A semantic analysis of Dholuo spatial prepositions using image schema theory; a concept in cognitive semantics theory

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Abstract:

The main focus of the study is the semantic analysis of spatial prepositions in Dholuo using the theory of image schema; a concept in cognitive semantics. In chapter one which is an introductory chapter, we give the background of the language of study and the statement of the problem. In this chapter too, we have set the objectives and the hypotheses that are tested. Also, we have given the rationale, scope and limitations of the study as well as theoretical framework, the literature review and the research methodology. Chapter two is a review of Dholuo prepositions in general in which they are classified into simple and complex prepositions. The simple prepositions are those that are made up of single words while complex Dholuo prepositions are derived from the human body parts. In regard to this general review, we have also given a general analysis of the functions these prepositions. The general background of the prepositions given in this chapter has formed the source of the spatial prepositions that are analysed in the subsequent chapters. In chapter three, we have formed an inventory of the spatial prepositions used in the study together with their corresponding image schemas which have helped in expressing the spatioconfiguration relation of the lexical items in a sentence. We have also examined the polysemous nature of these prepositions by looking at the semantic networks they constitute. In chapter four, the non-spatial uses of Dholuo spatial prepositions through metaphorical extensions are discussed. In the same chapter, we have looked at cognitive linguists' view on metaphors in relation to the spatial prepositions. The congruent uses of spatial prepositions with their non-spatial uses have been extended through metaphors. The functions have been expanded from concrete spatial uses to abstract non-spatial functions; whereby the type of transfer is reflected in the non-spatial function acquired. From this expansion, we have been able to conclude that the domain of spatial prepositions relate primarily with the domain of physical space, whereas the figurative senses of the same prepositions activate more abstract domains. Finally, chapter five is the conclusions of the findings of the study and the recommendations for future research in relation to the study.