

Selectional restriction in Idanre cooking verbs

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Abstract

A verb is a universal concept that is important when making a meaningful sentence. The term cooking verb is a segment under verb. Some scholars have worked on cooking verbs in other languages like Igbo. However, selectional restriction has not been the focus for analyzing cooking verbs. This research is to investigate the restrictions verb place on their object arguments, by introducing the semantic relationship between a verb and an object noun. This ensures the filtering out of object nouns that cannot co-occur with the verb. The research adopts the standard theory as a theoretical framework. The method of data collection is through one-on-one interaction with the competent native speakers of Idanre in Ondo state. The informants were ten in total, three male and seven female, which are within the age range of 50-70. The instrument used for data collection is a recorder. The research found that the verb of cooking can be classified into pre-cooking, cooking and post-cooking verbs. There is a generic cooking verb that can collocate with any object argument.

Keywords: Selectional restriction; Sub-categorization; Semantic features; Cooking verbs

1. Introduction

According to Wikipedia, cooking is the art, science and craft of using heat to prepare food for consumption. The act of cooking has been in existence for a very long time and it is widely practiced. Cooking is done in different ways based on how an individual wants it. It can be in form of roasting, boiling, steaming, toasting, grilling, frying and so on. Cooking has even grown to be an occupation and those who are into this work are called caterers or chefs. Changes have occurred with the tools used in cooking over time. For instance, the earthen pot was formerly used, then stove, then gas, now electric cooker and more are still coming. With this, cooking is made easier and faster.

2. Methodology

The data used in this research is the Idanre verb. There is a use of both primary and secondary data collection, however, more of primary data collection. The informants were 10 native speakers, with an age range of 50-65. The reason is that they know the indebted nature of the dialect more than the early age range. Due to the topic of the research, 7 female informants were interviewed and 3 male informants were interviewed. The reason is that the female counterparts are more of a “cooking person” than the male.

Another method of research used in data collection is observation, participant observation. It is done by the researcher engaging in cooking activities and taking note of how the participants make use of the verbs. The interview is carried out in the informants’ free time, although questions are asked a few times while cooking if the informants give the chance. The researcher makes use of a recorder during research, to compare what an informant said with what is written down, to ensure getting the data correctly. For the secondary data collection, the researcher sourced some

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cooking verb materials online both in English and Yoruba, to ask the informants what the data in English and Yoruba are in the Idanre dialect.

To acquire an easier and well-arranged work, the verbs were divided into three parts; pre-cooking, cooking and post-cooking verbs.

3. Significance of Study

The research is of significance to everyone and anyone that wants to do research work on selectional restriction. The reason is that this research is comprehensive and well explained, hence, it will be of great contribution to any researcher's work. This research will also be of great value to the Idanre speakers or anyone that wants to research the dialect. This research introduces a path of study on the Idanre dialect.

3.1. Sub-categorization of Pre-cooking Verbs

These verbs are centered around the actions that take place before cooking. They are grouped based on the function the verbs perform, to decode which nouns collocate with a particular verb. The pre-cooking verbs take object arguments that co-occur with them. It is so because some nouns can only collocate with a particular verb because they are semantically related to the verbs. The verbs to be examined are;

Verb of cutting: - *já* and *gé* "cut"

Verb of peeling: - *be*, and *re* "peel"

Hence, the semantic feature of these verbs filters out the other nouns that cannot collocate with them, where the sub-categorical features used for these are:-

[±breakable]: -This means that the object argument is liable to break.

[±measurable]: -The nouns collocating with the verb can be measured.

[±hand]: -Hand is used to achieve the aim of the verb.

[±object]: -An object is used to accomplish the aim of the verb.

[±powder]: -The nouns to be sieved must be ground fine particles.

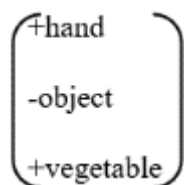
[±grain]: - This is a seed of grain that can be measured.

[±scale]: -The object noun must have a scale that will be peeled.

[±vegetable]: -The noun must be an edible part of a plant that can be cut.

For instance, verb of cutting: *já* and *gé*

Já [+V -N]



1b While *Gé* [+V -N]



The sub-categorical feature of “*ja*” and “*ge*” shows the nouns that collocate with each verb. As it is portrayed in the sentences below so has to know the usage is acceptable as

- a. Lola la gé eran nẹ

Lola IMP cut meat the

Lola go and cut the meat

- b. *Lola la jà eran nẹ

Lola IMP cut meat the

Lola go and cut the meat

- c. Bà Tope jà 'ta

Help Tope cut pepper

Help Tope to cut pepper

- d. *Bà Tope gé 'ta

Help Tope cut pepper

Help Tope to cut pepper

The verbs “*já*” and “*ge*” both stand for the verb “to cut” but have specific arguments they are restricted to. Checking the semantic feature of these verbs will help to know what differentiates them from one another, even though they are verbs “to cut”.

The placement of restriction is also seen in the object argument that collocates with the verb “to peel”. This verb is realized in three ways in Idanre dialect. They are “*be*” and “*re*”. Although they mean “to peel”, however, they have different object arguments attracted to them. For instance,

- a. Sola ti be isu

Sola PST peel yam

“Sola has peeled yam”

- b. Mope re eja

Mope peel fish

“Mope peel fish”

Example (a-b) shows the object argument that co-occurs with each verb, noting that this object cannot be used interchangeably for the verbs. The sub-categorization of each verb is;

Be [+V+N]

$$\begin{pmatrix} -\text{hand} \\ +\text{object} \\ -\text{scale} \end{pmatrix}$$

This means that in example(b), the object argument must not have feathers and the tool used to achieve this, is not the use of a hand but a knife which is classified under the object.

Re [+V +N]

$$\begin{pmatrix} +\text{hand} \\ -\text{object} \\ +\text{scale} \end{pmatrix}$$

This means that the object argument must not have a scale and the tool used to achieve this, is the use of a hand and not a knife. Hence the difference is seen with the semantic feature of each verb which gives room for the argument that can occur with it.

3.2. Sub-categorization of Cooking Verbs

Cooking can be done through these processes; roasting, frying, steaming, boiling and so. Selectional restrictions are also studied under the cooking verbs. This means that the verbs will be studied to know the object arguments they can collocate with in a sentence, since the verbs are intransitive verbs, by examining them by their semantic relationship with the verbs which are;

Verb of cooking: -*sè* and *tè* and *gún* “to cook”

Verb of frying: -*dín* and *gbá* “to fry”

Verb of burning: -*jó* “burn”

Verb of boiling: -*bọ* and *hó* “boil”

The sub-categorical features used to examine these verbs are;

[±water]: -This is a liquid that can go through the process of boiling.

[±fire]: -The object noun that co-occurs with a verb must have gone through fire.

[±oil]: -It is an edible liquid fat that is used to fry.

[±vulnerable]: -These nouns to co-occur with the verb are or are not exposed to getting burnt.

[±sand]: -This is the use of smaller particles to fry.

[±mortal]: -It is an instrument used for cooking.

[±cassava flakes]: -This feature is peculiar to the verb *tè* “to press”, which is also a form of cooking.

[±raw]: -The state of the noun determines the verb it co-occurs with.

[±solid]: -The noun to be boiled can be hard or liquid, in terms of water, which will determine the verb to collocate with.

Starting with the verb “to cook”, which is represented with *sè*, *tẹ* and *gún*. These verbs are different forms of cooking. The verb *sè* shows the action of cooking, even from its meaning than the verbs *tẹ* and *gún*. These verbs are different forms of cooking. The verb *sè* shows the action of cooking, even from its meaning than the verbs *tẹ* and *gún*. These verbs will be used in different sentence forms to know the arguments they collocate with.

a. M e sè ọbẹ lówó

I am cook soup presently

“I am cooking soup”

b. D a la sè ìresì

Should we IMP cook rice

“We should go and cook rice”

c. Fayo ti tẹ ẹbà
Fayo pst congeal cassava flakes

“Fayo has congealed cassava flakes”

d. Fayo ti gún isu
Fayo pst pound yam

“Fayo has pound yam”

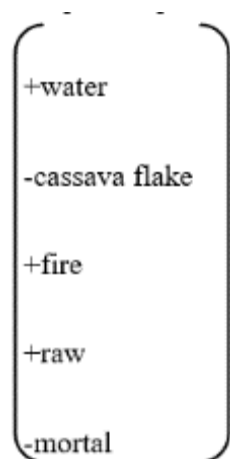
e. *Fayo ti tẹ isu

Fayo pst congeal pounded yam

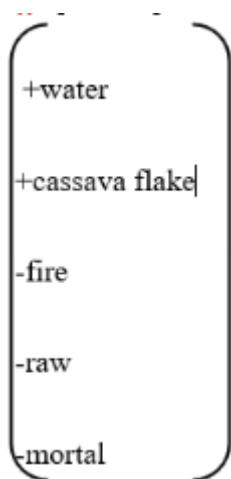
“Fayo has congealed pounded yam”

Examples (a-d) show the arguments each verb can collocate with but example (e) is ungrammatical because the argument it collocates with does not have any semantic relationship with it. The sub-categorize frame of the verbs is shown below

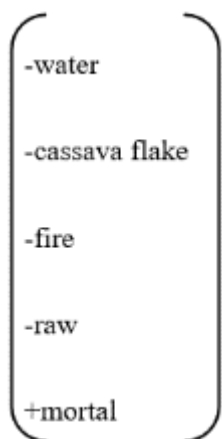
Sè [+V +N]



Tẹ [+V +N]



Gún [+V +N]



In the dialect under study, only the verb *tẹ* can collocate with the argument cassava flake and only the argument can collocate with the verb *tẹ* which results in actual cooking. While for others when used with this verb it means “to press”, which is under post-cooking verbs.

Another verb to be analyzed is the verb “to fry” *dín*. Taking the examples;

a. A ti dín eja àti eran nẹ

We pst fry fish and meat the

“We have fried the meat and fish”

b. Yẹ mi ti dín ẹpà

Mummy my pst fry groundnut

“My mummy has fried groundnut”

c. M e dín eyin

I am fry egg

“I am frying egg”

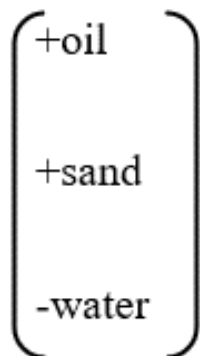
d. !M e dín omi

I am fry water

“I am frying water”

Examples (a-c) are grammatical because they are semantically related to the verb *dín* because they are arguments that can be fried. However, example (d) is ungrammatical and it is semantically filtered out because the object argument cannot be fried. The semantic features of the *dín* are;

Din [+V+N]



The verb *gbá* is also a verb that [+oil], although, the oil in question is palm oil while that of *dín* can be palm oil or vegetable oil. The verb *gbá* is used to cook the oil before it is used for any purpose it is going to serve. For instance;

a. M e gbá ekpo

I am bleach oil

“I am bleaching oil”

b. *Gbemi é gbá ata

Gbemi is bleach pepper

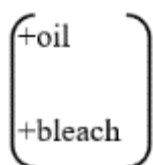
“Gbemi is bleaching pepper”

c. *Ojo ti gbá eran

Ojo pst bleach meat

“Ojo has bleached the meat”

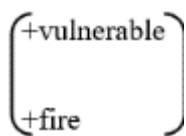
From the examples above, only example (a) shows the semantic relatedness between the verb and the object argument. Examples (b and c) are not semantically related so they are selectively restricted to co-occur with the verb. Thus, the sub-categorize frame of the verb is



The verb *jó* is the verb “to burn”. This verb indicates that an object is already destroyed by fire. In terms of food, not minding the process used in preparing the food, either by boiling or frying or roasting and so on, the verb that shows that the object is destroyed is the verb *jó*. Take these sentences for example;

- a. Funtọ ti jó oúnjẹ nẹ
Funtọ pst burn food the
“Funtọ has burnt the food”
- b. Funtọ ti jó èwà nẹ
Funtọ pst burn beans the
“Funtọ has burnt the beans”
- c. Funtọ ti jó ídọtí nẹ
Funtọ pst burn refuse the
“Funtọ has burnt the refuse”
- d. *Funtọ ti jó omi nẹ
Funtọ pst burn water the
“Funtọ has burnt the water”
- e. *Funtọ ti jó òkúta nẹ
Funtọ pst burn stone the
“Funtọ has burnt the stone”

Examples (a-c) show the different nouns that can be vulnerable to fire. As seen above, examples (a and b) are food items while example (c) is not a food item but it is also vulnerable to fire. While examples (d and e) are the opposite of examples (a-c) because they are not vulnerable to fire. The semantic features of the verb are;



Examples (a-c) could collocate with this verb because they exhibit these semantic features, unlike examples (d and e) which do not exhibit the semantic features.

The verb of boiling is also examined to study the argument they are restricted to. The verb “to boil” in the dialect of study are *bọ* and *hó*. The verbs are semantically similar but are differentiated by the content that is boiled. The verb *bọ* is used when boiling solid edible substance, like in the example below;

- a. Funtọ ti bọ eran
Funtọ pst boil meat
“Funtọ has boiled meat”
- b. Funtọ ti bọ irèsì

Funto pst boil rice

“Funto has boiled rice”

While the verb *hó* is used when boiling only water. For instance;

a. Omi nẹ ti hó

Water the pst boil

“The water has boiled”

b. Omi ìresì nẹ ti hó

Water rice the pst boil

“The water for the rice has boiled”

c. *Ìresì nẹ ti hó

Rice the pst boil

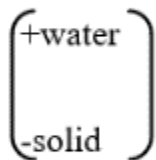
“The rice has boiled”

Examples (a-d) show the object argument that each verb can collocate with while example (e) is not accepted because the object argument cannot co-occur with the verb *hó*. Hence, the semantic features of the verbs are;

Bọ [+V +N]



Hó [+V +N]



3.3. Sub-categorization of Post-Cooking Verb

They are the verbs used after cooking has taken place. Although the verbs are few compared to others which are pre-cooking and cooking verbs. Hence, the verbs to be analyzed are;

Verb of filtering: *-dǎ* “to filter”

Verb of sharing: *-pín* “to share”

The semantic features are;

$[\pm water]$: -the object noun to be filtered should have water in it.

[±divisible]: -the nouns to be shared, should be able to be divided.

[±solid]: -the object noun to be filtered should not be liquid and be filterable.

The first verb to be analyzed is the verb “to filter”, which is the verb *dá*. Taking these examples to analyze the verb

a. Mo ti dà ìresì nẹ

I pst pour rice the

“I have filtered the rice”

b. Mo ti dà ẹwà nẹ

I pst pour beans the

“I have filtered the beans”

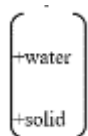
c. !Mo ti dà iyọ nẹ

I pst pour salt the

“I have filtered the salt”

The examples are grammatical, meaningful and acceptable to the native speaker. However, the semantic feature does not permit the object noun in example (c) to have a noun suitable for the verb in this context. Example (c) has to do with pouring the salt, while examples (a and b) object nouns agree with the verb semantic feature. These semantic features are;

Dà [+V +N]



The second verb to be analyzed is the verb “to share”, which is the verb *pín*. The examples below will present the object argument that can co-occur with the verb *pín*.

a. Sade ti pín oúnje nẹ

Sade pst share food the

“Sade has shared the food”

b. Sade ti pín owó nẹ

Sade pst share money the

“Sade has shared the money”

c. Sade ti pín aṣọ nẹ

Sade pst share cloth the

“Sade has shared the cloth”

d. *Sade ti pín ayọ nẹ

Sade pst share joy the

“Sade has shared the joy”

e. *Sade ti pín ayé è

Sade pst share life 2s

“Sade has shared her life”

Examples (a-c) are object arguments that can collocate with the verb because the nouns can be shared. However, examples (d and e) are not divisible which makes them not to conform with the verb. The semantic feature of the verb is;

Pín [+V+N]

[+divisible]

4. Conclusion

The analysis until now shows the dynamic nature of verbs in the way it select it object arguments. Especially those verbs, like the verb “to cut”, which has more than one verb representing them in the dialect, we get to know that the object argument that can collocate with a particular verb cannot co-occur based on the restriction they place on the nouns. The dialect which has different verbs with one meaning is due to the nature of these verbs’ semantic feature which restricts the type of nouns that can co-occur with it. It is noted that the presence of a particular verb in a sentence filters some object from not being able to fit into the sentence. This means that the presence of a verb in a sentence, create the absence of a noun from occupying the position of object argument.

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