

# **The Cultural Basis of Conceptual Metaphors: The Case of Emotions in Akan and English**

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## **Abstract**

Recent cross-cultural studies of conceptual metaphors in the cognitive linguistic tradition, particularly, those that concern emotion concepts, reveal both similarities and variation in the conceptualisation of emotion concepts across cultures. The cultural embodied prototype theory explains this phenomenon by positing that the conceptualisation of emotion concepts across cultures is grounded in both universal embodied cognition and culture-specific cognition. In this paper, within the general framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), I draw on evidence from language-specific (Akan and English) elaborations of the two conceptual metaphors LOVE/RELATIONSHIP IS A JOURNEY and ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER. Based on this evidence, I argue in support of the cultural embodied cognition position that the universality principle may indeed be applicable at one level of conceptualisation only, namely the generic/schematic level. While universal human embodied cognition may be the basis for highly schematic conceptualisations of emotion across cultures, based on the principle of cultural embodiment, I argue that there are culture/language-specific construals or elaborations of such universal human schemas that are grounded in cultural salience (cultural embodiment). Linguistic data for analysis were elicited through focus group discussions to corroborate intuitively generated data for a conceptual metaphor analysis.

## 1 Introduction

This paper explores the role of culture in the conceptualisation of two emotion concepts in each of two languages, English and Akan. It examines the culture/language-specific realisations of two conceptual metaphors, ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER and LOVE/RELATIONSHIP IS A JOURNEY both of which occur in Akan and English. The question of whether the conceptualisations of emotion concepts are universal across cultures or language/culture-specific has been a matter of research interest in cognitive linguistics and social anthropology (Kövecses, 1995, 2005; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lutz, 1988; Maalej, 2004). Several views and positions have been expressed in this regard centred around two main competing arguments. The first argument is that the conceptualisations of basic emotions are universal, i.e. the same across cultures, because they are grounded in universal human embodied cognition. The second line of argument in this debate holds that the conceptualisations of emotion concepts are culture-specific because they are socio-culturally constructed. Based on more recent findings from cross-cultural studies of the conceptualisations of emotion concepts, however, there is a third emerging argument, the cultural embodied prototype theory (Kövecses, 2005; Maalej, 2004), which takes the middle position that the conceptualisations of emotion concepts across cultures may be universal and culture-specific at the same time. Its proponents explain how this is possible by suggesting an extended view of the embodied cognition thesis, i.e. the cultural embodied cognition thesis.

Although evidence for the various debates has come from many different languages and cultures, only a couple of them (Wolof and Zulu) have come from African languages and cultures. This paper, drawing data from Akan, a West African language, therefore aims to contribute to the universality versus culture-specificity debate about the conceptualisation of emotions across cultures by showing evidence from another African language. The paper argues along the lines of the cultural embodied cognition thesis with regards to the conceptualisation of emotion concepts across cultures. This is because the analysis of the language-specific realisations of the two conceptual metaphors under examination reveals both similarities and differences in the Akan and English language-specific conceptualisations. On the other hand, it is possible to attribute the similarities in the conceptualisations of anger in English and Akan to universal embodied cognition from which general metaphorical principles derive, e.g. the body as container, responsibilities as burdens, and metonymic principles, e.g. body heat stands for anger. On the other hand, the differences may be explained in terms of cultural filtering of the general universal conceptualisations to reflect human experiences that are more salient to a particular socio-

cultural group. As Lutz (1988) has argued, universal embodiment may be overridden by cultural factors.

## **2 The Conceptualisation of Emotion Concepts: Universal or Culture-specific?**

The existence of major similarities and variations in the conceptualisations of basic emotion concepts within and between cultures has been documented extensively in cognitive linguistic research and social anthropology (Breugelmans et al., 2005; King, 1989; Kövecses, 2000, 2005; Lutz, 1988; Matsuki, 1995; Munro, 1991; Taylor & Mbense, 1998; Yu, 1995). Often discussed in terms of conceptual metaphors, the similarities of conceptualisation of emotion concepts across cultures have been explained in terms of the embodied cognition thesis. First introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in what has become known as the standard view, it was proposed that conceptual metaphors in general are based on human embodied cognition, i.e. how the human body and brain function in relation to their environment. Subsequently, universal human experiences, including human emotions, produce universal conceptual metaphors. The embodied cognition thesis was the basis for the prototype view which regards emotion concepts as structured scripts, scenarios or cognitive models.

There are two schools of thought within this view: the experientialists (e.g. Lakoff, 1987, Russell, 1991) and the social constructionists (e.g. Lutz, 1988). The experientialists subscribe fully to the embodied cognition thesis and posit that emotion concepts that have prototypical emotion scripts are largely universal, i.e. the same across languages and cultures, so that the respective conceptual metaphors that are based on universal human experiences, e.g. getting angry and a rise in bodily temperature, are universal or near universal. However, while the social constructionists agree with the notion that emotion concepts are scripts/scenarios, they disagree with the experientialists' claim that these conceptualisations of emotions are the same across cultures. Instead, the social constructionists argue that emotion concepts are socio-cultural scripts/scenarios or constructs whose properties depend on particular aspects of a given culture. According to this view different cultures will have different conceptualisations for the same emotion concepts because different cultures give concepts different socio-cultural salience.

Evidence from more recent cross-cultural studies on the conceptualisation of basic human emotion concepts (Breugelmans et al., 2005; Kövecses, 2000, 2005; Lutz, 1988; Maalej, 1999, 2004) suggests that indeed, each of these views is right in its claims to a certain degree. This

has led to the proposal of, the *embodied cultural prototype* view (Kövecses, 2000, 2005; Maalej, 2004), which synthesises the two diverging prototype views and proposes that the conceptualisation of emotion concepts across cultures is based on both universal human embodied experiences and more specific socio-cultural constructions. In other words, *embodied cultural prototype* theorists believe that bodily motivations have a socio-cultural salience and social constructions have a bodily basis. That is to say that while the general conceptualisation of such concepts is grounded in universal human experiences, different cultures attach different cultural salience specific realisations, elaborations or construals to these near-universal conceptual metaphors.

According to Kövecses (2000, 2005), these similarities and variations in the cross-cultural conceptualisation of emotions occur in two major areas: (1) the source domains in terms of which a particular target concept is understood, and (2) the elaborations in the conceptual correspondences of shared conceptual metaphors. This paper focuses on the latter. The two selected metaphors for analysis in this paper involve two emotion target concepts, ANGER and LOVE. It is interesting to note, however, that while the concepts involved are indeed emotion concepts, the analysis of the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor as occurs in the literature, (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2002)), is based on love *relationship* rather than love as an emotion.

### **3 Conceptual Metaphors and Emotion Concepts**

The study of emotion concepts was given scant attention in research in the past. According to Oatley and Jenkins (1996, p. 122) 'emotions have traditionally been regarded as extras in psychology not as serious mental functions like perception, language, thinking and learning'. In semantics, emotion concepts were considered as consisting of feelings only, and devoid of conceptual content (Lakoff, 1987). Recent research in cognitive science, however, has paid particular attention to the study of emotion concepts, particularly the language of emotion concepts (Kövecses, 1990, 2000, 2005). Dzokoto and Okazaki (2006) is the most frequently cited study of the language of emotion in Akan.

Current researchers recognise the important contribution findings from the study of emotion concepts can make to research on cognition. Oatley and Jenkins (1996, p. 122) subscribe to this view when they conclude that 'emotions are not extras but the very centre of human life'. Similarly, Lakoff (1987, p. 380) submits that 'emotions have an extremely complex structure, which gives rise to a wide variety of non-trivial inferences'. Cognitive linguistic research on emotion concepts, especially in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) tradition, has focused largely on the structure of such concepts within and across cultures. This is often

done by analysing the metaphors structuring such concepts. In CMT, a conceptual metaphor is generally defined as the systematic structuring or restructuring of one conceptual target domain, a coherent organization of experience, in terms of a source domain through the projection of semantic features of one domain onto the other. Typically, target domains are more abstract while source domains are more concrete. In other words, a conceptual metaphor is defined as understanding a more abstract conceptual domain in terms of a less abstract and more concrete domain, typically using knowledge structures of a less abstract aspect of experience to reason about a more abstract aspect of experience (Kövecses, 2002).

First proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), CMT claims that ‘the generalizations governing metaphorical language are not in language, but in thought: They are general mappings across conceptual domains’. Therefore, they propose that linguistic metaphors are good evidence of what our conceptual system looks like because they are instantiations of our conceptual structuring and organisation, i.e. linguistic metaphors reflect metaphorical structuring and organisation in our conceptual system. Thus, conceptual metaphor theorists analyse the linguistic metaphors or metaphorical expressions that are used to talk about one conceptual domain in terms of another to infer underlying conceptual structure and organisation. For example, based on the metaphorical expressions in italics about social organization in English in examples 1a-e below, Kövecses (2002) argues that the knowledge structure of plants is used to understand social organisations in English.

### 1. SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE PLANTS

- (a) He works for the local *branch* of the bank.
- (b) Our company is *growing*.
- (c) They had to *prune* the workforce.
- (d) The organization was *rooted* in the old church.
- (e) His business *blossomed*.

He, therefore, postulates the conceptual metaphor SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE PLANTS with the following conceptual correspondences in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1: *The SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE PLANTS metaphor (Kövecses 2002, p. 8)*

<i>Source: Plant</i>		<i>Target: Social organization</i>
The whole plant	⇒	the entire organization
A part of the plant	⇒	a part of the organization
Growth of the plant	⇒	development of the organization
Removing a part of the plant	⇒	reducing the organization
The root of the plant	⇒	the origin of the organization
The flowering	⇒	the best stage, the most successful stage
The fruit or crops	⇒	the beneficial consequences

Thus, CMT researchers investigate the conceptualisation of emotion concepts by inferring the conceptual structures of the concepts from a careful study and analysis of the metaphorical expressions that are used to talk about them. In the next section, I explain how CMT works, i.e. how linguistic metaphors are identified in a discourse as well as how conceptual metaphors are inferred from linguistic metaphors.

## 4 Methodology

This study adopted the general CMT framework of metaphor analysis which aims at systematically inferring conceptual representations and organisation from linguistic expressions that are metaphorically understood where metaphorical meaning is indirect meaning. The approach assumes that language is a window onto cognition, and that linguistic expressions in part reflect cognitive processes and structures. Consequently, CMT systematically links metaphorical expressions to underlying conceptual metaphors by positing conceptual mappings between two conceptual domains.

In this paper, two sets of linguistic data are discussed, native English data and native Akan data. Whereas the English data were from secondary sources, based on previously analysed conceptual metaphors in English<sup>1</sup>, the Akan data were primary data generated through my native speaker's intuition and through elicitation. Relatively monolingual native speakers of Akan in rural and semi-rural Ghana participated in focus group discussions to generate the elicited data. Each focus group was constituted by 6-8 participants and each discussion lasted for approximately 12 minutes. In all a total of approximately 120 minutes of discussions were audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Linguistic metaphors from the data were identified and analysed in order to infer conceptual metaphors from the metaphorical expressions.

Until recently, no explicit procedures had been established to identify both linguistic and conceptual metaphors in cognitive linguistic metaphor research. Consequently, metaphor researchers tended to rely on unilateral introspection in identifying both linguistic and conceptual metaphors. This has been criticised as potentially causing researcher bias in metaphor research (Deignan, 2005). However, in recent times, several proposals to systematize and make metaphor identification more explicit have been put forward, e.g. the Pragglejaz group approach, i.e. the metaphor identification procedure or MIP (Crisp et al., 2007; Steen, 1999). This study adopted the MIP approach in identifying linguistic metaphors, and Steen's (1999) five-step procedure to inferring conceptual metaphors from linguistic metaphors.

In line with the MIP, the following steps were taken in identifying linguistic metaphors from the Akan data: the entire transcription of the discussion was read to establish a general understanding of the meaning of the text; then the text was divided into lexical units after which I determined whether any of the lexical units in the discussion had been used metaphorically, i.e. indirectly. Where lexical units were believed to have been used metaphorically, I determined whether they had more basic meanings than the contextual meanings, where basic meaning relates to any of the following: (i) a more concrete meaning, e.g. smell, taste, feel, see, hear, bodily action, (ii) a more precise as opposed to vague meaning or (iii) a historically older meaning. The method also includes checking corpus-based dictionaries if in doubt about the meanings of a word. If the contextual meanings were different from the basic meanings, I decided whether the two meanings contrast but can be understood in comparison with each other. If the contextual meanings were related to the basic meanings by some form of similarity, then the lexical units were marked as metaphorical.

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<sup>1</sup> The cited literature deals with American English.

Steen's (1999) five-step procedure in identifying conceptual metaphors is a logical reconstruction of what presumably takes place when researchers assert that a lexical unit has been used metaphorically. It incorporates both linguistic metaphor identification and conceptual metaphor identification:

- (1) Identifying metaphorical focus
- (2) Identifying metaphorical idea
- (3) Identifying metaphorical comparison
- (4) Identifying metaphorical analogy
- (5) Identifying metaphorical mapping.

The first three stages of Steen's procedure are covered under MIP. Indeed, Steen's stage (3) corresponds to MIP's final stage which begins the conceptual metaphorical identification; identify source and target domains and establishing general connections between them. Consequently, only stages (4) and (5) of Steen's procedure were applied in inferring conceptual metaphors from linguistic metaphors. Steen's fourth step involves making more specific connections between elements in the source and target domains in such a way that the elements in the two domains fulfil analogous functions in the two similar domains, e.g., suppressing or keeping anger functions analogously to a burden one carries (cf. 5.2, example 9: ANGER IS A BURDEN). The identification of such metaphorical analogies then becomes the basis for coming up with a list of correspondences (with their entailments) in the final step of metaphorical mapping. Linguistic expressions that contained either the actual words for the target domains LOVE and ANGER, (*ɔdɔ* and *abufuw* in Akan respectively) or references to them were selected from the data. The expressions were then grouped according to their relatedness in terms of what other domains of experience, i.e. source domains, they could be associated with. After identifying the source domains, elements in them were then identified and mapped to arrive at the conceptual metaphors that license the linguistic metaphors.

In the discussion of my examples, I maintain the original Akan metaphorical expressions and then provide three levels of translation for them, namely, an interlinear glossing, a literal translation and an English translation equivalent. Since the analysis of the English metaphors was based on secondary data, I did not have to go through the metaphor identification procedures for the English data. This method is systematic and to some extent replicable, but it also has limitations that need to be addressed/justified, e.g. identifying the specific elements in both target and source domains remains largely at the subjective discretion of the researcher.

## 5 The Conceptualisation of Anger and Love: Comparing English and Akan

In this section, I present the language-specific construals only of the conceptual metaphors ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER, and LOVE IS A JOURNEY in English and Akan as further evidence in support of the notion that the conceptualisation of emotions across cultures is grounded in culturally embodied experience.

### 5.1 ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER in English

According to Lakoff (1987) and Kövecses (2002), the conceptual structure of anger in English is constituted by a system of conceptual metaphors that derive from interactions between general metonymic<sup>2</sup> and metaphoric principles. The ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor is believed to derive from the interactions between the general metaphor ANGER IS HEAT (when the heat is applied to liquids), which is based on the conceptual metonymy BODY HEAT IS ANGER, and the general metaphor THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE EMOTIONS. Kövecses (2002) postulates the following conceptual correspondences for this metaphor:

TABLE 2: *The BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE EMOTIONS metaphor (Kövecses, 2002, p. 96)*

<i>Source: Hot fluid in a container</i>		<i>Target: Anger</i>
The physical container	⇒	the angry person's body
The top of the container	⇒	the rational self of the angry person
The hot fluid inside the container	⇒	the anger
The degree of fluid heat	⇒	the intensity of anger
The cause of increase in fluid heat	⇒	the cause of anger

<sup>2</sup> In metonymic conceptualisations, one entity figuratively stands for another.

## 2. ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER

- (a) She's a real *hothead*.
- (b) You make my *blood boil*.
- (c) Let her *stew*.
- (d) I got all *steamed up*.
- (e) He's just *blowing off steam*.
- (f) I had *reached the boiling point*.
- (g) He *boiled over*.
- (h) She felt her *gorge rising*.
- (i) *Simmer* down!

Based on carryover knowledge from the source domain, the mappings are further elaborated to produce metaphorical entailments. For example, it is common knowledge that intense heat may cause a rise in volume or upward movement of hot fluids in a container. Such carryover knowledge gives rise to metaphorical entailments in the mappings above, so that the rise in the volume of the hot fluid corresponds to increase in the intensity of anger. Other carryover knowledge from the source domain includes the fact that heat produces steam in the container, putting pressure on it. In addition, it is common knowledge that too much heat produces too much steam and therefore too much pressure on the container, potentially causing the container to explode. When the container explodes, parts of the container go up in the air, and what was inside the container comes out. This knowledge produces the following metaphorical entailments in the mappings above:

- Intense anger produces steam: he got *all steamed up*; *Billy's just blowing off steam*.
- Intense anger produces pressure on the (body) container: his pent-up anger *welled up inside him*.

- When anger becomes too intense, the person explodes: He just *exploded*; he *erupted*.
- When a person explodes, parts of him/her go up in the air: I *blew my top*; I *blew my stack*; she *flipped her lid*.
- When a person explodes, what was inside him/her comes out: smoke *was pouring out of his ears*; his anger finally *came out*.

Kövecses (2005) identifies a more specific metaphor THE ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURIZED CONTAINER, which arises from the entailments of the central metaphor, ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER. He postulates the following mappings for the ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURISED CONTAINER metaphor:

TABLE 3: The ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURISED CONTAINER metaphor (Kövecses, 2005, p. 39)

The container with some substance or objects	⇒	the person who is angry
The substance or objects in the container	⇒	the anger
The pressure of the substance/objects on the container	⇒	the effect of the anger on the angry person
The cause of the pressure	⇒	the cause of the anger
Keeping the substance or objects inside the container	⇒	controlling the anger
The substance or objects coming out of the container	⇒	the expression of anger

### 3. THE ANGRY PERSON IS A PRESSURISED CONTAINER

- (a) He *exploded*.
- (b) I *blew a gasket*.
- (c) He *was fuming*.
- (d) I could barely *keep it in* anymore.
- (e) He managed to keep his anger *bottled up* inside him.
- (f) He *suppressed* his anger.
- (g) He *let out* his anger.

#### **5.2 ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER in Akan**

The general conceptualisation of anger in Akan is similar to that of English in many respects. First of all, the conceptual structure of anger in Akan is also constituted by a system of conceptual metaphors that are based on the interactions between some general metaphoric and metonymic principles. With more specific regard to the ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor, the conceptualisation is derived from the same general metaphor THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR THE EMOTIONS, as well as the metaphonymies, i.e. metonymy-based metaphors<sup>3</sup>, (Goossens, 2003) INTERNAL PRESSURE IS ANGER and THE BODY HEAT IS ANGER. I postulate the following similar yet different conceptual correspondences for the Akan version of this metaphor:

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<sup>3</sup> Unlike metaphor which relates two entities that are usually not associated with each other, metonymy is defined as a conceptual operation in which one entity (vehicle) may be employed in order to identify another entity (target) with which it is usually associated (Evans, 2007).

TABLE 4: The postulated Akan version of the ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor

<i>Source: Hot fluid in a container</i>		<i>Target: Anger</i>
The physical container	⇒	the angry person's body (chest)
The hot fluid inside the container	⇒	the anger
The degree of the heat of fluid	⇒	the intensity of anger
The cause of increase in the heat of the fluid	⇒	the cause of anger

#### 4. ANGER AS HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER

(a)	Ne	<i>bo</i>	re-	<i>huru</i>	<i>so.</i>	
	Poss	chest	prog.-	boil	over.	
	His/her	chest	is	boiling	over.	
	He/she	is boiling	with	anger.		
(b)	Ne	<i>bo</i>	<i>n-</i>	<i>dwo</i>	ne	ho.
	Poss	chest	neg	cool	poss	self.
	His/her	chest	does not	cool	him/	herself.
	He/she	is	still	angry		
(c)	ɔ	wɔ	<i>a-</i>	<i>bo</i>	<i>fuw</i>	<i>hyew.</i>
	3SG	has	nom	chest	weedy	hot.

	He/she	has	a hot,	weedy	chest.
(d)	Ne	<i>bo</i>	<i>n-</i>	<i>dwo-</i>	<i>e.</i>
	Poss	chest	neg	cool	compl
	His/her	chest	has not	cooled	down.
	He/she	is not	appeased		
(e)	Me	<i>dwo</i>	<i>dwo</i>	<i>Abufuw</i>	<i>no</i> <i>So.</i>
	1SG	cool	duplication	anger	Det. on.
	I	<i>cool</i>	<i>down the</i>	<i>anger.</i>	
	I	calm	down.		

Like English, Akan also makes use of some entailment potentials of the body-as-container source domain to elaborate the identified mappings. For instance, the general knowledge that intense heat causes a rise in volume or upward movement of a fluid in a container corresponds to the increase in the intensity of anger in Akan where the entire container rather than the hot fluid in it moves upward, e.g. *n'akoma a-sɔ re* 'his/her heart has risen'; *n'akoma kɔ soro* 'his/her heart has gone up'; *nebo rehuru* 'his chest is boiling'. Other carryover knowledge from the source domain that produces metaphorical entailments in the Akan mapping is that too much heat can cause the container to explode and that when the container explodes, what was inside it comes out, e.g. *w'adwa* 'he has split open (he/she has flared up)'; *ɔrepae* 'he/she is bursting/breaking' (he/she is *fuming*).

However, while some elaborations of the English mapping are based on the entailment potential 'hot fluid produces steam in the container', e.g. *He's just letting off steam*; there is no linguistic evidence of such elaborations in Akan. Again, in the English conceptualisation there is a linguistic evidence to show that parts of the body container go up in the air, and what was inside the container comes out in the case of an explosion of the container. However, there is no linguistic evidence to suggest that parts of the Akan body container go up in the air in the

case of explosion even though there are some linguistic elaborations that are based on the entailment that in an explosion what was inside the container comes out. This is shown in the following example taken from focus discussions:

5. Me bo fu a me n-tumi n-ye hwee, enti se me ne nipa no ko a na abufuo no afiri me mu.

When I get angry I can do nothing so if I fight the person, then *the anger gets out of me*.

As is evident from the analysis above, there exist both similarities and differences in the general conceptualisations of anger in native English and native Akan. First of all, both English and Akan make use of metonymic and metaphoric principles in their conceptualisations of anger. For instance, the human body is a key source domain in how anger is metaphorically understood in both languages. The physiological effects of anger on the body are used metonymically to stand for the emotion of anger (see section 6). However, not all the physiological effects identified in English are identified and used in Akan. For example, while the skin colour (redness around the face and neck area) is used metonymically to conceptualise anger in English, it is not used in the Akan metonymic conceptualisation of anger.

However, more specifically, the language-specific conceptualisation of ANGER AS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER in both languages is consistent with the conceptualisation of another emotion concept that stands in close contrast to anger, patience. The Akan label for this concept is *abotare*. It consists of three morphemes: *a-* a nominal marker, *bo-* chest and *tare-* to stick. Thus, in Akan, patience is construed as the process of the chest sticking on the body. In other words, in both English and Akan PATIENCE IS COOL FLUID IN A CONTAINER. Lakoff (1987) suggests that in the central metaphor ANGER IS HEAT, lack of heat corresponds to the absence of anger. Similarly, in the ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER metaphor, when there is no heat, the fluid is cool and calm. Again, there is similarity in the metaphorical entailments both languages use in elaborating this conceptualisation of contrast. For example, while hot fluids have the tendency to rise in volume and get out of the container that contains them, cool or cooled substances have the tendency or propensity to settle or remain securely in their containers.

I postulate the following conceptual correspondences for the conceptualisation of *abotare* 'patience', the concept that most closely contrasts *abufuw* 'anger' in Akan as A COOL FLUID IN A CONTAINER where the body is a container for cool, cooled or calm emotions:

## 6. PATIENCE IS A COLD FLUID IN A CONTAINER

(a)	Me <i>bo</i>	<i>a- dwo.</i>	
	Me-chest	compl- cool	down.
	My chest has	cooled	down.
	I am not	angry	any more.
(b)	Me <i>bo</i>	<i>a-tɔ</i>	<i>me yam.</i>
	Poss chest	compl fall	poss stomach.
	My chest has	fallen into	my stomach.
	I am appeased.		
(c)	<i>n'akoma</i>	<i>a- tɔ</i>	<i>ne yam.</i>
	Poss. heart	compl fall	poss stomach.
	His/her heart	has fallen into	his/her stomach.
	He/she has	calmed down.	

These similarities notwithstanding, there are differences in each language's construal of this metaphor. First of all, while the two languages conceptualise the human body as a container for anger, the specific body parts each language conceptualises as containing the emotion of anger differ. Whereas in English anger may be contained in the *eyes, face, neck, guts, nerves* and *blood*, anger is contained in the *chest, heart, back of the head* and *stomach* in Akan. In addition, although the hot fluid corresponds to anger in both languages, the hot fluid is specified as blood in the English elaborations, (e.g. you make my blood boil), but not specified in Akan. In fact, on the surface it may even look like there is no fluid at all in the Akan conceptualisation because no specific fluid is mentioned in the elaboration. However, the use

of a verb like *huru* 'to boil' (*ne bo rehuru so* – his/her chest is boiling over, he/she is boiling with anger) in Akan presupposes the presence of some liquid, usually water, although other liquids may apply.

Furthermore, whereas the English mapping has a role for 'top of the container' with linguistic elaborations, e.g. I blew my *top*; he blew the *gasket*, there is no linguistic evidence to suggest either in the mappings or in their elaboration, that the Akan body container is covered or has a top – no body parts go off in the Akan explosion even though the idea of explosion is alluded to in the Akan elaborations of this metaphor (*wadwa; wapae* 'he/she has split open', i.e. he has exploded). Again, while some English elaborations of this metaphor are based on the entailment potential of the source domain that hot fluid produces steam in the container (he is blowing off *steam*), this elaboration is absent in Akan.

Moreover, it has been shown how in the metaphorical entailment of both the English and the Akan conceptualisations of anger as A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER, lack of heat corresponds to lack of anger. However, there are differences in the specific ways in which this mapping is elaborated in each language. In English, the body container is made to settle down but in Akan, the anger-bearing container is made to settle in a more secure container to prevent the hot fluid from moving upward, e.g. *ka w'akoma to wo yam* 'push your heart into your stomach', i.e. calm down/be patient or *ma wo bo ntɔ wo yam* 'let your chest fall into your stomach', i.e. calm down/be patient.

### 5.3 LOVE IS A JOURNEY in English

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Kövecses (2002), the conceptual structure of JOURNEY is used to metaphorically understand the target domain LOVE in English with the following conceptual mappings that produce the metaphorical expressions in example 6 below:

TABLE 5: The LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 44-45)

<i>Source: Journey</i>		<i>Target: Love</i>
Travellers	⇒	Lovers
Vehicle	⇒	the love relationship itself
The journey	⇒	events in the relationship

The distance covered	⇒	the progress made
The obstacles encountered	⇒	the difficulties encountered
Decisions about which way to go	⇒	choices about what to do
The destination of the journey	⇒	the goal(s) of the relationship

### 7. LOVE IS A JOURNEY

- (a) They are *at a crossroads* in their relationship.
- (b) This relationship isn't *going anywhere*.
- (c) They are in a *dead-end* relationship.
- (d) This marriage is *on the rocks*.
- (e) This relationship has been *spinning its wheels* for years.
- (f) Their marriage has really gone *off the track*.
- (g) Look how *far we've come*.
- (h) We'll just have to *go our separate ways*.
- (i) We can't *turn back* now.
- (j) We're *stuck*.
- (k) It's been *a long, bumpy road*.
- (l) This relationship is *foundering*.

The mappings and elaborations in the English conceptualisation of LOVE AS A JOURNEY show roles for a vehicle in the journey. There is also evidence from the linguistic elaborations

of this metaphor that the English love journey can occur on land or by sea: 'It's been a *long, bumpy road*' and 'The marriage is *on the rocks*'.

#### 5.4 LOVE IS A JOURNEY in Akan

A careful examination of the conventional linguistic expressions of LOVE in Akan reveals that the concept is equally understood in terms of a journey. There are travellers (lovers) set on a journey (the love relationship) over a distance (progress in the relationship) towards a destination (goals of the relationship); the love relationship takes a course with crossroads (difficult decisions) etc. For instance, people talk about the distance their relationship has covered by referring to the onset of their journey together, (*yɛsiim akyɛ*, 'it's been a long time since we set off'). Based on the metaphorical expressions analysed, I postulate the following conceptual mappings for the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor in Akan:

TABLE 6: The posited Akan version of the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor.

Source: Journey		Target: Love	
Travellers	⇒	Lovers	
Journey	⇒	the love relationship	
Distance covered	⇒	progress made	
Impediments en route	⇒	difficulties in the relationship	
Destination	⇒	goal(s) of the relationship	

#### 8. LOVE/RELATIONSHIP IS A JOURNEY

(a)	Yɛ	a-	sian	a-	kyɛ
	3PL	compl	walk together	compl	long.

	We have	walked	together	for long.
	We have	come a long	way.	
(b)	Yε	<i>sim- m</i>	a-	<i>kyε.</i>
	3PL	set off- past	compl	long time.
	We set off	long ago.		
	We have	come a long	way.	
(c)	Yε	<i>a- nante</i>	<i>a-</i>	<i>kyε.</i>
	3PL	compl-walk	compl-	long time.
	We have	walked for a	long period.	
	See how far	we have	come.	
(d)	Aware	<i>kwan</i>	<i>ware.</i>	
	Marriage	Path	long.	
	Marriage	path is long	marriage is	forever.
(e)	Yε <i>to- o</i>	<i>nkwanta</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>yε a- pae.</i>
	3SP meet past	junction	rel.	3SP compl split up
	If we met	crossroads	we have	taken separate routes.
	This is the	end of the	road.	

Again, there is evidence of similarities in the conceptualisations of the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor in both English and Akan. For instance, both languages conceptualise lovers in a

love relationship in terms of travellers, and difficulties in a relation in terms of impediments. These similarities notwithstanding, there are differences between the Akan love journey and the English one. For instance, while the English love journey has a role for vehicle (this relationship is spinning *its wheels*), there is no explicit linguistic evidence to suggest that the Akan love journey has a role for vehicle. Instead, there are expressions to suggest that the Akan love journey takes place on foot, (*yɛanante akɔɛ*, 'we have walked for a long time', 'look how far we've come'). In addition, whereas there are linguistic expressions to suggest that the English love journey may take place either on water or land (*it's been a long bumpy road, this relationship is on the rocks*), the data available on Akan suggest that the Akan love journey takes place on land only (*aware kwan ware* 'marriage path is long, *yɛtoo nkwanta a yɛapae* 'we've parted at the crossroads/ we've come to the end of the road').

## 6 The Cultural Basis for Conceptual Metaphors

On the basis of the data presented above, one of the goals of this paper is to take a step forward in the understanding of the cultural influence on language-specific construals of the two metaphors discussed in this paper. Indeed, proponents of the cultural embodied prototype view (Kövecses, 2000, 2005; Maalej, 1999, 2004) propose two kinds of embodiment: physiological embodiment and non-physiological embodiment, also known as culturally specific embodiment. Going along this line of reasoning, it is possible to explain, for instance, the similarities between Akan and English construals of these metaphors as instances of physiological embodiment where the body is generally conceptualised as a container. However, we may explain the differences, e.g. in the specific body parts conceptualised as the container e.g. *blood, eyes, guts* in English and *chest, heart, stomach* in Akan, in terms of culturally specific embodiment.

As Maalej (2004, p. 173) argues, in culturally specific embodiment, a particular emotion establishes a conventional cultural correlation between a body part and a certain conceptualisation of an emotion concept, e.g. redness of skin around the neck and face area as anger in English, so that there is a fusion of culture and physiology. Indeed, if the body has both physiological and cultural dimensions, as Maalej (2004) claims, then the role of culture in the conceptualisation of emotion concepts cannot be denied. For example, it is easier to see the change of skin colour on light-skinned bodies than it is (if the latter is possible at all) to see it on dark-skinned bodies. The metaphonymic use of redness of skin around the neck and face area in the conceptualisation of anger has been reported across several cultures including English, Hungarian and Chinese, all languages of light-skinned cultures. However, this principle of conceptualisation does not operate either in Akan or Wolof, both languages

of dark-skinned cultures. This is obviously an example of cultural-specific embodiment. Here, I would like to argue that cultural specific embodiment is grounded in cultural salience. For instance, whereas the physiological effects of anger based on skin colour are culturally salient and are therefore encoded in the embodied cognition in light-skinned cultures, e.g. English, Hungarian, Chinese etc., such physiological effects are not culturally salient, and are therefore not encoded in the embodied cognition of dark-skinned cultures, e.g. Akan and Wolof.

While we may not be able to convincingly explain the differences and similarities between English and Akan conceptualisations of the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor in terms of physiological embodiment proper, the principle of general level conceptualisation that operates in physiological embodiment is applicable. In other words, the cross-cultural similarities in conceptualisation of this metaphor occur only at the highly schematic level of conceptualisation of a journey. The more specific conceptualisations or elaborations of this generic-level journey are motivated by specific cultural knowledge and socio-culturally more salient experience of journeys.

For, instance, the reason why the English love journey can take place on water or land but the Akan journey seems to take place only on land may be explained in terms of cultural salience. While the original home of English, England, is an island where both water and land journeys are common and perhaps necessary for everyday living, the original home of the Akans is largely a tropical rainforest with a few rivers and streams. Thus, while journeys by land and water may be geo-culturally more salient in English, only land journeys appear geo-culturally salient in Akan. In other words, only aspects of a journey that are culturally salient to each of the cultures are highlighted in the mapping and get encoded in the more specific construal of a journey in this conceptualisation.

## **7 Conclusion**

In this paper, I have compared and contrasted the language-specific construals or elaborations of two conceptual metaphors of emotion concepts that are shared in Akan and English: ANGER IS A HOT FLUID IN A CONTAINER and LOVE IS A JOURNEY. In explaining the similarities and differences on language-specific construals of these two metaphors in the two languages, I have made references to the embodied cultural prototype theory in emphasising the role culture plays in the conceptualisation of emotion concepts across cultures. Finally, I have argued that cultural embodied cognition is grounded in socio-cultural salience. This paper has drawn on data provided by relatively monolingual native Akan speakers in rural and semi-rural Ghana only. It would be interesting to know the kind of data we may get from other categories of native Akan speakers, e.g. bilinguals, city dwellers and

those in the diaspora. This is a viable area of research for not only Akan scholars but also for cognitive anthropological researchers.

## 8 References

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

Compl. = Completive Aspect; Det. = Determiner; Nom. = Nominal Marker/Morpheme; Neg. = Negative Marker/Morpheme; Prog. = Progressive Marker; Plu. = Plural marker; Rel. =Relative Marker; Redup. = Reduplicated form/reduplication; 1SG = First person singular pronoun; 2SG = Second person singular pronoun; 3SG = Third person singular pronoun; 1PL = First person plural pronoun; 2PL = Second person plural pronoun; 3PL = Third person plural pronoun