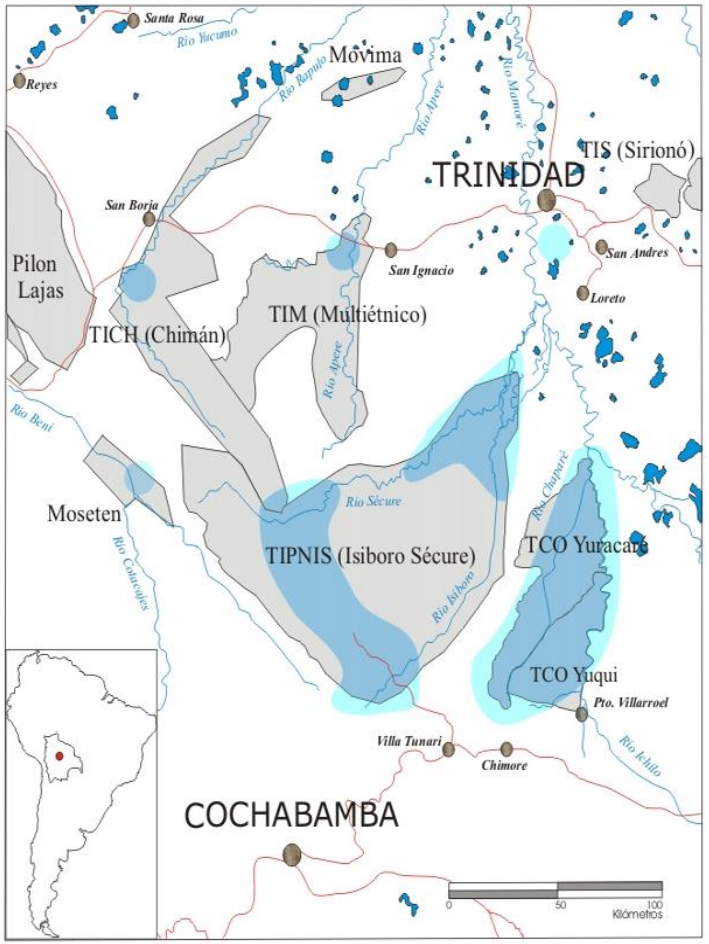
Meronymy in Yurakaré

Rik van Gijn

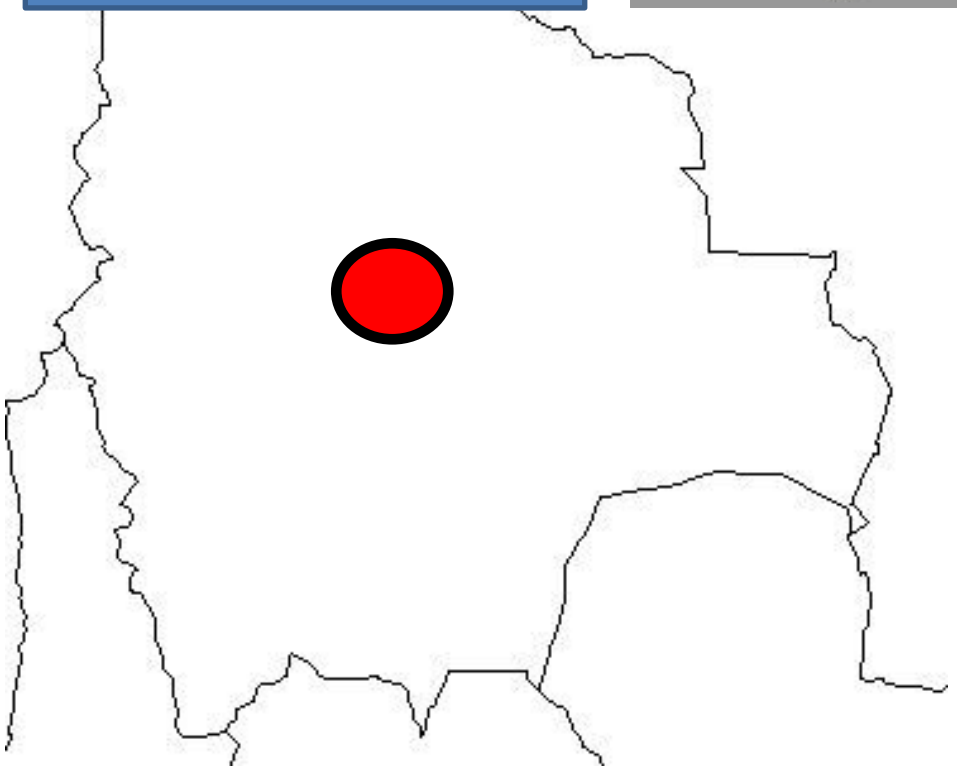
Vincent Hirtzel

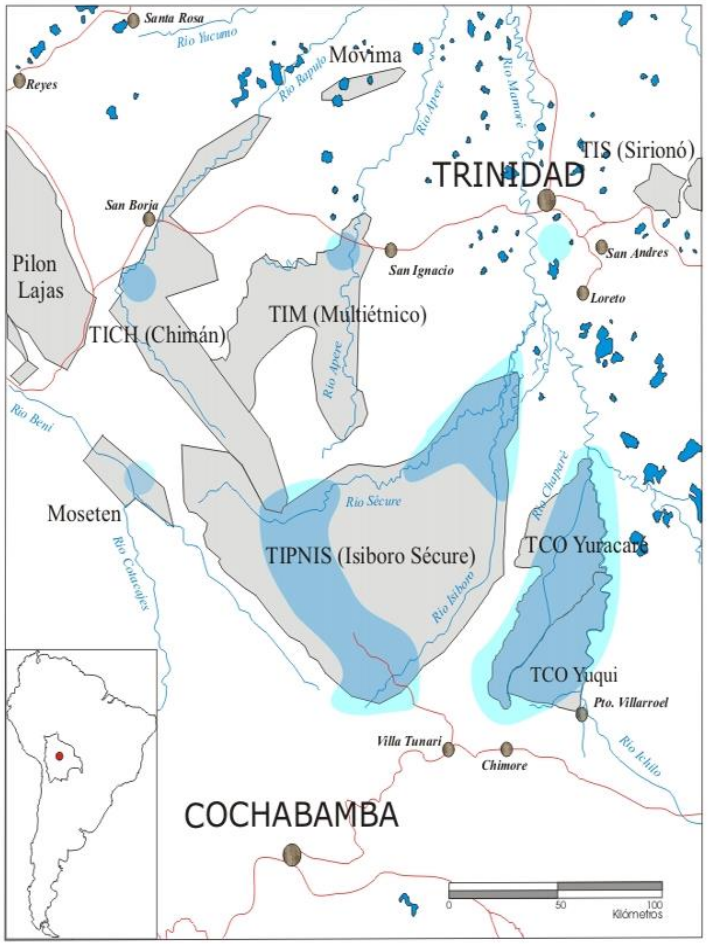


Fuente: Elaboración propia en base a: Mapa preliminar de asentamientos indígenas tierras comunitarias de origen en proceso de titulación, y otras áreas en propiedad o administración indígena en las tierras bajas de Bolivia. Elaborado por le centro de planificación territorial indígena Confederación de pueblos indígenas de Bolivia CPTI-CIDOB, con colaboración de CIDDEBENI (1998)

- Territorios Indígenas and Tierras Comunitarias de Origen
- Yuracaré's speaking areas
- Principal road
- Rives
- Lakes
- Capital of Department
- Capital of Province

Isolate language
2000-2500 speakers
Head-marking
Synthetic morphology
Accusative alignment





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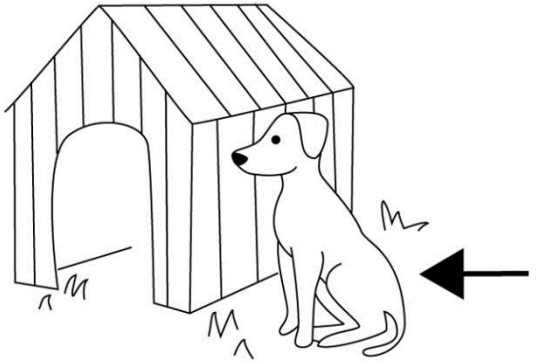
ANIMALES VERTEBRADOS
ANIMALES INVERTEBRADOS

Location constructions in Yurakaré

Ground	Specifier	Relator	Manner	Figure	
sibbë	*a-shëli*	*=jsha*	*tütü-ø*	*lëtta*	*chajmu*
house	3SG.P-side	=ABL	be;sit-3	one	dog

'A dog is sitting behind a house.'



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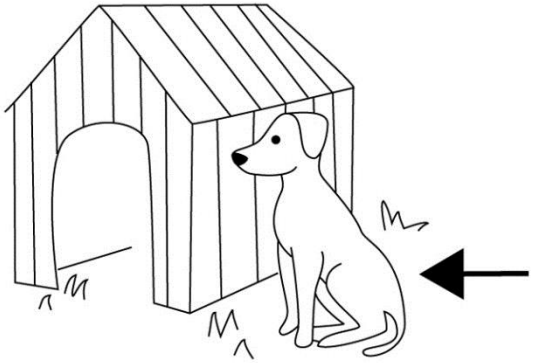
house	3SG.P-side	=ABL	be;sit-3	one	dog

'A dog is sitting next to a house.'



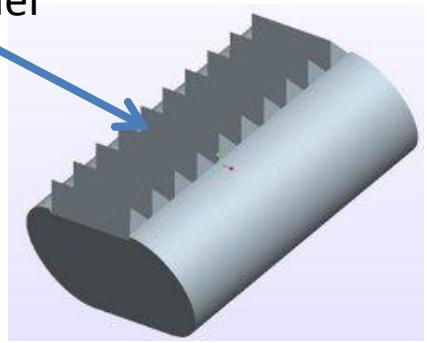
Observation #1

Different strategies available for the ‘specifier’

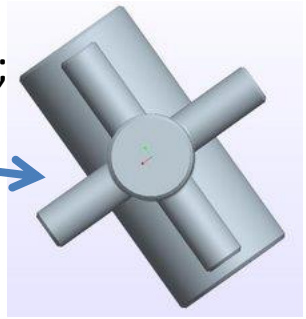
- object based
- surface/shape/size dependent terms
- ‘dedicated’ terms
- meronyms

Object-based terms

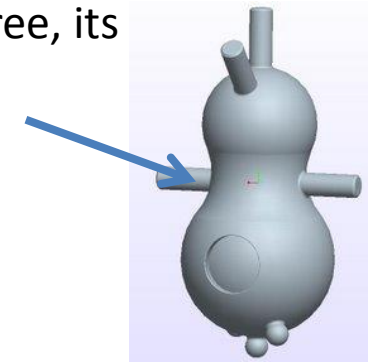
aeskalera
‘its ladder’



ajurushaw;
atimon



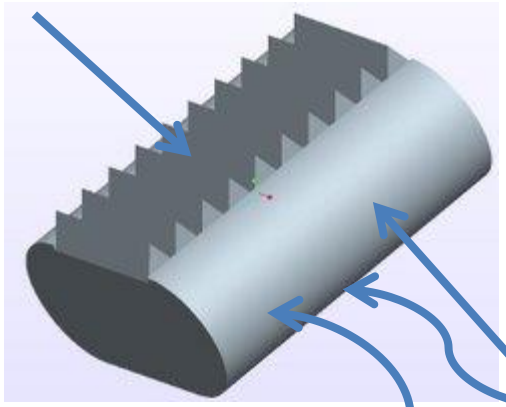
ajumë
‘its tree, its pole’



na mentisan
(ointment in pill box)

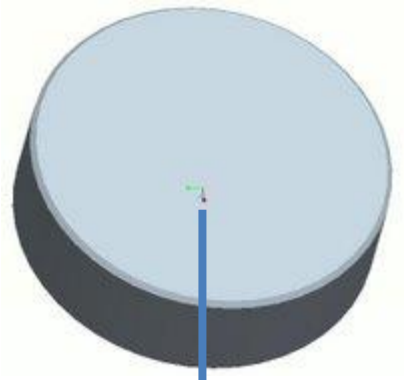
Surface-based terms

amürümürü ‘its ribbed surface’

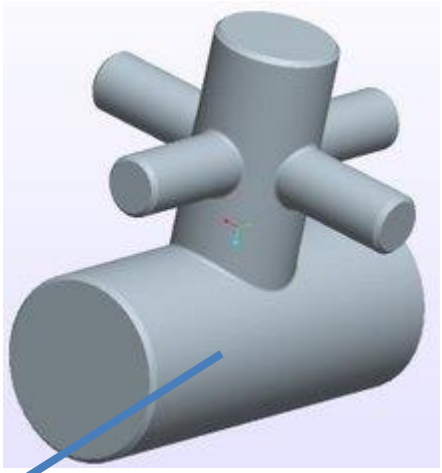


alëbëlëbë ‘its even surface’

Shape-based terms

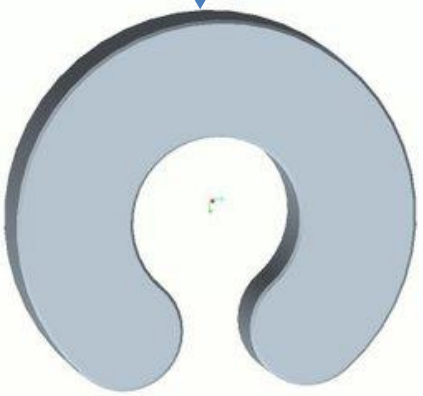


ajululita ‘its round part’



apimpimta ‘its cylindrical part’

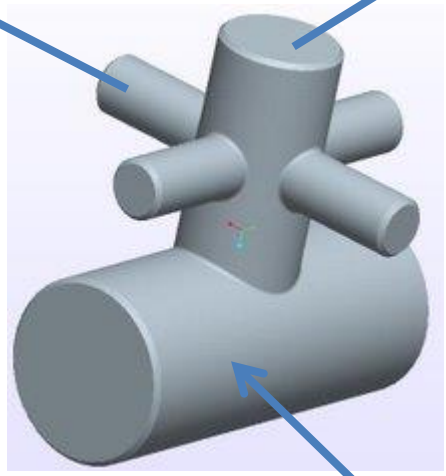
aeskinanñu ‘its little corner’



Size-based terms

amatamalapshë
‘its big one’

dyindilë malati
‘(the one) which is thin’



na tëchikkaja
‘The long one’

Dedicated spatial vocabulary

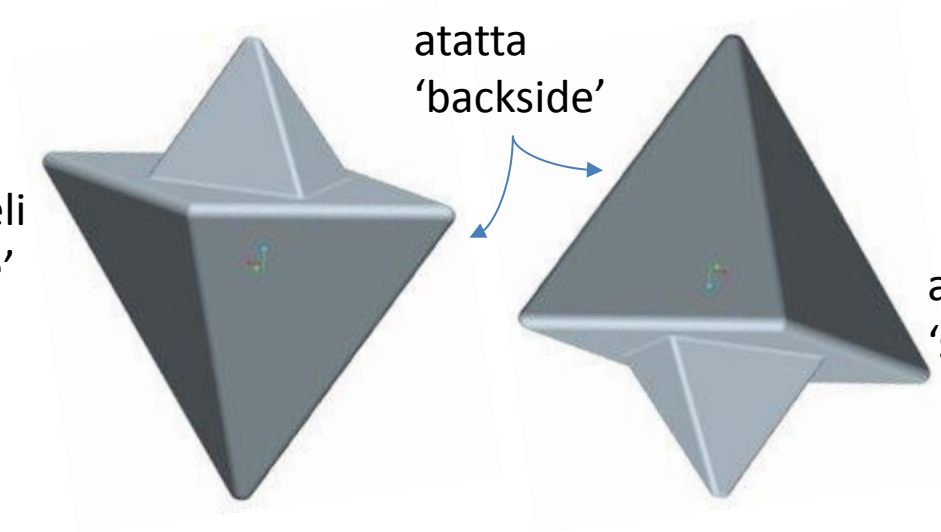
ashaa
'above'

adojo 'upside'

atatta
'backside'

apasha
'bank'

ashëli
'side'

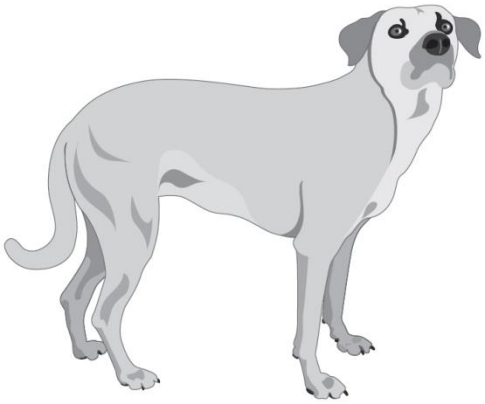


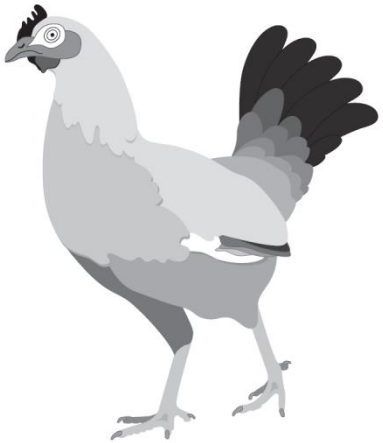
ashëli
'side'

apasha
'bank'

ajana
'underside,
below'

Body-part meronyms





Observation #2

Not all strategies are equally frequently used. Meronyms are among the most frequently employed strategies in the test, with only dedicated vocabulary with a higher token-type ratio.

Frequency (token) counts of meronyms mentioned in the object parts test
relative frequency of meronyms compared to other strategies

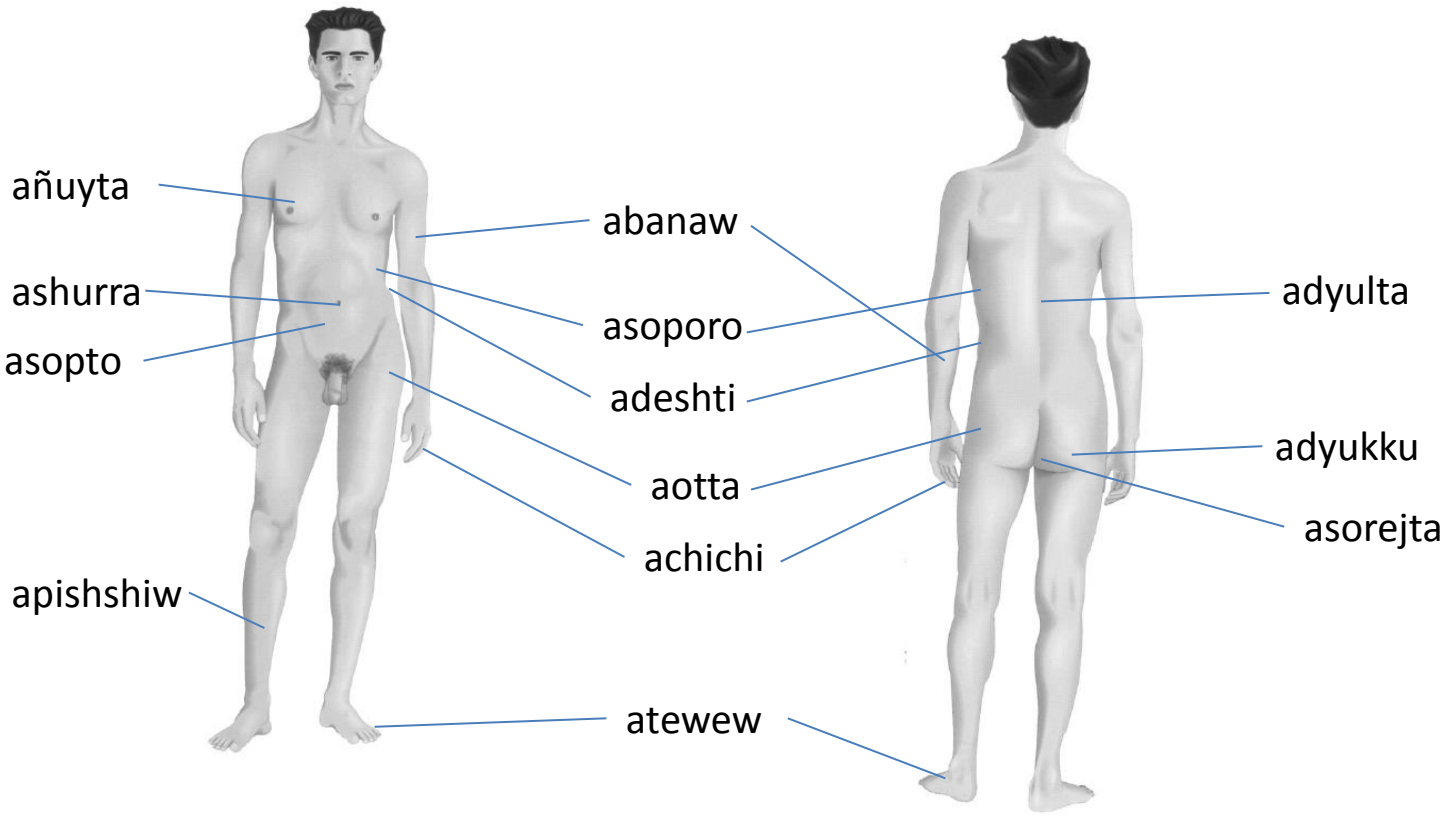
	Types (N=96)	Tokens (N=434)	Freq. factor
Meronyms	35	197	5.6
Non-meronyms	61	237	3.9

	Types	Tokens	Freq. factor
Dedicated	7	80	11.4
Meronyms	35	197	5.6
Shape	17	81	4.8
Size	5	19	3.8
Surface	9	25	2.8
Object	17	25	1.5
Other	6	7	1.2

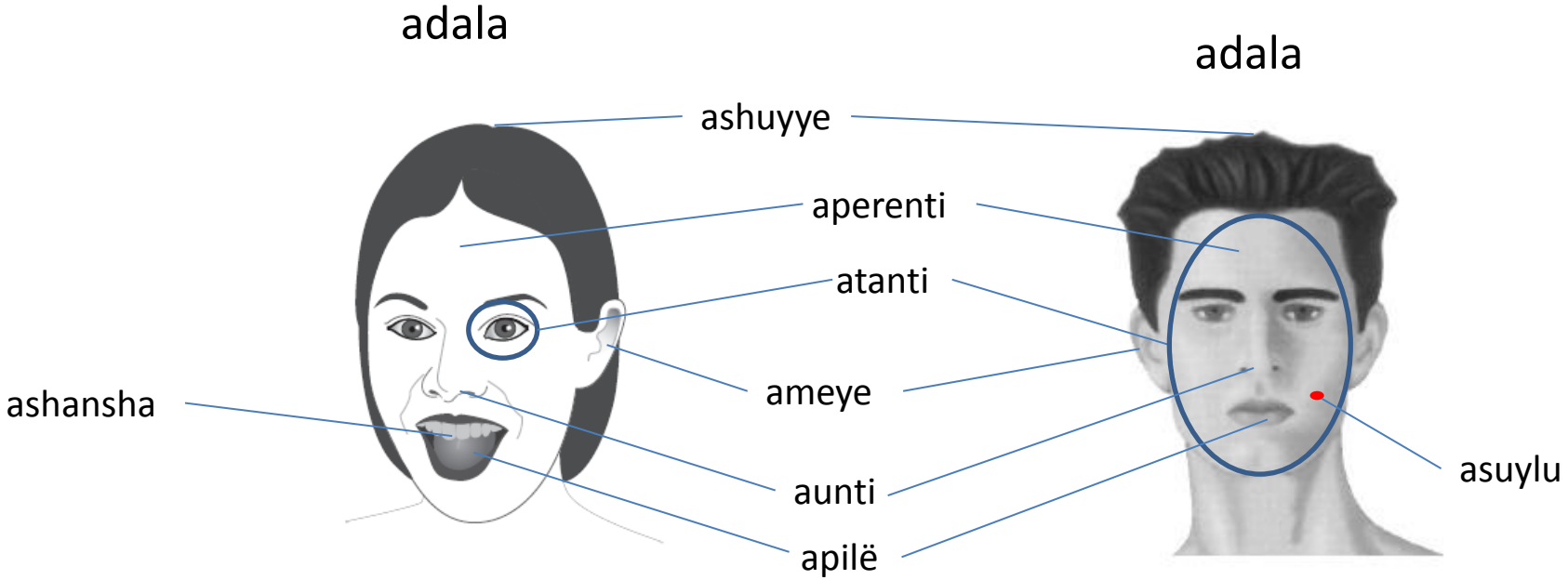
Observation #3

The human body is certainly the most important source for meronyms, but not the only one. Animal body parts and plant parts are also used.

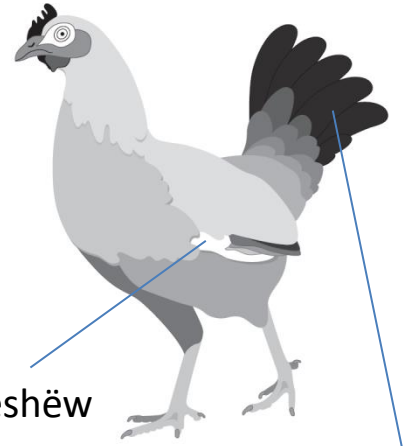
Body-part meronyms mentioned in the locations test



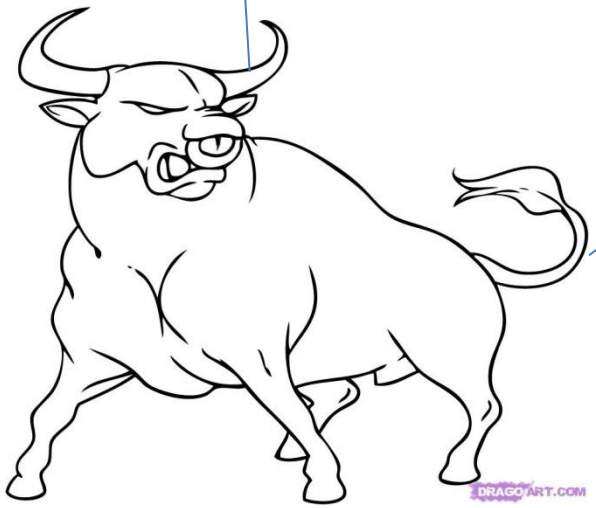
Body-part meronyms mentioned in the locations test (head)



Body-part meronyms mentioned in the locations test (animals and trees)

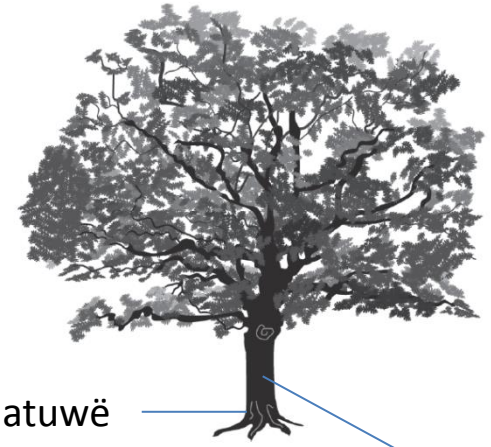


awëshëw



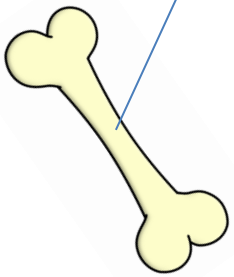
apojyew

awishwiw



atuwë

atoo

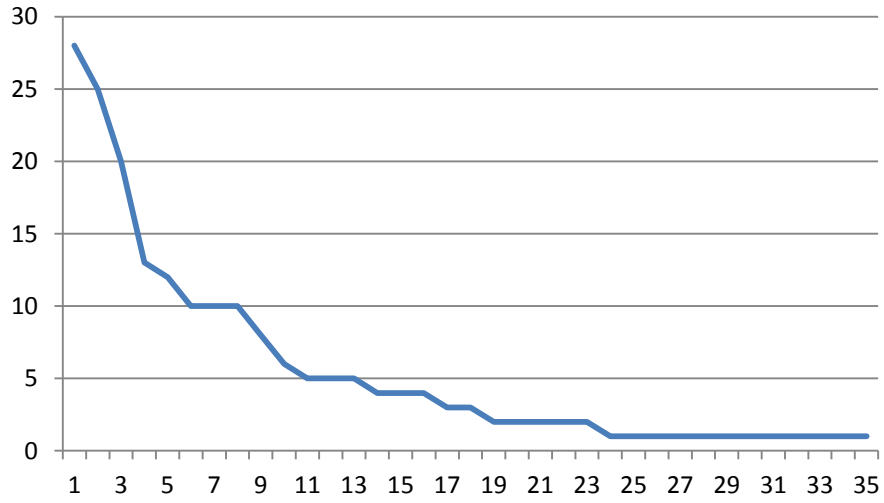


Observation #4

There is a skewing in the use of meronyms, favoring certain meronyms over others.

Frequency counts of meronyms mentioned in the object parts test
frequency of individual meronyms (top 5)

1	Unti ‘nose’	28
2	Shuyye ‘crown’	25
3	Pojye ‘horn, antler’	20
4	Sopto ‘belly’	13
5	Tewwe ‘foot’	12

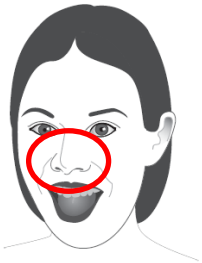


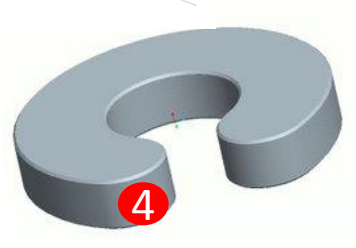
Frequency of meronyms

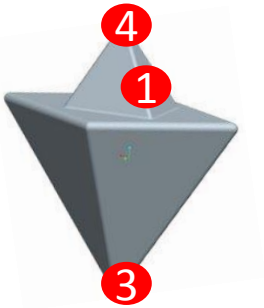
Observation #5

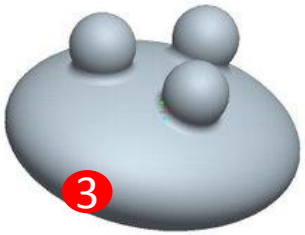
There may be a Levinsonian main axis-finding protocol, but directionality assessment seems at best a tendency (though more data are necessary).

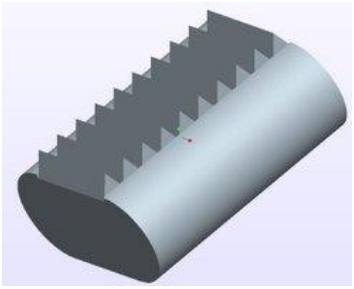
Referents of *unti* ‘nose’

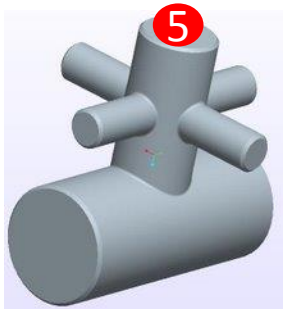


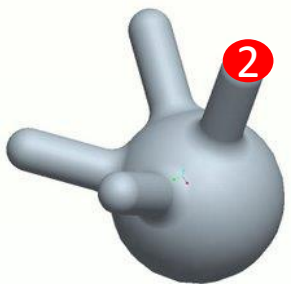




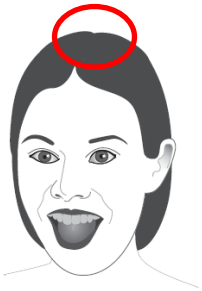


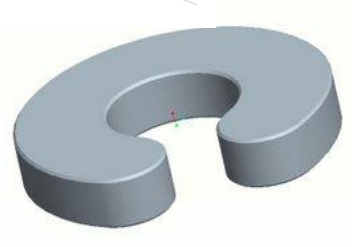


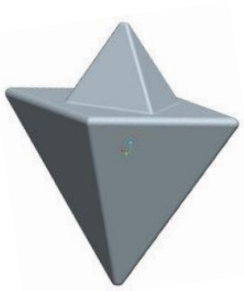


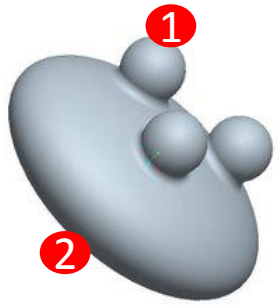


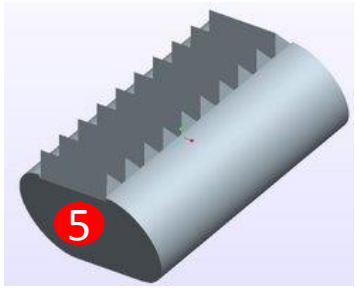
Referents of *shuyye* ‘crown’

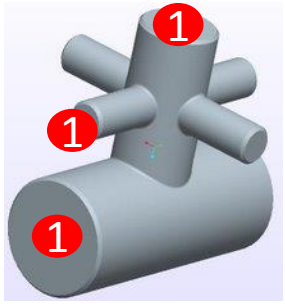


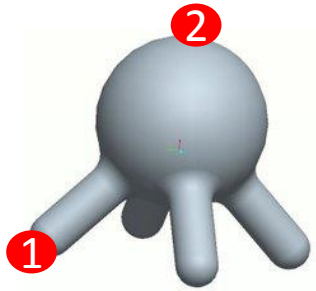


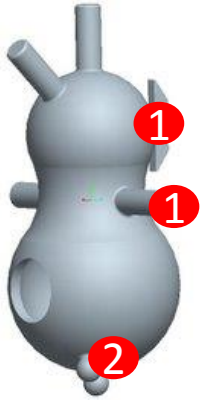




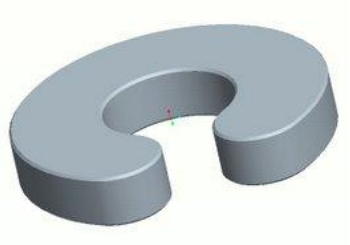


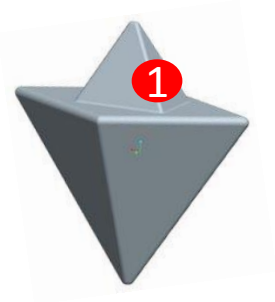


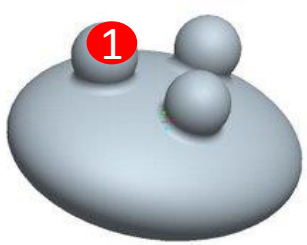


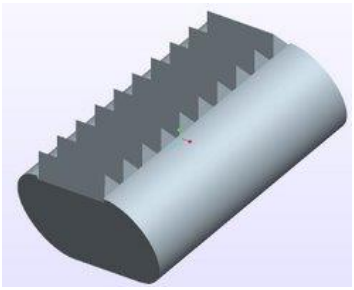


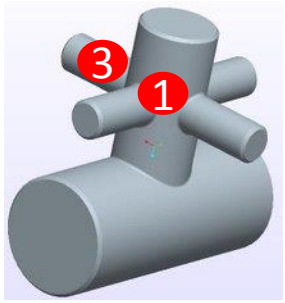
Referents of *pojye* ‘horn’

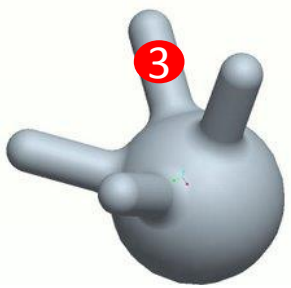


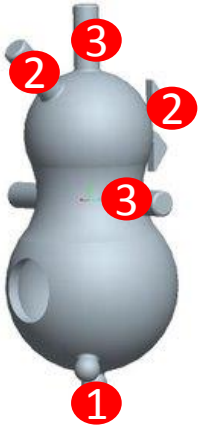


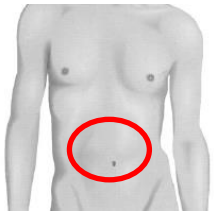




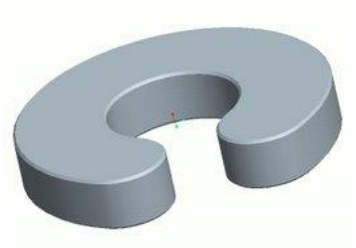


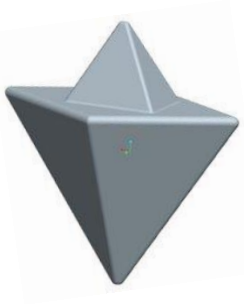


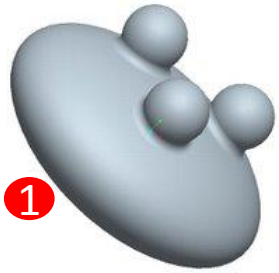


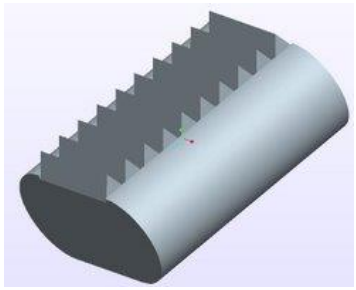


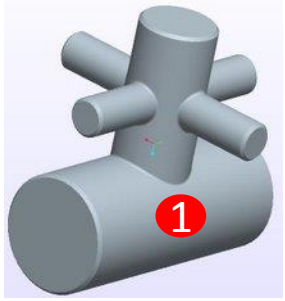
Referents of *sopto* ‘belly’

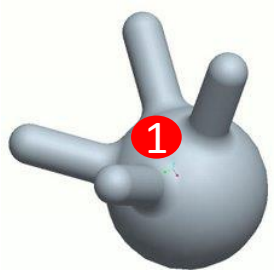


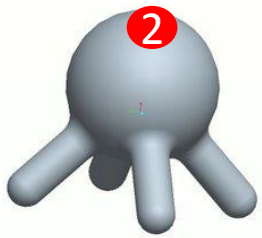




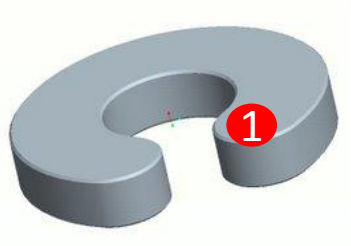


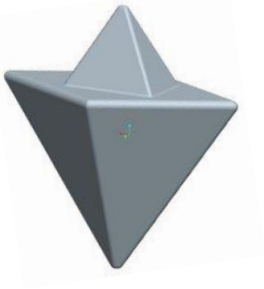


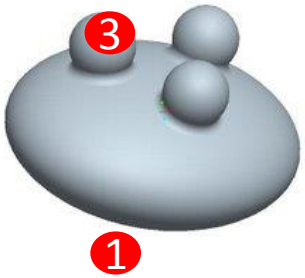


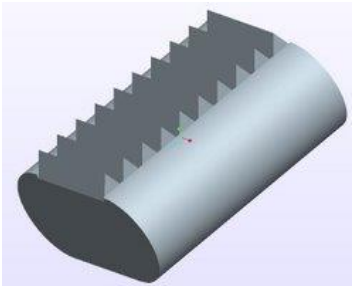


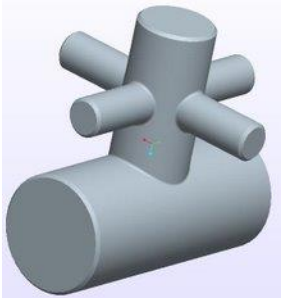
Referents of *tewwe* ‘foot’

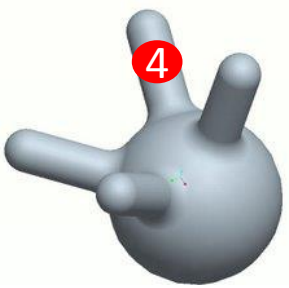










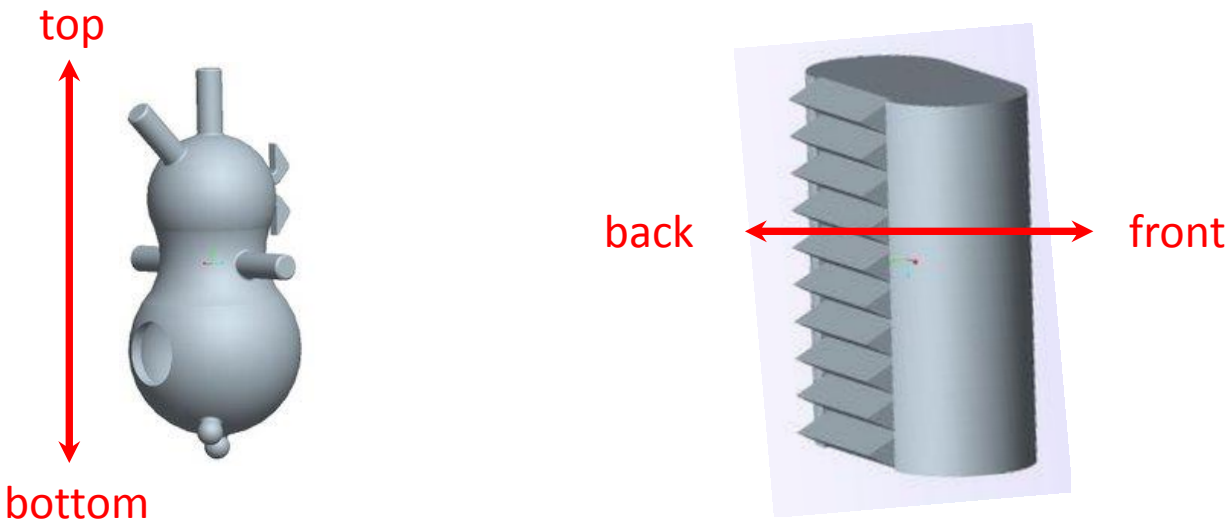


Meronyms in Yurakaré

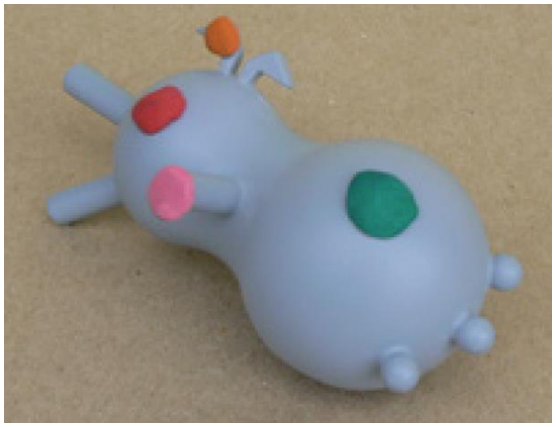
How are axes determined?

Levinsionian algorithm

1. main axis = creates generalized cone w/largest volume (≈ longest axis)
2. top = end w/sharpest convexity; bottom = 'squashed' end
3. orthogonal axis = yields two paired symmetrical halves
4. front = flatter and/or less complex surface



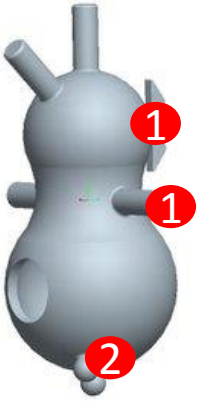
Meronyms in Yurakaré



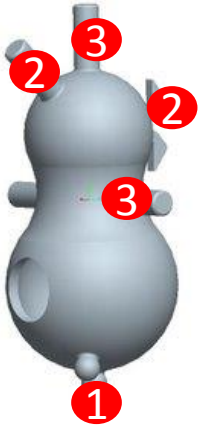
top

bottom

unti ‘nose’

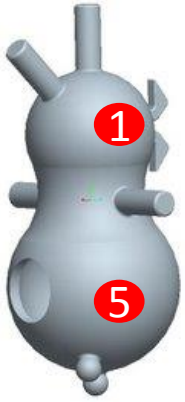


shuyye ‘crown’



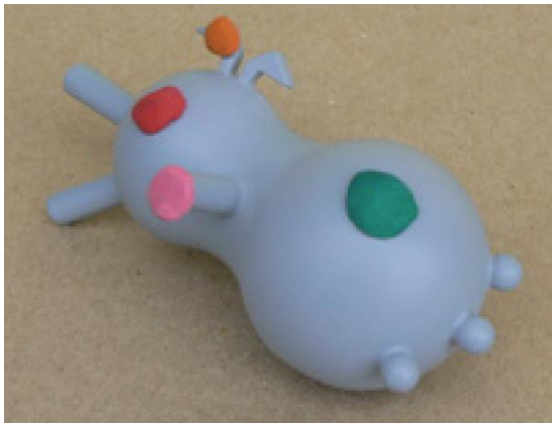
pojye ‘horn’

tewwe ‘foot’



sopto ‘belly’

Meronyms in Yurakaré

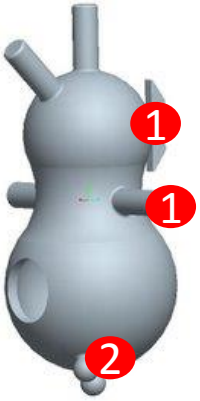


top

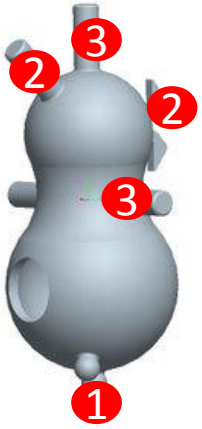
?

bottom

unti ‘nose’

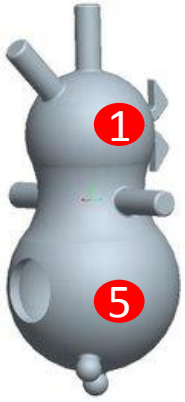


shuyye ‘crown’



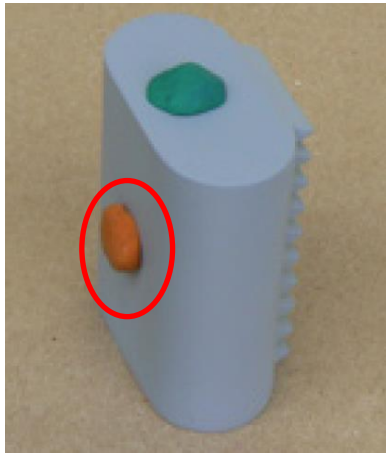
pojye ‘horn’

tewwe ‘foot’



sopto ‘belly’

Meronyms in Yurakaré



adyulta ‘its back’

against Levinson’s orthogonal axis procedure

Observation #6

Meronym assignment in Yurakaré depends at least on

1) object orientation
2) shape
3) A main versus secondary body dichotomy

   >> possibilities of multiple occurrences only for secondary bodies

Meronyms in Yurakaré

	unti	shuyye	pojye	sopto	tewwe
orientation	front/top (?)	top	top	center	bottom
shape	(apex of) sharp convex	flat or mildly tapering convex	long protrusion	round?	Small (roundish?) protrusion
size	secondary body	neutral	secondary body	main body	secondary body
occurrences	multiple	single	multiple	single?	multiple

Meronyms in Yurakaré, some other terms

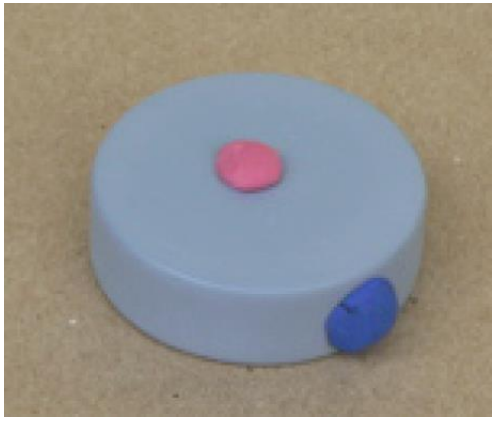
	awishwi	asoporo	adyulta	adyukku	abanaw
orientation	back	side of 3D	back	bottom or back	middle
shape	protrusion	either flat or convex	relatively flat surface	flat or convex	protrusion
size	secondary body	main body	main body	main body	scondary body
occurrences	?	single	single	single	multiple

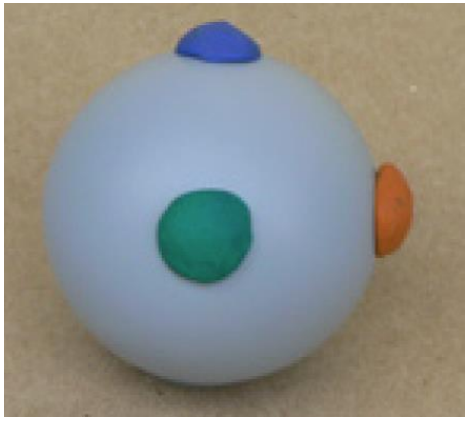
Observation #7

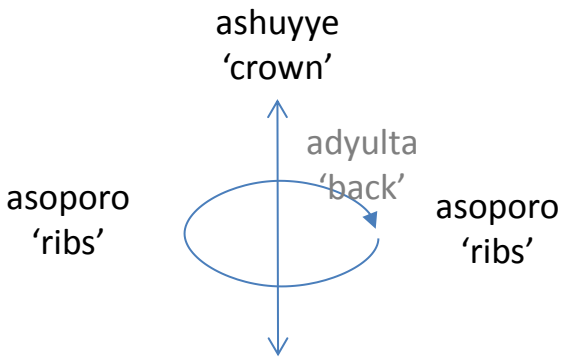
We can construct a main body rudimentary frame based on meronyms a la MacLaury.

However, a) not all terms in the system are derived from the human body and b) there is no fixed human (standing) orientation.

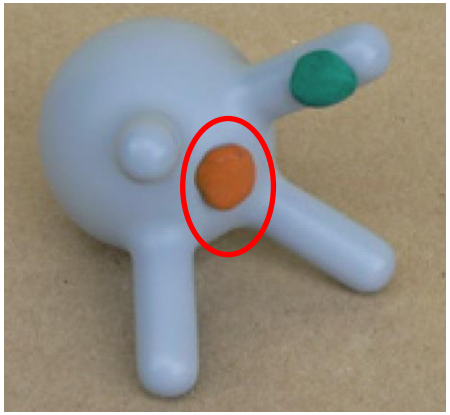
Meronyms in Yurakaré

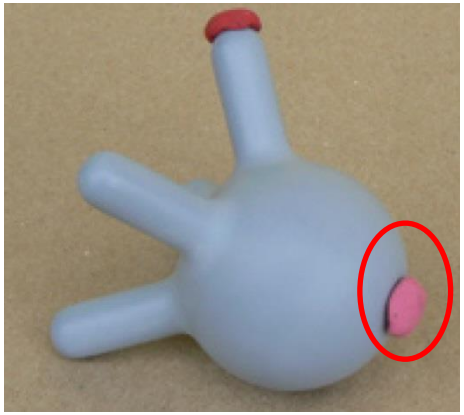


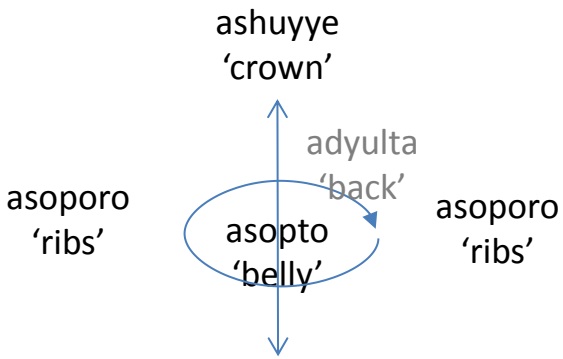




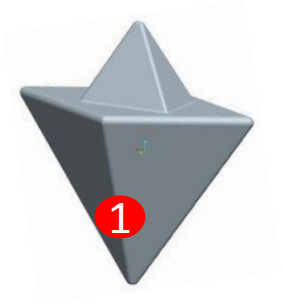
Meronyms in Yurakaré

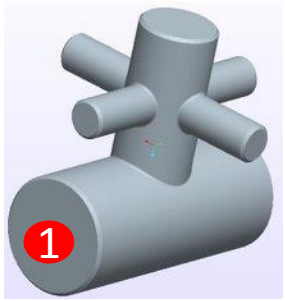


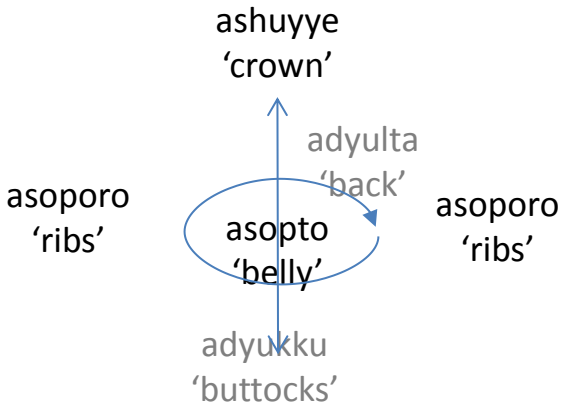




Meronyms in Yurakaré

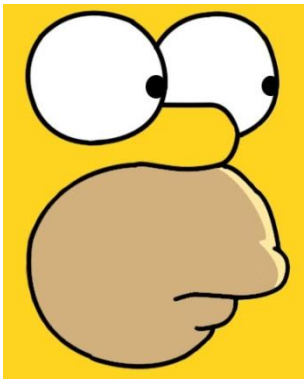


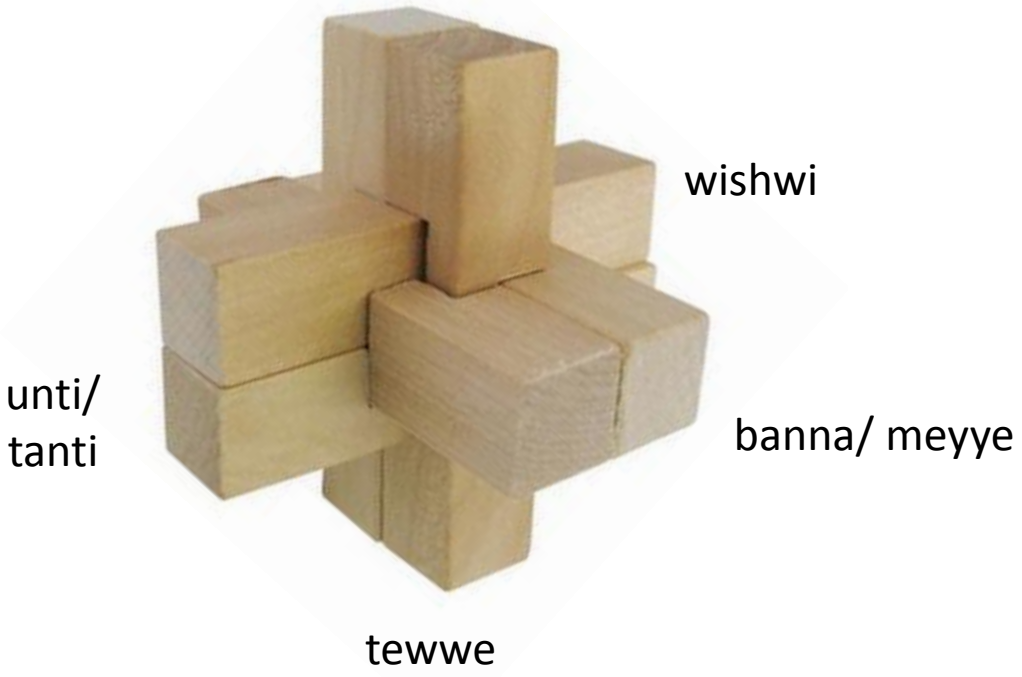




Observation #8

There also seems to be a protrusion-based frame (also relative to orientation)




pojye/unti
wishwi
unti/
tanti
banna/ meyye
tewwe

Conclusions

Meronym assignment in Yurakaré is a relatively flexible, system operating on at least the following parameters

- object orientation
- shape
- surface
- size

Conclusions

There is a system of dedicated nouns that functions as a ‘fixed’ frame.

The meronym system seems to operate as a complementary frame.

Conclusions

There furthermore seem to be two frames, one for the main body, and one for protrusions.

System 1: dedicated spatial nouns

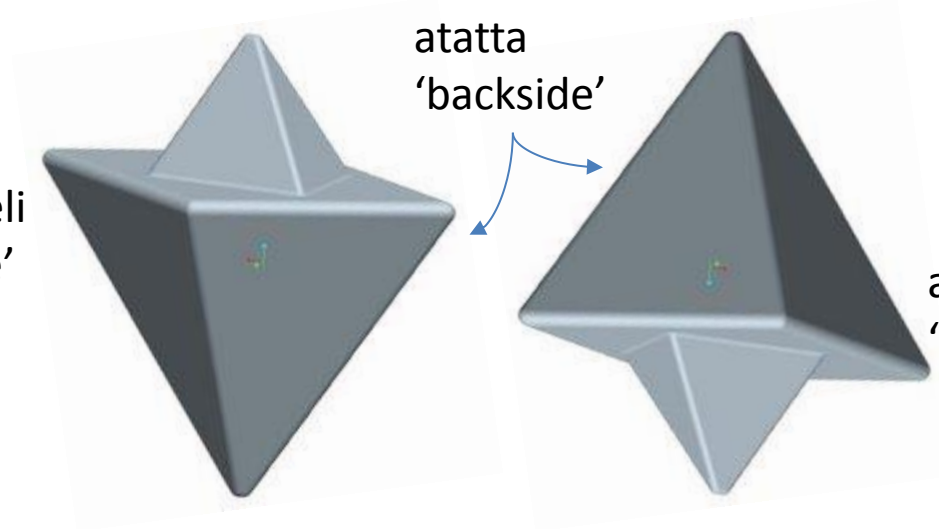
ashaa
'above'

adojo 'upside'

atatta
'backside'

apasha
'bank'

ashëli
'side'

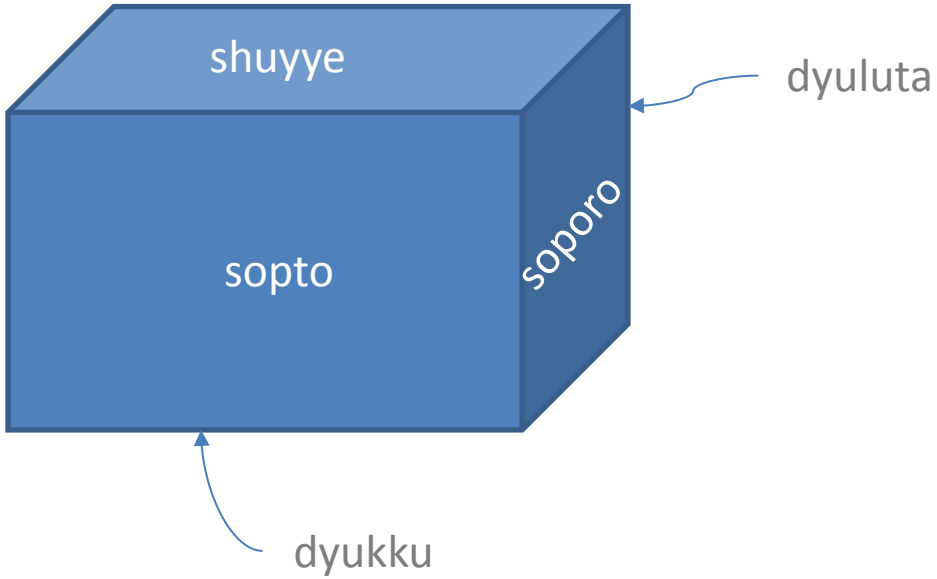
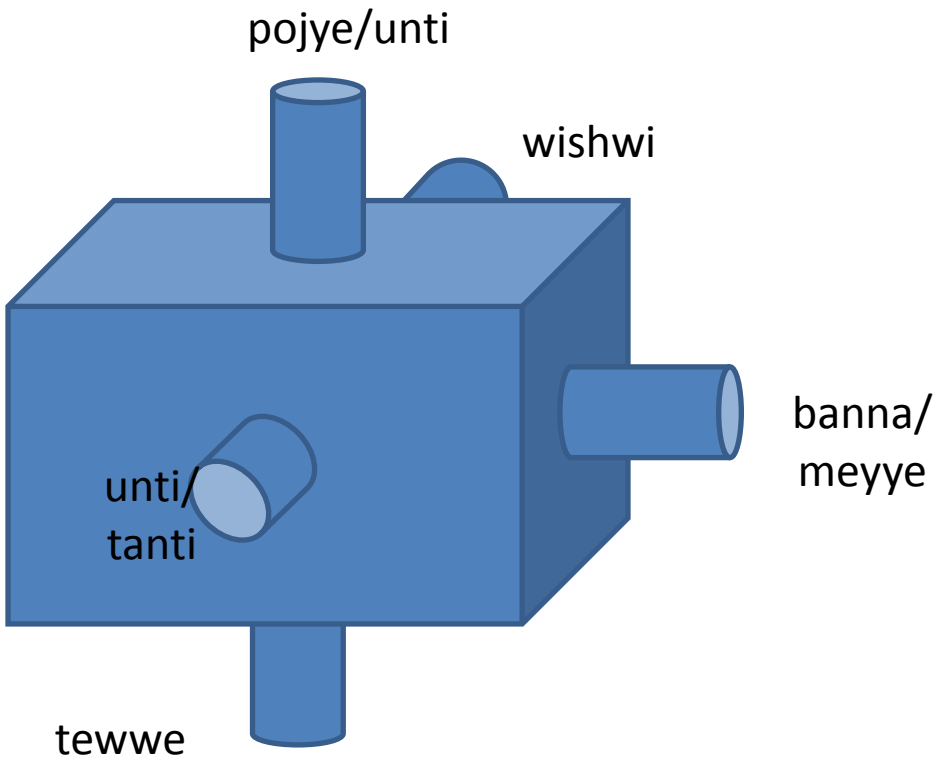


ashëli
'side'

apasha
'bank'

ajana
'underside,
below'

System 2: main volume meronyms



System 3: secondary volume meronyms