METAPHTONYMIES IN AKAN

R.K.Asante, Q.Ma
Tongji University, Shanghai, PR China

Summary: This paper canvasses two main cognitive projections, metaphor and metonymy, within the cognitive approach. It attempts to discover the cognitive basis which speakers of Akan employ to talk about abstract concepts including emotions and attributes. It discovers that these domains are best expressed in metaphtonymic language using body parts. Moreover, although there is a close interaction between metaphors and metonymies in Akan, the relationship is unidirectional. Thus, while metaphors are generally grounded in metonymies when they occur in the same utterance, the reverse is not true.

1. Introduction

The name Akan is used to refer to both a group of people and the largest language in Ghana. It is a Volta Comòe language in the Kwa language family, a sub-family of the broader Niger Congo language family [Dolphyne, Dakubu 1988]. The Akans are mainly located in Ghana with a few residing in Côte d'Ivoire and Togo. In Ghana, their major traditional locations are the Brong Ahafo region, the Ashanti region, the Western region, the Central region, the Eastern region, and the Volta region. The population of the Akans is on the ascendancy. In 1960, the Akans numbered 2.6 million representing 39% of the total population of 6.7 million. Exactly four decades later, the number has increased to 7.753.830 representing 44% of the total national population [Ghana Statistical Service 2005].

In addition to the native speakers, there is a very large number of Ghanaians who speak Akan as their second language. Thus, it is widely spoken and serves as a lingua franca in informal situations in Ghana. It obviously enjoys more media coverage than any other Ghanaian language. Moreover, it has a sizeable amount of literature and three standardized dialects: Akuapem, Asante, and Fante.

With specific reference to the topic at hand, there are quite a few works on the language. For instance, among others, Anane [1979] discussed the forms of Akan metaphors, the significance of the use of metaphors in Akan oral tradition, and metaphor and symbolism in Akan using a traditionalist approach, which is demonstrated in his definition of metaphor when he asserts that «Metaphor is a form of non-literal expression in poetry and creative literature…» [Anane 1979: 1]. On the other hand, Agyekum [2005] uses a cognitive approach to examine the metaphorical and polysemous use of *hunu*, a 'vision' verb of perception in Akan. This paper hopes to add to the already existing works on the language.

The cognitive projections, metaphor and metonymy, ordinarily called figurative expressions, have long been studied since the time of Aristotle, especially in the discipline called rhetoric. Traditionally, they were viewed as non-literal embellished expressions belonging to the domain of poets and novelists, hence,

distinct from ordinary language usage. However, since the inception of cognitive semantics fueled by the revolutionary book *Metaphors we Live by* by Lakoff and Johnson [1980], a different twist was given to them.

Cognitive semantics considers both metaphor and metonymy as devices that are used in everyday communication. They regard them as not exclusive to the domain of language but as ubiquitous in our day-to-day activities that involve thinking. In spite of these and many other similarities, there are some differences that have been identified between these two cognitive projections. Firstly, whereas metonymy is the conceptual relation 'X stands for Y', metaphor is the conceptual relation 'X understood in terms of Y'. That is, whereas metonymy uses expressions to «pinpoint» elements in order to talk about them, in metaphor, concepts are understood in terms of another. Secondly, while metaphors are «pre-conceptual in origin and are therefore in some sense inevitable associations (motivated by the nature of our bodies and environment), conceptual metonymies are motivated by communicative and referential requirements» [Evans, Green 2006: 211-212]. In other words, while the former is generally motivated by our inherent make-up, the latter is motivated by a need (communication) that we humans strive to fulfill. Last but not least, according to Lakoff and Turner [1989], whereas metaphor involves a cross-domain mapping, metonymy does not, but it rather «allows one entity to stand for another because both concepts co-exist within the same domain» [Evans, Green 2006: 322]. As a result of that, while metonymies are represented by the formula 'B for A', where 'B' is the vehicle and 'A' is the target or tenor, e.g. PART FOR WHOLE, metaphors are represented by the formula 'A is B', where 'A' is the target and 'B' is the source, e.g. LIFE IS WAR.

2. Conceptual Theories

Two related theories, Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Conceptual Metonymy Theory, both engrafted by Lakoff and Johnson [1980], are used in this paper. Since their introduction, the Conceptual Metaphor and Conceptual Metonymy theories have received lots of attention and have subsequently been developed by some linguists and psychologists [Gibbs 1994, Grady 1997, Kövecses, Radden 1998, Langacker 1987, Lakoff, Turner 1989, Lakoff 1990, Matlock 1989]. The underlying hypothesis of the conceptual theories is that metaphor and metonymy are not simply stylistic features, but that thought itself is metaphorical and metonymical. This implies that, firstly, the two cognitive projections, metaphor and metonymy, are not restricted to the domain of figurative language and that they are part of our everyday language use (see section 3.2 for an empirical illustration of this point). Secondly, they are not peculiar to only language; they are used in almost every human activity because they underlie our thinking processes.

2.1. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

There are some principles, constraints or hypotheses that define the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The first among them is what is called the «Unidirectionality of Metaphor», which simply asserts that, conventionally, source domains can structure target domains, but not vice versa. Thus, whereas target domains like LIFE can be understood in terms of WAR, the reverse is not the case. Lakoff

and Turner [1989] even come in strongly when they argue that unidirectionality can still thrive even when two metaphors share the same domain. They identified two metaphors, PEOPLE ARE MACHINES and MACHINES ARE PEOPLE, and their argument is that there is a distinct mapping for each of the metaphors even though they both share the same domain. For instance, they observe that «in the PEOPLE ARE MACHINES metaphor, the mechanical and functional attributes associated with computers are mapped onto people, such as speed and efficiency…». However, in the MACHINES ARE PEOPLE metaphor, «it is the notion of desire and volition that is mapped onto machines…» [Evans, Green 2006: 297]. In essence, people can only map their notion of desire and volition onto machines, but not their functional attributes. However, albeit their point is well appreciated, we believe that it is possible to map functional attributes of PEOPLE such as speed and efficiency to machines other than only the notion of will and volition. For instance, it is possible to assert that «my computer is fast, strong or slow». In Akan, you can even have statements like *anokwa, me kɔmputa yi adwumayɛ yɛ fɛ* 'ah, the way my computer works is wonderful/ beautiful'. Thus, not only the functional attribute of people is ascribed to the computer, but the dexterity with which it works.

The second hypothesis is «Hiding and Highlighting»; it claims that, in a metaphor, only an aspect of a target concept is brought to the fore (highlighted) by the source, leaving out (hiding) other aspects of the target simultaneously. For instance, only the adversarial quality of war is highlighted in the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR, hiding other aspects like the fact that arguments can sometimes be peaceful [Evans, Green 2006]. Another seminal principle is the claim that metaphors are «Image Schematic». Thus, conceptual metaphors are derived from pre-conceptual embodied experience and it makes them inherently meaningful.

Last but not least and most controversial is the «Invariance Principle» [Lakoff 1990]. This is a kind of principle that puts restriction on the kind of source domain that can structure the target domain. Thus, although according to the theory, concrete concepts serve as source domains, target domains select the kind of source domains that can structure them. For instance, it is argued that, while DEATH can be structured in terms of agents like DEVOURER, REAPER in a metaphor like DEATH IS A DEVOURER/ REAPER, it cannot be structured in terms of agents like LECTURER, COOK in an unattested metaphor like DEATH IS A LECTURER/ COOK. This kind of principle actually led Grady [1997] to come up with the Primary Metaphor Theory, which divides conceptual metaphors into two categories: primary metaphors and compound metaphors. According to this theory, both the source and the target domains of a primary metaphor have experiential basis. Thus, unlike the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, there is no distinction of abstraction between the source and the target. Both concepts are basic, although the target domain is more subjective than the source domain. For instance, the primary metaphor IMPORTANCE IS SIZE (*We've got a big paper to present on December 3, 2012*) has IMPORTANCE as its target because it lacks the kind of perceptual basis that characterizes source concepts like SIZE. Nevertheless, compound metaphors do

not have experiential basis like that of Primary Metaphors, although they are derived from the unification of primary metaphors.

2.1.1. Some Metaphors In Akan

Here, we illustrate the theory with two metaphors in Akan[1].

(1) Yɛ   –   re   –   kɔ – to   abɔfra no   din
     1. PL SUBJ –   PROG –   go – throw baby   DEF name
     'We are going to name the baby (lit. we are going to throw the baby's
      name)'.

(2) Aniwa – n   – nim   awerɛhoɔ
     Eye   – NEG – know   sadness
     'One whose nature demands that he sleeps does not know she or he is sad
     (lit. the eye does not know sadness)'.

The underlying metaphor of (1) is AN ABSTRACT CONCEPT (NAME) IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT, where PHYSICAL OBJECT is the source and ABSTRACT CONCEPT is the target. This is so because an abstract concept 'NAME' is given the human attribute 'MOVEMENT'. Thus, whereas physical objects like stone, metal, and people can be moved or thrown away, as in *yɛre kɔto boɔ no atwene* 'we are going to throw the stone away', that cannot be said literally of (1). Expression (1) is only used metaphorically with the underlying assumption that, before a new born baby can be «known», he or she has to be accessible and that can only be done if his/ her name is «thrown» into the world for people to access him or her. Consequently, *yɛato abofra no Kwadwo,* '(literally) we have thrown the child Kwadwo' reads 'we have named the child Kwadwo' and it is upon this name (Kwadwo) that he can be accessed. With regard to (2), the underlying metaphor is EVENT IS AN EXPERIENCER because the target, 'SLEEP', an inanimate entity (without volition), engages in an activity of the animate entity of experiencing sadness. This expression is also metonymic, but we will discuss this in section 3 below.

2.2. Conceptual Metonymy Theory

The Conceptual Metonymy theory like the Conceptual Metaphor theory sees metonymy as a device central to the human thought, and not just as an entirely linguistic device. There are some principles developed within the theory that help in the explanation of metonymy. The first among them is what is called «Metonymy as an Access Mechanism». By this principle, we mean that metonymy serves as a point of access to a target concept. Croft [1993], however, goes further to argue that metonymy does not only serve as a point of access but also sometimes functions to highlight one domain within a concept's domain matrix. For instance, if one said that *Steve is difficult to read*, the speaker is just highlighting Steve's literary work leaving out other aspects within the concept 'Steve', such as *it is difficult to get an 'A' in Steve*, which relates to courses that Steve teaches and the difficulty of students to get an 'A' in them. A caveat is

---

[1] The following abbreviations are used: CONS = consecutive, COMPL = completive, DEF = definite article, DEM = demonstrative, FOC = focus, FUT = future, NEG = negation, PERF = perfect, PL = plural, POSS = possessive, PROG = progressive, SG = singular, SUBJ = subject.

that this claim of metonymy highlighting one domain within a concept's domain matrix does not mean that metonymy is a cross-domain relationship as metaphors are. For instance, Croft [1993] argues that «while metaphor requires an association across two wholly distinct sets of domain matrices … metonymy highlights a particular aspect of a single domain matrix» [Evans, Green 2006: 315].

Another important principle in the Conceptual Metonymy Theory is the idea of «Metonymy-Producing Relationships». Thus, the idea that metonymy highlights a particular aspect of a domain matrix has led to two related questions: What common patterns of access are there? And what are good vehicles for access? With regard to the former, Kövecses and Radden [1998] argued for two main kinds of relationships: those relating to part-whole/ whole-part relationships and those relating to part-part relationships. Examples (3) and (4), taken from Evans and Green [2006: 317], illustrate the two kinds of relationships respectively.

(3)   a.   A CATEGORY FOR A MEMBER OF THE CATEGORY
          The pill for 'birth control pill'
      b.   A MEMBER OF A CATEGORY FOR THE CATERORY
          Aspirin for 'any pain-relieving tablet'

(4)   a.   OBJECT INVOLVED IN AN ACTION FOR ACTION
          to blanket the bed
      b.   AGENT FOR ACTION
          to butcher the cow, to author a book

With regard to the latter concerning what good vehicles are, Kövecses and Radden [1998] proposed several cognitive and communicative constraints that could be possible vehicles for metonymy. These constraints include HUMAN OVER NON-HUMAN, CONCRETE OVER ABSTRACT, IMMEDIATE OVER NON-IMMEDIATE, and IDEAL OVER NON-IDEAL. The claim is that HUMAN, CONCRETE, IMMEDIATE, and IDEAL are preferred to NON-HUMAN, ABSTRACT, NON-IMMEDIATE, and NON-IDEAL as vehicles respectively because of our anthropocentric perspective. Two of these principles, HUMAN OVER NON-HUMAN and CONCRETE OVER ABSTRACT, are illustrated in (5) and (6) respectively [Evans, Green 2006: 317].

(5)   PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT (HUMAN OVER NON-HUMAN)
      He is reading Shakespeare

(6)   BODILY FOR PERCEPTUAL (CONCRETE OVER ABSTRACT)
      ear (for 'hearing'), e.g. *lend me your ear*

2.2.1. Some Metonymies In Akan
There are different kinds of metonymies in Akan that generally conform to the answer given by Kövecses and Radden to the two questions (above) regarding the patterns of access relations and good vehicles. Some of these metonymies are illustrated below.

(7)   Me   –   re   –   tɔ   Appiah Menka
      1. SG SUBJ –   PROG –   buy Appiah Menka
      'I am buying Apino soap'.

Here, the metonymy is PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT because *Appiah Menka*, which is a name of the producer of the product (Apino soap), provides mental access to the soap. The vehicle therefore is HUMAN OVER NON-HUMAN. Again, it is a part-part relationship because a part of one domain (producer) stands for another part (product) of the same domain. On the other hand, it is certainly acceptable, if one uttered *Apino (soap) na ɔ-re-ba no* '(literally) it is Apino soap coming' to mean 'That is Appiah Menka coming'. In this case, the product (institution) NON-HUMAN provides mental access to the producer HUMAN of the product; hence, a metonymy of PRODUCT FOR PRODUCER is derived.

(8) Fa   wo   aso   ma   me
    take 2. SG POSS   ear   give   1. SG OBJ
    'Lend me your ears (lit. take your ear give/ for me)'.

Example (8) is PART OF THE HUMAN BODY (EAR) FOR ATTENTION metonymy, because *aso* 'ear' provides mental access to attention. It is CONCRETE (BODILY) OVER ABSTRACT (PERCEPTUAL), since the vehicle 'ear' is a concrete object and the target 'attention' is an abstract concept.

(9) Me   – re   – kɔ Manhyia a – ba
    1. SG SUBJ – PROG – go Manhyia CONS – come
    'I am going to the Asantehene's Palace, (but) will be back'.

Sometimes Manhyia, which is a name of a place/ town where the Asante/ Ashanti Paramountcy is situated, is used to refer to the paramountcy. Thus, it is a PLACE FOR INSTITUTION metonymy because *Manhyia*, which is a name of a place, stands for the Asante Paramountcy, which is an institution. It also has a part-part relationship because a part of a domain vehicles another in the same domain.

(10) Wo   wo   – o   nnipa   anaa   ɔbaa?[2]
    2. SG SUBJ give birth – COMPL human being or woman
    'Did you give birth to a man or a woman? (lit. did you give birth to
    a human being or a woman?)'

In the above expression, maleness/ masculinity is equated to humanity. As a result, there is a WHOLE FOR PART metonymy, and it has a whole-part/ part-whole relationship because *nnipa* 'human being', which is the entire domain, stands for a part of the domain *ɔbarima* 'man/ male'.

3. Metaphtonymies In Akan
Questions have arisen about the possible relationship or interaction between metaphor and metonymy, especially based on the fact that they both underlie our conceptual system and also contribute to providing structure to the human conceptual system. The interaction between metaphor and metonymy is what

---

[2] The Akan society, like most human societies, unfortunately has some expressions that are demeaning to womanhood as exemplified in (10). Thus, sometimes manhood is equated to humanity as shown in 'did you give birth to a human being or a woman'. These expressions are, however, rarely used now.

we call *metaphtonymy* in cognitive semantics. Goossens is one outstanding linguist who pioneered research about metaphtonymy. In his 1990 article, he identified two main logically possible ways in which metaphors and metonymies interact. The first is a kind of interaction where a metaphor is grounded in a metonymic relationship, which he called «metaphor from metonymy». The second is a kind of interaction in which metonymy is grounded in metaphor, which he called «metonymy within metaphor».

There are at least two ways of metaphtonymy in Akan, as it is discussed below. The first is a possible occurrence of metonymy and metaphor in the same expression or utterance, and the second is where some utterances are not only made up of metonymies and metaphors, but rather are the metaphors embedded in the metonymies, so that these metaphoric expressions cannot be carried out without the metonymies. These two ways are illustrated below with metaphtonymies relating specifically to the heart, eye, mouth, and hand[3].

3.1. *Akoma* 'Heart' Metaphtonymies

(11) a. Ne   were   a   –   ho
      3. SG SUBJ POSS   heart   PERF –   blow off/ not cook well
      'She/ he is unhappy/ sad (lit. her/ his heart has blown off/ not cooked well)'.

    b. Ne   were   a   –   kyekye
       3. SG SUBJ POSS   heart   PERF –   tie together
       'She/ he is consoled (now) (lit. her/ his heart has tied together)'.

    c. Ne   were   a   –   fi
       3. SG SUBJ POSS   heart   PERF –   move out
       'She/ he has forgotten (something) (lit. her/ his heart has moved out)'.

The three expressions (11a, 11b, and 11c) have the same ethnosemantic basis. They are metonymies because the vehicle *were* 'heart' «pinpoints» the concept 'human being' in order to talk about it. Thus, *were* 'heart' is an example of a PART FOR WHOLE metonymy (a part of the human body for the whole human being). It has part-whole/ whole-part relationship and it is CONCRETE OVER ABSRACT. They (11a, 11b, and 11c) are also all metaphors and the underlying metaphor for them all is EMOTIONAL STATES ARE PHYSICAL STATES/ POSITIONS (of the heart). For the Akans, the heart is seen as the center of all emotions, and so the status of the heart can positively or negatively affect the state of the human being at any particular point in time.

The verb *ho* has at least two homonymous meanings: 'to blow off' and 'not to cook well', as in *maame no ntema no aho* 'the woman's cloth has blown off' and *mankani no aho* 'the cocoyam has not cooked well (as expected)' respectively. Since the heart is conceived as the center of emotions, in order for it to be at the helm of affairs, it has to be normal, stable, and heavy, so that it cannot be blown off or dislocated by any foreign force. When that is not the case (that is, when it is abnormal, unstable, and light so that it can be blown off or dislo-

---

cated), the heart is not able to perform its function of mediating between the various states of emotions, leading to ups and downs in the emotional status of the individual. However, when the blown off pieces of the heart are collected and tied together as in (11b) *ne were akyekye* 'his heart has tied together', it re-occupies its original position and begins to perform its function. There is thus stability in the emotional state of the human being (such as consolation) when the heart is reorganized and begins to function well.

Moreover, in (11c), the verb *fi* has polysemous meanings relating to 'to go/ move out'. Before the advent of orthodox medicine, the Akans already knew that the heart was responsible for the circulation of blood to all parts of the body. Thus, before the brain can function well as the center of cognition and thought, including recollection, blood has to be supplied to it. The implication is that when the heart moves away from its normal position, it is obviously not in a position to function as it is supposed to for other parts of the human body in-cluding the brain. The human being, therefore, cannot remember what has been stored in the brain when the heart does not function because of its dislocation. Here are more of some related expressions.

(12) a. Ne   bo   a   –   fu
        3. SG SUBJ POSS chest   PERF   –   be bushy, grow
        'She/ he is angry (lit. his/ her chest has grown/ his chest is bushy)'.
    b. Adɛn na   wo   akoma   a   –   hu   saa?
        Why   FOC   2. SG SUBJ POSS heart   PERF – boil   DEM
        'Why are you so angry (lit. why has your heart boiled like that)'?
    c. Ne   bo   a   –   dwo
        3. SG SUBJ POSS chest   PERF   –   cool down
        'He is back to normalcy after being upset/ angry (lit. his chest
        has cooled down)'.

The above expressions (12a-c) are also heart metaphors in Akan. They show a close resemblance to the metaphors in (11) as they all have the same underlying metaphor EMOTIONAL STATES ARE PHYSICAL STATES. The word *bo* 'chest' is supposed to be the shield of the heart, but it is sometimes used metaphorically in Akan, as it is used in this context to refer to the heart (*akoma*), as seen in (12). Also, the heart is a metonym of the human being, mak-ing it a PART FOR WHOLE metonymy. When the heart is *fu* 'bushy' or *hu* 'boiled', then it means that it is not in its normal position and therefore cannot function well. There is danger and unsafety in 'bushy places' and places of high temperature, just as there is danger and unsafety when the human being is angry (the human heart is bushy/ hot). However, when something cools down, it be-comes normal and it is able to go about its normal duties. Inductively, in (12c), *ne bo adwo* 'his heart has cooled down' means that the heart was 'hot' (12b), hence abnormal, but it has now cooled down and is therefore capable of func-tioning well, which translates to normalcy in the emotional state of the human being. The explanation of (12b and c) is aptly captured in Kövecses' [2000: 21] metaphor ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER**.** However, like Chumburung, a Ghanaian Guang language, as observed by Hansford [2005], other anger metaphors that Kövecses mentions, such as ANGER IS AN

OPPONENT, ANGER IS A BURDEN, ANGER IS INSANITY, are absent in Akan. In (13) below, there are some more metaphtonymies based on the notion of heart. They have similar interpretations with their counterparts above and are therefore not repeated.

(13)

	Akan example	Literal translation	Gloss
a.	*Ne akoma atu*	Her/ his heart has flown.	'She/ he has been frightened/ scared'.
b.	*Ne akoma da egya mu*	Her/ his heart is lying in fire.	'She/ he is scared/ frightened'.
c.	*Ne bo ye hyɛ*	Her/ his heart is hot.	'She/ he is fearless/ courageous'.
d.	*Ne bo yɛ duru*	Her/ his heart is heavy.	'She/ he is courageous'.
e.	*Ne bo ha no*	Her/ his heart disturbs her/ him.	'She/ he is quick-tempered/ impatient'.

Note, however, that whereas (13a-b) relate to emotion, i.e. 'fear', (13c-e) relate to traits or characteristics of people, i.e. courage and patience.

3.2. *Ani* 'Eye' Metaphtonymies

(14) a. Ne   ani a   – fi
     3. SG SUBJ POSS eye PERF –   grow/ germinate, move/ go/ come out
     'She/ he is old/ matured (lit. his/ her eye has sprouted, opened or moved out)'.

   b. Ne   ani a   – bue
       3. SG SUBJ POSS eye PERF   – open
       'She/ he is matured/ polite/ civilized (lit. his/ her eye has opened)'.

   c. Ne   ani a   – wu
       3. SG POSS eye   PERF – die
       'She/ he is ashamed (lit. his/ her eye has died)'.

As we noted earlier, the verb *fi* (14a) is polysemous by extension with related meanings 'move out'. Here, too, *ani* 'eye' is used as vehicle for the target 'human being', forming the metonymy PART FOR WHOLE. The conception is that it is typically the grown-up who can come out and move about freely and do things that grown-ups do, as in *aduaba no afi* 'the seed has moved out/ germinated', *awia no afi* 'the sun has moved out', and *bosome no afi* 'the moon has moved out'. The seed/ plant, the moon, and the sun are enshrouded when they are not 'old' enough and therefore cannot move out. By extension, *ne ani afi* can also mean 'she/ he is matured' as in a child or a 'villager/ stranger' who is able to do things that are unexpected of him or her. However, this extension is fully born out in (14b) *ne ani abue* 'her eye has opened'. When one's eyes are wide open, then it means that the human being cannot just move out as in *fi* 'move out', but can rather virtually 'see everything', read in between lines, and actually manipulate his/ her way throughout life. In other words, all things being equal, one can clearly mediate and make better choices when she/ he can really 'see' (when she/ he is well informed). Furthermore, *ne ani abue* 'her/ his eye has opened' could further be extended to describe someone who is 'polite,

civilized or well cultured' as in *anokwa, abranteɛ yi ani abue* 'Ah, this young man is well cultured'.

Last but not least, in (14c), *ani* 'eye' provides mental access to the human being, and so it is a metonym of human being, forming a PART FOR WHOLE metonymy. The underlying metaphor, however, is A MENTAL STATE OF A HUMAN BEING (SHAME) IS A PHYSICAL STATE OF THE HUMAN BEING (DEATH). The underlying principle is that people who are ashamed are usually unable to 'face' people; they usually separate themselves from others and are seen alone, just as the dead is alienated.

A detour may be necessary here to make an observation concerning an underlying principle of conceptual theories (section 2.). An underlying hypothesis of the conceptual theories is that metaphor and metonymy are not simply stylistic features, but that thought itself is metaphorical and metonymical. Thus, as the Akan examples given so far have shown, the two cognitive projections, metaphor and metonymy, are not restricted to the domain of «figurative» language, and that they are part of the everyday language use of the Akan speakers. In other words, one does not need to be a «super» Akan speaker in order to use these examples in speech. They are among the basic construction types that toddlers or non-native speakers acquire first while learning the language. In fact, many of them do not have non-metaphtonymic paraphrases. Those that have paraphrases may not even be able to express precisely what their metaphtonymic counterparts do. For instance, another way of describing the concept of 'being ashamed' is to use the ambitransitive verb *fɛre* 'be shy, shy' in perfect or past situations, as exemplified in (15a and b) respectively.

(15) a. ɔ – a – fɛre
      3. SG SUBJ – PERF – be shy/ ashamed
      'She/ he is ashamed'.
   b. ɔ – fɛre – e (papa)
      3. SG SUBJ – to be shy/ ashamed – COMPL (well)
      'She/ he was (really) ashamed'.

Tentatively, we believe that in (15) one does not get exactly the same meaning as described in (14c), for instance, where there is a metaphtonymic use of language. More concretely, apart from the past and perfect, all other tense/ aspectual uses of the word *fɛre* connote the concept of 'being shy or shyness' rather than 'being ashamed'. For example, it is infelicitous to utter (16) to mean 'he will be ashamed'. The Akan could only capture the futurity of the concept 'being ashamed' by the use of a metaphtonymic language, as expressed in (17).

(16) *ɔ – bɛ – fɛre
     3. SG SUBJ – FUT – be shy
     'She/ he will be ashamed (She/ he will be shy)'.

(17) Ne ani bɛ – wu
     3. SG SUBJ POSS eye FUT – die
     'She/ he is/ will be ashamed'.

Thus, *ɔbɛfɛre* can only be used to mean 'she/ he will be shy' and not 'she/ he will be ashamed'. In order to express 'she/ he will be ashamed', *ne ani bɛwu* is required. The expressions in (18) are further examples of 'eye' metaphtonymies.

(18)

	Akan examples	Literal translation	Gloss
	Characteristics		
a.	*Ne ani ate*	Her/ his eye has cleared.	'She/ he is wise/ prudent'.
b.	*Ne ani yɛ den*	Her/ his eye is strong.	'She/ he is fearless/ courageous'.
c.	*Ne ani da fam*	Her/ his eye lies down.	'She/ he is discerning/ focused'.
d.	*Ne ani atera ne ani nton*	Her/ his eye has gone beyond her/ his eyelash.	'She/ he is disrespectful'.
	Emotions		
e.	*Ne ani agye*	Her/ his eye has collected.	'She/ he is happy'.
f.	*Ne ani gye ne ho*	Her/ his eye collects his/ self/ skin.	'She/ he is interested in (in love) him/ her'.
	States		
g.	*Ne ani kum*	Her/ his eye kills.	'She/ he is sleepy'.
h.	*Ne ani aha*	Her/ his eye has not cooked well.	'She/ he has lost vigor (in an activity)'.

These examples have similar explanations to those in (14) and are hence not reiterated. Like (14a-b), (18a-d) relate to human attributes including maturity, respect, discernment, courage, and prudence; (14c) and (18e-f) refer to human emotions, i.e. shame, love, and happiness; while (14g-h) make reference to human actions/ states[4].

3.3. *Ano* 'Mouth' Metaphtonymies

Ano 'mouth' also serves as a very vital source for several metaphtonymies in Akan. Unlike the previous two body parts, *ani* 'eye' and *akoma* 'heart', the mouth is not employed to express emotional feelings. It is used in metaphtonymies that generally make reference to speech attributes and actions, and could also be used to talk about unity and agreement.

(19) a. Ne   ano   a – te
   3. SG SUBJ POSS mouth/ lip PERF – be clear
   'She/ he is eloquent/ fluent (lit. her/ his mouth/ lip is cleared)'.

  b. Ne   ano   a – wo
   3. SG SUBJ POSS mouth/ lip PERF – dry
   'She/ he is eloquent/ fluent (lit. her/ his mouth/ lip is dried)'.

  c. Ne   ano   a – wu
   3. SG SUBJ POSS mouth PERF – die
   'She/ he is not fluent (lit. her/ his mouth is dead)'.

---

[4] See Hansford [2005] for a detailed separation of functions of 'eye' and other metaphors.

In (19) too, we have a PART FOR WHOLE metonymy, where *ano* 'mouth' gives access to the entirety of the human being. The two statements (19a-b) are actually paraphrases having similar underlying metaphors: ELOQUENCE IS A PYSICAL STATE OF THE MOUTH/ LIPS (DRYNESS) and ELOQUENCE IS A PHYSICAL STATE OF THE MOUTH/ LIPS (CLARITY) respectively. Akans have the underlying conception that one can speak 'better' when the lips, and hence the mouth, do not contain saliva (water). This conception is empirically based on the assumption that the new born child is unable to speak because there is a lot of saliva in the mouth, which comes out very often as bubbles to smear and wet the lips. At this stage, the child cannot speak and begins to utter some sounds when the amount of saliva in the mouth reduces, i.e. when there is a dramatic reduction or no 'water' at all on the lips. In other words, the assumption is that saliva in the mouth, which is shown by the wetness of the lips, actually impedes speech. And for one to be able to speak very well, the saliva must be cleared, as in (19a) *ne ano ate* 'his mouth is cleared', and, moreover, dried, as in (19b) *ne ano awo* 'his mouth is dried'. Thus, all things being equal, one who has a better cleared and dried mouth (lips) is more fluent and eloquent than the reverse[5]. Example (19c) is analogous to (14c). One may, at first sight, predict that *ne ano awu* means 'he is dumb'. This, however, is not the assumption in Akan. Usually (19c) is used to refer to a man who cannot «woo» a lady. Here, it is only an aspect of the dead alienation that is highlighted.

Similar to the expressions in (19), all the examples in (20-21) are metaphtonymic expressions relating to the mouth. While those in (20a-h) make reference to human characteristics relating to speech, such as eloquence, flattery, secrecy, gossip, lying, etc., those in (21a-h) make reference to actions encoding the concepts of opening, answer, closure, prevention, eating, leadership, accountability, etc.

(20)

	Akan examples	Literal translation	Gloss
	Characteristics		
a.	*ɔ-wɔ ano*	She/ he has mouth.	'She/ he is talkative/ eloquent/ flatterer'.
b.	*Ne ano yɛ dɛ*	Her/ his mouth is sweet.	'She/ he is a flatterer (sweet talk)'.
c.	*Ne ano yɛ du*	Her/ his mouth is ten.	'She/ he is a liar'.
d.	*Ne ano yɛ toro*	Her/ his mouth is slippery.	'She/ he is a gossip'.
e.	*Ne ano yɛ duru*	Her/ his mouth is heavy.	'She/ he is secretive'.
f.	*Ne ano yɛ mmienu mmienu*	Her/ his mouth is two two.	'She/ he is indecisive'.
g.	*Ne ano yɛ ya*	Her/ his mouth is painful.	'Her/ his speech is offensive/ vulgar'.
h.	*Ne ano beku no*	Her/ his mouth will kill her/ him.	'Her/ his speech will put her/ him in trouble'.

---

[5] We suspect an extension from just the child's ability to speak to its fluency of speech and the elderlies' ability to speak.

(21)

	Akan examples	Literal translation	Gloss
	Actions		
a.	*ɔ-a-ka ne ano*	She/ he has touched her/ his mouth.	'She/ he has eaten'.
b.	*ɔ-a-twe ne ano*	She/ he has pulled her/ his mouth.	'She/ he has pouted'.
c.	*ɔ-da ano*	She/ he sleeps at mouth.	'She/ he is the leader'.
d.	*ɔ-a-si ano*	She/ he has descended mouth.	'She/ he has prevented/ sealed it'.
e.	*ɔ-re-di ano*	She/ he is eating mouth.	'She/ he is bargaining'.
f.	*ɔ-bɛ-bu ano*	She/ he will break mouth.	'She/ he will account for it'.
g.	*o-yi-i ano*	She/ he removed mouth.	'She/ he answered it'.
h.	*ɔ-a-twa ano*	She/ he has cut mouth.	'She/ he has opened it'.

Hansford [2005] notes that in Chumburung, the 'mouth' could by extension also be used to talk about unity and contracts. She remarks: «In fact it [the mouth] is also used to illustrate the very high value placed on unity among people, assuming that if they speak with one voice, they will also act together» [Hansford 2005: 156]. She backs it up with the following example.

(22) Chumburung: [Hansford 2005: 156]

bʊ   de   kanɔ   kʊŋkʊ
3. SG SUBJ   have   mouth   one
'They are in agreement'.

The extension of the mouth to talk about unity and contracts is also applicable to Akan, as exemplified in (23).

(23)

	Akan examples	Literal translation	Gloss
	Mouth as Unity		
a.	*Yɛn ano yɛ baako*	Our mouths are one.	'We have one voice/ we are in agreement'.
b.	*Yɛn ano ahyia*	Our mouths have met.	'We have come to an agreement'.
c.	*Yɛn ano a-boa*	Our mouths have gathered.	'We have converged/ become same'.

3.4. *Nsa* 'Hand' Metaphtonymies

The last body part to be talked about is *nsa* 'hand'. Like *ano* 'mouth', the hand is not employed to make emotional expressions. It is generally employed to talk about human skills and agility.

(24) a. Ne   nsa   wa
      3. SG SUBJ POSS hand   be tall
      'She/ he is a thief (lit. her/ his hand is tall)'.

    b. Ne   nsa   ha   no
      3. SG SUBJ POSS   hand disturb 3. SG OBJ
      'She/ he is a thief (lit. her/ his hand disturbs her/ him)'.

The examples in (24) are paraphrases, although they have different underlying metonymies and metaphors. The metonymy for (24a) is PART FOR WHOLE because *nsa* 'hand' is used to «pinpoint» the human being to talk

about her/ him. But it is OBJECT OF ACTION FOR ACTION in (24b) because the hand provides the opportunity to access the target 'THIEVERY', but not the human being. Like most of the metaphors discussed above, (24a) has the underlying metaphor THIEVERY (A STATE OF THE HUMAN BEING) IS A PHYSICAL STATE (VERTICAL HEIGHT/ TALLNESS) and (24b) has the underlying metaphor THIEVERY (A STATE OF THE HUMAN BEING) IS LACK OF CONTROL. In the case of (24a) *ne nsa wa* 'her/ his hand is tall', the assumption is that a taller hand has a wider access to places than a shorter hand, in the sense that it can be stretched to reach places that the shorter hand cannot. Moreover, thievery is an activity which requires fastness and swiftness, and so, all things being equal, a taller hand has the ability to get to places faster (without carrying the whole body) than a shorter one. In the case of (24b) *ne nsa ha no* 'her/ his hand disturbs her/ him', in Akan, thievery is usually (but not always) considered as a devilish act which is the result of a curse or punishment on a person or even on an entire family or clan. As a result of that, thieves are considered to lack the will to control themselves from stealing. That is why the thief is described as 'her/ his hand disturbs her/ him' and not 'she/ he disturbs her/ his hand'. Consequently, it can be deduced that *nsa* 'hand' (concrete) is used metaphorically here to refer to the will (abstract).

In (25, 26), there are further examples related to *nsa* 'hand'. The examples (25a-c) are routine expressions used by the Akans to invite people to share food. The use of the hand instead of the fork, spoon or chopstick says a lot about the fact that the Akans traditionally relied on the bare hand (fingers) as the «tool» for eating. It is most likely that if the Akans had the habit of using the chopstick for eating, these expressions would have been centered on the chopstick. So, for instance, in inviting people for food, something like *me aduane abaa aka* 'my food stick has touched' would have been used instead of *me nsa aka* 'my hand has touched'.

(25)

	Akan example	Literal translation	Gloss
	Actions		
a.	*Me nsa aka*	My hand has touched.	'You are invited (food)'.
b.	*Me nsa wɔ mu*	My hand is in.	'Go ahead (food)'.
c.	*Me nsa da wo ase*	My hand thanks you.	'Thank you (food)'.

(26)

	Akan examples	Literal translation	Gloss
	Characteristics		
a.	*Ne nsa ano yɛ fɛ*	Her/ his hand's mouth is beautiful.	'She/ he is skillful (art)'.
b.	*Ne nsa ano yɛ dɛ*	Her/ his hand's mouth is sweet.	'Her/ his food is delicious'.
c.	*Ne nsa mu yɛ merɛ*	Her/ his hand's inside is soft.	'She/ he is generous'.
d.	*Ne nsa mu yɛ den*	Her/ his hand's inside is hard.	'She/ he is ungenerous'.

The examples in (26) code human characteristics, skills and generosity. Example (26) is quite interesting because unlike (24, 25), (26) clarifies specific parts of the hand involved: *nsa ano* 'hand's mouth (tip of the fingers)' and *nsa mu* 'hand's inside (palm)'. A probable underlying metaphor for (26c-d) is

GIVING IS SOFT (WEAK)/ HARD (STRONG) PALM. Thus, a person who has a weak palm does not have the capacity to hold on to objects for a long period and so may prefer to let go rather than to keep holding. Conversely, giving could be considered as a struggle for possession of objects between the «giver» and the «receiver». A person who has a softer/ weaker palm would invariably lose such 'struggles' against others with stronger palms and would hence be regarded as generous. On the other hand, if she/ he has a harder/ stronger palm than her/ his adversaries, then she/ he would invariably win most of the battles, and so would be considered ungenerous.

4. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the underlying conceptions of some metaphtonymic expressions in Akan within the cognitive approach. It has shown that metonymies in Akan are invariably PART FOR WHOLE. Typically, the vehicles are parts of the human body (CONCRETE) serving as points of access to the entire human being (ABSTRACT), thus confirming Kövecses and Radden's [1998] hypothesis that CONCRETE, HUMAN, IMMEDIATE, and IDEAL are preferred to ABSTRACT, NON-HUMAN, NON-IMMEDIATE, and NON-IDEAL as vehicles respectively. Moreover, generally the metaphors have more abstract, less physical or more subjective concepts understood in terms of more concrete, more physical or less subjective concepts. Thus, Akan generally employs concepts based on the physical states of the human body to refer to mental and emotional states such as sadness, fear, forgetfulness, shame, anger, love, etc.; human characteristics such as eloquence, flattery, secrecy, gossip, maturity, courage, respect, prudence, patience, ability, generosity, etc.; and human actions such as answer, closure, opening, prevention, eating, leadership, accountability, inter alia.

Moreover, the paper has shown that there is a great interaction between metaphor and metonymy. This relation is generally unidirectional in that whereas metaphors are embedded in metonymies when they occur in the same utterance, the reverse is not the case. For instance, hardly can any metaphorical expression on emotions be made about the human being without referring to *were, bo, akoma* 'heart' and *ani* 'eye' which in such expressions serve as metonyms for the human being.

Lastly, all the expressions used above are the language of everyday communication in Akan. Generally, the metaphtonymic expressions do not have paraphrases. Those that have are not able to express exactly what their metaphtonymic counterparts mean. This was particularly exemplified in section 3.2 with two distinct expressions for describing the concept of 'being ashamed' in the language. It was discovered that apart from the past and perfect, all other tense/ aspectual uses of the ambitransitive verb *fɛre* connote the concept of 'being shy or shyness' rather than 'being ashamed', unlike the metaphtonymic expressions involving the body part *ani* 'eye'.

REFERENCES

Agyekum 2005 – *Agyekum K*. Polysemy and metaphorical extensions of *Hunu,* 'vision' perception verb in Akan // M.E.K.Dakubu, E.K.Osam, (eds.). Studies in the Languages of the Volta Basin 3, Proceedings of the Annual Colloquium of the Legon-Trondheim Linguistics Project. Accra: Linguistics Department, University of Ghana, 2005.

Anane 1979 – *Anane D.K*. Metaphors in Akan. B. A. Long Essay, Accra: University of Ghana, 1979.

Croft 1993 – *Croft W*. The role of domains in the interpretation of metaphors and metonymies // Cognitive Linguistics, 4 (1993).

Dolpyhne, Dakubu 1988 – *Dolpyhne F.A., Dakubu M.E.K*. The Volta-Comoe languages // M.E.K.Dakubu (eds.). The Languages of Ghana. London: Kegan Paul International, 1988.

Evans, Green 2006 – *Evans V., Green M*. Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Ghana Statistical Service 2005 – Ghana Statistical Service. 2000 Population and Housing Census of Ghana: Demographic, Economic and Housing Characteristics. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service, 2005.

Gibbs 1994 – *Gibbs R*. The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language and Understanding. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Goossens 1990 – *Goossens L*. Metaphtonymy: The interaction of metaphor and metonymy in expressions of linguistic action // Cognitive Linguistics, 1 (1990).

Grady 1997 – *Grady J*. Foundations of Meaning: Primary Metaphors and Primary Scenes. Ph.D. Dissertation, Berkeley: University of California, 1997.

Hansford 2005 – *Hansford G*. Body metaphors in Chumburung // Journal of West African Languages, 32 (2005).

Kövecses 2000 – *Kövecses Z*. Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Kövecses, Radden 1998 – *Kövecses Z., Radden G*. Metonymy: Developing a cognitive linguistic view // Cognitive Linguistics, 9 (1998).

Lakoff 1990 – *Lakoff G*. The Invariance Hypothesis: Is abstract reason based on image schemas? // Cognitive Linguistics, 1 (1990).

Lakoff, Johnson 1980 – *Lakoff G., Johnson M*. Metaphors we Live by. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Lakoff, Turner 1989 – *Lakoff G., Turner M*. More than Cool Reasons: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Langacker 1987 – *Langacker R*. Foundations of Cognitive Grammar 1. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987.

Matlock 1989 – *Matlock T*. Metaphor and the grammaticalisation of evidentials // Berkeley Linguistics Society, 15 (1989).