

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ljh.v26i1.3>

The Metonymic and Metaphoric Conceptualisations of the Heart in Akan and English

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Abstract

The paper examines the metaphorical and metonymic structure of the heart in Akan (a Kwa language in West Africa,) and English, within the framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), formulated by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). My aim is to explore the ways in which *akoma*, ‘the heart’, is used in Akan to express human experiences and also to compare the conceptualisations of the heart in Akan to those in English in order to establish whether the two languages manifest any cross-conceptual, cross-linguistic or cross-cultural differences. The data reveal that there are no striking differences between English and Akan with respect to the metaphoric and metonymic conceptualisations of the heart. The differences in the language-specific conceptualisations are attributed to the cultural models embedded in the two languages.

Keywords: heart, metaphor, metonymy, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, cultural models

In recent years, a significant number of studies, focusing on conceptualisations of internal body organs, in several languages, has contributed to the understanding of the intricate relationship between culture, body and language (Niemeier, 2003 and 2008; Goddard, 2008; Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2008; Siahaan, 2008; and Yu 2008). The studies have explored how, across various cultures, internal body organs, such as the heart and the liver, have been used as the loci for the conceptualisation of feelings, emotions, reasoning *etc.* Related studies by Ghanaian scholars include Ameka (2002), Dzokoto & Adams (2007), Dzokoto (2010) Agyekum (2013), Ansah (2012, 2014a and 2014b).

In both English and Akan, the heart is the body part regarded as the site of emotions. Christaller (1933) has noted that in Akan, it is ‘the centre of affections’ (p. 247). The paper examines the metaphorical and metonymic structure of the heart in Akan within the framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) formulated by Lakoff

and Johnson (1980). The aim is to investigate the emotion types and attitude types expressed in constructions involving the heart in Akan. Since the heart is considered the site of emotions in both English and Akan, the study is also aimed at testing the universal applicability of the types of mappings in the English language proposed by Niemeier (2003) to those in Akan. She has identified the following mappings for the heart: THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON, THE HEART AS A LIVING ORGANISM, THE HEART IS AN OBJECT OF VALUE and THE HEART IS A CONTAINER (Niemeier, 2003, pp.199-209). The paper focused on these mappings to establish whether they exist in Akan, or whether the two languages manifest any cross-conceptual, cross-linguistic or cross-cultural differences. This focus distinguishes the paper from the cited works on the metaphorical and metonymic conceptualisations of internal body organs and feelings.

Metaphor and Metonymy in Cognitive Linguistics

Metaphor and metonymy have been traditionally examined as stylistic devices in literary studies. Cognitive linguistics, however, is not primarily interested in the creative usage, but in the strategies that underlie both the creative usage and everyday usage. With the cognitive approach, metaphor is seen as a conceptual phenomenon which relates to what happens in the mind. This configuration of the metaphor is different from the literary view of the metaphor which simply defines it as a figure of speech that compares two subjects. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) were the first to present a cognitive analysis of conceptual metaphors and propounded the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. In the CMT, metaphor is defined as ‘understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another’ (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). Some examples include when we talk and think about arguments in terms of war. When we do this, we map one conceptual domain to another, or there is a mapping from what the proponents have termed a “source domain” to what they have also termed a “target domain” (Lakoff, 1993).

Cognitive linguists hold the view that each mapping involves a set of correspondences between the respective entities in each domain. For example, the conceptual domain of ARGUMENT is structured in terms of WAR based on linguistic evidence such as the following:

- (1) *Your claims are indefensible.*
He attacked every weak point in my argument.
His criticisms were right on target.
I demolished his argument.
If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 4)

Here, WAR is understood to be the source domain, which is mapped onto the target domain of ARGUMENT. In this case, mapping knowledge from the domain of WAR onto the domain of ARGUMENTS allows us to reason about one in terms of the other (Lakoff, 1993, p. 207).

Metonymy, like metaphor, is basic to language and cognition (Barcelona, 2003, p. 4). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) describe it as the usage of ‘one entity to refer to another that is related to it’ (p. 35). Gibbs (1994) also defines it as a process by which ‘people take one well-understood or easily perceived aspect of something to represent or stand for the thing as a whole’ (p. 321). Metonymy is often illustrated with examples, such as the use of the Supreme Court to refer to the judges or administration of the Supreme Court, or the White House to refer to the US president and the presidential aide. Others include the following examples from Lakoff and Johnson (1980):

- (2)
 - a. *He is in dance.* (= the dancing profession)
 - b. *Acrylic has taken over the art world.* (= the use of acrylic paint)
 - c. *The Times hasn’t arrived yet.* (= the reporter from the Times)
 - d. *Mrs Grundy frowns on blue jeans.* (= the wearing of blue jeans) (p. 35)

Like metaphors, metonymies are not random or arbitrary occurrences, which is to say that metonymic concepts are also systematic (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Diegman, 2005). Cognitive linguists postulate that metonyms are generated through links of several types. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 38) cite the following processes and examples:

- (2) a. THE PART FOR THE WHOLE
 - Get your butt over here.*
 - We don’t hire longhairs.*
- b. PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT
 - He bought a Ford.*
 - He’s got a Picasso in his den.*
- c. OBJECT USED FOR USER
 - The sax has the flu today.*
 - The buses are on strike.*
- d. CONTROLLER FOR CONTROLLED
 - Nixon bombed Hanoi.*
 - Napoleonlost at Waterloo.*

e. INSTITUTION FOR PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE

*You'll never get the university to agree to that.
The Senate thinks abortion is immoral.*

f. THE PLACE FOR THE INSTITUTION

*The White House isn't saying anything.
Washington is insensitive to the needs of the people.*

g. THE PLACE FOR THE EVENT

*Let's not let Thailand become another Vietnam.
Watergate changed our politics.*

These examples show the general metonymic concepts in terms of which we organise our thoughts and actions. It follows, then, that there is a system of conventional metonymic associations or mappings which are reflected not only in language, but also in the way we think and act.

Kövecses (2002, p. 145) argues that it is a basic feature of metonymically-related 'vehicle entity' (one that directs attention) and 'target entity' (one to which attention is provided) that they are 'close' to each other in conceptual space. For example, producers are conceptualised as close to the product because they are the ones who make it while the site of an institution is also conceptualised as close to the institution itself because most institutions are located in particular physical places. Thus, in cognitive linguistics, it is suggested that a vehicle can provide mental access to a target entity when the two belong to the same domain. Based on this, Kövecses (2002, p. 145) provides a definition of metonymy as follows: 'Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain, or idealized cognitive model (ICM).'

This is one of the important distinguishing features between metaphors and metonymies. Whereas metaphors involve mapping across two domains, metonymies provide associations or linkages within a single domain.

Language, Data and Analysis

The Akan language refers to a group of very closely related and mutually intelligible dialects located in much of the southern half of Ghana (Osam, 2004). It is the most widely spoken of all the Ghanaian languages. Its dialects include Agona, Akuapem, Akwamu, Asante, Assin, Bono (Brong), Fante, Kwahu and Wassa. For the purposes of this paper, I drew all my examples from Asante Twi of which I am a native speaker. The justification is that my intuitions as a native speaker will be useful for the analysis of culture-specific metaphors (if there are any).

The Akan data were gathered from a range of sources, including song lyrics, radio and TV discussions in Akan which occur in a natural context of language use, the Asante Bible, the Akan dictionary, everyday expressions about the heart some of which were provided by some native speakers and others by myself, also as a native speaker. The radio and TV stations from which I collected the data are Hello FM and Kessben FM in Kumasi, and Peace FM and Adom FM in Accra. These stations were selected because the language of their transmission is Akan. As I listened to their morning shows, discussions and interviews in Akan, I collected for analysis a number of linguistic expressions involving the heart. The songs from which data were collected were Akan highlife songs by composers such as C. K Mann, Kojo Antwi and Amakye Dede. For English, I relied on the data provided by Niemeier (2003; 2008) which stem mainly from the Roget's Thesaurus and other dictionaries.

Mode of Analysis

The procedure for metaphor identification proposed by the Praguejazz Group (2007) served as a guide in my attempt at identifying the metaphorically used words and expressions in Akan. They proposed the following procedure:

- i. Read the entire text–discourse to establish a general understanding of the meaning.
- ii. Determine the lexical units in the text–discourse.
- iii. For each lexical unit in the text, establish its meaning in context and then also determine if it has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts than the one in the given context, where basic meanings may be more concrete easier to imagine, to see, hear, feel, smell, and taste, bodily action, more precise and historically older.
- iv. If the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with each other, then the lexical unit should be marked as metaphorical.

(The Praguejazz Group 2007, p.3)

I also consulted the lexicographic work by Christaller (1933) which is a dictionary of the Asante and Fante language to cross-check the basic meanings of the Akan words and expressions that were believed to have been used metaphorically. Some elderly native speakers in my neighbourhood were also consulted on the meanings of some of the expressions. I, then, grouped them into the major metonymic and metaphorical mappings for the analysis. The following major metaphorical and metonymic mappings were identified: THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON, THE HEART AS A LIVING ORGANISM, THE HEART IS AN OBJECT OF VALUE and THE HEART IS A CONTAINER. I then described the metonymic and the metaphorical

structure of the heart in Akan and compared it with the mappings in the data for English. For the comparative analysis, I used the methodology proposed by Barcelona (2001) and Kövecses (2003; 2010) regarding identification and description. In the paper, all the conceptual metaphors are shown in capitals. Linguistic examples in Akan extracted from the various sources with their morpheme-by-morpheme glosses are also provided for illustration.

Conceptualisations of the Heart in English

In many cultures, the heart plays an important part as a conceived source of emotions and feelings. From a cognitive semantic perspective, the heart in English has received some attention from scholars, notable among whom is Niemeier (2003; 2008) who argues that in English, a folk model exists that places the heart as the site of emotions. Swan (2009) also discusses the role of the heart in the history of English and its function as a key term in English speaking cultures. He shows that the metaphorical meanings related to the heart are not only largely subsequent to and developed from concrete meanings, but also that new meanings develop over time, often constituting complex networks of interrelated conceptualisations. Other studies have been contrastive in nature. Siahaan (2008), for example, contrastively studies metaphorical concepts in English and Indonesian. Of all these studies, the two works by Niemeier appear to offer the most comprehensive description of the conceptualisations of the heart in English. I, therefore, present an overview of the cognitive representations of the heart in English as discussed in Niemeier (2003; 2008).

The main aim of Niemeier (2003) is to show that the heart metaphors in English rely on a metonymic perspectivisation of the heart as a source domain for the metaphorical mapping. She groups the metaphorical expressions found in her corpus into four categories: *THE HEART AS A METONYMY FOR THE PERSON*, *THE HEART AS A LIVING ORGANISM*, *THE HEART AS AN OBJECT OF VALUE* and *THE HEART AS A CONTAINER*. (Niemeier 2003, p. 199). Niemeier (2003, pp. 200-208), then, discusses the four categories and the conglomerate of different sub-folk models related to them. What follows is a summary of the main categories as well as the sub-folk models that fall under them.

1. THE HEART AS A METONYMY FOR THE PERSON

- a. *THE HEART IS A MOVABLE OBJECT* ('set one's heart on somebody')
- b. *THE HEART IS CHANGEABLE IN SIZE* ('heart-swelling', 'have a big-heart')
- c. *THE HEART AS A SOLID* ('hardness of heart', 'heavy-hearted', 'heart of iron', 'heart of stone')
- d. *THE HEART AS AN ANTHROPOMORPHISED ENTITY* ('somebody being one's heart's desire')

2. THE HEART AS A LIVING ORGANISM

THE HEART AS AN AUTONOMOUS ENTITY ('All hearts throb for her')

3. THE HEART AS AN OBJECT OF VALUE

- a. *THE HEART AS A COVETED ENTITY*
- b. *THE HEART AS A PRIZE ('to win someone's heart', 'to offer one's heart')*
- c. *THE HEART AS A BOOTY ('to lose one's heart to somebody', 'to steal every heart')*
- d. *THE HEART AS A MANIPULABLE OBJECT ('broken heart', 'heart-broken', 'broken-hearted')*

4. THE HEART AS A CONTAINER

- a. *THE HEART AS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS ('to have a soft heart', 'to have a tender heart')*
- b. *THE HEART IS A LID CONTAINER ('to open one's heart', 'to close one's heart to something')*
- c. *THE HEART AS A MANIPULABLE CONTAINER ('to open one's heart', 'to close one's heart to something', 'to pour out one's heart to something')*
- d. *THE HEART IS AN OPEN CONTAINER FOR LIQUIDS ('a heart overflowing (with gratitude)')*
- e. *THE HEART AS A CONTAINER WITH GREAT DEPTH ('from the bottom of one's heart')*
- f. *THE HEART IS A CONTAINER WITH AN INTERNAL CONTAINER ('in one's heart of hearts')*
- g. *THE HEART IS A STOREHOUSE CONTAINER ('I could not find it in my heart')*
- h. *THE HEART AS A COMPARTMENTALISED CONTAINER ('have a place in every heart')*

Conceptualisations of the Heart in Akan

All the four major metonymic and metaphorical mappings identified in English *THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON*, *THE HEART IS A LIVING ORGANISM*, *THE HEART IS AN OBJECT* AND *THE HEART IS A CONTAINER* exist in Akan. In the sections that follow, I present a detailed discussion of them.

THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON

This metonymy belongs to the model *THE PART FOR THE WHOLE* or *THE BODY PART FOR THE PERSON*. In Akan, the heart is considered the seat of emotions.

The prototypical emotion connected with the heart is love and the heart of the person in love is used to stand for the person. The linguistic examples in (4) capture this:

- (3) a. *Me de m'akoma nyinaa a-ma wo*
 1SG SUBJ take POSS heart all PERF-give 2SG OBJ
 'I have given you all my heart.'
- b. *Fa w'akoma ma me na yen-tena ɔɔɔ mu*
 Take POSS heart give 1SG OBJ FM 1PLSUBJ-stay love inside
 'Give me your heart so we can stay in love.'
- c. *Ɔ-de n'akoma nyinaa ɔɔ no*
 3SG-SUBJ- take his/her- heart all love 3SG-OBJ
 'He/She take his/her heart all love him/her'
 (i.e. 'He/she loves him/her with his/her whole heart')

In all the examples in (4), the heart is used to stand for a person.

In Akan, as it is in English, the heart is conceptualised as *CHANGEABLE IN SIZE*. Here, it is often described as *big* or *small*. These descriptions of the heart are used for behaviour types that belong to the antonym of courage vs cowardice. Someone who is not courageous may be said to have 'a small heart' (5a), whereas someone who is courageous may be said to have 'a big heart' (5b). It is worthy of note that in Akan, the expression in (5b) may also be used to describe someone who is kind.

- (4) a. *W'akoma sua*
 Your heart small
 'Your heart is small.' (i.e., 'You are not bold'/'You are not courageous'.)
- b. *W'akoma so*
 Your heart big
 'Your heart is big'. (i.e., 'You are kind'.)

Speakers of Akan use the heart for the articulation of negative emotions. Here, the heart is conceptualised as hard or solid as a stone or metal - *THE HEART IS A SOLID*. In Akan, expressions such as those in (6) are used to describe someone with an unyielding attitude or a difficult person. The hard materials can be said to be metaphorically connected with the unyielding attitude or 'hard' feelings of the people involved.

- (5) a. N’akoma yɛ den
 His/her heart is hard
 ‘His/her heart is hard.’ (i.e., ‘S/he is a difficult person’.)
- b. N’akoma dendenden sɛ ɛboɔ/ dadie
 His/her heart hard like stone/ metal
 ‘His/her heart is as hard as stone or as metal.’ (i.e., ‘S/he is very wicked/unkind/difficult’).

The metaphor *THE HEART IS A SOLID* is used metonymically in so far as it picks out one detail of a person’s disposition to stand for the whole moral frame of the person. The metaphor, then, has a metonymic basis.

The heart, for Akan speakers, is sometimes perceived as a full entity which may be present, or even totally absent; it is not visualised as half-present as it is in English. Whereas in English the notions of presence or absence of the heart are used to describe people who are considered heartless or wicked, in Akan the notions are deployed to describe people who are regarded as impatient or quick-tempered (7a). In Akan, the expression in (7a) could also mean that the person is patient or kind. That meaning contrasts with that of (7b). It is in this sense that people who get irritated or angry are sometimes advised to calm down with the expression in (7c) which literally means that ‘they should get a heart’:

- (6) a. Papa no wɔ akoma paa
 man DEF have heart very much
 ‘The man really has a heart.’
 (i.e., ‘The man is patient’ or ‘The man is impatient/quick-tempered’)
- b. Papa no n-ni akoma koraa
 man DEF NEG-have heart at all
 ‘The man does not have a heart at all’
 (i.e. ‘The man is impatient/quick-tempered’)
- c. Nya akoma
 Get heart
 ‘Get a heart’ (i.e., ‘Take heart’/ ‘Take it easy’)

In Akan, the heart is also configured as a MOVABLE ENTITY. Here, it is the direction of movement that is highlighted. In those expressions, the heart is visualised as an entity that can move in an upward direction or in a downward direction. When the

heart is viewed as having moved upwards, the people so described are considered to have been agitated (8a). Consequently, the expression in (8b) which literally means ‘let your heart move downwards’ is sometimes used to advise such people to calm down or be patient. At other times, such people are advised ‘to move their hearts into their stomachs’ (9), which also involves movement from an upward direction to a lower direction. This conceptualisation is based on a folk model in Akan which gives priority to up-down orientation, where UP denotes a positive value and DOWN denotes a negative value. This view, as held in the Akan culture, is consistent with the position of Clark (1973):

Facts of perception also suggest how we could assign positive and negative values to directions away from the ... plane ... of asymmetry ... where positive is taken in its natural sense to mean the presence of something, and negative the absence ... since everything above ground level is perceptible and nothing below it is, upward is naturally positive and downward naturally negative.
(p. 33 quoted in Tyler and Evans 2003, p. 137)

However, in this context, there is an added specific cultural value in the linguistic expressions: an attitude that is high or up is not regarded as positive but negative, whereas an attitude that is low or down is regarded as positive. In this particular case, high is understood as negative and low is understood as positive in terms of human qualities:

(7) a. W’akoma kɔ soro dodo
 POSS heart go up too much
 ‘Your heart has gone up too much.’ (i.e., ‘You are too angry’)

 b. Ma w’akoma mmra fam
 Let POSS heart come down
 ‘Let your heart come down. (i.e., ‘Take heart’/ ‘Be patient’)

(8) Ka w’akoma to wo yam
 Move POSS heart put POSS stomach
 ‘Move your heart into your stomach.’ (i.e., ‘Take heart’ /‘Be patient’)

The Heart as a Living Organism

In Akan, sometimes the heart may be conceptualised as a LIVING ORGANISM or an AUTONOMOUS ENTITY. Here, the heart is understood as acting in its own right. As the example in (10) illustrates, the heart is viewed as a living organism and an

autonomous entity that is capable of ‘flying’. In (10), the heart is used to express fear. Some other expressions in Akan conceptualise the heart as what (Niemeier 2003, p. 203) describes as ‘AN ANTHROPOMORPHISED ENTITY’, where the heart itself, not the human being with which it is connected, may be regarded either as desiring someone or something in question (11a), may become proud (11b) or may grumble (11c):

- (9) M’akoma tu-i
 POSS-heart fly-COMPL
 ‘My heart flew (away).’ (i.e., ‘I panicked.’)
- (10) a. M’akoma so adeε
 My-heart top entity
 ‘My heart’s desire’
- b. ... w’akoma ama ne ho so (Deut. 8:14)
 ... *then your heart will become proud* (Deut. 8:14 NIV)
- c. Yi wo yam ma no, na mma no nnye w’akoma ahi se wo bema no
 (Deut 15:10)
Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart.
 (Deut 15:10 NIV)

The Heart as an Object of Value

It is worthy of note that Akans sometimes perceive the heart as an object or an entity. Consequently, they attribute characteristic properties of objects to the heart. In this regard, in Akan the heart as a whole is considered to be a kind of treasure or something of great value to its owner and to the other person as a COVETED ENTITY. Whereas in English the heart as an object of value can be conquered or won in a contest or in a war, in Akan it can be a COVETED ENTITY as indicated in (4b) repeated here as (12a) or an object that may be offered generously as indicated in (1a), also repeated here as (12b):

- (11) a. Fa w’akoma ma me
 take POSS heart give 1SG OBJ
 ‘Give me your heart.’
- b. Me de m’akoma nyinaa a-ma wo
 1SG SUBJ take POSS heart all give 2SG OBJ
 ‘I have given all my heart to you’

The heart is sometimes conceptualised as DELICATE or FRAGILE and can even be destroyed. Common expressions that illustrate this include those in (13a) and (13b):

- (12) a. W'a-sei m'akoma
 2SG-SUBJPERF-destroy my heart
 'You have destroyed my heart.'
 (i.e., 'You have made me angry' / 'You have disappointed me').
- b. Hwe na w'an-te m'akoma
 Look and 2SG SUBJ NEG-pluck POSS heart
 'Be careful you do not destroy my heart.'
 (i.e., 'Do not disappoint me' / 'Do not break my heart').

In all these cases, emotions are involved. Whereas the expression in (13a) may be used by someone who has been agitated or one whose love is unrequited, the one in (13b) may be used by someone who is madly in love and does not want to have his or her heart broken.

The Heart as a Container

In Akan, as it is in English, the heart is conceptualised in a static view as A CONTAINER WITH A LID or A CONTAINER WITH A DOOR which may be opened or closed. When it is opened, there is free access to the person's emotions or beliefs. Here, the heart is understood as A MANIPULABLE CONTAINER. In example (14), the heart is not only described as a container with a door that can be opened, but also as a place where someone (God in this case) can reside (*THE HEART AS A PLACE OF ABODE*).

- (13) Bue w'akoma mu na Onyame mmetena mu
 Open your heart inside for God stay inside
 'Open your heart for God to come and dwellin'.

The heart is also visualised as a container that can be filled with emotions (often positive emotions). The linguistic expressions in (15) illustrate this. This metaphor may be said to be based on the generic-level metaphor *THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE EMOTIONS*. In this connection, the heart stands metonymically for the emotions involved. If there are too many emotions involved, the container might be too small to absorb them, in which case it might overflow (15b).

- (14) a. M'akoma a-hye ma
 My heart PERF-fill full
 'My heart is full (of joy).'

- b. M'akoma a-hye ma a-bu
 so
 My heart PERF-fill full PERF-overflow
 top
 'My heart is overflowing (with joy).'

As Niemeier (2003, p. 207) has noted for English, this representation of the heart is illustrated by a dynamic view of an OPEN CONTAINER FOR LIQUIDS, where the path of the movement of the liquid from the container is visualised. Sometimes, the opposite kind of movement, namely movement towards the container is highlighted as illustrated in the Akan expressions in (16) below. This is a clear indication that the way from our feelings or emotions to the heart is not a one-way street, but works both ways, as feelings may enter or leave it.

- (15) Anigyee/Edɛ/ Awerehoɔ a-hye m'akoma ma
 Happiness/Joy/Sadness PERF-fill my heart full
 'Joy/Sadness has filled my heart'.
 (i.e. 'My heart is overflowing with happiness /joy/ sadness')

Niemeier (2003) has observed that in English, the heart is sometimes seen as 'A CONTAINER WITH GREAT DEPTH' and as filled with positive emotions. This type of container, she notes, is conceptualised as having a bottom representing the location where one's innermost feelings which are often thought to be very intense and sincere are stored. This is illustrated in the expression in (17) below:

- (16) *from (the bottom of) one's heart*

In Akan, it is the inner part of the heart that is conceptualised, and not as one with great depth (18):

- (17) E-firi m'akoma mu
 3SG SUBJ- come-from my heart inside
 'It comes from my heart.' (i.e., 'It is from my heart').

In Akan, the container metaphor is also used to describe another type of attitude, that is, honesty or purity. Here, the heart is visualised as a container whose inner part is clean or white in colour. This gives us the metaphor the HEART IS A CONTAINER WITH A WHITE/CLEAN INTERIOR. Here, there is an added specific cultural value in

the linguistic expressions: the colour white in Akan symbolises purity or cleanliness. Therefore, honest people or people who are believed not to harbour any ill-feelings against others are described with expressions such as those in (19):

- (18) a. M'akoma mu yε
 POSS heart inside good
 'The inner part of my heart is good.' (i.e., 'I am honest' / 'I have a pure heart').
- b. M'akoma mu fitaa
 POSS heart inside white
 "The inner part of my heart is good white." (i.e., I am honest / I have a pure heart).

Again in Akan, the heart is conceptualised as A CONTAINER OR A STOREHOUSE where items dear to one's heart are kept or where matters or issues dear to the heart are kept or hidden. In (20a), *toffee* refers to the beloved.

- (19) a. M'akoma mu toffee
 POSS heart inside toffee
 'My sweet heart'
- b. Me de asem no a-sie m'akoma
 mu
 1SG SUBJ take matter DEF PERF-hid POSS heart
 inside
 'I have hidden the matter in my heart.' (i.e., 'I have kept the matter in my heart'.)

Differences and Similarities in the Conceptualisations of the Heart in English and Akan

The differences and similarities in the conceptualisations of body parts in cognitive linguistics have been studied by a number of scholars (Siahaan, 2008). Evidence from these studies (Gaby, 2008; Goddard, 2008; Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2008; Ikegami, 2008; Niemeier, 2003 and 2008; Occhi, 2008; Pérez, 2008; Siahaan, 2008; Yoon, 2008; Yu, 2008) suggests that the conceptualisations can be explained in terms of the thesis of embodied cognition and also in terms of constructs whose properties depend on different aspects of a given culture. Pérez (2008), for example, who studied the representations of the heart in five languages observed that there are certain similarities and differences in the

conceptualisations. The similarities, she argues, derive from universal aspects of the human body, which support the idea of embodiment claimed by the cognitive theory. Siahaan (2008) who examined the cultural models of the Indonesian concept of LIVER as the centre of both emotional and mental activities, also concluded that the conceptualisations are not arbitrary, but reflect a cultural model common among Indonesian people.

My examination of the conceptualisations of the heart in English and Akan was based on the methodology proposed by Kövecses (2010). In both languages, the heart is talked about in terms of both conceptual metonymies and conceptual metaphors. With regard to the source domains in the metonymic conceptualisation, the linguistic evidence suggests a similarity. Both languages make references to the human person, where the heart is made to represent the person. Moreover, in both languages, the metonymy, THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON, forms the basis of metaphorical mappings. The metaphors THE HEART IS CHANGEABLE IN SIZE, THE HEART IS A SOLID, THE HEART IS AN ANTHROPOMORPHISED ENTITY and THE HEART IS A MOVABLE ENTITY are all based on the metonymy THE HEART STANDS FOR THE PERSON. It is interesting to note that the same conceptual sources and the targets are metaphorically associated in both languages.

However, there are differences in the elaboration in the two languages of the metaphor *THE HEART IS A MOVABLE ENTITY*. In English, the metaphor is derived from the expression ‘to set one’s heart on somebody’ (Niemeier, 2003, p. 200). As she explains, the heart or the person ‘only knows one goal that s/he tries to pursue with perseverance’ (Niemeier 2003, p. 200). In English, the elaboration is associated with love. Moreover, the movement is not clearly defined and may be described as traversing a path. In Akan, this metaphor is associated with the human attitudes of patience and impatience, and the movement is expressed in terms of an upward or a down movement. Interestingly, the idea of movement in both cases implies a sudden change and is based on the conceptual metaphor *CHANGE IS MOTION* (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, p. 52), which is an entailment of the more general metaphor *CHANGE OF STATE IS CHANGE OF LOCATION* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, p. 179).

In terms of the conceptual metaphors, the two languages share the following source domains: A LIVING ORGANISM, AN OBJECT and A CONTAINER. However, the source domains A PRIZE, and A BOOTY are exclusive to English, whereas AN ABODE and A CONTAINER WITH A

WHITE INTERIOR or a CONTAINER WITH a CLEAN INTERIOR are the Akan-specific source domains of the heart identified. There are also language-specific construals of some of the source domains identified. For instance, in both languages the heart is sometimes perceived as a full entity which may be present, or even totally absent. However, in English it is also visualised as half-present. Moreover, whereas in English the notions of presence or absence of the heart is used to describe people who are considered heartless or wicked, in Akan the notions are used to describe people who are considered impatient or quick-tempered.

Cultural Models and Embodiment in the Conceptualisations of the Heart

The body and mind dichotomy, that is dualism, is often regarded as distinctive of Western culture. However, it should be acknowledged that the idea of dualism has dominated Akan culture for some time and that this has linguistic consequences and effects. In Akan, there is a view that the individual is composed of the three essences - soul, body and spirit. Sarpong (1977) explains that the soul is received at conception and is ‘a small indestructible part of God which He gives to the individual before birth’ (p. 5). At death, the soul is not transformed in any way, but returns intact to the owner, God. The body becomes the corpse which is buried and the spirit morphs into a ghost.

A similar view is shared by Gyekye (1987/1995). The human being, according to Gyekye (1987/ 1995), is made up body, soul and spirit (p. 85). In Akan these are referred to as *honam* ‘body’, *okra* ‘soul’ and *sunsum* ‘spirit’. He asserts that ‘the *okra* is the innermost self, the essence of the individual person’ (Gyekye, 1995, p. 85). The *sunsum* ‘spirit’, on the other hand, is the ‘unperceivable, mystical beings and forces in Akan ontology, and specifically refers to the activating principle in the person’ (Gyekye, 1995, p. 88). He argues that although it is difficult to differentiate between the *sunsum* and *okra*, the two are not the same. Therefore, “Akan philosophy maintains a dualistic, not a tripartite, conception of the person: a person is made up of two principal entities, one spiritual or immaterial *okra* ‘soul’ and the other material *honam* ‘body’ (Gyekye, 1995, p. 94). This serves to posit a ‘theory of the unity of soul and body’ which makes the ‘Akan conception of a person both dualistic and interactionist’ (Gyekye, 1995, pp. 99-102).

Within this dualistic philosophy and categorisation prevalent in Akan, there is yet another dualism. The function of our immaterial selves, that is, soul

often suggests a dichotomy between the rational and the emotional. Interestingly, though the soul is conceived as abstract, invisible and immaterial, in Akan culture, we nevertheless locate it squarely in the body, specifically in two different body parts, the head (or brain) and the heart. In this context, the soul (i.e. feelings and rationality) in a sense is hijacked by the body, into those body parts which are highly relevant in our language. In Akan, both the head and the heart are words that denote concrete body parts. However, it has now become common to conceive of the heart as the seat of feelings, while the head is seen as the location of the intellect. Thus, the head ‘contains’ our reason and intellect and the heart on the other hand ‘contains’ various feelings and emotions.

In spite of the dichotomy between heart and head expressions in Akan, some exceptions were detected in the corpus of heart expressions. These are cases where the *heart* is connected to mental faculties. Most of these were found in the Asante Bible. Two examples have been provided in (21). Both expressions refer to thinking about something very deeply.

- (20) a. Na Yesu hunuu wɔn adwene no, ɔkaase: Aden nti na mo dwene
bɔne mo akoma mu. (Matt 9:4)
But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, ‘Why do you think evil
in your hearts?’ (Matt.9:4 NKJV)
- b. Aden nti na mo dwenedwene yei nom mo akoma mu? (Mark 2:8)
He said to them, ‘Why do you reason about these things in your
hearts?’ (Mark 2:8 NKJV)

Conclusion

In this article, I have compared and contrasted the general metonymic and metaphoric conceptualisations of the heart in Akan and English. The similarities and differences in the conceptualisations have been attributed to the commonality in human experience or to the thesis of embodied cognition, and also to our cultural models. The article focused on conceptualisations of one internal body organ in Akan and English. It is hoped that the article will contribute to the understanding of the intricate relationship between culture, body and language. It would be interesting to know the kind of results studies of other internal body organs in Akan would yield.

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Submitted: February 5, 2015 / **Published:** May 30, 2016