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### **Literal and metaphorical usages of Babanki EAT and DRINK verbs**

Pius W. Akumbu<sup>a</sup>  & Roland Kießling<sup>b</sup> 

CNRS-LLACAN Villejuif<sup>a</sup>

Universität Hamburg<sup>b</sup>

pius.akumbu@cnrs.fr

roland.kiessling@uni-hamburg.de

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## Literal and metaphorical usages of Babanki EAT and DRINK verbs<sup>1</sup>

Pius W. Akumbu<sup>a</sup> & Roland Kießling<sup>b</sup>

LLACAN (CNRS – INALCO) Villejuif<sup>a</sup> & University of Hamburg<sup>b</sup>  
pius.akumbu@cnrs.fr  
roland.kiessling@uni-hamburg.de

### Abstract

In Babanki, a Grassfields Bantu language of North-West Cameroon, two of the numerous consumption verbs, namely the generic verbs *ʒɪ* ‘eat’ and *ɲɪ* ‘drink’, constitute a major source of metaphorical extensions outside the domain of ingestion. Setting out from a characterisation of the basic meanings of these two lexical items as they emerge from their paradigmatic relations within the semantic field of alimentation processes, this paper explores the figurative usages of the two verbs and their underlying semantic motivations. Semantic extensions that radiate from EAT can be subsumed under two closely related structural metaphors, i.e. APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING and WINNING IS EATING. The first metaphor construes the acquisition and exploitation of non-food items such as material possession as eating, while the second metaphor casts the acquisition of immaterial advantage in the mould of eating. Both metaphors have further entailments, i.e. the derivation of pleasure from consumption of resources, the depletion of resources via consumption and the deprivation of a third party from access to these resources. Semantic extensions that radiate from DRINK can be accounted for in two structural metaphors, i.e. INHALATION IS DRINKING and ABSORPTION IS DRINKING. Remarkably, some metaphorical extensions of consumption verbs attested in other African languages, such as extensions of EAT for sexual intercourse and for killing, and the extensions of DRINK for undergoing trouble and enduring painful experiences are absent in Babanki.

**Keywords:** consumption verbs, metaphor, metonymy, Babanki

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## 1 Introduction

In Babanki, a Grassfields Bantu language of North-West Cameroon, the consumption verbs *ʒí* ‘eat’ and *ɲú* ‘drink’ constitute a rich source of metaphorical extensions similar to what is seen crosslinguistically (Williams 1991, Newman 2009, Jaggar & Buba 2009, Song 2009, Næss 2009, Ye 2010, Næss 2011). This is because both concepts relate to very basic human activities which have been recognised to participate actively in metaphorical extensions, and which Newman (1997, 2009) identifies as internalisation and transformation of food and drinks. Eating and drinking are basic activities of all human beings required for survival and growth as well as sources of pleasure and sociability. So both concepts seem to be universally lexicalised as consumption verbs that denote the process of taking solid or liquid food into the body through the mouth. More specifically, eating involves “(a) intake of food into the mouth, (b) mastication of the food involving mainly teeth, tongue, and roof of the mouth, (c) swallowing of the masticated food, and (d) sensory experiences on the part of the consumer” (Newman & Aberra 2009: 225). For its part, drinking involves “(a) intake of liquid into the mouth, (b) swallowing of the liquid, and (c) (usually positive) sensory experiences on the part of the consumer.” Although these activities are universal, they are not performed in the same way in all communities (Næss 2011). Their universality lies only in the physiological aspects of eating and drinking, i.e. the concept of taking food or drinks from outside into the body using the mouth as a passage (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam 2017: 63). As Ye (2010: 375) observes, “recent cross-linguistic investigation has pointed to both the regularities and variations in the way humans conceptualise the activities of eating and drinking”. Languages distinguish between consumption verbs based on the characteristics of an object and/or the manner of its consumption. The distinction in Navajo is based on the characteristics of the object (Rice 2009), while in English, the manner of consumption tends to be considered in the first line. In languages such as English, there is a clear interrelation between the characteristics of the object and the manner of its consumption, i.e. the characteristics, especially the texture entails how an object is consumed. English verbs such as ‘crunch’, ‘munch’, ‘gnaw’, ‘grind’, ‘slurp’ refer to the manner of eating, while necessarily also referring to the quality of the object that is

eaten. In Babanki the primary criterion of distinguishing between consumption verbs is the texture of the object which, in turn, determines the manner of consumption.

In this study we explore the semantics of the consumption verbs and examine the connection between the literal and metaphorical uses of the generic consumption verbs *ʒí* ‘eat’ and *ɲú* ‘drink’.<sup>2</sup> The data reveal that the metaphorical extensions that radiate from EAT cover the appropriation of non-food items such as material possessions, emotions such as pleasure derived from exploiting them and their subsequent depletion, while those that radiate from DRINK refer to processes which involve the internalisation of aeriform or gaseous materials by animate agents and the absorption of liquids into various types of porous substances. To properly explore the uses of these two consumption verbs, *ʒí* ‘eat’ and *ɲú* ‘drink’, this study proceeds in section 2 to present and characterise their basic meanings as they emerge from their paradigmatic relations within the semantic field of alimentation processes at large before discussing their metaphorical and metonymical extensions in section 3. This is followed by a conclusion in section 4.

## 2 Consumption verbs

Manners of taking food and drinks into the body through the mouth can be expressed in Babanki by various consumption verbs such as *ʒí* ‘eat’, *pfí?* ‘eat by chewing’, *ló* ‘eat by licking’, *bwólá* ‘eat noisily’, *ɲú* ‘drink’, *mí* ‘swallow’, *ʃwɔŋ* ‘suck’, and *lím* ‘bite’. As will be shown in section (3) below, only the verbs *ʒí* ‘eat’ and *ɲú* ‘drink’ are singled out from this list in undergoing metaphorical extension. This is because *ʒí* ‘eat’ and *ɲú* ‘drink’ are the prototypical verbs for the ingestion of

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<sup>2</sup> The data presented and analysed here come from two sources. The first author had five WhatsApp consultation sessions in December 2020 with five other native speakers of Babanki during which they produced most of the examples adapted and presented in this paper. All sessions taken together have the duration of approximately two hours. One session was dedicated to talking about the consumption of food and drinks while the other four focused on the use of the verbs *ʒí* ‘eat’ and *ɲú* ‘drink’ in any context participants could think of. The consumption verbs and metaphorical usages of ‘eat’ and ‘drink’ were later extracted and analyzed. The first author also generated examples based on his native speaker competence. Many thanks to Vivian Ba-ah, Regina Phubong, Cornelius Wuchu, Stanley Amuh, and Benjamin Nkwenti for sharing their knowledge of Babanki with us.

solid food vs. liquids, as reflected in their default usage in contexts where neither the object nor its texture nor the manner of eating (1) or drinking (2) is specified.

- (1) a. *Búnj* *yì* *ʒĩ³* *γ̄ɔ̄* *láyɩn* *á*  
 Bung P1 eat what today QUES  
 ‘What did Bung eat today?’
- b. *Búnj* *á* *yĩ* *ʒĩ* *nántô*  
 Bung DJ P1 eat much  
 ‘Bung ate a lot.’
- (2) a. *Búnj* *yì* *ɲù* *γ̄ɔ̄* *láyɩn* *á*  
 Bung P1 drink what today QUES  
 ‘What did Bung drink today?’
- b. *Búnj* *á* *yĩ* *ɲù* *nántô*  
 Bung DJ P1 drink much  
 ‘Bung drank a lot.’

Any of the other, semantically more specialised, verbs can be used in these contexts with the effect that the texture of the food and the manner of eating it are specified according to the verb’s meaning.

Each of the consumption verbs listed above denotes the texture of the object consumed, i.e. hard or soft, depending on whether it is raw, properly or partially cooked, or fried, as well as encoding the specific manner of eating or drinking. An overview of the distinctions is visualised in table (3) where the food items are grouped according to the verbs that typically collocate with them specifying their texture and the way they are consumed.

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3 The L tone on the verb is due to Low Tone Spread (LTS) from the preceding L tone. LTS dislodges the H of the verb which joins the L of a following noun prefix to form a HL falling tone, which is subsequently simplified to M. In the absence of a following prefix the dislodged H is deleted (Akumbu, Hyman & Kießling 2020).

## (3) Overview of consumption verbs and food items

Verbs	Food items
ʒí ‘eat’	<i>kàbáyɔn</i> ‘fufu’ <sup>4</sup> , <i>ndù</i> ‘koki’ <sup>5</sup> , <i>kàlàŋ</i> ‘achu’ <sup>6</sup> , <i>àkwén</i> ‘beans’, <i>àkwén á mǎŋkálà</i> ‘rice’, <i>kàlāŋ ká mǎŋkálà</i> ‘cocoyam’, <i>kàlāŋ ká káká</i> ‘taro’, <i>ndòŋ à mǎŋkálà</i> ‘potato’, <i>ndòŋ á lyímá</i> ‘sweet potato’, <i>kàsá</i> ‘cassava’, <i>àbú?</i> ‘pumpkin’, <i>kàzú?</i> ‘yam sp.’, <i>àlém</i> ‘yam sp.’, <i>mbàsà</i> ‘vegetable’, <i>kàzítŋ</i> ‘bitterleaf ( <i>vernonia amygdalina</i> )’ <sup>7</sup> , <i>tàwás</i> ‘peas’, <i>àŋgòm</i> ‘banana, plantain’, <i>mbú?</i> ‘peanut pudding’ [...]
<i>pfí?</i> ‘eat by chewing’	<i>nám</i> ‘meat’, <i>ʃù</i> ‘fish’, <i>bǎlàŋ</i> ‘peanuts’, <i>àŋgà?sá</i> ‘egusi (CPE)’ <sup>8</sup> , <i>àsáŋ</i> ‘maize’, <i>fǎŋgwòlè</i> ‘mango’, <i>ŋgwòbàŋ</i> ‘guava’, <i>kànsánsáŋ</i> ‘pineapple, sugar cane’, <i>àbí</i> ‘kolanut’, <i>mbvèn</i> ‘grasshopper’, <i>kàntsì</i> ‘cricket’, <i>fǎŋfí?</i> ‘beetle’ [...]

4 Fufu is the most popular staple food among the Babanki made from corn flour. After grinding dried maize, water is boiled and the flour cooked and stirred in the water to obtain a semi-solid paste which is shaped into loaves using a calabash bowl and eaten with a vegetable or sauce.

5 Koki is also made from corn. Fresh corn is ground and mixed with taro leaves, palm oil, and salt. The mixture is then tied up into plantain leaves and cooked. When ready it can be eaten with sweet potatoes, cassava, or plantains.

6 Achu is popular among the people of North-West Cameroon and is made by pounding cocoyam and/or taro into a paste using a pestle. It is generally eaten with what is popularly known as yellow soup.

7 “*Vernonia amygdalina*, a member of the daisy family, is a small shrub that grows in tropical Africa.” (Wikipedia, s.v. “*Vernonia amygdalina*”, last modified December 3, 2021, 00:08, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernonia\\_amygdalina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vernonia_amygdalina)). It is called bitter leaf because of the bitter taste of the leaves.

8 Egusi is the Cameroon Pidgin English name of the seeds of pumpkins, one of the *cucurbitaceous* plants. (Wikipedia, s.v. “Egusi”, last modified September 12, 2021, 14:40, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egusi>). After drying and grinding the seeds are used as a major ingredient in various soups, as well as for making egusi pudding.

9 Crickets and beetles are roasted in ashes and eaten directly or deep fried in palm oil, while grasshoppers can be eaten raw or fried without oil before eating.

Verbs	Food items
ló ‘eat by licking’	<i>lâmsà</i> ‘orange’, <i>kàmbámbáyn</i> ‘passion fruit’ <sup>10</sup> , <i>byâ</i> ‘avocado’, <i>kànwí?tè</i> ‘black nightshade’, <i>àdzòh</i> ‘plum ( <i>dacryodes edulis</i> )’ <sup>11</sup> , <i>àbyí</i> ‘shell butter nuts’, <i>àlyà</i> ‘honey’, <i>mbàsà</i> ‘soup’, <i>kàzín</i> ‘bitterleaf ( <i>vernonia amygdalina</i> )’, <i>tàwás</i> ‘peas’, <i>ngwòlò?</i> ‘okra’, <i>kànú?</i> ‘mushroom’, <i>fàsés</i> ‘pepper’, <i>fàmbváj</i> ‘salt’, <i>fàhó?</i> ‘tomato, garden egg’, <i>áhàs</i> ‘onion’, <i>gálík</i> ‘garlic’, <i>màhí?</i> ‘oil’ [...]
<i>bwólá</i> ‘eat noisily’	<i>àsáj</i> ‘corn’, <i>fáhgwòlè</i> ‘mango’, <i>ngwòbàh</i> ‘guava’, <i>àbí</i> ‘kola-nut’, <i>ndòh á lyimá</i> ‘sweet potato’, <i>mbòhmbòh</i> ‘bonbon’ [...]
<i>fwóh</i> ‘suck’	<i>lâmsà</i> ‘orange’ <sup>12</sup> , <i>kàmbámbáyn</i> ‘passion fruit’, <i>kànsánsáj</i> ‘pineapple, sugar cane’ <sup>13</sup> , <i>kànwí?tè</i> ‘black nightshade’, <i>àdzòh</i> ‘plum’, <i>àbyí</i> ‘shell butter nuts’, <i>mbòhmbòh</i> ‘bonbon’ [...]
<i>lím</i> ‘bite’	<i>fàhó?</i> ‘garden egg’, <i>nàm</i> ‘meat’, <i>fù</i> ‘fish’, <i>fáhgwòlè</i> ‘mango’, <i>àsáj</i> ‘corn’, <i>kàlāh ká mēhkalè</i> ‘cocoyam’, <i>kàlāh ká káká</i> ‘taro’, <i>ndòh à mēhkalè</i> ‘potato’, <i>ndòh á lyimá</i> ‘sweet potato’, <i>kàsá</i> ‘cassava’, <i>àbú?</i> ‘pumpkin’, <i>kàzú?</i> ‘yam sp.’, <i>àlém</i> ‘yam sp.’, <i>ngwòbàh</i> ‘guava’, <i>kànsánsáj</i> ‘pineapple’, <i>àhgòm</i> ‘banana, plantain’ [...]

The verb *zí* encodes the meaning ‘eat’ in general but it is used specifically when the food eaten has a soft texture and is easy to break down even for babies and older people who may lack strong teeth. When sufficiently cooked, some food items are soft enough to be easily tackled by an act of *zí* ‘eat’, e.g. *àkwén* ‘beans’ (4a) and *ndòh á lyimá* ‘sweet potato’ (4b).

10 The passion fruit is mostly called ‘Adam fruit’ in North-West Cameroon.

11 “*Dacryodes edulis* is native to Africa, sometimes called *safou* (in Cameroon), *atanga* (in Equatorial Guinea and Gabon), *ube* (in Nigeria), or *African pear*, *bush pear*, *African plum*, *nsafu*, *bush butter tree*, or *butterfruit*.” (Wikipedia, s.v. “*Dacryodes edulis*”, last modified January 10, 2022, 06:18, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dacryodes\\_edulis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dacryodes_edulis)).

12 To eat oranges in Cameroon a small lid can be cut away and the juice is sucked out. It is also common for the skin to be peeled off using finger nails or a knife and then breaking little pieces to eat.

13 In order to eat sugarcane in Cameroon, the skin is first peeled off using one’s teeth or a knife before breaking the softer inner part into little and chewing to squeeze the juice into the mouth and swallow.

- (4) a. *Búŋ yì zì ā-kwén á bónḡḡèŋ*  
 Bung P1 eat 6-beans PREP morning  
 ‘Bung ate beans in the morning.’
- b. *Búŋ yì zì ndḡŋ á lyìḡá*  
 Bung P1 eat 1.potato 1.AM be(come) sweet  
 ‘Bung ate sweet potato.’

The verb *pfí?* ‘eat by chewing’ rather describes the act of using a little more effort to masticate items such as *ŋàm* ‘meat’ (5a), *àsáŋ* ‘corn’ (5b) and others listed in table (3) above. This is due to their relatively hard texture even when these items are cooked or fried.

- (5) a. *Búŋ yì pfí? ŋàm á bónḡḡèŋ*  
 Bung P1 chew 9.meat PREP tomorrow  
 ‘Bung ate meat in the morning (by chewing).’
- b. *Búŋ yì pfí? tà à-sáŋ*  
 Bung P1 chew only 5-corn  
 ‘Bung ate only corn (by chewing).’

The semantic distinction between *zì* ‘eat’ and *pfí?* ‘eat by chewing’ can express the difference in the texture of the consumed object, i.e. whether the object is raw or cooked. This is seen when *pfí?* ‘eat by chewing’ rather than *zì* ‘eat’ is used to describe the eating of food items when they are not properly cooked, or are eaten raw or unripe, e.g. *kàlāŋ ká māŋkálà* ‘cocoyam’, *kàlāŋ ká káká* ‘taro’, *ndḡŋ à māŋkálà* ‘potato’, *ndḡŋ á lyìḡá* ‘sweet potato’, *kàsá* ‘cassava’, *kàzú?* ‘yam sp.’, *àlém* ‘yam sp.’, *mbàsà* ‘vegetable’, *ŋgwōbàŋ* ‘guava’ and *àŋḡḡm* ‘banana, plantain’. Thus, the selection of the verb *pfí?* ‘eat by chewing’ in (6) rather than *zì* ‘eat’ as in (4) indicates that the consumed items, i.e. beans (6a) and sweet potato, are not properly cooked or even raw<sup>14</sup> rather than well cooked as entailed when used in collocation with *zì* ‘eat’ in (4).

- (6) a. *Búŋ yì pfí? ā-kwén á bónḡḡèŋ*  
 Bung P1 chew 6-beans PREP tomorrow  
 ‘Bung ate beans in the morning (by chewing).’

<sup>14</sup> Babanki people do eat raw *ndḡŋ á lyìḡá* ‘sweet potato’, but not raw *ndḡŋ à māŋkálà* ‘potato’.

- b. *Búŋ* *yì* *pfĩ?* *ndõŋ* *á* *lyàmá*  
 Bung P1 chew 1.potato 1.AM be(come) sweet  
 ‘Bung ate sweet potato (by chewing).’

In other cases the manner of eating certain objects can be expressed only by a single verb. For example, the way *kàbáyŋ* ‘fufu’ is eaten can only be encoded by *zĩ* ‘eat’ because there is only one way to prepare it, that is, the corn flour must be cooked thoroughly to produce a paste that is made into loaves and then eaten with a vegetable or soup. The way of eating *ŋàm* ‘meat’, *ŋù* ‘fish’, *bǎlànŋ* ‘peanuts’, *àsáŋ* ‘corn’, *fǎŋgwòlè* ‘mango’, *kànsánsáŋ* ‘pineapple/sugarcane’ can only be described by *pfĩ?* ‘eat by chewing’ since they do not become completely soft even after cooking (where applicable) and still require some effort to masticate. If peanuts are ground to make *mbú?* ‘peanut pudding’ then the verb *zĩ* ‘eat’ is used.

The manner of consuming food items that are liquid or soft is encoded by *ló* ‘eat by licking (using tongue)’, as illustrated in (7). Some fruits such as *lâmsà* ‘orange’, *kàmbámáyŋ* ‘passion fruit’, *kànwì?tà* ‘black nightshade’, *àdzànŋ* ‘plum (*dacryodes edulis*)’, *àbyí* ‘shell butter nuts’, and *byâ* ‘avocado’ become soft or contain a high amount of juice when ripe, which justifies the conceptualisation of their consumption as eating by licking. This is also true of various kinds of vegetables such as *kàzĩŋ* ‘bitterleaf (*vernonia amygdalina*)’, *tèwás* ‘peas’, *ŋgwòlè?* ‘okra’, *kàvú?* ‘mushroom’, *fāsés* ‘pepper’, *fànó?* ‘garden egg, tomato’, *áŋàs* ‘onion’, and *gálík* ‘garlic’ which become soft when cooked. Other items actually come in liquid form, e.g. *mbàsà* ‘soup’, *mànŋfí?* ‘oil’, and *àlyè* ‘honey’, but are not consumed by drinking, but rather in small quantities, i.e. by licking or by sips. *Fàmbváyŋ* ‘salt’ comes in granular form, but can be consumed by licking in small quantities by dissolving either in liquid food or by saliva, just like *mbòŋmbòŋ* ‘bonbon’.

- (7) a. *Búŋ* *yì* *lò* *byâ* *láyŋ*  
 Bung P1 lick 1.avocado today  
 ‘Bung ate avocado today.’
- b. *Búŋ* *yì* *lò* *fā-sés* *nà* *ŋgwòlè?*  
 Bung P1 lick 19-pepper with 1.okra  
 ‘Bung ate pepper and okra.’

- c. *Búŋ*    *yì*    *lò*    *fā-mbváy*    *nàntò*  
 Bung    P1    lick    19-salt    much  
 ‘Bung ate a lot of salt.’

Apart from objects that are mostly liquid, i.e. *lâmsà* ‘orange’, *àlyè* ‘honey’, *mbàsà* ‘soup’, *màŋfí?* ‘oil’, the rest of the objects in this category, e.g. *byâ* ‘avocado’ (7a) and *fāsés* ‘pepper’ (7b) can also be chewed when not well-cooked, not properly ripe or even raw, as illustrated in (8a–b).

- (8) a. *Búŋ*    *yì*    *pfí?*    *byâ*    *láyŋ*  
 Bung    P1    chew    1.avocado    today  
 ‘Bung ate avocado today (by chewing).’
- b. *Búŋ*    *yì*    *pfí?*    *fā-sés*    *nà*    *ŋgwòlò?*  
 Bung    P1    chew    19-pepper    with    1.okra  
 ‘He ate pepper and okra (by chewing the pepper).’

The verb *ló* ‘eat by licking’ can also be used if someone eats any type of food, e.g. ‘fufu’ extremely fast (9a). The other verb that also refers to the act of licking, i.e. *líŋ* ‘lick (using fingers)’ describes the act of cleaning up a plate with fingers and licking them (9b). It is also used if someone finishes up the soup or vegetable before the carbohydrate, which could be ‘cocoyam’ or ‘fufu’ (9c), an act which is reprehensible and blameworthy.

- (9) a. *Búŋ*    *yì*    *lò*    *kā-báyŋ*    *á*    *n-lū*  
 Bung    P1    lick    7-fufu    CONJ    N-leave  
 ‘Bung hurriedly ate the fufu and left.’
- b. *Búŋ*    *yì*    *zí*    *á*    *n-ló*    *kā-káyŋ*  
 Bung    P1    eat    CONJ    N-lick    7-plate  
 ‘Bung ate and then licked the plate.’
- c. *Búŋ*    *yì*    *lò*    *mbàsà*    *n-kyé*    *kā-báyŋ*  
 Bung    P1    lick    1.soup    N-allow    7-fufu  
 ‘Bung finished up the soup and left the fufu.’

The verb *bwólá* ‘eat noisily, crunch’ encodes the manner in which objects that have a hard texture are eaten, e.g. *àsáŋ* ‘corn’, *fāŋgwòlò* ‘mango’, *ŋgwòbàŋ* ‘guava’, *àbí* ‘kolanut’, *ndòŋ á lyimá* ‘sweet potato’, and *mbòŋmbòŋ* ‘bonbon’. Apart from ‘kolanut’ and ‘bonbon’, the rest of the items listed above can be eaten noisily only under certain

conditions, e.g. corn should be dried and fried (10b) and sweet potato should be raw or not properly cooked (11b–c) for *bwólá* ‘eat noisily, crunch’ to be applicable.

- (10) a. *Búŋ yì pfè ā-sáŋ á m-pfí?*  
 Bung P1 boil 5-corn CONJ N-chew  
 ‘Bung boiled corn and ate it.’
- b. *Búŋ yì kàŋ ā-sáŋ á m-bwólá*  
 Bung P1 fry 5-corn CONJ N-crunch  
 ‘Bung fried corn and crunched it.’
- (11) a. *Búŋ yì pfè ndòŋ á n-zí*  
 Bung P1 boil 1.sweet\_potato CONJ N-eat  
 ‘Bung boiled sweet potato and ate it.’
- b. *Búŋ yì pfí? ndòŋ ā-kú*  
 Bung P1 chew 1.sweet\_potato 1-raw  
 ‘Bung ate raw sweet potato.’
- c. *Búŋ yì bwólá ndòŋ wàŋŋ á n-tfá?*  
 Bung P1 crunch 1.sweet\_potato 1.child DJ N-laugh  
 ‘Bung crunched raw sweet potato and the child laughed.’

As seen in table (3) above, corn, mango, guava, kolanut, and sweet potato primarily collocate with the verb *pfí?* ‘eat by chewing’. The application of *bwólá* ‘eat noisily, crunch’ instead of *pfí?* ‘eat by chewing’ in (10b) and (11c) highlights an unusually hard texture and an extraordinary amount of noise that accompanies the consumption, due to the hard texture of the object.

The verb *mì* ‘swallow’ describes possible ways of eating and drinking, since it can refer to the eating of food without chewing properly (12a), or eating rapidly without taking time to masticate (12b). The verb *mì* can also be used when someone keeps water in their mouth for a while before swallowing (12c).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Keeping the water in the mouth for a while is a necessary precondition since *ŋú* ‘drink’ is used for gulping down water or any other liquid immediately.

- (12) a. *Búŋ yì mì à-kwén mí-í*  
 Bung P1 swallow 6-beans swallow-SFX<sup>16</sup>  
 ‘Bung swallowed the beans.’
- b. *Búŋ yì mì ndòŋ á n-lú*  
 Bung P1 swallow 1.sweet\_potato CONJ N-leave  
 ‘Bung swallowed the potato and left.’
- c. *Búŋ yì ká? á m-mí mú<sup>u</sup> myì*  
 Bung P1 turn CON N-swallow 6a.water DEM  
 ‘Bung finally swallowed the water.’

The verb is also used to reprimand a greedy person who wishes to eat more food than is available. In this case, the person expected to provide the food can give ironic encouragement to the greedy person to swallow any object (13).

- (13) a. *mì-í Búŋ*  
 swallow-IMP Bung  
 ‘Swallow Bung!’
- b. *mì-í ñgù?*  
 swallow-IMP 9.stone  
 ‘Swallow the stone!’

The verb *fwòŋ* ‘suck’ is used to talk about the consumption of food items like fruits that are liquid in nature when properly ripe, e.g. *fáŋgwòlè* ‘mango’ or items that need sucking in the mouth before swallowing, e.g. *mbòŋmbòŋ* ‘bonbon’, as in (14a–b).

- (14) a. *Búŋ yì fwòŋ fá-ŋgwòlè*  
 Bung P1 suck 19-mango  
 ‘Bung sucked the mango.’
- b. *Búŋ á fwòŋ-á mbòŋmbòŋ*  
 Bung DJ suck-PROG 1.bonbon  
 ‘Bung is sucking the bonbon.’

*Fáŋgwòlè* ‘mango’ normally collocates with *pfí?* ‘eat by chewing’, and if it becomes soft and someone uses their mouth to peel and eat

<sup>16</sup> This suffix has been glossed simply as SFX for lack of a satisfying functional label since its presence is solely to specify the context of the occurrence of the repeated verb.

it, then only *fwɔŋ* ‘suck’ is used. As will be seen below, to break off a little piece of an unripe mango with the teeth before chewing is denoted with the verb *lím* ‘bite’. *Mbɔŋmbɔŋ* ‘bonbon’ collocates with *ló* ‘eat by licking’ whereas *fɔŋgwòlè* ‘mango’ does not since *ló* ‘eat by licking’ usually applies to items which can be dissolved by saliva. Regarding other kinds of fruits such as *lâmsà* ‘orange’, *kàmbámbáyn* ‘passion fruit’, and *kànwìtè* ‘black nightshade’ it is not clear what kind of contrast ensures that only *ló* ‘eat by licking’, not *fwɔŋ* ‘eat by sucking’ is applicable with them.

The act of sucking does not only apply to human agents but to non-human animates such as *fàmbúm* ‘mosquito’ (16a) and *kàkúf* ‘tick’ (16b) as well.

- (15) a. *fà-mbúm*    *fá*    *yì*    *fwɔŋ*    *Búŋ*    *ɣà*    *á*  
 19-mosquito    DJ    P1    suck    Bung    3SG    DJ

*ŋ-kwá?á*

N-be(come)\_ill

‘A mosquito sucked Bung (’s blood) and he fell ill.’

- b. *kà-kúf*    *ká*    *fwɔŋ*    *lí*    *mà-nlyún*    *fá*    *ā-wèn*    *à*  
 7-tick    DJ    suck    PO    6a-blood    PREP    5-body    5.AM

*ŋàm*

9.animal

‘A tick has sucked the animal’s blood.’

This meaning can be construed as an extension from the meaning of a person consuming something. Stinging and biting by insects are as concrete as humans biting food (Newman & Aberra 2009), implying that this meaning is not particularly figurative. In this regard, it is important to note that the eat verbs listed above can have nonhuman animate agents, e.g. *zì* ‘eat’ is used when dogs, cats, or pigs eat solid food such as *kàbáyn* ‘fufu’; *pfi?* ‘eat by chewing’ describes how cattle and goats eat grass or how dogs and cats eat meat; and *ló* ‘eat by licking’ is used when dogs and cats eat liquid food.

The verb *lím* ‘bite’ is used when a hard object needs to be broken down into little pieces before chewing, as in the case of mango (16a) and meat (16b). Objects in this category also include *fàŋɔ?* ‘garden egg’, *kàlāŋ ká mǎŋkálè* ‘cocoyam’, *kàlāŋ ká káká* ‘taro’, *ndɔŋ à mǎŋkálè* ‘potato’, *ndɔŋ á lyimá* ‘sweet potato’, *kàsá* ‘cassava’, *àbú?* ‘pumpkin’, *kàzú?* ‘yam sp.’, *àlém* ‘yam sp.’, *àŋgòm* ‘banana, plantain’, *fù* ‘fish’, *àsáŋ*

‘corn’, *ngwòbàŋ* ‘guava’, *kànsánsáŋ* ‘pineapple/sugarcane’, as listed in table (3) above.

- (16) a. *Búŋ yì lìm fá-ŋgwòlè á ŋ-kú wāyn*  
 Bung P1 bite 19-mango CONJ N-give 1.child  
 ‘Bung took a bite from a mango and shared it with the child.’
- b. *Búŋ yì lìm ñàm à wāyn*  
 Bung P1 bite 9.meat 9.AM 1.child  
 ‘Bung took a bite of the child’s meat.’

As with sucking, the act of biting does not only apply to human agents but to non-human animates, e.g. *fāmbúm* ‘mosquito’ (17a) and *kàkúf* ‘tick’ (17b), as well.

- (17) a. *fā-mbúm fá yì lìm Búŋ yà á*  
 19-mosquito DJ P1 bite Bung 3SG DJ  
*ŋ-kwá?á*  
 N-be(come)\_ill  
 ‘A mosquito bit Bung and he fell ill.’
- b. *kà-kúf ká lìm lí ñàm*  
 7-tick DJ bite P0 9.animal  
 ‘A tick has bitten an animal.’

Drinking involves the movement of liquid through the mouth and down the throat facilitated by the tongue and the palate. The verb *ŋú* ‘drink’ describes the process of drinking *mú<sup>u</sup>ú* ‘water’, *mà-nlyū?* ‘wine (i.e. palm wine, soft and alcoholic drinks)’, and *ŋkáj* ‘cornbeer’, as in (18).

- (18) a. *Búŋ yì ŋù mú<sup>u</sup>ú nántô*  
 Bung P1 drink 6a.water much  
 ‘Bung drank a lot of water.’
- b. *Búŋ á ŋú-ú tà mà-nlyū? má*  
 Bung DJ drink-PROG only 6a-wine 6.AM  
*m-ffá?à mà*  
 N-white 6a  
 ‘Bung drinks only palmwine.’

- c. *Búŋ* *yì* *ɲù* *ŋkáj* *á* *ə-ŋgə̀ŋ*  
 Bung P1 drink 1.cornbeer at 5-home  
 ‘Bung drank cornbeer at home.’

The semantic distinctions in Babanki consumption verbs hinge primarily on the texture of the object which, in turn, determines the manner of consumption. In other words, the choice of verb depends primarily on the texture of the object consumed, but gives information about the manner of consumption, since one determines the other.

### 3 Semantic extensions of *ʒí* ‘eat’ and *ɲú* ‘drink’

Babanki verbs for EAT and DRINK are rich sources of figurative extensions just as they are in other African languages such as Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam 2017), Amharic (Newman & Aberra 2009), Ewe and Gurene (Adjei & Atintono 2009), Hausa (Williams 1991, Jaggar & Buba 2009), and Swahili (Sheikh & Wolff 1981) and non-African languages such as Korean (Song 2009), Mandarin and Shanghainese (Ye 2010). The verbs for EAT and DRINK are the lexical items in the domain of consumption of solid vs. liquid food which have the most generic meanings in Babanki, as systematically expanded and illustrated according to extensions that radiate from EAT (3.1) and those from DRINK (3.2).

#### 3.1 Semantic extensions of EAT

In general, semantic extensions that radiate from EAT are based on the process of getting food into the mouth and eventually swallowing it. They reflect the tendency for the internalisation of food to provide the agent with certain sensory experiences such as taste, satisfaction, pleasure or displeasure (Newman 2009). As for Babanki, all semantic extensions of the generic verb *ʒí* ‘eat’ build on two closely related overarching structural metaphors, i.e. APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING (3.1.1) and WINNING IS EATING (3.1.2), and a metonymical extension that links mutual agreement with commensality (3.1.3).<sup>17</sup> The first metaphor construes the internalisation

<sup>17</sup> The shorthand notation of conceptual metaphors by using small capitals follows conventions adopted in cognitive linguistics, most notably Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and Kövecses & Benczes (2010).

of non-food items such as material possessions as ingestion of food, which in itself is based on another structural metaphor RESOURCES ARE FOOD. The second metaphor casts the acquisition of immaterial advantage gained in a competition in the mould of eating. The metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING has two major entailments which derive from correspondences between source and target concepts on the level of individual aspects and sub-components. Thus, the insertion of food into the mouth as the initial phase in the act of eating simply corresponds to the appropriation of possessions itself. The act of swallowing corresponds to the eventual spending of the resources as enabled by appropriation. The act of spending typically entails two further effects, i.e. pleasure on the consumer's side which corresponds to the derivation of positive feelings from the pleasant taste of food and the sensation of satiation in the course of eating (3.1.1.1) and reduction and depletion on the side of the consumed item which corresponds to the decrease of available food in the course of the meal (3.1.1.2).

In contrast to APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING (3.1.1), the structural metaphor WINNING IS EATING (3.1.2) rather highlights two additional aspects, i.e. the benefit gained does not reside in the appropriation of some material possession, but rather in some advantage gained in the course of a competition and at the expense of some other participant. In addition, the metaphor WINNING IS EATING is also linked to the first metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING by virtue of the negative effect of deprivation which the appropriation inevitably has on the prior owner of the resource in question. Such negative corollaries of autobeneficiary effects will be referred to as altrimagefiary in the following.

The semantic extension ACHIEVING MUTUAL AGREEMENT IS EATING TOGETHER (3.1.3) is motivated by the cultural practice of sealing an agreement with the shared consumption of kolanuts.

### *3.1.1 Appropriation of resources*

Taking over possession of something is often conceptualised via the structural metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING, which is based on yet another metaphor, namely, RESOURCES ARE FOOD. The applicability of both metaphors is motivated by the positive sensory experiences that are linked to the internalisation of food items being mapped onto the pleasant feelings that an individual

experiences as a result of taking over ownership in general (19a–c) and in specific cases such as collecting a bribe (19e). While the case of inheritance (19d) may predominately involve negative feelings such as sadness about the loss of the deceased person, the inheritor may still be seen to gain a certain amount of satisfaction from inheriting the deceased person’s property. Beside mere appropriation, the metaphor also includes the notion of profit or benefit on the side of the agent and detriment to the former owner or some third participant. In contrast to ordinary expressions of possession and appropriation via verbs such as *zén* ‘buy’ in (20) and *lyè* ‘take’, *bóŋ* ‘pick’ and *kíŋ* ‘have’ (28), the expressions based on the metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING include an additional notion of irretrievability, i.e. the items consumed in (19) become completely inaccessible to anyone else with no chance of retrieval. It is the semantics of the framing verb ‘eat’ that brings out this particular notion.<sup>18</sup>

(19) APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING

- a. *Búŋ á zí ʳlí nsé āy-óm*  
 Bung DJ eat P0 1.land 9-POSS  
 ‘Bung has seized my piece of land.’
- b. *Búŋ á zí ʳlí tʃʒ?*  
 Bung DJ eat P0 1.njangi  
 ‘Bung has collected the *njangi* money.’<sup>19</sup>
- c. *Búŋ á zí-í ā-lyè*  
 Bung DJ eat-PROG 3-honey  
 ‘Bung is collecting honey.’
- d. *Búŋ á zí ʳlí kà-báŋ ká tí?*  
 Bung DJ eat P0 7-compound 7.AM 1.father

<sup>18</sup> We owe this observation to one of the anonymous reviewers to whom we are grateful.

<sup>19</sup> The term *njangi* is commonly used in Cameroon to refer a group of individuals who meet on a regular basis to contribute money and give it to one or more members at a time. During subsequent meetings previous benefactors refund the exact amount the current beneficiary had contributed and those who are still to benefit contribute an amount equal to or greater than an agreed minimum. Whatever they contribute will eventually by refunded to them when their turn to benefit comes.

á wén<sup>20</sup>

1.AM 3SG

‘Bung has inherited his father’s property.’

- e. Búŋ á zí ʔlí ŋkùf  
 Bung DJ eat PO 1.bribe  
 ‘Bung has taken a bribe.’

The structural metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING has the following entailments: (a) the agent acquires some material item or gain, (b) the agent derives a positive effect from taking over ownership of the item or gain (profit or benefit), (c) the agent’s ownership of the item or gain is to the detriment of the prior owner (19a, c, e) or a third party, i.e. the other *njangi* candidates (19b) and other potential inheritors who go away empty-handed (19d). The agent willfully takes over possession of items, preventing some other participant(s) from doing so. In (19a, e), the victims are deprived of their items such that they actually lose it against their will. Elsewhere, the agent’s new possession may be endorsed or approved by others. In (19b) in particular, the choice of the beneficiary is always a consensus between the *njangi* members, whereas in (19c) only the owner of a beehive has the right to collect honey from it, and in (19d) inheriting property is usually based on the deceased person’s will.<sup>21</sup> In all the cases in (19), the agent enjoys and gains satisfaction from appropriating a resource. The metaphor, therefore, includes the notion of profit or benefit on the side of the agent, showing that it is not simply a transfer of possession, but rather that the agent is actively involved in controlling the transfer. Even in the case of inheritance, which is patrilineal in Babanki, the agent is not passive as he has to prepare for and undergo the rituals involved. Implicit in the metaphor is the understanding that the material item or gain is not only appropriated by the agent, but it diminishes or vanishes from the perspec-

<sup>20</sup> There is no negative connotation here at all, although the one who inherits would not say he has “eaten” his father’s property but would simply say he is the successor.

<sup>21</sup> Inheritance which is not in the deceased person’s will is said to have been taken forcefully, as expressed in the following example.

Búŋ á zí ʔlí kà-báŋ ká tí? á wén á ŋāŋ  
 Bung DJ eat PO 7-compound 7.AM 1.father 1.AM 3SG by 9.force  
 ‘Bung has usurped his father’s property.’

tive of the prior owner as a consequence of their loss of access to it. Although the appropriation of a resource from a prior owner is done with the intention of spending the resource for oneself, the notion of spending alone does not license the application of the metaphor of eating. Thus, when agents simply spend their legitimately earned money on buying some commodity, the metaphor of eating cannot be used; only the verb *zén* ‘buy’ (20) is available in this context.

(20) Lack of emphasis on appropriation of resources

- a. *Búnj á zén ʷlí à-fóʒíná á sàŋ*  
 Bung DJ buy P0 8-food 8.AM 1.month  
 ‘Bung has bought food for the entire month.’
- b. *Búnj á zén ʷlí mántù tá kē-dìŋ*  
 Bung DJ buy P0 1.car like 7-many  
 ‘Bung has bought several cars.’

Using *zɛ́* ‘eat’ here would either produce the prototypical meaning (21a) or another metaphor, i.e. WINNING IS EATING (21b) elaborated in (3.1.3).

(21) Lack of emphasis on appropriation of resources

- a. *Búnj á zɛ́ ʷlí à-fóʒíná á sàŋ á*  
 Bung DJ eat P0 8-food 8.AM 1.month in  
*kē-tsí kē-mù?*  
 7-day 7-one  
 ‘Bung has eaten a month’s food supply in a single day.’
- b. *Búnj á zɛ́ ʷlí mántù tá kē-dìŋ*  
 Bung DJ eat P0 1.car like 7-many  
 ‘Bung has won several cars.’

When money is spent, two different situations can license the use of the EAT metaphor. The first is illegitimate acquisition, i.e. the process of acquiring the money spent is inappropriate, e.g. using someone else’s money without their consent or in a way the owner disapproves of (22a), and the second is when the acquisition is legitimate but the money is misused or squandered, e.g. spending children’s school fees on alcohol or women (22b).



- (25) *Búnj*    *ǎ*    *zǐ-í*            *ǎ-lyù*    *ló-ó*  
 Bung    DJ    eat-PROG    3-honey    lick-PROG  
 ‘Bung is collecting and eating honey.’

The eat metaphor for taking a bribe (19e) is widespread in Cameroon and Nigeria, as can be seen from its occurrence in Cameroonian Pidgin English (CPE), Cameroonian French (Meutem Kamtchueng 2015), and Nigerian Pidgin (Naija). In CPE, for example, it is common to hear the expression in (26) uttered by a service provider who intends to make the beneficiary understand that they have to give a bribe for the service provided.

- (26) *na*    *thank*    *you*    *I*    *di*    *chop*  
 COP    thank    2SG    1SG    AUX    eat  
 ‘Do I eat appreciation?’

P-Square’s big music hit of 2011 “Chop my money” illustrates the use of this metaphor in Naija.<sup>22</sup> The eat metaphor for taking a bribe is prevalent in those African societies where bribing is conceptualised as feeding or as a (food-)gift, as pointed out by Polzenhagen & Wolf (2007).

The solid nature of the consumed item is crucial in the conceptual transfer of the structural metaphor APPROPRIATION OF POSSESSION IS EATING, since in none of the expressions in (19) above the verb *zǐ* ‘eat’ can be replaced by *nú* ‘drink’, as shown by the ungrammatical constructions in (27a–b).

- (27) a. \**Búnj*    *ǎ*    *nú*    *ʰlí*    *nsé*    *ǎy-óm*  
 Bung    DJ    drink    PO    1.land    9-POSS  
 ‘Bung has \*drunk my piece of land.’
- b. \**Búnj*    *ǎ*    *nú*    *ʰlí*    *tfó?*  
 Bung    DJ    drink    PO    1.njangi  
 ‘Bung has \*drunk the njangi.’

As mentioned above, the EAT metaphor always includes the notion of benefit on the agent’s side which works to the detriment of some other participant(s). To express the transfer or acquisition of possession but without any additional ethical connotations, transfer verbs

<sup>22</sup> NaijaPrey, s.v. “P-Square – Chop My Money Remix ft. Akon, May D”, last modified October 12, 2021, <https://www.naijaprey.com/p-square-chop-my-money-remix-ft-akon-may-d/>.

such as *lyì* ‘take’ (28a) and *bóŋ* ‘pick’ (28b) or the possession verb *kíŋí* ‘have’ (28c) are used.

(28) Other expressions of transfer and acquisition of possession

- a. *Búŋ*    *á*    *lyî*    *ʘlí*    *kà-mbō*    *āk-óm*    *ká*  
 Bung    DJ    take    PO    7-bag    7-POSS    7  
 ‘Bung has taken my bag.’
- b. *Búŋ*    *á*    *bóŋ*    *ʘlí*    *ā-kó*    *ā-γóm*    *á*  
 Bung    DJ    pick    PO    5-money    5-my    5  
 ‘Bung has picked up my money.’
- c. *Búŋ*    *á*    *kíŋí*    *ʘlí*    *ā-kó*  
 Bung    DJ    have    PO    5-money  
 ‘Bung has made money / become rich.’

While the agent acquires possession of the items in (28) and may derive profit or benefit from them, there is no indication that they consume the items nor that they acquire the items to the detriment of some other participant(s). In (28a), for example, the agent might have simply taken the bag to hand it over to the owner, just as in (28b) where the agent may also hand over the money to the owner. In (28c) the agent has become rich probably by working hard without preventing others from doing the same. This contrasts with the specific meaning of acquisition of property for one’s own benefit and consumption to the exclusion and detriment of other participants obtainable by replacing the central verbs in (28a–c) by *zí* ‘eat’, as in (29).

(29) Appropriation with detrimental side-effect entailed by the EAT metaphor

- a. *Búŋ*    *á*    *zí*    *ʘlí*    *kà-mbō*    *āk-óm*  
 Bung    DJ    eat    PO    7-bag    7-POSS  
 ‘Bung has confiscated my bag.’
- b. *Búŋ*    *á*    *zí*    *ʘlí*    *ā-kó*    *ā-γóm*    *á*  
 Bung    DJ    eat    PO    5-money    5-my    5  
 ‘Bung has taken my money, i.e. refused to refund it me.’

- c. *Búŋ á zí ʘlí ā-kó*  
 Bung DJ eat PO 5-money  
 ‘Bung has won money.’

As illustrated in section 2, the generic verb *zí* ‘eat’ can undergo the metaphorical extensions in (19) but closely related consumption verbs like *pfí?* ‘eat by chewing’ (30a), *ló* ‘eat by licking’ (30b), *bwólá* ‘eat noisily’ (30c), *mî* ‘swallow’ (30d), *lím* ‘bite’ (30e), and *fwóŋ* ‘suck’ (30f) cannot. Their use in this context actually produces humorous effects.

(30) Inappropriateness of consumption verbs other than *zí* ‘eat’ for expressing appropriation

- a. *\*Búŋ á pfí? ʘlí nsé āy-óm*  
 Bung DJ \*chew PO 1.land 9-POSS  
 ‘Bung has chewed my piece of land.’
- b. *\*Búŋ á ló ʘlí tʃí?*  
 Bung DJ lick PO 1.njangi  
 ‘Bung has \*licked the njangi.’
- c. *\*Búŋ á bwólá ā-lyù*  
 Bung DJ eat noisily.PROG 3-honey  
 ‘Bung is eating honey \*noisily.’
- d. *\*Búŋ á mî ʘlí kà-báŋ ká*  
 Bung DJ swallow PO 7-compound 7.AM  
*tí? á wén*  
 1.father 1.AM 3SG  
 ‘Bung has \*swallowed his father’s compound.’
- e. *\*Búŋ á lím ʘlí ŋkùf*  
 Bung DJ bite PO 1.bribe  
 ‘Bung has \*bitten a bribe.’
- f. *\*Búŋ á fwóŋ ʘlí ŋkùf*  
 Bung DJ suck PO 1.bribe  
 ‘Bung has \*sucked a bribe.’

### 3.1.1.1 Enjoying resources

Metaphorical entailments under this subgroup are based exclusively on EAT and express pleasurable emotional states agents derive from spending a resource such as *ā-yóʔ* ‘wealth’ in (31a). Since we prefer food which procudes an agreeable taste and avoid food which is not pleasant to taste, “there is an experiential bias towards enjoyable gustation” (Song 2009: 201). This bias actually motivates the metaphor ENJOYING RESOURCES IS EATING as an entailment of the structural metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING.

#### (31) ENJOYING RESOURCES IS EATING

- a. *Búnj á ʒí-í ā-yóʔ á wén*  
 Bung DJ eat-PROG 5-wealth 5.AM 3SG  
 ‘Bung is enjoying his wealth (e.g. by drinking beer, hiring labour, etc).’
- b. *wàyn á ʒí-í à-wén á wén*  
 1.child DJ eat-PROG 5-body 5.AM 3SG  
 ‘A child is enjoying himself (e.g. by playing, eating, dancing, etc).’
- c. *víʔí á ʒí-í mbyí*  
 2.people DJ eat-PROG 9.world  
 ‘People are enjoying life (e.g. by traveling, playing, eating, dancing, etc).’

Example (31a) reflects the linkage of the metaphor ENJOYING RESOURCES IS EATING to the metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING, since the wealth Bung enjoys is something he must have acquired by prior transfer, either by personal achievement or by inheritance. By contrast, examples (31b–c) show that the metaphor ENJOYING RESOURCES IS EATING also works independently, since in those instances the pleasure is derived from a resource for which prior appropriation is hard to conceive. The situation in (31b) can be interpreted as enjoying oneself by drawing on one’s own body as a resource in all types of physical activities which create pleasure. In (31c) eating the world is equated to enjoying life by drawing on resources available to anyone who is capable of taking them for themselves. The actors may manifest physical evidence of what has

been internalised through bodily gestures or other forms of expression of satisfaction.

Using DRINK in these expressions, as in (32), makes the metaphor collapse.

- (32) a. \**Búŋ*    *á*    *ŋú-ú*                    *ā-yó?*            *á*            *wén*  
 Bung    DJ    drink-PROG    5-wealth    5.AM    3SG  
 ‘Bung is \*drinking his wealth.’
- b. \**wàyn*    *á*    *ŋú-ú*                    *à-wén*            *á*            *wén*  
 1.child    DJ    drink-PROG    5-body    5.AM    3SG  
 ‘A child is \*drinking himself.’
- c. \**víʔí*            *á*    *ŋú-ú*                    *mbyí*  
 2.people    DJ    drink-PROG    9.world  
 ‘People are \*drinking life.’

### 3.1.1.2 Depleting resources

A crucial entailment of the structural metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING is depletion, i.e. the resource is diminished markedly in quantity, content, or value after appropriation as the new owner starts spending it. In other words, the resulting metaphor DEPLETION OF RESOURCES IS EATING is linked to the basic metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING via an intermediate metonymical step, i.e. SPENDING OF RESOURCES IS EATING. This entailment is motivated by the effect of eating on the patient, i.e. food that is consumed. As the consumer takes food into their mouth and breaks it down into digestible particles, the transformation is considered to be depletive, i.e. time and resources referred to are not simply spent, but rather used up to an extent which is commonly felt to go beyond the prototypical limit, as illustrated in (33).

(33) DEPLETION OF RESOURCES IS EATING

- a. *à-fē?*            *yén*            *á*            *ʒí-í*                    *ā-ʒú*  
 5-work    DEM    DJ    eat-PROG    5-time  
 ‘This job consumes time.’
- b. *à-ŋgàŋ*            *yén*            *á*            *ʒí*            *ʔlí*            *kà-tsó?*  
 5-house    DEM    DJ    eat    PO    7-brick  
 ‘This house has taken too many bricks to build.’

- c. *tòsà*            *yén*        *á*        *ʒí*        *ʷlí*        *ndzísá*  
 1.trousers    DEM    DJ    eat    PO    10.fabric  
 ‘This trousers has consumed a lot of tissue.’
- d. *fà-kɔʔ*        *fá*        *ʒí*        *ʷlí*        *kà-ʃí*  
 19-tree    DJ    eat    PO    7-place  
 ‘A tree has occupied a lot of space.’
- e. *Búŋ*        *á*        *yí*        *ʒì*        *ā-kó*        *āy-ómá*  
 Bung    DJ    P1    eat    5-money    1-POSS  
 ‘Bung squandered/consumed my money.’

The examples in (33) illustrate how certain resources, i.e. *àʒú* ‘time’ (a), *kàtsɔʔ* ‘bricks’ (b), *ndzísá* ‘fabric’ (c), *kàʃí* ‘space’ (d), and *àkó* ‘money’ (e) are depleted. In each case a greater amount of the resource is used whereas the desire is that a lesser quantity should have been sufficient. In (a), the job takes up too much time, just like the building that requires more bricks for its construction (b), the dress that takes up more fabric (c), the tree that takes up more space than is desired (d), and the human agent who uses up money in a way that is not expected (e).

Although the agent derives pleasure from using someone else’s money in (33e), the metaphor’s entailment is categorised as depletion rather than pleasure from the perspective of the speaker who regrets and disapproves of the action, as discussed above in (3.1.1.1). The speaker regrets that the agent has used up the money either without authorisation or in a way that was not expected.

That depletion entailments are limited to EAT is confirmed by the fact that any attempt to replace the verb ‘eat’ in (33) with ‘drink’ produces only ungrammatical constructions, as illustrated in (34).

- (34) a. *\*à-ʃéʔ*        *yén*        *á*        *ŋú-ú*        *ā-ʒú*  
 5-work    DEM    DJ    drink-PROG    5-time  
 ‘This job is \*drinking time.’
- b. *\*à-ŋgàŋ*        *yén*        *á*        *ŋú*        *ʷlí*        *kà-tsɔʔ*  
 5-house    DEM    DJ    drink    PO    7-brick  
 ‘This house has \*drunk too many bricks.’

Babanki extensions categorised under “depletion” are classified as “destruction” extensions in a number of languages, e.g. Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam 2017), Amharic (Newman & Aberra 2009), Korean (Song 2009). The classification is based on what happens

to the patient, i.e., food, when taken whole or piecemeal into the mouth, crushed and chewed (i.e., masticated) by means of the teeth, tongue and palate and then swallowed. The reduction of food into small particles is considered to be “destruction”, and the metaphorical extensions are based on the destruction or transformation of the patient. In Babanki, however, the patient is not really “destroyed” and the target meaning is rather something like “use up beyond a prototypical limit”, and is better described as “depletion”.

### 3.1.2 *Winning*

Immaterial gains are conceptualised as eating, motivated by the structural metaphor WINNING IS EATING. In contrast to the metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING, the benefit gained does not reside in the acquisition of some material possession, but rather in some advantage gained in the course of a competition and at the expense of some other participant. Both metaphors are also linked by virtue of the altrimaldeficiary effect of deprivation which the appropriation inevitably has on the prior owner, just as the triumph of winning has for the loser. The applicability of this metaphor is motivated by the positive sensory experiences that are linked to the internalisation of food items being mapped onto the pleasant feelings that an individual experiences as a result of winning, as in the following examples.

#### (35) WINNING IS EATING

- a. *Búŋ á zí ʰlí (wàyn á) kà-ńíŋ*  
 Bung DJ eat PO 1.child in 7-running  
 ‘Bung has won (beaten the child) in the race.’
- b. *Kàmàlún á zí ʰlí (fə̀lāns á) b̄*  
 Cameroon DJ eat PO France in 1.ball  
 ‘Cameroon has won (beaten France) in the football game.’
- c. *Búŋ á zí ʰlí (wàyn á) ntán yì*  
 Bung DJ eat PO 1.child in 9.quarrel DEM  
 ‘Bung has won (defeated the child) in that quarrel.’
- d. *Búŋ á zí ʰlí (ndzì?sə̀ á) nsó?*  
 Bung DJ eat PO 1.teacher in 9.court\_case

yì

DEM

‘Bung has won (defeated the teacher) in that court case.’

- e. *Búŋ á zí lí ndón*  
 Bung DJ eat PO 9.cup  
 ‘Bung has won the cup (trophy).’

- f. *Búŋ á zí lí ã-kó*  
 Bung DJ eat PO 5-money  
 ‘Bung has won a lottery.’

The optional mention of the opponents in (35a–d) suggests that either the “competition”, i.e. *kàpínj* ‘race’, *b̄* ‘football game’, *ntánj* ‘quarrel’, or the *nsó?* ‘court case’, or the opponent in the competition could be conceptualised as the patient and appear as direct object of *zí* ‘eat’. The following entailments are included in this structural metaphor WINNING IS EATING: (a) the agent acquires some immaterial gain, which (b) secures him or her an advantage (profit, gain, or benefit), (c) the agent derives a positive effect from winning, (d) the agent’s winning is to the detriment of some other participant.

### 3.1.3 Mutual agreement

Agreement between individuals or groups of people is lexicalised in the verb stem *zímá* ‘agree with each other’ (used only with plural subjects), as exemplified in (36) below. The verb stem *zímá* is derived from the root *zí* ‘eat’ by the associative extension *-má* (Hyman 2018: 182) which expresses a social stem, i.e. the notion of cooperation of two or more participants. The semantic link which connects the source meaning ‘eat’ and the derived meaning ‘agree’ resides in the conventional practice of sealing an official agreement by both parties breaking and eating kolanuts together. The semantic transfer which derives the notion of mutual agreement from the notion of eating thus seems to be metonymical in nature in that shared consumption of kolanuts is taken to refer to the agreement that it seals.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> In addition, one might also argue that the metonymy ACHIEVING MUTUAL AGREEMENT IS EATING together also supports and strengthens the structural metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING, due to their convergence in the concept of pleasure. The mutual agreement achieved between two parties is a source of pleasure in that both gain mutual benefit from each other which is equal to the pleasure gained in a shared meal. And this corresponds to the pleasure a new owner

## (36) ACHIEVING MUTUAL AGREEMENT IS EATING TOGETHER

- a. *vàwé á zí-má ʰlí*  
 3PL DJ eat-ASS PO  
 ‘They have agreed.’
- b. *váyáŋ á kó ʰzí-má (bwén)*  
 1PL.INCL DJ NEG eat-ASS NEG  
 ‘We are not in good terms with them.’

The associative verb *zí-má* is specialised for the derived meaning ‘agree with each other’. The original meaning of its source *zí* ‘eat’ is no longer available in *zí-má*. In order to express the sharing of a meal one has to resort to periphrastic means, e.g. with the adverbial *ámúʔú* ‘together’ (37).

- (37) a. *vàwé zí ʰlí kà-bán ámúʔú*  
 3PL eat PO 7-fufu together  
 ‘They have eaten fufu together.’
- b. *vàwé pfiʔ ʰlí à-bí ámúʔú*  
 3PL chew PO 5-kolanut together  
 ‘They have not eaten kolanut together.’

## 3.2 Semantic extensions of DRINK

Semantic extensions that radiate from DRINK are based on two structural metaphors, namely, ABSORPTION IS DRINKING and INHALATION IS DRINKING. The two stages of getting drinks into the mouth and eventually swallowing which are included in the meaning of the source verb *nú* ‘drink’ motivate its metaphorical extension to express absorption and inhalation. The metaphor ABSORPTION IS DRINKING (3.2.1) is based on the construal of the inanimate locus of absorption as personified agent of a drinking action while the metaphor INHALATION IS DRINKING (3.2.2) is based on the extension of eligible patients from liquids to aeriform or gaseous materials.

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may derive from appropriating and spending a new resource as entailment from the metaphor APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING.

### 3.2.1 Absorption

In the process of absorption, a liquid substance such as *mənzi?* ‘oil’ (38a–b) or *mú<sup>u</sup>* ‘water’ (38c–e) penetrates a locus, i.e. infiltrates some porous or permeable material such as *əngəm* ‘plantain’ (38a), *pwəfpwəf* ‘puff puff’ (CPE) (38b)<sup>24</sup>, *nsé* ‘soil’ (38c), *kəbáyn* ‘fufu’ (38d) and *ndzi<sup>u</sup>sá* ‘dress’ (38e) up to the point of soaking or satiating it. This process is conceptualised via the metaphor ABSORPTION IS DRINKING in Babanki. The semantic transfer underlying this metaphor resides in the construal of the locus of absorption as a metaphorical agent which actively initiates and willingly controls the process of taking in a liquid. At the same time, the theme role in the intrusion process is construed as a patient which undergoes reduction.

#### (38) ABSORPTION IS DRINKING

- a. *Búŋ káj ə-ŋgəm yó n-nú mə-nzi?*  
 Bung fry 5-plantain DJ N-drink 6a-oil  
 ‘Bung fried plantain and it absorbed oil.’
- b. *pwəfpwəf á nú <sup>u</sup>lí mə-nzi?*  
 1.puff\_puff DJ drink PO 6a-oil  
 ‘The puff puff has absorbed oil.’
- c. *nsé á nú <sup>u</sup>lí mú<sup>u</sup> myì*  
 9.soil DJ drink PO 6a.water DEM  
 ‘The soil has absorbed that water.’
- d. *kə-báyn ká nú <sup>u</sup>lí mú<sup>u</sup> wàyn á*  
 7-fufu DJ drink PO 6a.water 1.child DJ  
*ŋ-kú?sá*  
 N-add  
 ‘The fufu has absorbed water and the child has added more.’
- e. *wàyn tɸù ndzi<sup>u</sup>-sá sá n-nú mú<sup>u</sup>*  
 1.child soak dress-10<sup>25</sup> DJ N-drink 6a.water

<sup>24</sup> Puff puff is the Cameroonian Pidgin English name of a popular West African fluffy and slightly crunchy doughnut made by deep frying dough in oil.

<sup>25</sup> The noun class marker appears as a suffix since the noun *ndzi<sup>u</sup>-sá* ‘dress’ is from class 10 which is marked by the *-sá* suffix in Babanki as opposed to the rest of the classes which are marked by prefixes.

*mw-ḡmà*  
6a-POSS

‘The child soaked dresses and they absorbed my water.’

The construal of the liquid as patient in a metaphorical drinking process entails the notion of its depletion, i.e. as more liquid comes to be soaked in, the amount remaining outside decreases markedly in quantity. In (38a–b), the quantity of oil that would have been used to fry more plantains, puff puff or other items is depleted by the item fried and in (38c–e) the water is soaked up by the item involved requiring more water to be supplied.

Absorption metaphors in other languages, e.g. Amharic (Newman & Aberra 2009) are mapped from the positive benefits derived from drinking to the effect the absorbed liquids have on the receiving objects. As in Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam 2017), what is evident in Babanki is “internalisation” rather than “entity benefit” since not all absorption/internalisation of liquids is beneficial to the consumer. As is well known, some liquids may provide the consumer with the desired positive sensory feeling, but may not be beneficial. The focus, therefore, is on the absorption, not the benefits.

Absorption metaphors are restricted to DRINK and using eat leads to the collapse of the metaphor, as exemplified in (39).

- (39) a. \**Búŋ káŋ ā-ŋgòm yá n-zí mā-ŋzí?*  
Bung fry 5-plantain DJ N-eat 6a-oil
- b. \**pwə́fpwə́f á zí ʷlí mā-ŋzí?*  
1.puff\_puff DJ eat PO 6a-oil

### 3.2.2 Inhalation

The extensions in this subgroup are restricted to DRINK and describe the smooth, continuous, unimpeded intake of stimulants through the nasal-oral tract. As noted by Song (2009: 205) “gas and gas-like substances are akin to liquid in that they have a volume but no (definite) shape. They can also be inhaled through the nose - or the mouth if required - without interruptions, just as liquid is taken through the mouth into the stomach and intestines with virtually no interruption”. It is this smooth, continuous, uninterrupted intake that motivates the metaphorical extensions. The inhaling or smoking interpretation is obtained by collocating *ɲú* ‘drink’ with *kə̀bhì?* ‘dust’ (40a) or *ndə̀bò?*

‘cigarette’ (40b), *kəfú* ‘medicine’ (40c), *kətátá?* ‘cold’ (40d) *fəlí?* ‘smoke’ (40e), *kəfwəs* ‘fart’ (40f), and *kələm* ‘smell’ (40g).

(40) INHALATION IS DRINKING

- a. *Búŋ á ɲú kə-bhì?*  
 Bung F1 drink 7-dust  
 ‘Bung will inhale dust.’
- b. *Búŋ ə ɲú-ú ndə̀bò?*  
 Bung DJ drink-PROG 1.cigarette  
 ‘Bung is smoking a cigarette.’
- c. *Búŋ ə ɲú ʰlí kə-fú*  
 Bung DJ drink P0 7-medicine  
 ‘Bung has taken medicine.’<sup>26</sup>
- d. *wàyn ə ɲú ʰlí kə-tá? ə sá*  
 1.child DJ drink P0 7-cold CONJ now  
*kwá?à*  
 ill.PROG  
 ‘The child has been exposed to the cold and is now ill.’<sup>27</sup>
- e. *wàyn ə ɲú ʰlí fə-lí? ə n-tfō*  
 1.child DJ drink P0 19-smoke CONJ N-pass  
 ‘The child has been exposed to too much smoke.’
- f. *Búŋ ə ɲú ʰlí kə-fwəs ək-yə*  
 Bung DJ drink P0 7-fart 7-2SG  
 ‘Bung has smelt your fart.’
- g. *Búŋ ə kó kəŋ ə-ɲú kə-lēm ká*  
 Bung DJ NEG like INF-drink 7-smell 7.AM

<sup>26</sup> While the verb *ɲú* ‘drink’ is used for both liquid medicine and tablets, *mì* ‘swallow’ is used only if the medicine is in the form of tablets.

<sup>27</sup> Unlike ‘cold’, ‘heat’ is not encoded by *ɲú* ‘drink’ but by *līm* ‘be(come) hot’, as in the following example.

*ə-í ə līm-ə á ə-wèn ə wàyn*  
 8-place DJ be(come) hot-PROG at 5-body 5.AM 1.child  
 ‘The child feels hot.’

*nàm*

1.meat

‘Bung doesn’t want to inhale the smell of meat.’

Compared to the prototypical drinking scenario the only semantic parameter that changes in these metaphors is the patient, while the semantic characteristics of the agent role remain the same as with the prototypical meaning. Other languages in which inhalation is conceptualised via drinking include Amharic (Newman & Aberra 2009), Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam 2017), Hausa (Jaggar & Buba 2009), Korean (Song 2009), Lango (Noonan 1992), Puluwat (Elbert 1972).

An attempt to use EAT in these extensions makes the metaphors collapse since the metaphors of inhaling or smoking are restricted to DRINK, as illustrated in (41).

(41) a. \**Búŋ á ʒí kà-bhì?*  
 Bung F1 eat 7-dust  
 ‘Bung will \*eat dust.’

b. \**Búŋ á ʒí-í ndòbò?*  
 Bung DJ eat-PROG 1.cigarette  
 ‘Bung will \*eat a cigarette.’

## 4 Summary

The generic consumption verbs *ʒí* ‘eat’ and *nú* ‘drink’ undergo various semantic extensions in Babanki, both metaphorical and metonymical. The proliferation of figurative meanings is more common with EAT than with DRINK, as recurrently observed crosslinguistically, e.g. for Amharic (Newman & Aberra 2009), Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam 2017), and Korean (Song 2009). Semantic extensions of *ʒí* ‘eat’ are based on two closely related overarching structural metaphors, i.e. APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING and WINNING IS EATING. The first metaphor construes the internalisation of non-food items such as material possessions as ingestion of food, and is thus based on another metaphor RESOURCES ARE FOOD. The second metaphor casts the acquisition of immaterial advantage gained in a competition in the mould of eating. Further entailments of these metaphors have been traced along three separate lines of extension in a step-by-step fashion leading up to the target concepts, i.e. the altrimage-

ciary effects of appropriation of resources, the pleasure of enjoying resources and the depletion of resources, as visualised below in table (42). The conceptualisation of ACHIEVING MUTUAL AGREEMENT BY EATING TOGETHER must be treated separately on both formal and semantic grounds. First, it is not directly based on the verb *ʒí* ‘eat’, but rather on its social verb stem *ʒímá*. Second, the semantic transfer involved is not metaphorical in nature, but rather metonymical in that the notion of mutual agreement is derived from the conventional practice of sealing official agreements by breaking and eating kola-nuts together.

Semantic extensions that radiate from *ɲí* ‘drink’ are accounted for in two structural metaphors: INHALATION IS DRINKING and ABSORPTION IS DRINKING. While the first metaphor is simply based on the extension of eligible patients from liquids to aeriform or gaseous materials, the second metaphor is rather based on the construal of the inanimate locus of absorption as personified agent of a drinking action.

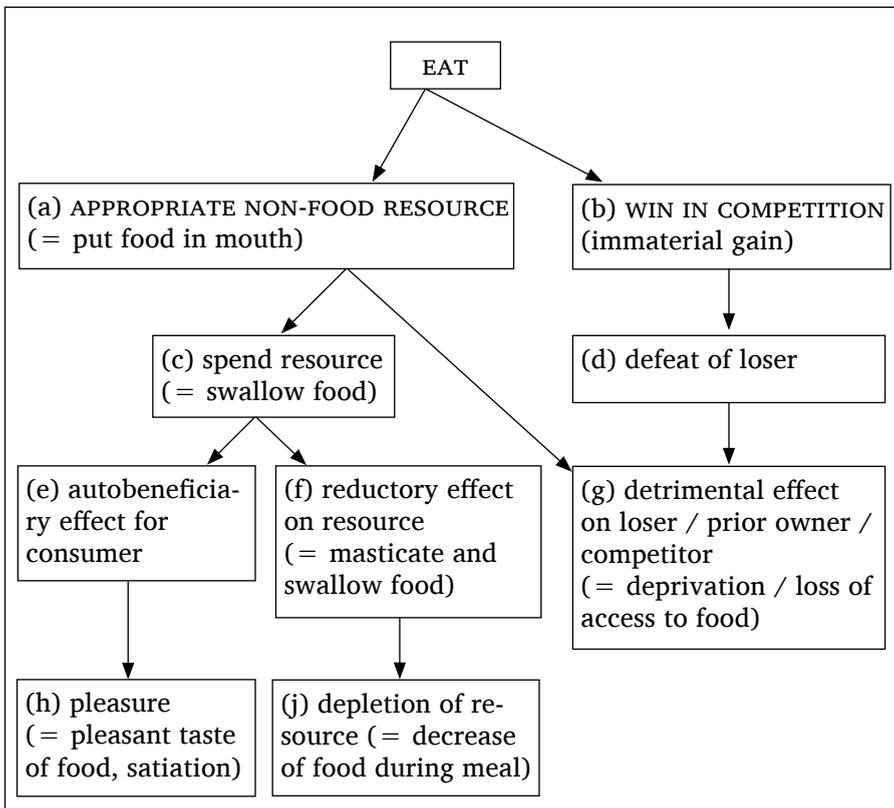
(42) Babanki semantic extensions of EAT and DRINK

Basic concept	Steps of extension
	> appropriate resources (non-food items) > consume / enjoy resources irretrievably > deprive another party from resources > derive an autobeneficiary effect from consumption
EAT	> gain possession of resources (non-food items) > use of resources beyond prototypical limit > deprive another party from resources > reductory effect on resources > depletion
	> win competition (immaterial gain) > derive an autobeneficiary effect from winning > detrimental effect for loser
EAT TOGETHER	> achieve mutual agreement
DRINK	> soaking in of liquid into porous material > porose material ingests liquid > absorb (inanimate “agent”) > reductory effect on liquid
	> ingestion of aeriform or gaseous materials > inhale

The entailments of the two basic metaphors derived from EAT in table (42) above, i.e. APPROPRIATION OF RESOURCES IS EATING and WINNING IS EATING, can be unified in a single semantic network in (43)

which exposes two crucial dimensions of the conceptual extensions branching off from the source concept EAT. First, it allows for an easy identification of areas of overlap in the metaphors' entailments. Thus, the altrimaleneficiary effect can be seen to result from both metaphors, i.e. it follows as the defeat of the loser in a competition from the fact that the winner takes the gain, according to the metaphor WINNING IS EATING; and at the same time it also follows as the deprivation of prior owners or competitors, according to the metaphor APPROPRIATION of resources is eating. The pleasure effect results from the enjoyable taste of food and the feeling of satiation on the side of the consumer under the appropriation metaphor, while it also results as the winner's triumph from the winning metaphor.

(43) Unified model of semantic extensions of EAT



The second dimension the network aims to reveal is the matching of individual entailments with individual aspects of the source concept EAT, as explicitly detailed in the bracketed expressions. Thus, the appropriation of non-food resources and the immaterial gain acquired by winning a competition correspond to the intake of food in the mouth under the source concept. Spending the resources is paralleled by the act of swallowing the food. The pleasure the new proprietor derives from spending the resources as well as the triumph the winner experiences when winning the competition can be equated with the positive sensory experiences derived from the pleasant taste of food and the feeling of satiation on the side of the consumer. The detrimental effect on the side of the loser as well as the prior owner or competitor corresponds to their deprivation and loss of access to food. Finally, the depletion of the resource corresponds to the decrease of the food during the meal resulting from its destruction by the process of mastication and swallowing.

Crosslinguistically, metaphorical extensions of either EAT or DRINK may both present pleasant and unpleasant sensory experiences, e.g. extensions from *shaa* ‘drink’ in Hausa (Jaggar & Buba 2009). Although the verbs for EAT and DRINK express universal activities, since everyone eats and drinks, the activities are conceptualized differently in different cultures. As pointed out by Adjei & Atintono (2009: 192) “there will be variations in the extent to which people from different cultural settings profile the interpretations of the metaphorical expressions. There is a strong relationship between a people’s conceptual, environmental and cultural experiences and their linguistic systems which is shared across cultures”. This accounts for the remarkable absence in Babanki of some metaphorical extensions of EAT and DRINK attested in other languages, e.g. extensions of EAT for sexual intercourse, as in Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam 2017), Hausa (Newman 2009, Jaggar & Buba 2009), Zulu (Newman 2009), Swahili (Sheikh & Wolff 1981) and Camfranglais (Stein 2021: 172), for kill something / someone in Amharic (Newman & Aberra 2009), Akan (Agyepong, Amfo & Osam 2017), Hausa (Jaggar & Buba 2009), Ewe and Dagaare (Adjei & Atintono 2009), and the extensions of DRINK for undergoing trouble and enduring painful experiences, as in Hausa (Jaggar & Buba 2009). On the other hand, the fact that EAT (and DRINK) activities are conceptualized differently in different cultures accounts for the presence in Babanki of the metonymy

ACHIEVING MUTUAL AGREEMENT IS EATING TOGETHER, which, to our knowledge, has not been reported for other languages.

## Abbreviations

♯ downstep, 3SG third person singular, 1PL first person plural, 3PL third person plural, 1...19 noun classes, AM associative marker, ASS associative, AUX auxiliary, CON consecutive, CONJ conjunction, DEM demonstrative, DJ disjoint, F1 Immediate future tense, H high tone, IMP imperative, INCL inclusive, INF infinitive, L low tone, M mid tone, N nasal, NEG negative, PO immediate past tense, P1 hodiernal past tense, POSS possessive, PREP preposition, PROG progressive, QUES question, SFX suffix.

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