THE PRAGMATICS OF 'MOUTH' METAPHORS IN AKAN

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Abstract

The paper addresses the semantic shifts, extensions and metaphorical use of **ano** 'mouth' in Akan (a Ghanaian language). It focuses attention on the semantic patterns and pragmatic nature of the metaphor and its usage in a variety of contextual features. In Akan, the body part expressions and bodily functions have extended meanings that still have some relationship with the original words. The body parts thus act as the productive lexical items for the semantic and metaphoric derivation. I will consider the body part **ano** from its physical and cognitive representations. The paper also looks at the positive and negative domains of **ano**, 'mouth' expressions. The data are taken from Akan literature books, the Akan Bible and recorded materials from radio discussions. The paper illustrates that there is a strong relation between a people's conceptual, environmental and cultural experiences and their linguistic systems.

Key terms: cognitive semantics, semantic change, pragmatics, metaphor, body-part language

1. Introduction: Cognitive Semantics and Conceptual Metaphor

This paper is grounded in cognitive semantics, which relates linguistic expressions to human cognitive experience. The complex expressions in language are derived from the basic categories, including body parts (Sweetser 1990:1). Many expressions of emotions, perceptions, cognition, intellect, locatives and the face concept in pragmatics are tapped from body parts (Agyekum, 2005, 2004a, 2002). Most body part expressions have become conventionalised metaphors because they have been long established. Others are more recent and are part of our current social metadiscourse.

This paper also employs conceptual metaphor theory (CMT). In the view of Semino (2008: 5) "Conceptual metaphors are defined as systematic sets of correspondence, or 'mappings', across conceptual domains, whereby a 'target' domain is partly structured in terms of a different 'source' domain." Conceptual metaphor (CM) theorists view metaphor as being partly a linguistic phenomenon and also a mode of conceptual representation. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 177) argue as follows:

> Many aspects of our experience cannot be clearly delineated in terms of the naturally emergent dimensions of our experience. This is typically the case for human emotions, abstract concepts, mental activity. . . Though most of these

can be experienced directly, none of them can be fully comprehended on their own terms. Instead, we must understand them in terms of other entities and experiences, typically other kinds of entities and experiences.

In supporting the above claim, Semino (2008:6) further contends that:

Cognitive metaphor theorists emphasize that target domains typically correspond to areas of experience that are relatively abstract, complex, unfamiliar, subjective or poorly delineated, such as time, emotion, life or death. In contrast, source domains typically correspond to concrete, simple, familiar, physical, and well-delineated experiences such as motion, bodily phenomena, and physical objects and so on.

Within CMT, the meanings of linguistic expression are rooted in human cognitive experience (see Yu 2004:664, Sweetser 1990).[1] A cognitively based theory of language takes human perception, parts of the body, and understanding of the world as the basis for the structure of human language. The **ano** 'mouth' expressions in Akan support the notion that many of the source domains of conceptual metaphor reflect patterns of bodily experience (Gibbs et al. 2004: 1192). The relationship between linguistic form and function reflects human conceptual structure and general principles of cognitive organisation. In the case of metaphor we will agree with Gibbs et al. (2004: 1191) and others that metaphor is not merely a linguistic, rhetorical figure, but constitutes a fundamental part of people's ordinary thought, reason, and imagination.

The paper illustrates that the language of a people is inextricably interwoven with their culture, environment and various sectors of their society. In most cases, a change in any of these variables has a direct effect on the nature and structure of the language and can thus bring about corresponding, diachronic changes and shed light on the etymology of certain expressions. Universally, bodily experience is a fertile ground for the conceptualisation of emotions and abstract thought in general (see Dirven et al. 2007: 1209).

There is a correlation between our external experience and our internal emotional and cognitive states. Bonvillain (1993: 82) aptly states that:

…widespread use of corporeal metaphors probably results from the central importance human beings attribute to their own bodies. We extend the imagery

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[1] In looking at the metaphor of eye among the Chinese, Yu (2004:669) posits that compounds and idioms involving the eye in Chinese do not describe seeing *per se*, but state the activities and connections to the heart and the mind. The Chinese have a metaphor like, MENTAL FUNCTION (thinking, knowing, and understanding) is PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE (seeing).

of body to inanimate objects and to descriptions of activities. It is a process of observing and experiencing the world through human eyes and by analogy with human form.

The mapping of concrete concepts with abstract notions should be well done, and people should understand the cultural traits (see Ungerer and Schmid 2009: 120). The concepts expressed in metaphors correspond to natural experiences and basic domains of human life, including bodily perception and movement, basic objects, the environment, culture and social interactions (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Dzokoto and Okazaki (2006: 129) state that in most languages "the body is an integral part of the symbolism used in the expressions of affective experience by their speakers". This notion conforms to the notion of embodiment, where issues, concepts and states in our body form the basis of social life through which we perceive and socialize the world (cf. Radley 1998).

The constructions of the meanings of words are drawn from the encyclopaedic knowledge of the people, which is sourced from various aspects of their sociocultural life (see Evans and Green 2006: 162). According to the conceptual theory, unfamiliar and delineated concepts in our experiences can only be grasped by means of other concepts that we understand in clearer terms. To Evans and Green (2006: 157), "the nature of conceptual organisation arises from bodily experience." In conceptual theory there is a strong interaction between language and the physical world. (See Cruse 2000, Orthony 1993, Searle 1993, Morgan 1979, Kovecses 2002, Semino 2008 on metaphor).

Some of the **ano** 'mouth' expressions in Akan are based on semantic changes and extensions of meanings. Semantic change is a process whereby the meanings of certain words or expressions acquire different meanings with the passage of time and space and change of context and culture. The original meaning may be extended to cover other notions and objects (extension). Traugott (1982) emphasises that meaning more frequently shifts from concrete to abstract than in the opposite direction.

Kovecses (2002: 6) posits that "Conceptual metaphors, typically employ a more abstract concept as target and a more concrete or physical concept as their source." We can see then that ABSTRACT CONCEPTS ARE PHYSICAL CONCEPTS. This happens due to the cognitive nature and the conceptual behaviour of speakers of the language and the interaction between language and the physical world, as noted earlier on.

1. 1. Metaphor

The term 'metaphor' is very pervasive in semantics, lexicology, literature, philosophy and cognitive studies. According to Kovescses (2002), "metaphor is

defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain." Metaphors are conceptually grounded on physical and mental experience.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 5) state that "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (cf. Lee 2005: 6; Semino 2008:1). The use of metaphors is one of the highest manifestations of language creativity (see Fromkin and Rodman 1998: 188). Meanings of metaphorical utterances cannot be deduced only from literal senses of the words, so we need to understand and rely on both the literal and the conceptual meanings (Agyekum 2002; Orthony 1993). Sometimes, the metaphorical meaning is only a slight semantic extension of the literal meaning. There are thus degrees of derivation of a metaphor from the literal meanings; some meanings are transparent while others are remote from their literal meanings. There is thus a continuum of metaphorical extensions (see Foley 1997: 182, Ungerer and Schmid 2009: 118, Kovecses 2002: 4).

A proper analysis and understanding of metaphors and their meanings involves a closer look at their semantics, pragmatics and cognitive concepts and an overall knowledge of the language, culture, society, and environment. The semantic aspect considers their intrinsic and extended meanings. The recognition and interpretation of a metaphor requires attention to the *particular* pragmatic contexts under which the utterances were made. Mey (1993: 64-65) clearly states that:

> pragmatically speaking, all metaphors are wrong as long as they are not 'contextualised', i.e. placed within the proper situation of use… Only the context of situation that we want to characterise metaphorically can determine the usefulness of a particular metaphor. …. The task of pragmatics is to 'deconstruct' the metaphor, to unload the 'loaded weapon' of language.

To Sweetser (1990: 19), a metaphor is a major structuring force in semantic change and in a metaphor; speakers find an inter-domain between knowledge and vision or between time and space (cf. Levinson 1983: 165-166). Understanding of metaphors takes place in holistic domains of experience and not in terms of isolated concepts.

1.2 The Akan People

The word 'Akan' refers to the people as well as their language. The Akans are the largest ethnic group in Ghana. According to the 2000 national population census about 44% of the population speaks Akan.

The Akans occupy the greater part of southern Ghana. Akan is spoken as a native language (L1, first language) in six of the ten regions in Ghana namely, Ashanti, Eastern, Western, Central, Brong Ahafo and Volta Regions.

1.3 Methodology

The data were collected through interviews and recordings at various social interactions and communicative events. Some were picked up from Akan news from FM stations. I also recorded some from Akan preaching on FM radio and TV and also took notes from preaching in my local Methodist Church. Others were from Akan folksongs, proverbs and dirges. I tapped some data from various written sources – the major sources were Christaller's (1933) Akan Dictionary and the Akan Bible, especially the book of Proverbs. Apart from this, I also consulted Akan oral and written literature. I crosschecked the list with renowned speakers of the Akan language and fellow Akan lecturers at the University of Ghana.

In the analyses, I have put up a summary of the structure of the **ano** compounds that have been lexicalised. I have also provided a list of **ano** expressions and used some of them in examples under the various morphological structures and semantic domains for my analysis.

2.0 *Ano* 'mouth' expressions in Akan

This section looks at the metaphorical extensions derived from the body part **ano**, 'mouth'.

2.1 Structure and analysis of *ano* 'mouth' expressions.

Most Akan body part expressions are compound nouns. The internal morphological structure falls under one of the basic structures below.

Structure 1 [NP [body organ] + VP [V]] Nominal → NP
    ano   **yi**   **anoyie**
    mouth   withdraw   'defence'

Structure 2 [NP [body organ]] + VP [V] [suffix]] Nominal → NP
    ano   **te**   **ɛ**   **anoteɛ**
    mouth   tear   SUFF   'eloquence'

Structure 3 [NP [body organ] + VP [V Redpl]]+ NP [N] [suffix]] → NP
    ano   **se se**   **ade**   **ɛ**   **anoseseadeɛ**
    mouth   say say   thing   SUFF 'braggart'

Structure 4 [NP [body organ] + NP [N]] Nominal → NP
    ano   **kam**   **anokam**
    mouth   scar   'invective'

Structure 5 [NP [body organ] + VP [V+ Adj.]] Nominal → NP
    ano   **yɛ (ɔ) dɛ**   **anoɔdɛ**
    mouth   be (is) sweet   'persuasion'

Structure 6 [NP [body organ]] Postpos. Assoc.] + NP [N +]] Nominal → NP

ano	**mu**	**asɛm**	**anomusɛm**
mouth	inside	issue	'bragging'
ano	**ho**	**ba**	**anohoba**
mouth	body	child	'vow/promise'.

We see from the above that a body part expression in Akan is made up of an obligatory body part NP and (a) a noun or (b) a simple or complex VP made up of a verb and a postposition or an adjective. A body part expression may have an underlying prefix or suffix, but these may be covertly or overtly expressed in the surface structure.

The **ano** 'mouth' metaphors are based on the physiological, biological, psychological, and the socio-cultural functions of the mouth.

A: *ano* **'mouth'**

The mouth is one of the most active parts of the body used in speech. In view of this, many expressions dealing with communicative interaction and utterances are derived from the word **ano** 'mouth'. The binary features [+, -] in the table below indicate how the Akans conceptualise a particular term as being positive or negative (see Sec. 4).

Table 1: *Ano* Expressions and their English Equivalents

	Akan	Literal meaning	English Equivalent
1	**anobaabae** [±]	mouth opening (redupl.)	dispute, contention
2	**anobirebire**	prattling mouth	talkative, prattling mouth
3	**anobow** [-]	stinking mouth	abusive, defying reply
4	**anodi** [+]	eating the mouth /edge	bargaining, agreement
5	**anodisɛm** [+]	mouth eating issues	content of an agreement, resolution
6	**anoduan** [+]	mouth food	daily bread
7	**anoduro** [+]	heavy mouth	tight lipped, discrete, reticent
8	**anofena** [-]	mouth sword	grievous speech, abusive language
9	**anohoba** [+]	mouth pledge	promise
10	**anofom** [-]	mouth mistake	slip of tongue, mistake in speech
11	**anohunu** [-]	vain/empty mouth	whimsical or vain talk/statement
12	**anohyira** [+]	mouth blessing	joyful ritual with good food
13	**anokam** [-]	mouth scar, cut, mark,	the effect of an invective

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14	**anokasa**	mouth language	oral speech
15	**anoko** [±]	mouth fighting	jest, verbal duel
16	**anokoro** [+]	single mouth	unanimity, unison
17	**anokotwa** [-]	mouth fighting cut/scar	striving about words
18	**nokorɛ/kware** [+]	single mouth	truth, honesty, faithfulness
19	**nokwafo** [+]	single mouth person	truthful, trustworthy, faithful person
20	**nokwasɛm** [+]	single mouth issue	truth, a true saying
21	**nokwatɛn** [+]	single mouth judgement	faithful, fair, impartial judgement
22	**anokum**[1] [-]	mouth killing	gossiping
23	**anokum**[2] [-]	mouth killing	completion, coming to an end
24	**anokurokuro** [-]	mouth prattling	talkative
25	**anomsɛm** [-]	mouth inside issues	boasting
26	**anomum** [±]	deaf mouth	reticence, muteness, silence
27	**anomuɔdɛ** [-]	sweet inside the mouth	having a sweet tooth
28	**anomuduɔdɛfoɔ** [-]	sweet mouth person	greedy person, having a sweet tooth
29	**anontanata** [-]	twin mouth	double-tongued, liar
30	**anoɔdɛ** [±]	sweet mouth	flattery, persuasion
31	**anoɔhare** [-]	fast mouth	quickness of speech, indiscretion, gossiper
32	**anoɔtorɔ** [-]	slippery	gossiping (okro mouth[2])
33	**anopa**[1] [+] (adj.)	good mouth	pleasant language, friendly reply
34	**anopa**[2] [-] (verb)	gliding/wobbling mouth	unintended accusation, insult
35	**anopɔnhunu** [-]	big empty mouth	empty boasting or blustering
36	**anoseseadeɛ** [-]	mouth says many things	braggart
37	**anosɛm** [-]	words in the mouth	boast, swagger, bluster, vain words

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[2] In Ghanaian parlance the term 'okro mouth" is a popular figurative equivalent of 'slippery mouth', to indicate that the person cannot keep a secret.

38	**anosɛmfoɔ** [-]	person with words in mouth	boaster, swaggerer, braggart
39	**anosom** [-]	mouth serving/worship	lip service
40	**anoteɛ** [+]	clear mouth	fluency of speech, eloquence
41	**anotoɔ** [-]	mouth throwing	sending an abusive word
42	**anotorofetorofe** [-]	smooth mouth	glib, blabbing out secrets
43	**anototoɔ/anotoɔ** [-]	mouth throwing (redupl.)	false accusation, sycophancy
44	**anoɔyea** [-]	a mouth that carries pain	insulting mouth,
45	**anoyie** [+]	remove/withdraw mouth	response, defence
46	**anoyie/anobua** [+]	remove/withdraw mouth	reply, answer, response, defence
47	**nyinyiano/anoyiyie**	removal of mouth	refusing to do things by giving flimsy excuses

2. 2 Analysis of *ano* expressions:

The expressions related to 'mouth' also follow the general structures given, that is, they are made up of an obligatory N [body part] and (1) a verb, (2) a verb + adjective (c) another noun, (d) a postposition or a combination of two or more of these.

2.2.1 *Ano* + Verb (±suffix)

In this construction the noun **ano** 'mouth' is followed by a verb plus or minus a suffix:

    [NP [body organ] + VP [V] +(Suffix)]   Nominal
       [ano   **yi**   **-e]**   **anoyie**
       [mouth   withdraw]   'defence'

  In the expression **anoyie**, the person is seen to defend or exonerate himself by making a movement or pulling the mouth to speak, to convince the people that he is right or innocent.

  1. **Otemmuafoɔ no gye- e   Akua   anoyie   no to-o   mu**
   judge   the accept-PST Akua.POSS response the put-PST inside
   'The judge accepted Akua's defence.'

Here, the concept of **anoyie** 'defence/response' is conceptualised as a concrete thing that the judge received from Akua, then put it into a container of truthfulness and then released her.

  Some of the expressions that come under this structure are **anotoɔ** 'sending an abusive word', **anoteɛ** eloquence', **anopa** 'gliding/wobbling of the mouth', **anoko**

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'mouth fight', and **anofom** 'slip of the tongue'. In some of these expressions the verb is reduplicated as in **anobaebae** 'dispute, argument, debate'. Let us look at the following.

> [NP [body organ] + VP [V]   Nominal]
> **[ano   fom]   anofom**
> [mouth   slip]   'slip of tongue, mistake'

In the Akan language a mistake in an utterance is not attributed to the tongue but linguistically related rather to the mouth. We can reduplicate it to get **anofomfom.**

2. **Ebinom de anofom   kata wɔn   atorɔ so**
    some   use slips.of.tongue cover their lies   on
   'Some people intentionally adopt slips of tongue to cover their lies.'

2.2. 2. *Ano* + **Verb** + **Noun**

There is another structure where the body part is followed by a verb and further by a noun.

> [NP [body organ] + VP [V] +[N]   Nominal
> **[ano   di (a)sɛm]   anodisɛm**
> [mouth   eat   issue]   'resolution'

The expression **anodisɛm** is made up of **ano** 'mouth', **di** 'eat' and **asɛm** 'issue/matter'. It implies an issue that can literally be eaten. It is therefore edible and consumable to bring about healthy life. It is a resolution whose contents are true. It also refers to a Charter that refers to the values a group cherishes. The Acheampong regime in Ghana (1972-1978), introduced a Charter of Redemption, that was referred to in Akan as **ɔman anodisɛm**. Akan broadcasters describe resolutions presented to officials as **anodisɛm** as in 3 below:

3. **Ɔyɛkyerɛfoɔ no   de   wɔn anodisɛm kɔ-ma-a   aban**
    demonstrators the take their resolution   go-give-PAST government.
   '**The demonstrators presented their resolution to the government.'

2.2.3. *Ano* + **Copula Verb** +**Adjective**

Certain **ano** metaphorical expressions are composed of the body part plus the copula verb **yɛ** 'to be' and then an adjective. Expressions that fall under this category include **anoɔyaw, anoɔhare, anoɔtorɔ, anoɔdɛ**, etc. Their structure is as in the frame below.

> [NP [body organ] + VP [Cop] +Adj]   Nominal
> **[ano   yɛ(ɔ)   duru]   anoduru**
> [mouth   be   heavy] 'tight lipped'

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The word **anoɔduru** derived from **ano** 'mouth' and **duru** 'heavy', refers to 'tight mouth'. Here, the mouth is considered to be so heavy and tight that the speaker would not be able to open it. Information in the head is, therefore, intact, as indicated in example 4 below.

4. **Mansa anoɔ-duru nti ne   papa ka n'atirimusɛm   kyerɛ no**
   Mansa mouth-heavy so POSS father say head.inside.matters   show her
   'Owing to Mansa's tight lips, her father tells her his secrets.'

It is conceptualised that such mouths are so heavy that the person will scarcely open it to divulge secrets or make unnecessary comments about issues. People with such mouths and quality are those you can plan and do good business with.

2.2.4. Ano + Adjective

There are expressions that are derived from the body part and an adjective as seen below:

        [NP [body organ] +   Adj]   Nominal
          [ano   hunu]   anohunu
          [mouth   empty]   'vain talk'

Akans believe that if a person speaks or promises and fails to fulfil it, then the mouth that was used in the speech is considered zero, null and void and the utterance should be conceptualised as if no utterance has been made, since it has no perlocutionary effect or impact. It is simply an empty mouth with no substance.

5. **Yɛ-m-fa   ano-hunu   m- pam   busuefo**
   we-NEG- use mouth-empty NEG-chase evil.person.
   'We do not chase the evil one with empty talk.'

This is a popular maxim among the Akans. The Akans believe traditionally that the evil ones have strong spiritual potentials and to do away with them you need a spiritual antidote, but not mere talk devoid of both physical and spiritual action. Other expressions that fall under this structure include **anopa** 'good mouth, good talk or good speech', and **anopɔnhunu** 'empty boast or bluster'. Let us look at the frame below.

        [NP [body organ] + Adj +Adj]   Nominal
          [ano   pɔn hunu]   anopɔnhunu
          [mouth   big empty] 'empty boast'

In the above structure, the mouth is followed by the augmentative suffix **pɔn**, 'big/large/great' which is now serving as an adjective to mean big (size). There is another adjective **hunu**, 'vain' indicating quality to imply that the mouth is "big for

nothing". The term **anopɔnhunu** refers to the saying of big things that are not true and that cannot be realistically fulfilled.

6. **Amanyɔfoɔ de ano-pɔn-hunu ka sɛ wɔ-bɛ-di nkonim abatoɔ mu.**
   politicians   use   mouth-big-vain   say that they-will-get   victory   election in.
   'Many politicians brag and bluster and say that they will win elections.'

The above implies that even when politicians know very well that their chances in elections are far from being bright, they will swagger and boast that they will win. This is conceptualised as using their big mouths to say things that they cannot do or achieve.

2.2.5. *Ano* + Noun

Other expressions are derived from the body part and nouns as seen below.

        [NP [body organ] + NP [N]]   Nominal
            [**ano**   **kam**]   **anokam**
            [mouth   scar]   'invective'

In this structure, the body part 'mouth' is followed directly by another noun to form the compound. The Akans believe that once a scar is found in the body after a cut, nothing can be done about it, and it will remain there forever. They therefore have a proverb that states as follows:

7. **Anokam   kyɛ sene   yiwan-kam**
    mouth.scar   lasts longer.than   blade-scar
   'A scar that results from the mouth lasts longer than a scar from a blade.'

It literally means that injury from a mouth is more painful than a knife injury. **Anokam** is an imaginary scar that results from invective words. Certain words are more harmful than sharp swords. Invectives leave memories and take much time to get out of the minds of the addressee. Most wars and conflicts start from the inappropriate use of words. This highlights the potency of the spoken word, which can make and unmake (see Agyekum 2010: chapter 5)

  Other examples that fall under this structure include, **anomum** 'deaf mouth', **anosɛm** 'boast, swagger, bluster, vain words', **anontanta** 'twin/double mouth', **anokoro** 'unanimity, unison', **nokorɛ** 'single mouth, truth, honesty', and **anofena** 'sword mouth'.

2.2.6. *Ano* + Postposition + Noun

Some **ano** metaphorical expressions are made up of the body part followed by a postposition, which is locative, and then a noun as in the structure below.

[NP [body organ]]	Postpos.Assoc.] + N [N +]]		Nominal
[**ano**	**mu**	**asɛm**]	**anomusɛm**
[mouth	inside	issue]	'bragging'.

We all know that utterances come from the mouth, however if what comes out amounts to bragging we say as follows: **X yɛ anomusɛm**.

8. **Mɛnsa   anomusɛm nti obiara   n-nye   no n-   ni**
Mensah's bragging   so everybody NEG-get him NEG- eat.
'Owing to Mensah's bragging nature nobody believes him.'

Among Akans, to believe in somebody is conceptualised as getting and consuming what the person says so that it forms part of you.

Other examples that fall under this structure are **anohoba**, 'vow/pledge'. Let us look at the following sentence.

9. **Yaw bɔ-ɔ   anohoba sɛ ɔ-bɛ-si   dan   a-ma**
Yaw strike-PAST pledge that he-will- build house CONSEC-give
ne maame
his mother.
'Yaw pledged that he will build a house for his mother.'

The verb phrase **bɔ anohoba** is a commissive verb that commits the speaker to a posterior time that will provide an event to benefit the addressee.

3. Positive and Negative Communication and Character Traits in 'Mouth' Expressions

This section focuses on **ano** 'mouth' expressions in two semantic domains, namely *good communications* and *good character traits*. We will see whether an expression is considered positive or negative, implying that the individual is accepted or rejected by Akan culture. Characteristics are thus grouped into virtues (positive) and vices (negative).

3.1. Positive Communication and Character Traits

Positive communication and character traits bring about joy, peace, hope, freedom, and trust and are accepted by the society. There are some strong virtues that are derived from **ano** 'mouth', to imply that the mouth has the propensity of providing virtues to make socialisation and social harmonisation complete. They may also refer to character traits that are highly recommended in the society. Such expressions include **anohoba** 'vow/promise', **anokoro** 'agreement/unison', **anoteɛ** 'eloquence', **anoduru** 'tight lipped', **anopa** 'proper speech' and **nokorɛ** 'truth'.

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10. **Anoteɛ   nti   na   wɔ-fa-a   Kyei   Ɔkyeame**
      eloquence so   FOC they-take-PST Kyei   chief's.spokesperson
   'It was due to his eloquence that Kyei was selected as the chief's spokesperson.'

A person who speaks for the chief should display the highest levels of eloquence and oratory. The word **anoteɛ** is made up of the noun **ano** plus **te** 'to be clear', to imply that the two lips are clearly separated for articulation to be clear, and further bring about perfect communication. A synonymous expression to this is to say **X ano awo**, 'X's lips are dried'.

   The expression **nokorɛ** 'truth' is made up of **ano** 'mouth' and **korɛ** 'single' to indicate that someone will stick to what he says irrespective of the space, time and the participants involved.

11. **Manu   ka nokorɛ enti nkurɔfoɔ pɛ   n'- asɛm**
      Manu   says truth so   people   like his-issues.
      'Manu speaks the truth so people like him.'

A person who speaks the truth is referred to as **ɔnokorɛfo** 'a single mouth person', an honest person', and it is corrupted into **nokwafo**. The Akans cherish truth as a cultural value, and therefore have the following adage to prove what truth can actually do.

12. **Nokorɛ   di   tuo**
      truth   consumes   gun.
      'Truth conquers.'

3.2. Negative Mouth Expressions

There are expressions that are considered negative because they do not facilitate harmonious communicative and social interaction. They include **anoɔhare** 'indiscretion, gossiping', **anoɔtorɔ** 'gossiping', **anopa** 'wobbling of the mouth', **anopɔnhunu** 'empty boasting or blustering', **anoseseadeɛ** 'braggart', **anokurokuro** 'talkative', **anomsɛm** 'boasting', **anomuɔdɛ** 'lickerishness/sweet tooth', **anontanata** 'double-tongued, liar', **anoɔyea** 'invectives', etc. The expression **anoɔyea** has the following morphological components:

   [NP [body organ]]   VP] +   Adj]]   Nominal
      [**ano**   **yɛ**   **yea**]   **anoɔyea**
      [mouth   be painful]   'invective'.

The expression **anoɔyea** literally means 'mouth pain'; it metaphorically connotes a mouth that carries painful statements. It refers to a person who can hurl invectives and insults at people to goad them. The invectives psychologically affect the addressee and create psychological and mental pain. One can say as follows:

13. **Twum ano yɛ ya   dodo   ɔ-didi   mpanimfoɔ atɛm**
Twum's mouth is   painful too.much he-hurls elders   invective
'Twum is too insulting, he hurls insults on elders.'

Let us now consider **anoɔhare**. It is used with regard to the dissemination of information and rumour mongering.

[N   Copula   Adj]   Nominal Word
[**ano   yɛ   hare**]   **anoɔhare**
[mouth be   light/fast]   'light/fast mouth'

Anoɔhare is made up of the nominal **ano** 'mouth', a copula verb **yɛ** [ɔ] and the adjective **hare** 'light/fast. Semantically, the modifier **hare** 'light/fast' connotes that the mouth is so light that it is flexible and can thus be manoeuvred, and can carry messages easily and fast.

14. **Esi anoɔhare nti me-n-ka   m'-asɛm   n-kyerɛ   no**
Esi's light.mouth so I-NEG-say my-issue NEG-tell her.
'Due to the gossiping nature of Esi, I do not tell her my secrets.'

A synonym to **anoɔhare** is **anoɔtorɔ** 'slippery mouth'. Such a mouth is so slippery that messages landing on it can easily slip and fall onto other persons.   The expressions **anoɔhare** or **anoɔtorɔ** carry a negative slur on the person described as such. People would not like to reveal their secrets to him/her. The Fante dialect has a variant expression **anokum**, made up of **ano** 'mouth' and **kum** 'kill', implying 'slander/libel'.   This expresses the seriousness of such behaviour, implying that a slanderous mouth has the potency to kill.

4. Complex State Expressions

Even though we have categorised the expressions into the polar domains above, there are some expressions that can belong to both domains; they are either positive or negative depending on the sociocultural and ethnographic contexts or situations. They include **anoɔdɛ** 'boasting, persuasion', **anobaebae** 'dispute, debate, argument', **nyinyiano/anoyiyie** 'refusing to do things by giving flimsy excuses, or responses meant to defend oneself', **anomum** 'tight lips', and **anoɔdɛ** 'flattery'. If we take the word **anomum** 'tight lipped', it is negative when one refuses to speak to defend himself or to claim something. In such a situation silence is negative.

15. **Osei a-yɛ   anomum a-ma   obi a-gye   n'-asaase**
Osei PERF-be tight.lips PERF-let sb   PERF-get his-land.
'Osei has been so tight lipped that somebody has taken his land.'

In other contexts, any attempt to speak on a subject can land somebody into trouble, and it is thus ideal to be tight lipped.

16. **Awua yɛ- ɛ   anomum ma-a   wɔ-de ɛka no kyɛ-ɛ   no**
    Awua make-PST   tight.lip   let-PST they-use debt the give-PAST him
    'Awua was so sober and calm that they did not ask him to pay his debt.'

There is the expression **anoɔdɛ** which in its negative connotation means 'boasting'. It is conceptualised that his words are too sweet to be credible. In its positive sense, **anoɔdɛ** 'sweet mouth' means 'persuasion'; such sugar-coated words are able to convince and lure people to act from the point of view of the speaker (see Agyekum 2004b on persuasion). Let us look at the positive example:

17. **Adu de anoɔdɛ   a-gye   adwuma no**
    Adu   use mouth.sweet PAST-get job   the
    'Adu used persuasive words to get the job.'

 This also means that language has intrinsic power to influence human beings.

5. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the Akan body part word **ano** 'mouth' and its metaphorical extensions. It considered how most of the extensions have been conventionalised to the extent that there are no alternative or synonymous words for them. The word **ano** 'mouth', the name of a body part that is used in speech and eating, has extended meanings. This body part term is the source for the production of semantic and metaphoric new expressions; this process is a rich source of word formation in Akan.

  This paper has demonstrated clearly that there is a mapping and correlation between our external experience and our internal emotional and cognitive states based on cognitive semantics and embodiment. We have observed that the mapping of the physical to the mental world brings about extension of expressions to cover other senses. There is thus a general tendency to borrow concepts and vocabulary from the more accessible physical and social world (in our case mouth) to refer to the less accessible world of reasoning, emotion and intellect.

  In the structure of the **ano** 'mouth' expressions we saw that all the body part expressions were compound nouns. They have an obligatory body part followed by a verb, an adjective, another noun, a postposition or a combination of these. In terms of the semantics and pragmatic uses, we grouped the **ano** 'mouth' expressions into two; positive and negative; some of them however are either positive or negative depending on the context in which they are used.

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