



'Jɔɔgye Kumpala, Maame Container': Conceptual metaphors and ideologies in Oyerepa Afutuo, Oyerepa Radio/TV, Kumasi, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the conceptual metaphors used by Auntie Naa (a Ghanaian radio presenter) to introduce her programme and engage her audience. Specifically, the study explored the types of metaphors she employs, their cultural grounding, the communicative purposes they serve, and the ideologies they construct. Guided primarily by Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), and complemented by insights from Critical Discourse Analysis, the study analysed fifteen transcriptions of Auntie Naa's introductory remarks drawn from programmes broadcast in January and February 2024. The analysis identified four primary metaphors - *Life Is A Journey*, *Authority Is Up*, *High Status Is Up/Low Status Is Down*, and *Ideas Are Food*—which motivated several complex conceptual and image metaphors, including *Auntie Naa Is A Container of Knowledge*, *Auntie Naa Is A Judge*, *Oyerepa Afutuo Is A Flight*, *Auntie Naa Is A Pilot*, *Problem-Solving Is A Journey*, *Ideas Are Objects*, and *Joining The Programme Is Staying With Her*. These metaphors were found to be deeply embedded in Akan cultural knowledge, communal values, and embodied experiences. Beyond their cognitive functions, the metaphors were also shown to reproduce five dominant ideological constructions. The findings demonstrate that metaphors function equally as ideological resources through which social beliefs, identities, and power relations are reproduced. The study advances research in African media discourse, cognitive linguistics, and cultural linguistics by examining the interplay of language, cognition, and culture in the construction of ideologies in Ghanaian radio discourse.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Cognitive Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Akan, Ghanaian Media Discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Lakoff and Johnson argue that metaphor is not merely confined to the realm of language but a pervasive force that shapes not just how we speak, but think and act.¹ According to them, "Our ordinary conceptual

¹ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.” This challenges the traditional view of metaphor as a linguistic feature and elevates it to a central role in our cognitive system. Kövesces and Lakoff have equally argued that metaphors, as cognitive concepts, are employed in cognitive representations.² These representations, known as mappings, facilitate comprehension of metaphors by establishing a connection between the abstract and the concrete, enabling complex ideas to be understood through reference to lived experiences.³

The theory of metaphor highlights how deeply entrenched metaphorical thinking is in various aspects of life. Since Lakoff and Johnson’s ground-breaking work *Metaphors We Live By*, research has expanded considerably to model the metaphorical structuring of human experiences.⁴ In Ghana, there has been an avalanche of such studies. There have been studies of metaphors in political discourse,⁵ cultural representations of psychological behaviours and concepts,⁶ metaphorical extensions/representations of body parts,⁷ metaphors in ceremonial discourse and in media advertisements.⁸

To the best of our knowledge, existing studies on radio presentations in Ghana have not specifically examined conceptual metaphors. Folitse et al., for example, examined the impact of agricultural programmes on radio on the livelihoods of farmers in some districts and municipalities in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.⁹ Their study revealed that farmers gained knowledge in various improved practices in agriculture due to the programme on the radio, and that the knowledge helped increase agricultural output and productivity. Again, Abdulai et al. used the qualitative approach to

² Kövesces Zoltán, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (Oxford university press, 2010); George Lakoff, “Metaphor and War. The Metaphor System Used to Justify War in the Gulf,” 1992.

³ Zoltán Kövesces, *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation* (Cambridge university press, 2005); Zoltán Kövesces, “Conceptual Metaphor Theory,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Metaphor and Language* (Routledge, 2016), 31–45.

⁴ George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (University of Chicago press, 2009); Raymond W Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding* (Cambridge University Press, 1994); Charles Forceville, *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising* (Routledge, 2002); Andrew Goatly, *The Language of Metaphors* (Routledge, 1997); Jarosław Dąbrowski, “Metaphors in Advertising Texts: A Cognitive Grammar Analysis,” *The Evidence of Literature: Interrogating Text in English Studies*, 2000, 295–313; Friedrich Ungerer, “Muted Metaphors and the Activation of Metonymies In,” *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective* 30 (2000): 321.

⁵ Emmanuel Amo Ofori et al., “The Use of Metaphors and Similes in Political Discourse in Ghana,” *International Journal of Language and Linguistics* 9, no. 4 (2021): 180, <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jll.20210904.16>; Sandra Addo Wiredu, “Rhetorical Analysis of the Use of Metaphor in Ghana’s First and Former President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s Political Speeches,” *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* 3, no. 10 (September 30, 2021): 09–15, <https://doi.org/10.32996/jelta.2021.3.10.2>; Mark Nartey, “‘I Shall Prosecute a Ruthless War on These Monsters...’: A Critical Metaphor Analysis of Discourse of Resistance in the Rhetoric of Kwame Nkrumah,” *Critical Discourse Studies* 16, no. 2 (2019): 113–30; Mark Nartey, “A Critical Metaphor Analysis of Heroic Myth in the Discourse of Kwame Nkrumah,” *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines* 12, no. 1 (2020): 37–53; Mark Nartey, “Metaphor and Kwame Nkrumah’s Construction of the Unite or Perish Myth: A Discourse-Mythological Analysis,” *Social Semiotics* 30, no. 5 (2020): 646–64; Joyce Anim-Ayeko, “Metaphor in Politics: A Verbal and Non-Verbal Analysis of Selected Political Advertisements in the Ghanaian Print Media,” *Unpublished MPhil Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon*, 2012; Esther Serwaah Afreh, “Metaphors President John Dramani Mahama Lives by: A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Some Speeches of His Excellency Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana,” *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities* 4, no. XI (2016): 11–22; Yaw Sarkodie Kyeremeh et al., “Analysis of Communicative Functions of Metaphors in Selected Political Speeches,” *Universal Journal of Literature and Linguistics*, no. 1 (2023): 16–28.

⁶ Gladys Nyarko Ansah, “The Cultural Basis of Conceptual Metaphors: The Case of Emotions in Akan and English,” in *Conference in Linguistics & Language Teaching, Lancaster University*, 2010; Gladys Nyarko Ansah, *Metaphor and Bilingual Cognition: The Case of Akan and English in Ghana* (Lancaster University (United Kingdom), 2011); Gladys Nyarko Ansah, “Culture in Embodied Cognition: Metaphorical/Metonymic Conceptualizations of FEAR in Akan and English,” *Metaphor and Symbol* 29, no. 1 (2014): 44–58; Esther Serwaah Afreh, “Metaphors Otumfoɔ Lives by: A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Metaphors in Some Addresses by Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II, Asantehene,” *Cognitive Semantics* 4, no. 1 (March 10, 2018): 76–103, <https://doi.org/10.1163/23526416-00401004>; Kofi Agyekum, *Akan Cultural Semantics: An Introduction*. (Accra: : Adwinsa Publications, 2015).

⁷ Kofi Agyekum, “Polysemy and Metaphorical Extensions of Hunu ‘Vision’ Verb of Perception in Akan,” *Studies in the Languages of the Volta Basin* 3 (2005): 147–62; Patrick Ntiemoah, Abdulai Akuamah, and Faustina Kusi, “Examining the Metaphorical Extensions of Hye (a Dress Verb) in the Akan Language,” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, September 15, 2023, 1110–25, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2023498>; Charles Owiredo, “Metaphoric and Metonymic Conceptualization of the Nose in Hebrew and Twi,” *Conspectus* 31 (2021): 36–53; Esther S Afreh, “The Metonymic and Metaphoric Conceptualisations of the Heart in Akan and English,” *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 26 (2015): 38–57.

⁸ Afreh, “Metaphors Otumfoɔ Lives by: A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Metaphors in Some Addresses by Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu II Asantehene”; Esther Serwaah Afreh, “A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Metaphors in Selected Advertisements by Some Financial Institutions in Ghana,” in *Online Proceedings of UK-CLA Meetings*, vol. 4, 2017, 293–312.

⁹ Benjamin Y. Folitse et al., “Impact of Agricultural Radio Programmes on Livelihoods of Farmers: The Case of Royal FM in Brong-Ahafo Region, Ghana,” 2016.

examine the role of radio in setting the agenda for the electorate and creating an atmosphere of aggression during elections in the Northern Region of Ghana.¹⁰

As the foregoing review has shown, no previous study has applied both the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the language employed by Ghanaian radio hosts in engaging their audiences. One radio personality who has arguably become vibrant in the facilitation of important social and family conversations is Auntie Naa of Oyerepa FM/TV, a locally based media house in Kumasi, the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Her language use, particularly how she introduces her program – *Oyerepa Afutuo* – to connect with her audience, motivates the researchers' purpose for the study, which is to explore the conceptual metaphors she uses to introduce her program. The following questions are addressed in this study:

- i. What type of metaphors (primary and complex) are used by Auntie Naa to connect with her audience?
- ii. What is the cultural grounding of the metaphors used by Auntie Naa?
- iii. What are the purposes for which these metaphors are used?
- iv. How do Auntie Naa's conceptual metaphors construct and reproduce social and cultural ideologies in *Oyerepa Afutuo*?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored in two complementary theoretical frameworks: the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), developed by Lakoff and Johnson, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as proposed by Fairclough.¹¹ The Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides the analytical framework for examining how metaphors structure thought and shape the conceptualisation of social realities. Critical Discourse Analysis complements this perspective by extending the analysis beyond the linguistic features of texts to uncover the ideological assumptions and power relations embedded within discourse. According to van Dijk, discourse is inherently ideological, and the language choices speakers and writers make are influenced by underlying beliefs, values, and social interests.¹² Together, these frameworks enable the study to analyse not only the conceptual metaphors employed in *Oyerepa Afutuo* but also the ideological meanings and power structures they construct and reinforce. For the present study, CDA provides an appropriate theoretical framework because it enables a systematic examination of how discourse constructs particular representations, advances ideological perspectives, and influences public understanding of social issues.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative discourse analysis using primary data from transcribed recordings of Auntie Naa's *Oyerepa Afutuo* programme, supplemented by relevant Akan song lyrics, texts, and naturally occurring expressions. *Oyerepa Afutuo* is a live radio and television programme that is also streamed on the station's official YouTube channel. Fifteen episodes broadcast in January and February 2024 were randomly selected and downloaded from the official YouTube channel. This sample was considered sufficient because the introductory remarks exhibited recurring metaphorical patterns, indicating thematic saturation. Since the study focused on Auntie Naa's introductory remarks, approximately the first two minutes of each programme were transcribed in Asante Twi. Expressions identified as metaphorical were translated into English for analysis.

Metaphor identification followed the Pragglejaz Group's four-step procedure: (1) reading the discourse for overall meaning, (2) identifying lexical units, (3) determining their contextual and basic meanings, and (4) classifying lexical units as metaphorical where contextual and basic meanings

¹⁰ Mashoud Mohammed, Hadi Ibrahim, and Muhammed Abdulai, "The Role of Radio in Setting the Agenda for the Electorate and Creating an Atmosphere of Aggression during Elections in the Northern Region of Ghana," *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications*, 2020.

¹¹ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*; Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (London: Longman, 1995).

¹² Teun A Van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis," *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 2015, 466–85.

contrasted. The *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language (Tshi/Twi)* was consulted to verify the basic meanings of lexical items where necessary.

To enhance reliability, the researchers independently identified and coded metaphors and repeated the coding exercise after one month. Discrepancies were discussed, and only mutually agreed metaphors were retained. In addition, two Akan linguists from the Department of English, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), with expertise in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), independently reviewed the transcribed data. Their observations were compared with the researchers' coding, and only recurrent metaphors that aligned with the study objectives were selected for detailed analysis.

The researchers' intuitions as native Akan speakers, together with consultations with elderly Twi and Fante speakers, informed the interpretation of culturally embedded expressions and proverbs. Cross-domain mappings derived directly from the linguistic data were grouped into broader conceptual metaphors and interpreted within the framework of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Illustrative examples are presented in Akan with English translations, and identified conceptual metaphors are presented in capital letters.

A Brief Background of Auntie Naa and the *Oyerepa Afutuo* Programme

Eunice Naa Amerley Nortey, popularly known as Auntie Naa, is a radio personality in the Ghanaian media space. She is the host of the famous *Oyerepa Afutuo* on Oyerepa FM and TV. Oyerepa FM and TV is a locally based media house located in the Kumasi metropolis of Ghana. The media house primarily operates using Twi, an Akan dialect. *Oyerepa Afutuo* is a live telecast program on weekdays at 13:00 GMT. It delves into a range of topics relevant to Ghanaian society. Basically, the program addresses social and family issues and seeks to resolve various types of disputes among individuals and families. There is also a segment on the programme dedicated to callers' interaction. On the programme, Auntie Naa provides a lively and interactive atmosphere for open dialogue. *Oyerepa Afutuo* is a Twi program. Although the target audience for the programme is all Ghanaians, Twi-speaking Akans are the direct audience.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed the following primary metaphors: LIFE IS A JOURNEY, AUTHORITY IS UP, HIGH STATUS IS UP/LOW STATUS IS DOWN, and IDEAS ARE FOOD. These metaphors provided the basic structure for a number of complex (conceptual and image) metaphors. These are *OYEREPA AFUTUO*/AUNTIE NAA IS A CONTAINER OF KNOWLEDGE, *OYEREPA AFUTUO* IS CHEWING/EATING, AUNTIE NAA IS A JUDGE, *OYEREPA AFUTUO* IS A FLIGHT, AUNTIE NAA IS A PILOT, PROBLEM-SOLVING IS A JOURNEY, IDEAS ARE OBJECTS and JOINING HER/LISTENING TO THE PROGRAMME IS STAYING WITH HER. In the following sections, linguistic evidence from the data is used to illustrate and discuss these metaphorical structures.

***Oyerepa Afutuo*/Auntie Naa is a Container of Knowledge**

Auntie Naa frames her program as a well of information. She also constructs herself as a facilitator of knowledge sharing and community building, using the metaphor *OYEREPA AFUTUO*/AUNTIE NAA IS A CONTAINER OF KNOWLEDGE. The source domain is knowledge, while the target domains are Auntie Naa and her program. This is an ontological metaphor, specifically the container metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson define ontological metaphor as the perception of experiences such as actions, events, ideas, and emotions as things and substances in our physical world. They further refer to ontological metaphors as "entity and substance metaphors."¹³ According to Lakoff and Johnson, ontological metaphors facilitate the identification, measurement, interpretation, and comprehension of abstract entities and experiences. They further argue that the container metaphor serves as a bridge between the concrete and the abstract.¹⁴ The power of the container metaphor lies in its ability to make the abstract

¹³ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

¹⁴ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

tangible. It provides a basis for understanding abstract concepts through actions associated with physical objects and concrete experiences.

This metaphorical framing not only simplifies complex concepts but also empowers the feeling of control over them. Considering ‘knowledge’, for instance, an intangible, elusive concept, the container metaphor allows the mapping of knowledge onto a familiar physical entity, like a box or a basket. This mapping conceptualises knowledge in terms of acquisition, storage, and dissemination. Consequently, knowledge may be perceived as something that can be retained, accumulated, or even experienced as burdensome. Such metaphorical expressions are grounded in the container schema, a cognitive framework through which abstract experiences are understood in relation to concrete entities.

In Auntie Naa’s case, the container metaphor serves as a powerful tool. She makes the following introductory statement to her program:

(1) Maame container. Yɛn nko ara na yɛn container
 Woman/ mother container. 1PL SUBJ¹⁵ only and POSS¹⁶ container
 no mu nnoɔma yɛ ahodoɔ ahodoɔ ahodoɔ
 DEF¹⁷ inside items be different different different

‘Woman/Mother container. We are the only ones who have our container filled with/full of different items.’

In Extract (1), the source domain is a container, while the target domain is Auntie Naa and the entire program or even the FM station. Auntie Naa frames herself as a repository of knowledge. She presents herself as one full of knowledge/information. This projects her to be well-poised and informed. Similarly, she frames her program and FM station as a well of information/knowledge, emphasising the core function of the program she hosts. In the metaphor, knowledge, an abstract concept that is intangible and elusive, becomes a tangible entity housed within a container. This metaphorical framing instantly resonates with the audience. A container can be visualised – a box, a basket, a cupboard – making it easy to understand the actions of placing items within it or removing them from it. Drawing this parallel, Auntie Naa transforms the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge into a relatable process. This metaphorical framing transforms knowledge acquisition and sharing into a tangible process. Listeners can easily grasp the purpose of the show: to serve as a repository of wisdom on various social and family issues. Among the Twi-speaking Akans, knowledge, translated as ‘nimdee’, is also conceived as a tangible phenomenon, which could be accumulated, possessed and shared. The following Akan proverbs are evidence of this:

(2) a. Nnipa nimdee n-sa gye w’a-wu

Person knowledge NEG¹⁸-finish until 3SG-SUBJ¹⁹ PERF-die
 ‘A person’s knowledge does not finish until he/she dies.’

b. Nyansani a ɔ-kyɛ ne nimdee no

Wise person RM²⁰ 3SGSUBJ-share POSS knowledge DEF

kɔso nya nyansa
 continue get wisdom

‘A wise person who teaches/shares his/her knowledge does not cease to be wise.’

¹⁵ 1st Person plural subject

¹⁶ Possessive (determiner)

¹⁷ Definite article

¹⁸ Negative or negation marker

¹⁹ 3rd Person singular subject

²⁰ Relative marker

From these, it is inferred that Akans consider knowledge as a shared resource and a tangible treasure to be actively cultivated and enjoyed. This unique perspective on knowledge permeates the Akan language and culture. For the Akans, knowledge is accumulated, and sharing does not diminish it (2b). Instead, it enriches it. They believe that sharing knowledge strengthens one's own understanding. Unlike material possessions that wear out or lose value, knowledge is considered an enduring treasure. It is something that humans possess throughout life (2a). Thus, Auntie Naa draws on this cultural understanding of knowledge and constructs herself and her program as a wellspring of knowledge. Afreh explains that several Akan proverbs and sayings are directly mirrored in the conceptualisation of knowledge.²¹ Some of these include *obi nnim a obi kyere* (if one does not know, one teaches), *asem bi safoa bue asem bi pono* (the key of one information opens the door to another) and *nimdee ahye ne ma* (knowledge has filled him/her, or he/she is filled with knowledge). This enforces the cultural grounding of the conceptual metaphor.

The richness of the metaphor also extends beyond its core structure. In Extract (1), the term *Maame Container* infuses the image with cultural significance. "Maame" translates to "woman" or "mother". It carries the weight of respect and wisdom – qualities often associated with mothers, elders, or women of stature. Using "maame" instead of just "container", Auntie Naa elevates the image beyond a mundane box. It transforms into a container imbued with the wisdom and respect inherent in the concept of a woman or mother. It is not just any container; it is one overseen by a wise and respected figure. This linguistic choice instills the 'container' (the host and the program) with a sense of authority and trustworthiness, assuring the audience that the knowledge it holds is valuable and reliable. This word choice also positions Auntie Naa herself within the metaphor. She becomes more than just a show host; she embodies the "maame", a source of knowledge and wisdom guiding the audience. Associating herself with this concept, Auntie Naa builds trust and credibility with her listeners. They are more likely to be receptive to the knowledge shared on the show, as it comes from a respected and trusted source. This metaphorical framing assures listeners that the knowledge held within is not only plentiful but also reliable and valuable.

Furthermore, the "different items" within the container represent the diverse range of social and family issues tackled on the show. Each "item" is unique, mirroring the complexities of the problems discussed on the show. The container, filled with its "different items", implies that everyone has their own issues. The show, then, becomes a platform for receiving and holding these diverse issues. This aspect of the metaphor highlights the show's ability to delve into a wide array of real-life challenges faced by the audience. The unique issues gathered from the different people who come with their problems become a pool from which knowledge is shared. Auntie Naa frames herself and her program as a repository that holds diverse social and family challenges. These issues provide the basis on which the audience is offered knowledge about life. This underscores the notion that knowledge is not monolithic; it encompasses a spectrum of experiences and perspectives. In the Akan culture, knowledge is also not considered to be a preserve of an individual. This is seen in the following popular Akan adages:

- (3) a. Nyansa/adwene/nimdee n-ni baakofoɔ tiri mu
- wisdom/ideas/knowledge NEG-be one man head inside
- 'Wisdom/Ideas /Knowledge is not in the head of one man.'
- b. Obi n-nim a obi kyere
- Someone NEG-know CM²² someone teach
- 'If one does not know, one teaches.'

²¹ Afreh, "Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's Inaugural Address: Conceptual Metaphors, Metonymies and Values to Celebrate a Presidency."

²² Complementizer

These proverbs emphasise the importance of knowledge sharing and its communal nature (3a & 3b). They highlight the ongoing process of learning and knowledge exchange. Just as one can ‘teach’ by sharing knowledge from the ‘container’, one can also ‘learn’ by receiving knowledge from it. This continuous flow of knowledge in and out of the ‘container’ reinforces the idea that knowledge is not static or owned by any single person. These proverbs paint a vivid picture of a society that values knowledge sharing and the communal pursuit of understanding. This, it is believed, forms the cultural background from which Auntie Naa uses the container metaphor and constructs herself and her programme as a platform for learning, discussion and collective enrichment of knowledge.

Oyerepa Afutuo is Eating/Chewing

Another metaphor identified in Auntie Naa’s introductory comments to her programme is *OYEREPA AFUTUO IS EATING/CHEWING*. This structural metaphor has its source domain as eating/chewing. The source domain is mapped onto the description of Auntie Naa and her production team as babies with chewing abilities. Thus, Auntie Naa frames her programme as “an eating process that overcomes challenges.” The remarks in (4), (5) and (6) are made in her introductory comments:

(4) Akrantɛ ne ne mma. Yɛ-re-ba a-bɛ-we

Grasscutter and POSS babies 1st PLU-SUBJ PROG²³ come SUBJ-FUT ²⁴chew
a-kɔ
FUT-go
‘Grasscutter and family. We have come to destroy.’

(5) Na ɛmmom yɛ re-kɔ-di nɛm

But rather 1st PLU-SUBJ PROG-go-eat issues
‘But rather, we are going to settle issues.’

(6) Wo-re-pe akrantɛ a-we na w’a-kɔ-da

2SG-SUBJ²⁵-PROG-want grasscutter FUT-chew and 2SG-SUBJ-FUT go- sleep
ɛnti yɛ-re-ba a-bɛ-we na y’a-kɔ-da
so 1PLU-SUBJ PROG-come FUT-come-chew and 1PLU- SUBJ-FUT-go-sleep

‘You want grasscutter to chew, and you go to sleep. So we are coming to chew and go to sleep.’ (‘You are looking for grasscutter to eat and sleep. So we are going to eat and sleep.’)

In Extracts (4) and 5), Auntie Naa shows her approach to tackling social and family issues. As indicated, the source domain of the metaphor *OYEREPA AFUTUO IS EATING/CHEWING* lies in the realm of addressing complex social and family issues. These issues can be multifaceted and present significant challenges to individuals and families. Auntie Naa casts herself and her production team as individuals confronting these challenges. The target domain in (4) and (6), where the metaphorical mapping takes place, is the world of the grass cutter and its babies - *Akrantɛ ne ne mma*. Grasscutters, small but persistent rodents, are known to be a delicacy in Ghana. They are considered a good source of

²³ Progressive

²⁴ Future

²⁵ 2nd Person plural subject

protein and are often consumed roasted or fried. It is also renowned for its formidable chewing abilities and destructive nature. It can devour tough grasses and vegetation, a testament to its relentless approach to consumption. Auntie Naa draws a parallel between the grasscutter's eating and destructive characteristics and the way she and her team tackle social and family problems. She does not simply say they are like the grasscutter. Instead, she emphasises *Yereba abewe ako* 'We are coming to chew and go'.

This portrays Auntie Naa and her team not as passive consumers but as active agents who arrive with a purpose – 'to chew', which signifies dismantling and overcoming the challenges presented by their numerous audiences. This gives rise to the image metaphor that DISCUSSING THE ISSUES IS CHEWING. Both the source and target domains are concrete items. The act of 'chewing and going' suggests efficiency and a focus on achieving results. The strength of the metaphor lies in its vivid imagery. The powerful jaws of the grasscutter chomping through tough obstacles can easily be imagined. This image is then superimposed on Auntie Naa's approach to the social and family problems. The listener receives a strong sense of determination and an unwavering commitment to finding solutions. The focus on 'chewing and going' might also suggest a swift and decisive approach, which may not always be feasible when dealing with intricate social issues. However, the underlying message of determination and a commitment to finding solutions remains clear.

This complex metaphor finds parallels with Lakoff and Johnson's metaphor IDEAS ARE FOOD.²⁶ Lakoff and Johnson have pointed out that consumption, particularly the act of eating, is often associated with problem-solving.²⁷ We 'chew on' difficult ideas, or say we need 'something to chew on' when faced with a complex situation. Similarly, we 'consume' ideas, 'feed' on information, and find certain ideas to be 'nourishing' or 'filling'. Lakoff and Johnson further illustrate that good news or significant ideas are conceptualised as having an appetite for food – INTEREST IN IDEAS IS APPETITE FOR FOOD. It follows that since good food could be described as healthy while bad food could also be described as harmful, so are ideas – GOOD IDEAS ARE HEALTHY FOODS and BAD IDEAS ARE HARMFUL FOODS.²⁸ Afreh illustrates the presence of this metaphor in Akan. She argues that in Akan, ideas, like food, are conceptualised as substances being taken in and consumed. She illustrates the presence of this metaphor in Akan with the following expressions, in which accepting ideas is literally described as having taken in the idea (7a) or having taken and eaten the idea (7b).²⁹

(7) a.	W'a-gye	a-to	(ne)	mu
	3SG SUBJ PERF-take	PERF-put	POSS)	inside
	'S/he has accepted it.'			
	b. W'a-gye	a-di		
	3SG SUBJ PERF-take	PERF-eat		
	'S/he has believed it.'			

Afreh further points out that it is common for Twi-speaking Akans to literally describe themselves as being satisfied after being fed with some information.³⁰ Twi-speaking Akans conceptualise an idea or information as a meal that satisfies an individual (8).

(8)	Asem	no	a-ma	me	a-mee
	matter	DEF	PERF-make	3SG OBJ	PER-satisfy

²⁶ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

²⁷ Lakoff and Johnson. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*.

²⁸ Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 241.

²⁹ Afreh, "Metaphors Otumfo Lives By: A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Metaphors in Some Addresses by Otumfo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene."

³⁰ Afreh, "Metaphors Otumfo Lives by: A Cognitive Linguistic Study of Metaphors in Some Addresses by Otumfo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene."

‘The matter has made me satisfied.’ (‘I am satisfied with the issue.’) (Afreh, 2018:88)

It is also common for one to hear Akans express their satisfaction with the information as though they have tasted it. Thus, they describe the palatability or otherwise of hearing the information (9).

(9) Me-te-e asem no a-n-ye me de

1SG SUBJ- hear-COMPL news DEF 1SG SUBJ-NEG-do 3SGOBJ sweet
'I was not happy when I heard the news.'

The pervasiveness of the IDEAS ARE FOOD metaphors in Akan, it is believed, explains Auntie Naa's use of the eating metaphor in her introductory remarks (see Extracts 4-6). She taps into this ingrained association, making the metaphor not only original but also intuitively understandable. This metaphorical mapping allows her audience to make sense of the complex idea of solving issues by grounding them in our bodily experience – eating.

Auntie Naa is a Judge

Auntie Naa also frames herself as a judge or mediator. The image metaphor AUNTIE NAA IS A JUDGE is identified in the data. Deignan points out that image metaphors are a type of metaphor that connects two tangible objects as opposed to conceptual metaphors.³¹ In this situation, the ‘source’ and ‘target’ domains are both concrete. The image metaphor AUNTIE NAA IS A JUDGE hinges on the source domain of law and justice, a realm governed by established rules, procedures, and pronouncements from a figure of authority – the judge. The target domain is Auntie Naa herself, host of the radio program. Declaring herself the ‘Judge’, Auntie Naa draws a powerful parallel. She makes the following remark:

(10) Joogyē nie. Joogyē Kumpala!

Judge this. Judge Kumpala!
‘This is the judge. Judge Kumpala!’

This metaphor evokes specific legal associations. Just as a judge presides over a courtroom, Auntie Naa commands the airwaves. Both seek truth and fairness, albeit through different means. A judge relies on evidence and legal precedent; Auntie Naa leverages her experience, cultural understanding, and the power of open communication. Callers become litigants, their stories the evidence, and Auntie Naa, the wise arbiter navigating a path towards resolution. The metaphor highlights the performative aspect of Auntie Naa's role. Judges embody a specific persona: impartial, authoritative, and unwavering in upholding the law. Auntie Naa, too, adopts a persona. She projects a sternness similar to a judge addressing a disorderly courtroom, or a nurturing empathy when dealing with delicate family matters. This performativity fosters trust. Listeners perceive her as a figure of authority, someone capable of offering not just advice, but a definitive 'judgment' on the situation. The metaphor captures the essence of her program and, more importantly, highlights the authority she wields on the airwaves, the framework she provides for resolving conflict, and the trust she inspires in her listeners. In a world where social and family disputes often go unaddressed, Auntie Naa's radio program becomes a virtual courtroom, a space where the gavel of *Jɔɔgye Kumpala* echoes with the promise of understanding, reconciliation, and a renewed sense of community.

Auntie Naa's metaphorical transformation into a 'judge', as inferred, stems from the primary metaphors *AUTHORITY IS UP* and *HIGH STATUS IS UP/LOW STATUS IS DOWN*³². According to Lakoff and Johnson, our physical experiences of verticality influence how we understand abstract concepts. Upward movement is associated with power, superiority, and control, while downward movement signifies weakness, submission, and lack of control. Lakoff and Johnson show how verbs

³¹ Alice Deignan, "Metaphor and Corpus Linguistics," 2005.

³² Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

- (13) Fasten your seat belt. Mia mu, medofo. Mia mu kakra na Joogyen menfa wo ntu mfa wiem

Fasten your seat belt. Fasten it, my dear, fasten it a bit so Judge, let me take you fly through the sky

‘Fasten your seatbelt. Fasten it a bit, my good friend, and let the judge fly into the sky with you.’

The statement (13) cleverly uses a metaphorical journey, with the source domain being aviation and the target domain being her radio programme *Oyerepa Afutuo*. The act of ‘fastening seatbelts’ is a ubiquitous action in air travel. It signifies preparation for departure, a moment of anticipation as the journey begins. Asking her listeners to perform this action, Auntie Naa metaphorically places them on board her metaphorical aircraft, ready to embark on a voyage together. This creates a sense of shared experience, inviting her audience to actively participate in the program rather than passively consume it. The metaphor takes the flight further when Auntie Naa declares, *mmia mu kakra na Joogyen menfa wo ntu mfa wiem* ‘Fasten it a bit and let the judge fly into the sky with you.’

Here, she positions herself as the pilot, the one navigating the course of the program. Auntie Naa leverages familiar emotions associated with air travel to connect with her audience. The excitement of take-off is mirrored by the anticipation of engaging discussions on her programme. The element of trust placed in a pilot resonates with the trust listeners place in Auntie Naa’s experience and judgment in handling sensitive issues. Turbulence encountered during a flight can symbolise the emotional challenges that may arise during discussions of social and family problems. Unlike a real flight with a set destination, Auntie Naa’s program probably has a more open-ended itinerary. The specific social and family issues addressed serve as the waypoints, guiding the metaphorical journey. This reflects the dynamic nature of her program, where audience participation and emerging topics can shape the course of the discussion.

Auntie Naa is a Pilot

Another journey metaphor found is AUNTIE NAA IS A PILOT. This image metaphor is closely related to the metaphor of *OYEREP A FUTUO IS A FLIGHT*. Both are ingrained in the primary metaphor *LIFE IS A JOURNEY*. The pilot metaphor also aligns with Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) *AUTHORITY IS HEIGHT* metaphor. Just as a pilot occupies a higher position within the aeroplane, physically above the passengers, Auntie Naa, the metaphorical pilot, positions herself as someone with a broader perspective and control over the program’s direction. This physical elevation in the aeroplane translates to a metaphorical elevation in authority within the program. In the metaphor *AUNTIE NAA IS A PILOT*, the source domain is aviation, and the target domain is Auntie Naa, the radio host. Extract (13) illustrates this metaphor.

In the extract, the expression *mia mu kakra na Joogyen menfa wo ntu mfa wiem* ‘Fasten it a bit and let the judge fly into the sky with you’ subtly positions Auntie Naa herself as a pilot, navigating the metaphorical journey of her program. The pilot, in the realm of aviation, is a figure of authority and expertise. They (pilots) are entrusted with the safety and direction of the aircraft and its passengers. Auntie Naa, through this metaphor, casts herself in a similar role. She takes charge of the program, guiding the discussions on social and family issues with a steady hand. Her experience and knowledge become her piloting skills, ensuring a safe and productive journey for her listeners. The act of ‘flying’ itself signifies rising above the ordinary, gaining a broader perspective. Auntie Naa, the pilot, suggests that her program will offer fresh insights and solutions to complex problems. Listeners are no longer grounded in their everyday challenges; they are invited to soar alongside her, gaining a new perspective on the issues at hand. This pilot metaphor goes beyond simply establishing Auntie Naa’s authority. The trust placed in a pilot mirrors the trust listeners place in Auntie Naa’s ability to navigate sensitive topics. Social and family issues can be emotionally turbulent, and Auntie Naa, like a skilled pilot navigating rough air, ensures a smooth journey despite the potential for bumps. Her calm demeanor and insightful guidance become essential for navigating these choppy waters.

Problem-Solving is a Journey

The data also reveal the presence of the complex metaphor PROBLEM-SOLVING IS A JOURNEY. This metaphor is based on the primary metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY (Lakoff and Johnson propose that our understanding of abstract concepts is grounded in our experiences with the physical world).⁴⁰ Life, in this view, is akin to a journey – a progression with a starting point, obstacles to overcome, and a destination to reach. Hence, activities in life are construed to be journeys with starting points and destinations. The LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor is present in Akan culture. The Akan proverb in (14a) shows how life is construed as not being a straight path. Life, among the Akans, is also conceptualised as a path for which a person charts or travels (14b).

(14) a. Obra ye akyewakyew

life be crooked
'Life is not a straight line.'

b. Deɛ ɔ-re-twa sa no n-nim sɛ n'akyi
who 3SG SUBJ-PROG-cut path DEF NEG-know that POSS back

akyea
crooked

'He who is charting a path does not know how crooked it is.'

Other evidence of the pervasiveness of LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor in Akan has been provided. The LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor forms the basis for the complex metaphor PROBLEM-SOLVING IS A JOURNEY. Again, Auntie Naa makes the following introductory remarks:

(15) Wo-re-pɛ akrantɛɛ a-we na

2SG SUBJ-PROG-want grass cutter FUT-chew and

w'a-kɔ-da ɛnti yɛ-re-ba a-bɛ-we
2SG SUBJ-FUT go-sleep so 1PLUSUBJ-PROG-come FUT-come-chew

na y'a-kɔ-da
and 1PLU SUBJ FUT-go-sleep

'You are looking for a grass cutter to eat and sleep. So we are going to eat and sleep.'

In extract (15), Auntie Naa's invitation extended to her audience to join her for dinner is a metaphorical approach to life's challenges. On her show, social and family issues become the 'meat' they gather to consume. The act of 'chewing' represents the collective effort to discuss, dissect, and unpack these complexities. Finally, 'going to sleep' signifies the resolution, the sense of peace that comes with finding understanding or a path forward. Just as a journey has a starting point, obstacles, and a destination, Auntie Naa reminds us that problem-solving requires a similar structure. There is an initial state (identifying the problem), challenges to navigate (the complexities of the issue), and a goal to achieve (reaching a solution or path forward). We begin by identifying the issue, the knotty center of the problem. Then, the obstacles arise – conflicting viewpoints, hidden biases, and the complexities inherent in human relationships. The act of 'chewing' becomes a metaphor for the back-and-forth of a healthy discussion. Problems may be examined from multiple perspectives, reconsidered repeatedly,

⁴⁰ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

can be put inside or outside them, and boundaries that define the container's limits. The authors argue that this understanding of containers is projected onto social situations. Lakoff and Johnson point out that "Activities in general are viewed metaphorically as SUBSTANCES and therefore as CONTAINERS".⁴⁴ The authors consider these activities to be holding spaces for the acts and other activities that make them up. It comes from this that human groups can be considered as containers with members being inside the group and those who do not participate being outside. By picturing ourselves 'inside' a group, we feel a sense of connection and shared identity with other members. This idea of 'being in a group is being in a container' provides the primary conceptual framework for the complex metaphor JOINING HER/LISTENING TO THE PROGRAMME IS STAYING WITH HER. The linguistic manifestation of this metaphor can be found in the expression in (18).

- (18) Page members a nnawɔtwe yi mo ne yɛn a-tena,
 Page members REL week this 2PL SUBJ and 3PL OBJ PERF-stay
 mo bundles, mo sika, callers mo sika a mo-de a-frɛ ...
 your bundles, your money callers your money REL 2PL-SUBJ-take PERF-call
 'Members on this platform, who have stayed with us within this week, your data bundles, your money you have spent to call on the programme...'

In Extract (18), Auntie Naa utilises the metaphor to acknowledge and appreciate her audience's engagement. On the surface level, it refers to those who tuned in to Auntie Naa's program. However, a deeper analysis reveals the source domain – the concept of sacrifice. Here, 'staying' is not simply remaining passive; it signifies an active choice that comes at a cost. The target domain becomes the act of spending a resource – 'data bundles' and 'money' used for calls. Auntie Naa suggests that being part of her community requires an investment. The audience expends resources – data or call credit – to connect and participate. This metaphor emphasises the value of the audience's engagement. Highlighting the 'cost' of staying tuned in, Auntie Naa subtly elevates the importance of their presence. It is not a passive act; it is a conscious investment on the part of the audience.

Ideological Construction in Auntie Naa's Metaphorical Discourse

Beyond their cognitive functions, the analysis revealed that Auntie Naa's metaphorical constructions simultaneously perform five dominant ideological functions. They (1) construct knowledge as legitimate authority, (2) promote communalism and collective responsibility, (3) legitimise institutional authority, (4) naturalise maternal leadership and moral authority, and (5) frame audience participation as commitment and collective sacrifice. These are discussed below.

Knowledge as Legitimate Authority

A key ideology emerging from the data is the construction of knowledge as legitimate authority. Auntie Naa's self-description as *Maame Container*, particularly in the expression "*Yɛn nko ara na yɛn container no mu nnoɔma yɛ ahodoɔ ahodoɔ ahodoɔ*" ('We are the only ones whose container is filled with different items'), portrays knowledge as a valuable resource that is stored and shared. Lakoff and Johnson argue that container metaphors conceptualise abstract ideas as bounded entities,⁴⁵ while Kövecses highlights their cultural grounding.⁴⁶ Similarly, other scholars show that Akan culture conceptualises knowledge as a communal resource.⁴⁷ Through this metaphor, Auntie Naa constructs herself as a trusted custodian of socially valued knowledge rather than merely a broadcaster. This aligns with Afreh, Atta-Asamoah

⁴⁴ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 31.

⁴⁵ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*.

⁴⁶ Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor in Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511614408>.

⁴⁷ Kofi. Agyekum, *Akan Language and Culture* (Accra: Adwinsa Publications., 2019); Harriet Appiah Kyeremeh and Esther Serwaah Afreh, "Metaphoric Conceptualisations of Knowledge among Students of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana," *Perspectives* 22 (2008): 205.

and Kyei, who argue that linguistic choices project institutional identities and legitimise authority.⁴⁸ As van Dijk notes, discourse legitimises both knowledge and those authorised to produce it.⁴⁹ Consequently, the container metaphor establishes Auntie Naa as a culturally recognised moral educator whose authority is grounded in wisdom.

Communalism and Collective Responsibility

Auntie Naa's frequent use of inclusive first-person plural forms such as *yen*, *ye*, *yereba*, and *yerekɔ* constructs conflict resolution as a collective rather than an individual responsibility. Expressions such as “*Yerekɔdi nsem*” (‘We are going to settle issues’) and “*Yereba abewe na yekɔda*” (‘We are coming to chew and then sleep’) position both the production team and the audience as active participants in resolving social and family disputes. This reflects the Akan emphasis on communal participation and collective responsibility. Fairclough further argues that inclusive pronouns create solidarity and reinforce in-group identity.⁵⁰ Consequently, *Oyerepa Afutuo* is ideologically constructed as a symbolic family committed to communal problem-solving. This finding also aligns with the views of Afreh et al., who show that Ghanaian media discourse often frames social conflict as requiring collective rather than individual action.⁵¹

Legitimation of Authority

By introducing herself as “*Jɔgye Kumpala*” (‘Judge Kumpala’), Auntie Naa appropriates the symbolic authority traditionally associated with judicial institutions. Rather than merely entertaining listeners, the judicial metaphor constructs her as an impartial arbiter whose judgements carry moral legitimacy. Fairclough notes that discourse frequently legitimises institutional authority and argues that institutional metaphors naturalise power relations by making them appear socially acceptable.⁵² The judicial metaphor, therefore, positions Auntie Naa as a trustworthy mediator whose authority aligns with Akan notions of leadership founded upon wisdom, fairness and communal trust.⁵³ Similar ideological constructions have been observed in Ghanaian institutional discourse, where linguistic choices strategically project leadership identities and legitimise authority through discourse rather than coercion.⁵⁴

Maternal Leadership and Moral Authority

The repeated expression *Maame Container* simultaneously invokes Akan understandings of motherhood as care, wisdom, protection and moral responsibility. Unlike institutional authority, which derives from formal roles, maternal authority is culturally grounded in care and experience. By combining the maternal identity (*Maame*) with the judicial identity (*Jɔgye*), Auntie Naa presents authority as both compassionate and firm. Her guidance is therefore framed not as domination but as responsible care for the wellbeing of the community. This supports Fairclough’s argument that discourse legitimises authority by representing it as protective rather than oppressive. Through these complementary metaphors, power becomes naturalised as moral responsibility. The combination of maternal and judicial identities also illustrates Fairclough's view that discourse simultaneously constructs social identities and legitimises social roles.⁵⁵ Here, authority derives not only from institutional position but equally from culturally valued notions of motherhood, care and wisdom.

⁴⁸ Esther Serwaah Afreh, Obed Atta-Asamoah, and Emmanuel Kyei, “Syntactic Complexity and Ideologies,” *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 37, no. 1 (2026): 93–131.

⁴⁹ Van Dijk, “Critical Discourse Analysis.”

⁵⁰ Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*.

⁵¹ Afreh, Atta-Asamoah, and Kyei, “Syntactic Complexity and Ideologies.”

⁵² N. Fairclough, “Language and Power. 2nd Edn. London and New York” (Routledge, 2001).

⁵³ Agyekum, *Akan Language and Culture*.

⁵⁴ Afreh, Atta-Asamoah, and Kyei, “Syntactic Complexity and Ideologies.”

⁵⁵ Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*.

Participation as Commitment and Sacrifice

References to listeners' *data bundles, telephone credit, and financial commitment*, as expressed in “*Mo bundles, mo sika, callers mo sika a mode afree*” (‘Your data bundles, your money, the money you have spent calling the programme’), transform media participation into collective investment. Audience engagement is not represented as passive consumption but as a meaningful contribution to a shared social enterprise. This finding resonates with Kyei et al., who argue that interpersonal linguistic resources actively involve audiences in discourse by fostering emotional engagement, solidarity and shared participation.⁵⁶ Auntie Naa similarly transforms listeners from passive recipients into active members of a moral community through metaphorical framing. Scannell argues that broadcast discourse constructs audiences as interpretive communities, and observes that symbolic solidarity is achieved through shared values and participation.⁵⁷ Auntie Naa, therefore, positions audience members as active contributors to a moral community whose collective sacrifices sustain the programme’s mission of resolving social and family conflicts.

CONCLUSION

This paper explored the conceptual organisation that underlies selected expressions in Auntie Naa’s introductory remarks on *Oyerepa Afutuo* on Oyerepa FM/TV, and the ideologies they construct. The findings reinforce the view within Conceptual Metaphor Theory that primary metaphors provide the experiential basis for more complex metaphorical structures. The study further demonstrates that metaphorical conceptualisations are not merely linguistic embellishments but culturally grounded cognitive structures shaped by bodily, social, and communal experiences. Auntie Naa’s metaphorical constructions draw heavily on Akan cultural knowledge systems, values of communalism, authority, wisdom, and shared problem-solving, thereby illustrating the close relationship between language, cognition, and culture. The present findings resonate with recent studies on Ghanaian public and media discourse, which demonstrate that linguistic choices simultaneously construct identities, legitimise authority and promote collective social action. They extend the explanatory scope of Conceptual Metaphor Theory by demonstrating that the conceptual metaphors structuring everyday cognition simultaneously function as ideological resources that legitimise authority, reinforce cultural values, construct social identities and negotiate power within contemporary Ghanaian media discourse.

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⁵⁶ Emmanuel Kyei et al., “‘Money Doesn’t Like Noise’: Akufo Addo’s Pathos from A Metadiscoursal Perspective,” *Linguistics Initiative* 3, no. 1 (2023): 49–65.

⁵⁷ Paddy Scannell, *Radio, Television and Modern Life*. Oxford: Blackwell. Serwornoo, Michael Yao Wodui. 2016. (The Changing College Radio Model of Broadcasting In Ghana. , 1996).

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