



Examining Semantic and Pragmatic Roles of Prepositions in Kinyarwanda

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Abstract

The article examines the roles of prepositions in Kinyarwanda language, the motivation behind the examination was that most studies on Kinyarwanda are on contentive words, and those that have touched on Kinyarwanda prepositions in passing are incomplete, thus desires investigation to fulfill this gap. The Schema and cognitive semantics theories guided the analysis under the Leipzig glossing rules' representation. Unstructured interviews and critical document analysis were methods of data gathering from three Nyarwanda natives who were selected purposively as they are trilingual speakers of English, Kiswahili, and Kinyarwanda. The work revealed that prepositions of Kinyarwanda have socio-cultural significance and their meanings are conceptual. In other words, prepositions are vehicles for multi-communicative facts as they indicate time, dimensional, relative positions, places, instrumentality, passage, conjunctive and causation facets. The paper argues that functors including prepositions have a direct philosophical stance to native speakers, as one preposition may present different contextual semantics. From this base, storing or keeping and documenting functors in Kinyarwanda specifically preposition remain tangible phenomena in the current sphere of research.

Introduction

This paper examines Kinyarwanda prepositions. Kinyarwanda is one of the Intralacustrine Bantu languages spoken in Rwanda, a country in East Africa located at JD61 (Nurse & Philipson, 2003, p. 504). The Kinyarwanda language has been studied by various linguists, focusing on different topics such as verb morphology, as seen in Banerjee (2018, 2019); Baker (1985); and others on semantics, as in Bostne (1983) and Jerro (2003). While one group investigated morphology and another explored Kinyarwanda semantics, other scholars examined language use (cf. Gabriel, 2018) and the allocation of loanwords in Kinyarwanda from French and English (cf. Jacques, 2010), whereby words have been assigned to different domains of daily life in Kinyarwanda. This serves as justification for the current study and highlights the incomplete documentation (cf. Zeller & Ngoboka, 2016) of the topic under discussion that requires re-analysis.

Literature Review

Maho (1999); Ngoboka (2016); Batibo (1985); and Zeller and Ngoboka (2016) argue that, in Kinyarwanda, there are four locative prefixes: *aha-*, *ku-*, *mu-*, and *i-*, which correspond to noun classes 16, 17, 18, and 23, respectively. Nouns that inherently describe a location are marked with



class 16, such as *aha-ntu* 'place' and *ah-irengeye* 'high place, a place everyone can see.' This data is helpful for the current investigation as it establishes the base or starting point of the discussion. However, the current study further establishes preposition patterns in Kinyarwanda beyond locative orientation.

Kinyemi (1980, 1988) investigated Kinyarwanda applicative implications. The focus of this literature is that it appears to contain prepositions, although they are *in situ*. In other words, his study indicated prepositions that lack phonetic forms, which may confuse readers in detecting them. Consider the following data in 1 below:

1. Umugabo a-ra-y-andik-iisha ikaramu
Man he-pres-it-write-instr pen
'The man is writing it with a pen'

The data in 1 above shows the syntactic representation of prepositions in the sense that no particle indicates any sort of preposition. This draws attention to the need for further investigation into Kinyarwanda functors and prepositions, specifically.

The available Kinyarwanda data (cf. Gabriel 2018) highlights the investigation of Kinyarwanda prepositions. The author analyses the variations among native speakers of the language using a synchronic approach. According to him, educated individuals tend to speak standard Kinyarwanda more frequently than uneducated individuals. The author includes an illustrated dialogue between a Community Radio journalist and children from a district in the Northern Province, which goes as follows: Kids: *Ndabwotujagayo* (instead of saying *ntabwotujyayo*, meaning "we don't go there"). The dialogue suggests a preposition of place used before describing its semantic scopes. Further investigation is needed to determine whether the language has lexical prepositions, embedded prepositions, or tonal prepositions.

Marten (2010) and Bresnan and Kanerva (1989) argued that many Bantu languages have locative markers in classes 16, 17, and 18, with the prefixes *pa-*, *ku-*, and *mu-*. Ngoboka (2016) added that the same observation applies to Kiswahili, where *mu*, *pa*, *ku*, and *ni* are also affixes indicating location. Ngoboka (2017) concluded that locatives in Bantu languages can be marked in the following ways: by a locative prefix, a locative suffix, or by both. In some cases, an unmarked noun may carry a locative interpretation. This contention arises from the unmarked noun's attraction toward prepositions, which the author did not analyse. Furthermore, we believe that Bantu languages cannot solely use three contexts for locative interpretation as part of prepositions. This requires further investigation.

Theories underpinning the study

The current paper utilizes Image Schema theory, which was first developed in Cognitive Semantics and later significantly expanded in fields such as cognitive and developmental psychology. The theory was pioneered by Lakoff & Johnson (1980). The question, "*Where does the complexity associated with our conceptual representation come from?*" (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 176), prompted Lakoff and Johnson to assert that this complex system is, to a large extent, a result of the strong correlation between the types of concepts human beings can form and the nature of the physical bodies we possess (Evans & Green, 2006, p. 177-178).

Three tenets underlie the theory: the container, the force image, and the path-schema. The container illustrates the integration of human experience in the physical world through words such as *in*, *into*, *out*, *out of*, *out from*, etc. The force image symbolises an embodied experience through interactions with other entities (cf. Johnson 1987), as reflected in terms like *in front*, *within*, *outside*, *toward*, etc.



Furthermore, the path schema suggests movement from one location to another. Generally, the image schema emerges from percepts; the range of perceptual information from the world is synthesised into a mental image and form-meaning pairings termed symbolic assemblies, such as down, at, above, on (to), up, etc., which represent the perceptual mental areas with which humans interact. This raises the conceptual system of human experience in structuring physical regions, positions, perceptions of years, distances, and reasons, to name just a few. Image Schema theory is well-suited for analysing Kinyarwanda prepositions based on this framework due to the physical and mental conceptualisation of movements projected onto world reality.

Although Image Schema theory addresses descriptions of Kinyarwanda prepositions, it fails to account for both basic and non-basic senses of these prepositions. This is aligned with cognitive grammar (cf. Langacker, 1982, 1987, 2000; Taylor, 1990, 2000, 2003), as it contextually describes multiple senses. The theory's tenets include compositionality or strict compositionality; this is one of the principles suggesting that the meaning of a complex expression arises from the meanings of its constituent parts. In other words, the principle suggests that the meanings of complex structures or expressions can be decomposed into increasingly smaller sub-components until no further decomposition is possible, yielding a set of primitives (Langacker, 1987, p. 87). This tenet cannot function in the current study since it focuses on the pragmatic roles of conceptual prepositions. However, those with direct senses can benefit from being described by this framework.

Metaphor and metonymy are additional tenets of cognitive grammar that emphasise multiple perspectives of the semantic scopes of a given word. The former implies the conceptualization of meaning across different domains (Taylor, 2002, p. 485), while the latter is described as "a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain (Kövecses, 2002, p. 145). For the current study, prepositions sometimes have different meanings within or across various dimensions of place, time, or position. Kövecses further notes that, like metaphors, metonymies are conceptual in nature; similarly, to conceptual metaphors, they are revealed by metaphorical linguistic expressions.

Monosemy and polysemy are key concepts in cognitive semantics. The former refers to a situation in which a lexical item has a single sense, while the latter describes the association of two or more related senses with a single linguistic form (Taylor, 2003, p. 102; Goldberg, 1995, p. 33). Additionally, the prototype model is an essential tenet of cognitive grammar, organized into categories of meanings known as prototypes (Tsohatzidis, 1990, p. 1). Notably, these categories possess a 'core' and a 'periphery,' where the former represents the basic meaning and the latter indicates the secondary sense. The study benefited from polysemy, as most Kinyarwanda prepositions have multiple conceptualisations. Therefore, cognitive grammar successfully captures the envisioning of prepositions in the language under discussion since many of them have core (literal) and peripheral (non-literal) meanings they represent.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive design to characterise the roles of Kinyarwanda prepositions through a qualitative approach, using words, phrases, and clauses. The research involved three native Kinyarwanda speakers who are multilingual and proficient in Kinyarwanda, English, and Kiswahili. They were purposefully selected as natives of the language under investigation. Two data collection methods were utilised: unstructured interviews and critical document analysis. The researcher prepared interview guides in English, and respondents were asked to translate into the target language, for example, *kuri* 'at'. The researcher analysed Kinyarwanda written documents, including 'the semantics of applicativization in Kinyarwanda' (Jero, 2003) and 'templatic morphology



through syntactic selection in Kinyarwanda' (Banerjee, 2019), from which thematic prepositions will be sampled for discussion.

The image schema and cognitive semantics theories were used to analyse the data (cf. Christian, 1982). During the data analysis process, a thematic analysis was conducted to generate various themes by adapting the procedures and methods used by Evans and Green (2006) and Sasala & Barasa (2024). We coded the data by identifying similarities in functions such as time, place, passage, benefactive, possession, etc.

Discussion of the findings

The article examines the roles of prepositions in the language under discussion. Kinyarwanda prepositions serve various contextual functions relevant to sentence structures. In language studies, prepositions are particles or words that demonstrate the relationship between nouns and other words. In Kinyarwanda, the term *intangiriro* means preposition in the English language. The following subsection begins with the preposition of time, which is called '*intangiriroyigihe*' in Kinyarwanda.

Time: This is a form of preposition that indicates when something happens at a specific time. During the focus group discussion with Nyarwanda native speakers, the study identified many prepositions of time in the language under discussion, namely: *mu* or *muri* 'in or for', *kuri* 'at', *bitarenze* 'by', *kugeza* 'until', *kuva* 'since', *kuva...kugeza* 'from...to'. Consider the following examples in 2-3 below:

2. *Navutsemu 1990*
Na-vutse mu 1990
1Ps-born in 1990
'I was born in 1990'
3. *NzágendamuriNyakanga*
Nzá-genda-muri-Nyakanga
1Ps (Ft)-travel-in-July
'I will travel in July'

The data in 2-3 shows that the Kinyarwanda prepositions *mu* (*ri*) have been used to indicate a period or range of time. It captures the framework in cognitive semantics theory (cf. Langacker, 1987), as prepositions are conceptual because their grammar lists the complete set of statements representing a speaker's grasp of linguistic convention pertinent to periods. This is metonymic, as the time range is calculated within the same domain of time (Kövecses, 2002). Thus, they can imply or predict a given period's beginning, middle, or end. Therefore, the range of time is usually associated with the prepositional phrases. The same phenomenon of prepositions of time, but in a different style, can be shown in the 4-5 data below:

4. *Nizegutetakuri 8*
Nize-ku-tekakuri 8
1Ps (Ft)-INF-cook-at 8
'I learned to cook at 8 years'
5. *Azahuranawekuwababiri*
a-za-hura-na-we ku wahabiri
1Ps - will-meet-you on Tuesday
'He will meet you on Tuesday'



The data from 4-5 have different semantic scopes compared to those from 3-4, as the former illustrates the range of time as in "ku, " while the latter presents locations as in "ku" and exact time as in "kuri. "This data aligns with cognitive semantics theory in both semantics and pragmatics contexts, according to Taylor (2003). The former is characterized by the linguistically determined meanings of an expression, whereas pragmatics concerns an expression's contextually conditioned interpretation(s). However, the perspective in cognitive semantics suggests that pragmatic aspects can also be integrated into the conventionalized meaning of an expression. Therefore, when saying "on Tuesday" or "at eight years, " native speakers know the time range. This concept is also reflected in the image schema of time experience (Green, 2006).

Another example of a preposition of time is derived from *kugeza* 'until'. It functions as a preposition of time while also emphasising the reason or causative environment. Thus, it is a preposition associated with the motivations for doing something. See data 6 below:

6. *Nzazajyagutekakugezambonye Mama*
Nza-zajya-gu-teka-kugeza mbonye mama
 1Ps-go-to -cook-until see mother
 'She will not go to cook until she sees mother'

The data in 6 shows prepositions of time in the Kinyarwanda language of East Africa. Sometimes, these forms of prepositions are known as simple prepositions because they consist of single particle words (Quick & Greenbaum, 2006), such as *ku*, *kuva*, *mu*, *muri*, *kuri*, and *kugeza*. The cognitive semantics theory considers these prepositions, for example, Heine (1997, p. 3), who opines that the centrality of meaning arises from the observation that when using language, people are less concerned about what kind of syntax or phonology to use than about how to encode the meanings they wish to communicate as effectively as possible. This implies that interlocutors focus on the sense of schema rather than the prolonged structure. Thus, the use of *ku*, *mu*, *muri*, *kuva*, and *kugeza* emphasises the meanings they present. Such prepositions cannot be addressed with the compositionality tenet of cognitive grammar because their meanings do not stem from the result of morphemes, as has been encoded elsewhere in this work.

The other category of prepositions in Kinyarwanda consists of those that can line up together in a single structural string. We invoked such prepositions when native speakers constructed sentences using the language under discussion. Thus, the data in 7 (b) is described:

7. (a) *Bakozeurugendokuvaejo*
Bá-koze-u-rugendo-kuva *ejo*
 2P-been-SP-Journey-since yesterday
 'They have been travelling since yesterday'
- (b) *Gahundayanjyenikuva* 2:00 *kugeza* 4:00
Gahunda-ni-kuva 2:00 *kugeza* 4:00am
 Time-my-is-from 2:00pm to 4:00am
 'My time is from 2:00pm to 4:00am'

The data in 7(a) indicate a single preposition that shows the time range, while in 7(b), the data show two prepositions in the same syntactic structure: *kuva* 'since' and *kugeza* 'until'. This syntactic phenomenon allows *kuvato* follow *kugeza* and not vice versa. Thus, the preposition *kuva* feeds the preposition *kugeza* because the former is a feeding preposition while the latter is the breeding preposition. The Schema theory (cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) perceptually envisions the preposition of this form, as it is invoked in the experiences native speakers have. For example, time is directly

embodied when constructing concepts like *kuva*, which means 'from', and *kugeza*, which means 'to'. The data in 7 show that Bantu prepositions can be demonstrated by prefixes and suffixes as encoded in Ngoboko (2017) & Buell (2005), and in some cases can be demonstrated lexically.

Place: Prepositions indicate the dimensional properties of location and direction. However, expressions of place and direction are primarily adverbial and serve as post-modifiers, answering the question of where (Leech & Svartvik, 2001). See data 8-9 below:

8. *Turi mu ishuri*
Turi-mu-i-shuri
 2P-in-DET-class
 'We are in the classes'

9. *Ikaramu irimugitabho*
I-karamu-iri-mu-gitabho
 SP-pen-in-book
 'The pen is *inside* the book'

Figure 1: mu



The data in 8-9 indicates that the preposition "*mu*," which means 'in,' and "*kuri*," which means 'inside' in English, show a positive direction. This suggests that people within the classroom are likely invisible. The preposition in Figure 1 contributes specifically to the descriptions of image schema and the container tenet; the container illustrates the position in which something is located (Evans & Green, 2006). This differs from prepositions like "at," which indicate a specific point. This point generally identifies its location without considering its dimensions, such as width, length, or height. See data 10-12 below:

10. *Ndikusenema*
Ndi-ku-senema
 1Ps-at-cinema
 'I'm at the cinema'

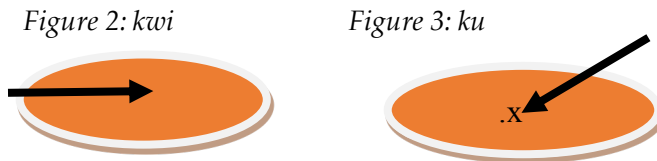
11. *Ndikurisenema*
Ndi-kuri-senema
 1Ps-at-the-cinema
 'I'm at the cinema'

12. *Ndajakwishuri*
Ndi kw-i kwishuri
 1Ps to-SP school
 'I'm going to school'

The data in 10-12 indicate a positive direction in demonstrating points against the inside position. Thus, they reveal various dimensional areas or points where a person or item is located. The concepts of core and peripheral, as well as polysemy (cf. cognitive grammar theory), contribute to describing the senses of these prepositions, as they sometimes denote time. In contrast, at other



times, they denote places. This reflects the speaker’s pragmatic use of words in the real world. The figures in 2 & 3 can explicitly describe the location of the period or full stop against x view:



The image schema helps explain the location (cf. Figure 2, 3). This is accomplished through the force image, considering the point of location alongside users’ experiences; thus, the concept of Figure 2 differs from that of Figure 3. Note that in the sentences above, the focus is on the preposition, which serves as the head word of the prepositional phrase. Such prepositional phrases can be effectively managed within Radford’s (2004) Binariness and headedness principle. The former states that every syntactic structure is binary-branching, while the latter declares that every syntactic structure is a projection of a head word. Refer to Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Preposition phrases



The presentation phrases in Figure 1 indicate that the overall phrases *kwishuri* and *kuSenema* are preposition phrases (PP), and that their two constituents are the prepositions (PP) *kw'* and *ku*, as well as the nouns (N) *shuri* and *senema*. The preposition *ku* or *kw'* serves as the head of the overall phrases (and thus is the key word that determines the grammatical and semantic properties of the phrases *kwishuri* and *kusenema*); consequently, the phrases *kwishuri* or *kusenema* (PP) are projections of the prepositions *kwi* or *ku*. In a syntactic context, such phrases are larger expressions created by merging the head prepositions *ku* or *kwi* with another constituent of an appropriate kind, such as *ishuri* and *Senema*.

These forms of prepositions are articulated within the framework of image schema theory. Mandler (2004) argues that image schemas emerge because experience is a function of our bodies and our interaction with the world. The author states that this experience arises alongside our physical and psychological development during early childhood. This idea supports the manifestations of *ku*, *kuri*, *mu*, and *muri* prepositions since *ku* differs from *kuri* in their partial positions. Still, Nyarwanda natives understand their spatial relationships and distances.

However, the literature data can attest to other prepositions of place in the Kinyarwanda language spoken by the Rwandan people; the data from Jerro (2020) in 13 exemplifies:

13. *Umw-ana y-a-ha-menny-e igi-kombe.*
 1-child 1S-PST-16-break-PFV 7-cup
 ‘The child broke the cup there.’ (Jerro, 2020, p. 124)

The data in 13 shows *ha* as a locative preposition. We identified that the core sense of this preposition is “place part,” while the peripheral sense is “any place,” as the prototype model accentuates the way of conceptualizing senses within the framework of the prototype model (Rosch,

1978). Langacker (1987, p. 47) added that: 'a surface grammatical form does not conceal a 'truer', deeper level of grammatical organisation; rather, it embodies the conventional means a language employs for the structuring and symbolisation of semantic content.' Langacker's (1987) sentiment meant that grammatical diversity (currently preposition) is considered real and should be dealt with in terms of the conceptualisation of meaning. Thus, the prepositions in 1-9 indicate time (cf. 1-5); while true, the same prepositions indicate place (cf. 10-13) phenomena. This anchors that, for example, "ku" or "mu" embodies time and conceptualises places.

The prepositions "hagati" and "muri" are also among those in the Kinyarwanda language that indicate position; they correspond to the lexemes 'between' and 'among,' respectively, in English. See figures 2-3 below:

Figure 2: *hagati*



Figure 3: *muri*



Figure 2 indicates the position of relatedness, with the man placed between two stars. However, the figure in Figure 3 shows that a man is situated among the stars. It is important to note that Figure 4 can relate to two objects given that speakers have a definite set in their minds, unlike Figure 5, which collocates with mass nouns. Theoretically, the metonymic tenet of cognitive grammar (cf. Kövecses (2002) contributes to the descriptions of these prepositions, in that the mental accessibility of the conceptual entity, the target, differs between *hagati* 'between' and *muri* 'among', but they remain within the same location domain.

Possessive prepositions are those that indicate possession within sentence structures. It is important to note that the possessive preposition form is used to express ownership relationships for both animate and inanimate objects. They are also considered connecting syntactic particles within sentence structures, such as 'byu' and 'cya' in Kinyarwanda, which translates to 'of' in English. See data 14-15 below:

14. *Ibhisubizobyuburyobune*
i-bhisubhizo-byu-buryo-bune
 SP-results-of-form-four
 'Results of the form four class'

15. *Igitabhocya* *mama*
i-gitabho-cyamama
 SP-book-of Mother
 'The book of my mother'

The data in 14-15 indicate possessive prepositions represented by "byu" and "cya," meaning 'of' in English. The Image Schema theory (cf. Johnson 2005) aligns with possessive prepositions in that the central idea is that image schemas have their logic, which can be applied to abstract conceptual domains. Image-schematic logic then serves as the basis for inferences about abstract entities and operations. Thus, the possessive preposition operates within the inferences of logical possession. Similarly, to Image Schema theory, Thobias (2013) stated that when we use prepositions in our languages, we typically communicate concepts that listeners easily understand to denote something concrete in the real world.



Conjunctive preposition: A word that joins sentences is a conjunction (Murthy, 2014, p. 212). During data collection, this preposition was identified in the language under discussion. Here, the preposition connects the two syntactic structures of complete or incomplete clauses. However, the preposition "hamwena" in Kinyarwanda expresses the role of a conjunction. See data 16 below:

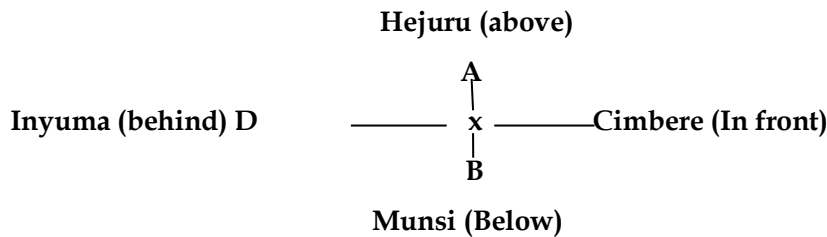
16. (a) *Ngirango Juma yigahamwena John*
Ngirango Juma yiga-hamwena John
 1Ps-think Juma study-with John
 'I think Juma is studying with John'

(b) *Aron yigihaguhahahamwena Murumunawanjye*
Aron-ya-gihe-guhaha-hamwena- Murumuna-wanjye
 Aron-SP-go -shop- with-brother-my
 'Aron went to the shop with my brother.'

The data in 16 shows that Kinyarwanda prepositions can function as conjunctions, meaning they can connect one structure to another. Thus, semantically, the preposition *hamwena* above indicates that the subject (cf. *Ngirango*, *Aron*) and the objects (cf. *John*, *brother*) are linked in performing the same activities.

Relative position: Some prepositions indicate the relative position of two objects or a group of objects. Prepositions include *nu* or *ni* 'by', *imbere* 'in front', *munsi* 'under or below', *inyuma* 'behind', and *iruhande* 'beside'. See Figure 4:

Figure 4: Relative position



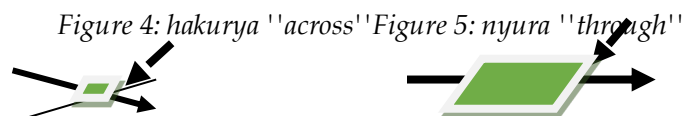
Adapted from Quick & Greenbaum (2006, p.161)

The preposition indicated in Figure 4 reveals lexical characteristics. It must be noted that prepositions are generally categorised as functional words; however, in the Kinyarwanda, they can sometimes be classified as a lexical category. Radford (2004, p.22) argued that syntactic substitution is one principle for testing word categories. In other words, it is suggested that the syntactic substitution test can determine the category to which a particular word belongs. A word or category that can be substituted with its opposite is referred to as a lexical word. Therefore, prepositions such as *inyuma* 'behind' and *imbere* 'front' demonstrate that they have antonyms, indicating their lexical nature. This proves that prepositions can be classified differently from prefixes and suffixes, as Buell (2005) and Ngoboka (2017) asserted.

Passage or motion: Some prepositions indicate passage or motion from one place to another semantically. The concept of passage primarily conveys locative meaning, which corresponds to *hakurya*, meaning 'across,' and *nyura*, meaning 'through,' in English language prepositions. See data 17 below:

17. (a) *Nogahakurya y'-inyanja*
N-oga- hakurya-i-nyanja
 1Ps-swim-across-lake
 'I swim across the lake'
- (b) *Ningiyemucyombanyura mu I dirisha*
Ni- nyiye -mu-cyomba-nyura-in SP-door
 1Ps-enter-in -room-through -door
 'I entered the room through the window'

The data in 17(a) shows that a person is on the other side after crossing the lake; in other words, the lake acted as a surface for crossing. 17(b) considers the dimensions of the window in height, length, and breadth, indicating that the window is long and wide enough for a person to pass through. Figure 4-5 represents 7(a-b) consecutively:



However, the prepositions *hakurya* 'across' and *nyura* 'through' meet the accountability and descriptions of the Path-schema apparatus in Schema theory by capturing the concept of interior, boundary, and exterior elements. In other words, an image schema is the *source-path-goal*, sometimes referred to as *path* schema. Importantly, these prepositions correspond to the point of *source*, a destination, and a series of contiguous locations that relate to the source and goal (Evans & Green 2006, p. 189).

Instrumentality: Some Kinyarwanda prepositions indicate instrumental roles. This means they demonstrate how something occurred, functioned, or was accomplished. Quick and Greenbaum (2006) stipulated that this preposition is complex to describe systematically in terms of such labels. Importantly, these particles are sometimes referred to as prepositions of method, as in lexemes like *by*, *with*, *etc.* See the data 18 below:

18. (a) *Yamwicishye* *umusho*
Ya-mwici-shye *u-musho*
 2PS-killed-with SP-knife
 'He killed with a knife'
- (b) *Yandicishya* *ikaramu*
Ya-ndici-shya *i-karamu*
 2PS-writing-with SP-pen
 'He is writing with a pen'
- (c) *Yicwan'u Mwami*
Yi-cwa-n'u King
 2PS-killed-by King
 'He was killed by the King'

The data in 18(a, b) indicate that prepositions can function by demonstrating instrumental manifestations. In other words, the preposition '*shy*' is used instrumentally for killing and writing. The data in 18(c) shows the preposition of agency or agent, which connects the doer with the action.



This form of preposition establishes a relationship between the noun and the verb. Generally, the preposition particle described in 18 juxtaposes with the theory of cognitive semantics, particularly metaphor or metonymy. The theory's description reflects that the meaning of lexemes is not limited to literary language only. Thus, Langacker (1987) argues that metaphorical meaning is not a significant principle of structuring language and thought, but rather a semantic extension that involves shifting from concrete to more abstract domains. Therefore, the prepositions in 18(a, b) carry more than the sense shown in 18 (c).

Conclusion

This article examines how Nyarwanda-speaking people embed and use prepositions in their social and cultural communication systems. The study seeks to relate to previous literature in Kinyarwanda, aiming to understand how extensively the topic under discussion requires investigation. Six themes emerged during the data analysis relevant to the roles of Kinyarwanda prepositions: time, places, relative positions, instrumentality, possessiveness, and passage or motion. Given the richness of Kinyarwanda preposition functions, native speakers can use one preposition across multiple semantic dimensions. This contributes to expanding and developing linguistic theories such as Schema and cognitive grammar theories. Thus, storing, keeping, and documenting functors in Kinyarwanda, specifically prepositions, remains a tangible phenomenon in the current sphere of research.

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