

# Metaphors in Shona: A Cognitive Approach<sup>1</sup>

N. E. MBERI

*Department of African Languages and Literature, University of Zimbabwe*

## Abstract

*This article discusses the pervasiveness of metaphors in everyday Shona language. It argues that metaphorical expressions are not mere words, but they are part of a much bigger way of conceptualizing things. Examples are given to show how everyday metaphorical expressions are based on a much larger set of conceptual metaphors. The article takes a cognitive view which sees metaphors as one of the basic human strategies for dealing with our environment in that we use existing physical concepts in our environment to conceptualize more abstract concepts. This kind of metaphorical extension from one domain to another plays a very important role in the extension of the lexicon.*

## Introduction

Metaphor has been studied from a number of different perspectives, from time immemorial. It is studied in a wide variety of disciplines including, linguistics, philosophy, literary studies, psychology and education among others. Some scholars have traced the study of metaphor to as far back as the Aristotelian era. In Aristotle's well-known works *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* most studies focus on his discussion of the place of metaphor in language as well as its relationship with communication. For a long time the dominant view of metaphor was that it is the "exclusive domain of literary scholars and the odd linguist who was interested in rhetoric or stylistics" (Ungerer and Schmid 1996: 114). This traditional view of metaphor in which it is regarded as a linguistic phenomenon which falls largely in the realm of "poetic" or "figurative" language relegates this very important phenomenon to the level of an "ornamental device used in rhetorical style" (Ungerer and Schmid 1996: 114).

Lately many works have been written that question this traditional notion of metaphor. No attempt is made in this article to chronicle the development of metaphor research. This article focuses on what we call the "everyday

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metaphor" in Shona. Shona is a Bantu language spoken by about 75% of Zimbabwe's population, currently estimated at about 13 million people. We argue, in this article, that the pervasiveness of metaphor in Shona has not been recognised because the study of metaphor in Shona has not benefited from the recent developments resulting from the proliferation of works that have taken a cognitive view of metaphor in the past 20 years or so.

In our view the watershed on the metaphor research landscape is marked by the publication of two monumental works which radically changed the view of metaphor from "a device of poetic imagination and rhetorical flourish" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 3), to a more contemporary theory in which metaphor is regarded as a phenomenon that is "deeply engrained in the cognitive processes, social acts and verbal usage" (Dirven and Paprotte 1985: vii). The two monumental works are *Metaphor and Thought* (1979), a collection of articles edited by Ortony, and the book, *Metaphors We Live By*, written by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Other works that take this cognitive approach to metaphor include the writings of such scholars as Dirven (1985), Lakoff (1993), Lakoff and Turner (1989), Lakoff and Johnson (1999) and Fauconnier (1994) among others. One central idea running through these works is that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life. As Lakoff and Turner (1989: xi) put it,

metaphor is a tool so ordinary that we use it unconsciously and automatically, with so little effort that we hardly notice it. It is omnipresent: metaphor suffuses our thoughts, no matter what we are thinking about.

Before we go on to discuss what has since been called the "contemporary theory of metaphor" as the theory is called by Lakoff (1993: 202) we need to first of all discuss some of the assumptions of the traditional approach to metaphor and what the implications of these assumptions have been on the study of metaphor in Shona.

### Assumptions of the Traditional View of Metaphor

Some of these assumptions have already been mentioned in the introduction above. The first assumption of the traditional view of metaphors is that they are seen, like all other rhetorical devices, as being deviations from everyday language usage and they are seen as being "parasitic on the core semantics and literal meaning" (Fauconnier 1994: 1). This assumption is based on the premise that "all everyday conventional language is literal and none is metaphorical" (Lakoff 1993: 04).

The second assumption is that metaphors are merely a matter of words. To illustrate the point that metaphor is not just mere words Sweetser (1990: 8) gives the example of the use of the word "white" to mean "honest" or "candid" rather than using the word for "purple." She argues that it is a fact about the cultural community that they see whiteness as metaphorically

standing for honesty or moral purity. She also says that this system of metaphorical uses of colour terms is not based on a systematic correlation between colours and morality in the world but is present in the speakers' linguistic and cultural models.

Most students of Shona would give the following examples of *metaphor*:

(1) *Tendai ishumba pabasa*

Tendai .i-shumba pa-basa

CL.1A-Tendai COP.PRE-lion CL.16-work

"Tendai is a lion at work" i.e.

"Tendai is a hard worker"

(2) *mukomana uyu inguruve yemunhu*

mu-komana u-yu .i-nguruve ye-munhu

CL.1-boy DEM-this COP.PRE-pig POSS.PRE-CL.1-person

"this boy is a pig" i.e.

"this boy has dirty habits"

(3) *murume uyu ibere remunhu*

mu-rume u-yu i-bere re-mu-nhu

CL.1-man DEM-this COP-hyena POSS-CL.1-person

"this man is a hyena"

"this man is a coward"

In the above examples, the traditional theory of metaphor simply takes them to be a matter of language where we have a substitution of literal words with metaphorical words. For example, the approach taken by the rhetorician Richards (1936), who is cited in Hoffman and Honneck (1980: 5), identifies three things in a metaphor, the thing that is being commented upon, the *topic* which he called the *tenor*, the thing which is used to talk about the topic, which he called the *vehicle*, and the relation between the topic and the vehicle, which he calls the *ground*. Using Richards's analysis the three examples given above can then be analysed as shown in Table 1 below.

The traditional view of metaphor would concentrate on the principle of transference of qualities from one thing to another, which is a result of using the *vehicle* in place of the ordinary language. In example (1) the vehicle *shumba* "lion" is being used in lieu of the literal language which might be *anoshanda chaizvo pabasa* "he is hardworking."

In example (2) the vehicle *nguruve* "pig" is used in lieu of *ane hutsvina* "he is a very dirty person". And in example (3) the vehicle *bere* "hyena" is used to replace the literal language *anotyia chaizvo* "he is a coward" or *anoda nyama zvakanyanya* "he likes meat a lot." According to this view,

Table 1

Metaphor	Topic	Vehicle	Ground
(1) Tendai ishumba pabasa	Tendai "a name"	shumba "lion"	anoshanda chaizvo "he is hardworking"
(2) mukomana uyu inguruve yemunhu	mukomana "boy"	nguruve "pig"	"ane hutsvina" "he is a dirty person"
(3) murume uyu ibere remunhu	murume "man"	bere "hyena"	anotya chaizvo "he is a coward" OR anoda nyama zvakananya "he likes meat a lot"

metaphor was defined as "a novel or poetic linguistic expression where one or more words for a concept are used outside of their normal conventional meaning to express a "similar concept" (Lakoff 1993: 02). This brings us to the third assumption of the traditional approach to metaphor. There has to be literal language first, for us to have metaphor.

We argue that there are instances in Shona, in which we have metaphorical language that does not seem to start from literal language. We will come back to these assumptions later on after we have discussed the levels of metaphor.

### Levels of Metaphor

It is not possible, in this article, to discuss all levels of metaphor. By levels of metaphor we are referring to the following types of metaphor as was suggested by Dirven (1985: 88) that are determined by the level of linguistic structure that we will be looking at as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2:

Levels of Linguistic Structure	Type of Metaphor	
phono	logy	sound metaphor
lexi	s	word metaphor
synt	ax	phrase metaphor
dis	course	discourse metaphor
morpholog	semantics	

Source: Dirven (1985: 88)

Dirven uses the term *sound metaphor* to refer to this phenomenon where "given sound combinations are used in a great number of words with specific meanings" (Dirven 1985: 88). He gives the example of the combination *sw-* in English which is used in motion words that show 'curved' or 'swift' action and he gives the examples of words like *swerve, swing, swipe, swift, swell, swirl and swarm*. In Shona, there are verbs which start with the combination *dh-* in words like,

-*dhuguka*, "come out or go out quickly-making some noise"

-*dhuma*, "strike against", -*dhubuka* "come out quickly from small mouth (liquid)",

-*dhuuka*, "loud explosion", -*dhovhora* "pierce soft object", -*dhonora* "constant hitting with hard object on a hard surface" where the sound /d/ in this set of words meaning something making a heavy sound.<sup>2</sup>

*Word metaphors* are those words that are used as "new vehicles for already familiar or newly experienced tenors." In Shona, for example, the word *ziso* "eye" is the vehicle of many different tenors as can be seen in Table 3 below. Two examples are given below:

(4) *ndiri ziso renyu*

ndi-ri ziso re-nyu

1SG-be CL.5-eye POSS.PRE-you

"I am your eye" .i.e.

"I am your informant"

(5) *pane ziso rake*

pa-ne ziso ra-ke

CL.16-to.be CL.5-eye POSS.PRE-him/her

"where his/her eye is" .i.e.

"where his/her hope is"

The next type of metaphor is the *phrase or sentence metaphor*. Dirven (1985: 90) gives Churchill's famous metaphor *iron curtain* as an example of a phrase metaphor. In the case of *word metaphors* that we looked at above, the expressive power of metaphor comes mainly from one single word. In *phrase or sentence metaphors*, the expressive power comes from more than one vehicle. One vehicle might be more important than the other, but they both contribute to the expressive power of the metaphor. In Shona, such phrase metaphors are often found in proverbs, for example:

(6) *imbwa nyoro ndidzo tsengi dzamatowo*

2. I am indebted to Moreblessings Chitauro-Mawema for providing me with these examples of phonological metaphor which she came across while editing *Duramazwi ReChiShona* (1996).

"soft dogs are the ones that chew the animal skins"  
 "quiet people can do the unexpected"

In the above proverb the expressive power of *imbwa nyoro* "soft dogs" only comes out as a result of the combination of the two vehicles *imbwa* "dogs" and *nyoro* "soft".

As for the *discourse metaphors*, there are many animal stories in Shona which are "anthropomorphized" in the same fashion as George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. It should be pointed out that any attempt to divide these metaphors into discrete levels will always be arbitrary because boundaries between these levels are fuzzy.

This article focuses on *word metaphors* because they clearly illustrate the pervasiveness of metaphor in everyday Shona language and they also show how metaphor plays an important role in extending the lexicon. This article builds on Pongweni (1989)'s work on figurative language in Shona. Pongweni (1989) is the only "odd linguist" who started abandoning the traditional view of metaphor and analyses metaphors in a number of Shona novels. In our view, Pongweni (1989) does not go far enough in showing the pervasiveness of the "everyday metaphor."

### The Cognitive View of Metaphor

The cognitive view of metaphor, as we have already pointed out, sees metaphor to be much more important and widespread than what existing studies in Shona have revealed. From a cognitive perspective metaphor is a "mapping" of the structure of a source model to target models. The metaphor "mapping" originates from cartography but is now considered as a mathematical term that refers to this transference of linguistic properties that are inherent in one category to another category. These linguistic properties are given various names in the cognitive literature; some call them "models", others call them "mental spaces" (Fauconnier 1994: 1), while others call them "domains" (Lakoff: 1993). The key issue here is that these mental spaces are part of language. Hence, Lakoff (1993: 203) argues that:

the generalizations governing poetic metaphorical expressions are not in language but in thought; they are general mappings across domains. These general principles which take the form of conceptual mappings apply not just to novel poetic expressions but to much of ordinary everyday language.

He also adds that:

The locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another. The general theory of metaphor is given by characterizing such cross-domain mappings.

And in the process, everyday abstract concepts like time, states, change, causation, and purpose also turn out to be metaphorical.

Table 3 below illustrates how a single word, *ziso* "eye" can be used metaphorically in a number of ways to show how everyday language is rife with metaphorical expressions.

Table 3

Metaphor	Literal Translation	Meaning
-bira ziso	steal for eye	<i>quick look</i>
-teya ziso	trap eye	<i>keep gazing at something</i>
kupa ziso	to give an eye	<i>to look at</i>
-isa ziso	put an eye	<i>to look at or focus on</i>
-buditsa ziso	bring out the eye	<i>to be on the watch out for or stern look</i>
pane ziso	where the eye is	<i>where one is looking at</i>
-tsvukisa ziso	make the eye red	<i>look at menacingly</i>

In our efforts to show the pervasiveness of the "everyday metaphor" in Shona we have selected a set of words denoting body-parts and another set of words denoting environmental phenomena and these are found in Tables 4 and 5 below. The choice of these body-part metaphors and those that refer to our physical environment comes from this cognitive view that language structure "is the product of our interaction with the world around us" (Heine 1997: 3). Heine (1997: 40) also says that the human body provides one of the most important models of expressing concepts. We use human categories to describe and understand non-human concepts. Because the human body is the most accessible to us in the world, it tends to be the most important model. The other set of metaphorical expressions in Table 5 are taken from our immediate environment.<sup>3</sup> So the choice of these body-part and environmental metaphorical expressions emanates from the cognitive view that we use existing cognitive models in the process of metaphorical mapping from one source model to another. We will not be able to give all the conceptual metaphors from which we get the metaphorical expressions listed in the Tables below. We will only analyze a few of them.

3. The anthropomorphic model uses human body parts as source models and the zoomorphic model takes the animal body parts as source models while the environmental landmark model takes such landmarks as the river, the sky, the house, and others as the source models in metaphorical extension. For a detailed discussion of these models see Svorou (1994).

Table 4: Shona Body-part Terms as Sources of Metaphorical Expressions

Body-part	English gloss	Metaphors
(a) musoro	head	<p><b>musoro wechitima</b> "head of train" i.e. "train engine"</p> <p><b>musoro wemba</b> "head of family" i.e. "breadwinner" or "main decision maker"</p> <p><b>musoro wenyaya</b> "head of story" i.e. "main issue"</p> <p><b>musoro wemubhedha</b> "head of bed" i.e. "the side where there one normally puts the head"</p> <p><b>musoro wechipikiri</b> "the head of a nail" i.e. "the top part of the nail"</p>
(b) matama	cheeks	<b>matama enzira</b> "the cheeks of the path" i.e. "edges of the path"
(c) huma	forehead	<b>huma yechitima</b> "the forehead of a train" i.e. "the front face of the engine"
(d) mwoyo	heart	<p><b>mwoyo wechibage</b> "the heart of a maize seed" i.e. "the nucleus of the maize seed"</p> <p><b>-tora mwoyo</b> "take someone's heart" i.e. "fall in love with that person"</p> <p><b>-rasa mwoyo</b> "throw away one's heart" i.e. "get disheartened"</p>
(e) ziso	eye	<b>ziso regumbo</b> "the eye of the leg" i.e. "ankle"
(f) garo	buttock	<b>garo remugomo</b> "the bottom of a container" i.e. "the base of the container"
(g) gumbo	leg	<b>gumbo rechigaro</b> "the leg of a chair or stool" i.e. one of those parts of a stool or chair that enables it to stand"
(h) muromo	mouth	<b>muromo wegejo</b> "the mouth of the plough" i.e. "the part of the plough that cuts into the soil" or "the ploughshare"
(i) dumbu	stomach	<b>dumbu rechitima</b> "the stomach of train" i.e. "the middle carriages of the train"
(j) muswe	tail	<b>kumuswe kwechitima</b> "the tail of a train" i.e. "the last carriages of the train"



**Table 5: Shona Landmark Terms and Other Terms from Our Environment as Sources of Metaphorical Expressions**

Shona word	English gloss	Metaphor
a) <b>denga</b>	sky	<b>denga remba</b> "the sky of the house" i.e. "the roof of the house"
b) <b>nyoka</b>	snake	<b>nyoka yemunhu</b> "a person who is a snake" i.e. "a dangerous double dealer"
c) <b>zizi</b>	owl	<b>zizi remunhu chairo</b> "he is a real owl" i.e. "he works all night"
d) <b>rwizi</b>	river	<b>ropa rakaita rwizi</b> "the blood was like a river" i.e. "a lot of blood was spilled"
e) <b>gomo</b>	mountain	<b>akapihwa gomo resadza</b> "he was given a mountain of sadza." i.e. "he was given a plate full of sadza"
f) <b>mhepo</b>	wind	<b>musha wapinda mhepo</b> "a wind has got into the village" "a quick spreading disease or problem has gripped a village" e.g. a series of deaths
g) <b>imba</b>	hut	<b>akaparadza imba yake</b> "he destroyed his hut/house" i.e. "he destroyed his family"
h) <b>dikita</b>	sweat	<b>vanorarama nedikita revamwe</b> "those who survive on other people's sweat" i.e. "those people who exploit other people"
i) <b>mutara</b>	a type of tree	<b>nyaya yakwira mutara</b> "this issue has climbed a mutara tree" i.e. "the issue has become more difficult"

### Analysis of Some of the Above Examples

We now look at some of the examples of metaphorical language that we gave in Tables 4 and 5 to illustrate that the metaphorical language would be part of a much bigger way of conceptualizing concepts. Take the example of the metaphorical language **musoro wechitima** "the head of a train" to refer to a train engine. Such an expression is not isolated. The conceptual metaphor in this case is the TRAIN-IS-A-BODY. Out of this conceptual metaphor, we can get a number of metaphorical expressions that are based on this conceptual metaphor that are used in everyday language. These are not just expressions; they are not mere words but our way of conceptualizing things.

In this metaphor the TRAIN-IS-A-BODY, the train is the target and the body is the source. There is a movement from the source domain to the target domain. The body that is referred to here is obviously not that of a human being but most likely that of a reptile like a snake or it can be that of a millipede. There are a number of other metaphorical expressions that would fit into this conceptual system. Some of them are found in the set of examples that are given in Table 4. Examples 4(c), 4(i) and 4(j) are metaphorical expressions, which have body-parts as source domains, and they are all coming from this conceptual metaphor where the train is a body.

- 4 (c) **huma yechitima** "forehead of the train" i.e. "*the front face of the train*"  
 4 (i) **dumbu rechitima** "the stomach of the train" i.e. "*the middle carriages of a train*"  
 4 (j) **kumuswe kwechitima** "the tail of the train" i.e. "*the last few carriages of a train (from the engine of the train)*"

A moving train is like a moving reptile or a millipede. The engine of the train is like the head of the body because it is the most important part of the whole body and it pulls the rest of the body. The middle of the train is compared to the stomach of the body. The many legs of the millipede are compared with the many wheels of the train. The passengers and the goods that get into the train are like the food that gets into the stomach of the train. Hence the metaphorical expression **padumbu pechitima** "the stomach of the train" when people say, for example, **motokari yakarovera padumbu pechitima** "the car hit the stomach of the train". So the whole set of metaphorical expressions are coming from this metaphor and this shows what we have said above that metaphor should be seen "not as a property of language but rather as a property of our conceptual system" (Katz 1998: 4).

Another metaphorical expression that we find in Table 4 involving **musoro** "head" is **musoro wemba** "head of family" i.e. "*the breadwinner*" or "*the chief decision maker*." In the Shona context, this traditionally refers to the father of the house. The conceptual metaphor can be seen as a "mapping", FAMILY-IS-A-BODY and according to Lakoff (1993: 207) such a mapping is "a set of ontological correspondences that characterize epistemic correspondences by mapping knowledge" about a family onto knowledge about the body. In this case, the family is the topic while the body is the tenor. The "similarities" or "correspondences" in the two categories FAMILY and BODY is that a body has a head as its most important part. The father is the head of the family, that is, the most important member of the family. This kind of metaphorical expression is more than just language in the sense that it reflects the worldview of a whole group of people at a point in

time. In this case we are using our existing knowledge about the human body in order to reason about the family unit. Using the metaphorical expression **baba musoro wemba** "the father is head of the family", we are not just substituting one word with another but it also means defining the roles of other members of the family. For example, the position of the mother and the position of the children within that family is reasoned using our knowledge about the body. The whole structure of the family can easily be decoded from the mappings that we find in these metaphorical expressions. Metaphor as we have pointed out earlier ceases to a matter of just words. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1999: 60) metaphors form "a huge part of our conceptual system and affect how we think and what we care about almost every waking moment."

The next metaphor that we get from the metaphorical expressions in Table 4 is that which takes a STORY-IS-A-BODY as we find in the expression **musoro wenyaya** "the head of the story" i.e. "the main issue." As we saw in the other body metaphors above, there is a mapping from a story, which has episodes or events. The mapping as mentioned above involves "ontological correspondences" between our knowledge of a STORY and our knowledge of a BODY. The main correspondence in this metaphor is the one we get from the metaphorical expression **musoro wenyaya** "the head of the story" i.e. "the main issue." Other correspondences would involve other parts of the body. Take for example the last concluding episode (that is if the episodes are arranged linearly) would correspond to the tail of the story.

There are so many metaphorical expressions involving the head that one finds in everyday Shona language. A few of these examples are found in Table 4 above and two of these are given as examples (7) and (8) below.

- (7) *musoro wechipikiri*  
 mu-soro we- chi-pikiri  
 CL.3-head POSS.PRE-CL.7-nail  
 "head of the nail" i.e.  
 "the top part of the nail"
- (8) *pamusoro pegomo*  
 pa-mu-soro pe-gomo  
 CL.16-CL.3-head POSS.PRE-CL.9-hill/mountain  
 "the head of a hill/mountain" i.e.  
 "the top of a hill/mountain"

### Metaphor and Lexicon Extension

Examples (7) and (8) above also show us the role of metaphor in extending the lexicon. There are no "literal" lexical items in Shona that refer to the

concepts that are being described by the metaphorical expressions in these examples. The question of how people acquire labels for concepts for which no previous designation exists or for which new designations are required is discussed in Heine *et al* (1991: 27). They list the following as some of the options:

- a) inventing new labels, that is, creating arbitrary combinations of sounds.
- b) borrowing from other dialects or languages,
- c) creating symbolic expressions such as onomatopoeia,
- d) composing and deriving new expressions from already existing lexical and grammatical forms,
- e) extending the use of existing forms for the expression of new concepts, commonly described strategies including analogical transfer, metonymy, metaphor and the like.

Heine *et al* (1991: 27) argue that, of all the above processes, options (d) and (e) are the most productive, especially metaphorical extension. Dirven (1985: 114) has also pointed out that "metaphorical processes seem to account for the greater part of meaning extension of lexical items." Below we provide more examples that show how the "everyday metaphor" plays an important part in the extension of the lexicon. In Table 4, in the case of **denga remba** "the sky of the hut" i.e. "roof" which is example (9) below, the metaphorical language does not necessarily replace literal language. In Shona, there is no term for "roof" other than the descriptive metaphorical expression **denga remba** "sky of the hut." This falsifies the assumption that we mentioned earlier on, that there has to be literal language that needs to be replaced for us to have a metaphor. Other examples in this category include **muromo wegejo** "mouth of the plough" i.e. "the ploughshave" in example 10 and **gumbo rechigaro** "the foot of the stool/chair" in example 11 below.

- (9) **denga remba**  
**denga re-mba**  
 CL.5-sky POSS-PRE-house/hut i.e.  
 "the sky of a house/hut" i.e.  
 "the roof of the house/hut"

- (10) **muromo wegejo**  
**mu-romo we-gejo**  
 CL.1-mouth POSS-PRE-plough  
 "mouth of the plough" i.e.  
 "the ploughshave"

- (11) **gumbo rechigaro**  
**gumbo re-chigaro**

CL.5-leg POSS.PRE-CL.7.stool or chair  
"leg of a stool or chair" i.e.  
*"one of those parts of a stool or chair that enables it to stand"*

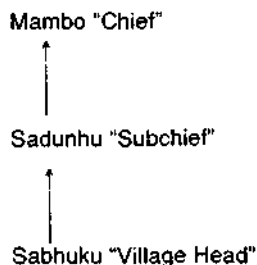
- (12) huma yeshangu  
huma ye-shangu  
CL.9-forehead POSS-PRE-CL.9-shoe  
"the forehead of a shoe" i.e.  
*"the front part of the shoe"*

The metaphorical expressions that we discussed so far are from Table 4, which have to do with parts of the body. We now move on to Table 5, where the key words in the metaphorical expressions make reference to environmental phenomena. In that table the metaphorical expression (i) **nyaya yakwira mutara** "the case or issue has climbed a **mutara** tree", is explained fully in example (13) below.

- (13) nyaya yakwira mutara  
nyaya ya-kwir-a mu-tara  
CL.9-case SP-climb-FV CL.3-tree  
"the case has climbed a **mutara** tree" i.e.  
*"the case has taken a new (difficult) dimension"*

The conceptual metaphor producing this metaphorical expression is, **CASE-IS-A-HUMAN BEING CLIMBING**. In this metaphor, the mapping is that of a **CASE** that is mapped with **PERSON** climbing a **mutara** tree. The way a case moves from a lower court to higher courts is likened to the way in which a human being climbs a **mutara** tree. In a traditional Shona court system, a case moves from **dare remusha** "village court" to **dare rasadunhu** "subchief's court" and then ultimately getting to **dare ramambo** "chief's court" as shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: The Traditional Court Hierarchy in Shona**



The following correspondences are derived from the metaphor:

- i) There is vertical movement in both cases, a case moves from a lower court to a higher court and a person moves from the ground to the top of a tree.
- ii) There are a number of obstacles in this vertical movement. It is very difficult to climb a *mutara* tree. This type of tree is very difficult to climb because it has a bushy top, which has strong closely intertwined branches that do not give much room for a human being to pass through. Apart from the closely intertwined branches, the tree has some very sharp thorns that also make it difficult to climb let alone the dangers of falling. It is very difficult to take a case right up to the chief's court. One has to pay the court officials, the messenger of court at the various levels and the possible punishment that the offender will have to go through as well as the possible embarrassment of losing the case.

It should also be pointed out that the climbing image is found in every aspect in life where success is conceptualized as going up. Those who have achieved their goals in life have a "higher" status than those who have not achieved their goals who have a "lower status." In traditional Shona society, the highest point in the social ladder is that of the chief.

In Table 5, we have the example of *mhepo* "wind" in the metaphorical expression *mhepo yapinda mumusha* "a wind has got into a village" which is fully explained in example (14) below:

- (14) *mhepo yapinda mumba*  
*mhepo ya- pind-a mu-mu-sha*  
 CL.9-wind CL.9SP-enter-FV CL.18-CL.3-village  
 "a wind has got into the village" i.e.  
 "a quick spreading disease or problem has got into the village"

The conceptual metaphor from which we derive this metaphorical expression is DISEASE-IS-A-WIND. Some of the ontological correspondences that form the conceptual system of the metaphor are as follows:

- i) a disease spreads quickly just like the wind moves very fast.
- ii) a disease causes widespread disaster within a short time, so does a wind.
- iii) a wind is personified and it enters the village so is a disease.

This goes back to the main point in this article, that metaphors are not just mere words but they are embedded in human cognition. It is part of a whole system of thought.

### Metaphor and Polysemy

In our discussion of the role of metaphor in extending the lexicon, we have so far been concentrating on the metaphorical expression of one type. We

have looked at the type of lexicon extension in which metaphorical expressions are used in cases where we do not have existing labels as shown in examples 7 to 12 above. We pointed out, for example, that we do not have an existing term for "roof" in Shona. We therefore extend the lexicon by using the metaphorical expressions like *denga remba* "the sky of the house/hut." The other type of lexicon extension involves polysemy.

The present writer, in his PhD dissertation, argues that a great deal of lexical polysemy is due to metaphorical extension. In that dissertation it is argued that multiple synchronic senses of a given word are normally related. In most cases, an account of the relationship between the senses reveals that one of the meanings is a metaphorical extension of the other.

Let us go back to example (14) above. We have already explained how the sense *mhepo* "disease" is a metaphorical extension of the sense *mhepo* "wind." Such kind of metaphorical extension plays a very important role in lexicon extension.

Another example of polysemy resulting from metaphorical extension is found in the word *nyaya* which we have already looked at. In one sense it means "a story" as the example which we discussed earlier on when we looked at the metaphorical expression *musoro wenyaya* "the head of the story" i.e. "the main issue." In this sense it means a narration of events. The other sense of *nyaya* "a case" as it is used in the example *nyaya yakwira mutara* "the issue has taken a new (difficult) dimension" that we looked at earlier on. The second meaning is a metaphorical extension of the first one in the sense that when you take an issue or a case to the courts one is normally asked to relate their story of what happened, narrating events as they occurred. Hence the use of the word *nyaya* to refer to "a case" is a metaphorical extension of the word *nyaya* in which it means "a story". We could go on to give many more examples which show that a great deal of polysemy, not only in Shona but in many languages, is a result of metaphorical extension.

## Conclusion

In this article we argue that the pervasiveness of the "everyday metaphor" has not been recognized in Shona linguistic studies because of the traditional view of metaphor in which it is regarded as merely a linguistic phenomenon. We take a contemporary cognitive view of metaphor which sees metaphors not just as words but as part of a much bigger way of conceptualizing things.

In our efforts to show that metaphors are not a property of language but a property of our conceptual system we gave examples of metaphorical expressions as well as the bigger conceptual metaphors from which these metaphorical expressions are derived. We showed that in these metaphorical

expressions there is a movement of one domain to another. As Swetseer (1990: 145) observed, there is a pervasive "metaphorical structuring of our internal mental world in terms of our physical world."

We used body-part metaphors and other metaphors that refer to our environment to show the cognitive view of language, that we use existing cognitive models in the process of mapping from one cognitive domain to another. We have especially focused on the ubiquitous nature of the everyday metaphors focusing on their role in lexicon extension.

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