration, *irra* relates trajectors and landmarks in such a way as to define a common axis, prototypically the vertical axis, defined by the resting side of the trajector oriented towards the landmark's outer side.

From a functional point of view, the trajector sitting on the landmark is seen as having control of the situation, giving rise to a burden-bearer relationship between entities located one over the other. However, when *irra* is used to designate a trajector located higher than the landmark without contact between them, a different configuration may come into the picture. That is the idea that the trajector is now 'cut loose' from the landmark and is therefore free to move above it. Thus a trajector can pass over the landmark while still being in its sphere of influence.

These are the basic schemas. It is also the case that we can have shifts from these schemas. That is, though the prototypical landmark is a horizontal surface, we can have other kinds of landmarks, sometimes with other orientations, due to a shift away from the general schema.

Thus the postposition can relate trajectors on a variety of landmarks: position on a horizontal surface, position on a non-horizontal surface, trajector being part of landmark, relative position, etc.

All these types of configurations of the relationship between trajector and landmark are the basis for metaphorically extended meanings prompted for by the postposition *irra*. Thus, in addition to the spatial configuration between a trajector and a landmark, the concept prompted for by an adposition also involves a functional element which arises as a consequence of the particular spatial configuration. Drawing on the experiential correlation supported by conceptual metaphor, a number of extended meanings can thereby be obtained. The correlation between vertical elevation and increment in quantity has given rise to a number of senses of *irra* such as the *more* sense, the *addition* sense, the *sequence* sense, the *preference* sense, the *comparative* sense and the *control* or *dominance* sense.

From a topological or locational point of view, senses such as *repetition*, *temporal*, and *state* can be inferred. Further, from a functional point of view, various extended senses can be inferred from the burden / bearer relation. Such senses drawn from the burden point of view include: *obligation*, *responsibility*, *negative feelings* and other *psychic phenomena, expenditures*, *penalties*, and *dependency*.

From the support point of view, by virtue of various conceptual metaphors, a number of abstract landmarks are conceived as support for various trajectors. In this sense, abstract

notions such as *help*, *causes*, *resources* and *media* are perceived as supporting bases for development, effects, sustenance, and communication respectively. When *irra* relates a trajector and landmark without contact between them and hence without a bearer-support relation, the trajector passes over the landmark. This type of configuration gives rise to the conceptualization of abstract notions like *forgiveness*, *promotion*, *excess* etc., in terms of physical trajectors that are in a position to pass over a landmark.

Generally, it has been shown that the Oromo postposition *irra* is a highly polysemous lexical item. From primary meaning of relating a trajector located higher than a landmark, a number of abstract metaphorically extended senses can be systematically derived from the proto-scene.

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The semantics of an Oromo adposition of verticality: the case of *irra* 'on/over'

Declaration

This research is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and all the materials used for this study have been duly acknowledged.

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