THE SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS OF AKAN IDEOPHONES

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This paper examines the syntax-semantics of Akan ideophones. As part of the syntactic characteristics of ideophones, the study discusses the word class dynamism in Akan ideophones. Additionally, it looks at the verbal polarity and the group of ideophones that co-occur based on the polarity of the verb. This has become necessary because unlike other parts of speech, not much have been done on Akan ideophones in the literature. Therefore, aside from the contribution that this paper makes to the discussion on the syntactic dynamism in Akan ideophones, it also looks at the sensitivity of ideophones to the polarity of the verb in a sentence. This is against the backdrop that Saah (1995), Bodomo (2006) and Agyekum (2008) have dilated on the morpho-phonological and pragmatic characteristics of ideophones but not much on the syntax and semantics characteristics of Akan ideophones, especially its polarity sensitivity. Hence, this study examines the polarity sensitivity of Akan ideophones towards the categorization of ideophones into two, namely Affirmative Polarity Ideophones (API) that only collocate with positive verbs and Negative Polarity Ideophones (NPI) that only collocate with negated verbs. It shows that Negative Polarity Ideophones (NPI) collocate with negated verbs irrespective of the tense aspect mood. Progovac's (1993) theory of Entailment and Binding is employed to account for the polarity sensitivity of ideophones while the syntactic dynamism in the ideophones is tested on the X-bar theory.

Keywords: Akan, Ideophones, collocation, polarity, negation sensitivity

1.0 Introduction

Ideophones are marked group of words that have a direct relationship between sound and meaning. This direct sound to meaning characteristic of ideophones undermines the arbitrariness of language. However, according to Childs (2001) and Dingemanse (2012), ideophones are cross-linguistic phenomenon that is common in the world's languages, especially the African and Asian languages. This marked group of words has been described from the perspective of various scholars across languages from the earliest time. Some of the terms invented by scholars to describe this group of words and its sound symbolism include onomatopoeia, imitations, echoisms, and mimetics. However, the term ideophone coined by Dokes (1935) in the description of imitative words has gained a wide acceptance in languages across the globe. Therefore, following Dokes

(ibid) this study adopts the term ideophone as a cover term for all forms of sound symbolism in Akan.

Aside from the direct sound-to-meaning feature of ideophones that violate the arbitrariness of languages, ideophones in the world's natural languages manifest a large variety of peculiarities. Some of these marked features of ideophones are phonological. For instance, the common phonotactic rules, tone, stress and length that apply to ordinary grammatical forms may be inapplicable concerning ideophones (Childs 1988; Klamer 2002). Other peculiar features of ideophones may reflect in the domain of morphology, syntax, semantics, and even pragmatics. Morphologically, reduplication is a striking feature of ideophones yet in many languages they are nonconcatenative. It is with this nonconcatenative property of ideophones that Zwicky & Pullum (1987) observed that ideophones are marked in the extent to which they conform to the conventional process of affixation and word formation. Moreover, the syntactic distribution and position of occurrence of ideophones in sentences appear to be constrained. In this regard, Diffloth (1972) notes that ideophones are predominantly effective in declarative sentences than non-declarative sentences, especially in the affirmative constructions. The general characteristics, usage and frequency of ideophones might not be applicable to all speech context. In a prosaic or an extremely official speech context, the frequency and properties of the ideophone may be less. However, it is an indisputable fact in the literature that ideophones reflect numerous feature deviations from regular grammatical forms. Thus, ideophones have striking characterizations that make them distinct from other word forms. In this line, Kita (1997) describes ideophones as a distinct representational mode of meaning that has direct contact with the sensory motor and affective information.

Like many other African languages, Akan has a widespread ideophones. Yet, many ideophones continue to be coined in informal speech to express iterative and affective concepts. Despite its prevalence in Akan and distinctive characteristics, not much have been done on Akan ideophones in the literature. It is against this backdrop that Agyekum (2008) began a morphophonological characterization of Akan ideophones such as its reduplicative features, high pitch levels and non-conventional phonotactics that kick against the arbitrariness of language. He further discusses the ethnographic context, syntactic category and how pragmatic use of ideophones stimulate sensual perceptions. Accordingly, Ofori (2010) expounds the morphophonological and metaphorical principles and processes involve in the formation of Akan ideophones. He establishes the frequency of vowels and consonants in Akan ideophones while metaphorically associating sound qualities to meaning. In effect, it attributes the breach of phonotactics as the penalty for capturing sound emissions vividly and undermining language arbitrariness but reduplication is ascribed to the effect of intensity. All these features of ideophones make it a powerful device for achieving vividness. Thus, Sefa-Owusu (2013) discusses the aesthetic use of ideophones in narrative performance to arouse interest. However, this study is situated within the interface of the syntax

and semantics properties of Akan ideophones. Thus, as part of contributing to the ongoing discussion on the syntactic class of ideophones, this study explores the syntactic dynamism in ideophones as a major word class. In this regard, it demonstrates that ideophones can pick up nominal functions as well as adjectival and verbal functions in a sentence. Additionally, the study examines the syntactic restrictions on the distribution of ideophones to the polarity of the verb collocating with a particular ideophone in a sentence. For instance, the English phrases; *at all, for years, in weeks, any, yet* and *never* collocate with only negated verb phrases in a sentence (cf. Krifka 1995, Lawler 2007). Similar issues of collocation are noticeable within the distribution of Akan ideophones. This is shown in example (1) below.

(1a) *Kofi anka huute[1]*   "Kofi has not said anything"
(1b) **Kofi aka huute**   "Kofi has said anything"

Example (1a) is meaningful in Akan but its reversal in (1b) is unacceptable and obscured semantically. What accounts for the restriction and the breakdown in meaning? This and many other issues relating to collocations in ideophones and their dynamism in function as a major word class are the subjects of investigation in this study.

The rest of the discussion is done within the following sections. Section 1 presents a general introduction to the study and a brief description of the Akan language. Section 2 presents a brief background on the conceptual framework of ideophones in linguistic studies as well as the theoretical framework for the study. Section 3 contains the methodology employed for the study. Section 4 is a discussion on the syntactic category of Akan ideophones. This section is also devoted to the discussion on the collocations and polarity sensitivity in Akan ideophones within the theoretical framework of Progovac's (1993) Entailment and binding theory. The last issue in section 4 is a test of polarity sensitivity on tense aspect mood. Section 5 concludes the discussion.

1.1 The Akan Language

Akan as a descriptive characteristic refers to an ethnic as well as a specific linguistic group of people in Ghana and part of the Ivory Coast. In Ghana, geographically, this group of people predominantly occupy the southern (including the Oti enclave carved out of the Volta Region) and middle part of Ghana. The Akan people, with their various subdivisions, have an identical culture and a language with intricate relationships leading to mutual intelligibility. According to Agyekum (2004), the language consists of about ten (10) related dialects that include Asante, Akuapem, Fante, Agona, Assin, Ahanta, Akyem, Wassa, Bono and Gomoa. From the lists of dialects, it is only the three major dialects; Asante, Akuapem, and Fante that have achieved literary status. Nine out of the sixteen regions in Ghana are predominantly occupied by the Akans and they speak any of the dialects as their mother tongue. These regions are Central, Eastern, Ashanti, Western, Western North, Bono East, Bono, Oti, and the Ahafo regions. However, due to migration, Akan

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[1] This is glossed as:

Kofi	**a-n-ka**	**huute**
Kofi	PFT-NEG-say	anythingIDEOPH

speakers can be found across the length and breadth of the country. It is for this reason that it is statistically estimated that a little over 50% of Ghana's over 30 million population either speak or understand any of the three major dialects as an L1 or a lingua franca (cf. Simons & Finnig 2017). Therefore, due to its dominance and wider coverage, it is not out of place to claim that Akan is the most widely spoken language in Ghana.

As in most Niger-Congo languages, the basic word order of Akan is SVO. This order is also known as the nuclear predication. This order may be subject to peripheral modifications mostly adverbial adjuncts (cf. Osam 2004). An example of the SVO structure is demonstrated in (2) below.

(2a) ***Kofi frɛɛ Ama***   "Kofi called Ama"
(2b) ***Kofi frɛɛ Ama nnora***[2]   "Kofi called Ama yesterday".

The sentence in (2a) is an SVO structure without any peripheral but (2b) has a peripheral modification. In Akan, the subject is omittable in imperative sentences and the verb is mandatory but the presence of the object and adjunct depends on the valency of the verb.

2. 0 Definition and Background of Ideophones

Cross-linguistically, several terms have been coined in the description of the phenomenon popularly known in today's linguistic literature as ideophones. Some of these terms were derived from the phonetic properties of the phenomenon. Among them is the compound word 'ideophone' which comprises idea + phone (sound) propounded by Doke (1935). Like ideophones, other terms derived from the phono-semantics of the concept include ideomatopoics (Alexandre 1966; Samarin 1971). Others are onomatopes (Sanderson 1922; Hulstaert 1934; Mamet 1960) and onomatopoetic vocables. Other terms like picture words, mots images in French by Burssens (1946) have been composed to describe the concept. However, among the phono-semantic terms and other morpho-semantic labels such as imitative, echoism, it is the term ideophone that has survived the test of time in the literature.

In this respect, Akanbi (2014) describes an ideophone as a kind of communicative device in which particular words are used to describe what is referred to in such a way that the hearer will picture what is being spoken about in mind. It is also seen as a vivid lexical representation of an idea in sound (Doke, 1935). Thus, an ideophone is a special group of words that resemble the noise or sound associated with the phenomenon those words represent. These are descriptive words connoting the noise of the described event. It shows that an ideophone can describe an event by sound, manner, smell, action, or colour. This is due to the phonetic fact that an ideophone is mostly produced through a rise in pitch, stress, tone, sound germination, or reduplication of a component of the stem (Awoyale 1989; Kruspe 2004, Akita 2009). It is this reduplicative and high pitch feature associated with the production of an ideophone that qualifies it to be used to express the intensity of an experience.

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[2] **Kofi   frɛɛ   Ama   nnora**
    S   V   O   Adjunct

From the foregoing, it is obvious that an ideophone has a level of phonological uniqueness. It is in line with this phonological uniqueness that Welmers (1973) described an ideophone as vocal images, which frequently contain sounds not otherwise noticed in regular lexical items. Assessing the phonological peculiarities of an ideophone leads to the plausibility that an ideophone is a product of a rise in tone especially among the tone languages of Africa. This is reinforced by the observation that the phonetics of an ideophone shows an abnormally high or low tone, tempo, or loudness as characterizing the production of that particular group of words but not the stylistics of the language (Cole 1955; Childs 1988). The auditory and phonetic properties of an ideophone in a language are noticeable because it deviates from normal phonotactic rules and the course of normal speech. These distinct physical features facilitate the iconicity of an ideophone in a language.

Aside from the marked phonology of ideophones, another striking morphosyntactic property is their reduplication. Samarin (1971) identified this characteristic among ideophones of the Bantu language. However, Dingemanse (2012, 2018) noted that reduplication is a feature of almost all ideophones among African and Asian languages. The reduplication in an ideophone could be a repetition of a sound, syllable, or either a part or a whole of the stem. In this regard, it is the extent of the reduplication coupled with the loudness of other physical features such as stress, pitch, tone, and tempo that determines the intensity of the description. As indicated in Agyekum (2008) all these marked phonological and morphosyntactic properties of ideophones are true among Akan ideophones. The sentences in example (3) reinforce this position.

(3a)   *Ɔbɔɔ no mu **tum***!   "S/he hit him hardly"
(3b) Ɔbɔɔ no mu **tumtum!**   "S/he hit him very hard"

Comparing sentence (3a) and (b), the only difference in meaning is in the intensity of the action. However, it is noteworthy that some Akan ideophones are derived from verbs. Doke (1947) treated such a derived ideophone as a deverbative ideophone in the Bantu language. A similar situation can be accounted for in the Akan context. However, in Akan, the relationship between such verbs and the derived ideophone is that of the action and the corresponding imitative sound associated with the action. The descriptive sound in the ideophone can be directly or indirectly linked to the verb. It is due to this semantic connection between the verb and the derived ideophone that probably permits the two to collocate in a sentence. The collocation of the derived ideophone and the source verb expresses a complete thought. Examples of deverbative ideophones and their collocation with the source verb in the Akan phrase include the following from Fante and Akuapem

(4a) ***Atsew tseee!***   "Tear"
(b) ***Awaw waa!,***   "Split"
(c) ***Dow no doee***!   "Ïnject"

The final word in each phrase is an ideophone that represents the sound in these verbs. Similar issues of syntactic dynamism in an Akan ideophone and collocations based on verbal polarity are subsequently addressed in this study.

2.1   Theoretical Framework
2.1.1 Entailment and Binding

The discussion on the polarity of ideophones is formalised on the theory of Entailment and Binding (DE-BI). This theory of Entailment and Binding is a merger of the Entailment (EN) theory of Ladusaw (1980) and Progovac`s (1991) theory of binding. In this novel model, Progovac (1993) makes two central postulations suitable for an analysis on polarity sensitivity. The model calls for an identification of the element that licenses polarity especially the negative polarity item. In support of the licenser is the locality conditions which hold between the licenser and the polarity sensitive expression. Often, a polarity operator in the form of either a negator, negative quantifiers, comparative and superlative restrictors license a negative polarity item while a nil negation or a positive quantifier licenses a positive polarity item. Binding (BI) postulations foster locality conditions. Accordingly, binding is expected to be coreferential between the polarity sensitive item and its licenser. Therefore, they are clausemates and can be co-indexed within the same clause. Thus, the antecedent of polarity item could be a negator or an empty polarity operator. The following sentential comparison exemplifies the application of the various binding assertions.

(5a) *(I don't$_x$ know him at all$_x$/ yet$_x$.   vs   * I know$_y$ him at all$_x$ / yet$_x$).*
(5b) *(Ama is$_x$ here already$_x$/ rather$_x$ vs   *Ama isn't$_y$ here already$_x$/ rather$_x$).*

The rightward sentences for both (5a) and (5b) are odd and unacceptable. For (5a), the oddity is because without the negator, "*at all or yet*" is an unlicensed NPI and cannot occur in its rightward counterpart. For (5b), the rightward sentence is also unacceptable due to the faulty collocation or binding between the negator and the PPI; *"already or rather"*. The varying indexation shows the breach of polarity sensitivity and poor binding relationship. A resolution of the unacceptability requires a consideration of the polarity sensitivity of the items involved and their collocation accordingly. This fosters a proper binding relationship for acceptability.

However, unlike Upward Entailing /UE/ functions which are order preserving and closed under supersets, Downward Entailing /DE/ functions of entailment are order reversing and closed under subsets. Thus, DE functions of inference reversal from a set to subset incline expressions towards NPIs while UE functions incline expressions towards API/PPI (cf. Fintel 1999). Fintel (ibid) gives the following example assuming that Italian ice cream is semantically stronger than ice cream:

(6a). ***Mary ate Italian ice cream [entails] Mary ate ice cream***.

The above relation is a UE function meaning it is positive that *[Mary ate ice cream]* which is a superset because it could be any ice cream but the subset gives a stronger item *[Mary ate Italian ice cream]*. It is a modifier towards positivity and PPI`s.
Nevertheless, DE functions are inference reversal towards a deeper or specific negativity and NPI as in (6b) below.

(6b) ***Mary didn`t eat ice cream [entails] Mary didn't eat Italian ice cream.***

DE reverses from a set to subset because *Mary {didn`t eat {ice cream}* is superset and *{Mary didn`t eat Italian ice cream}* is a subset of ice cream (cf. Krifka 1990: 161; Fintel 1999: 2)
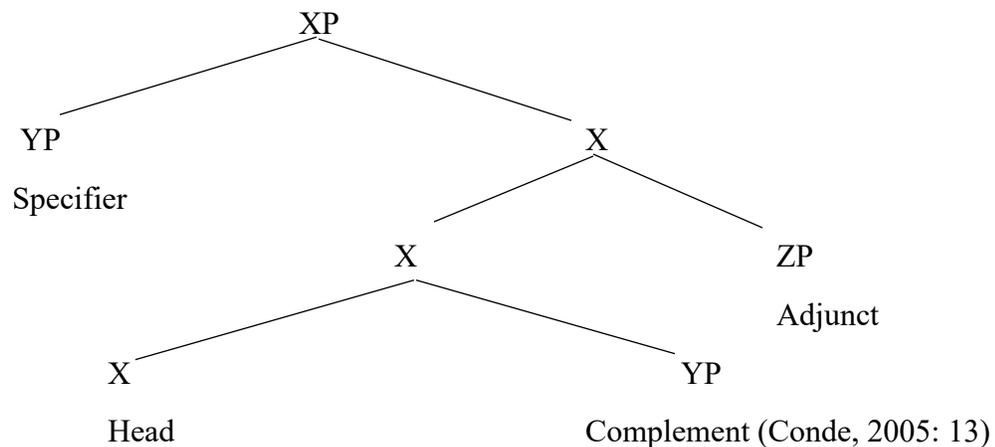
2.1.2 The X- Bar Theory

The x-bar theory encompasses the idea of cross categorial similarities which was developed into a theory to describe the generic form of any phrase. This theory is termed X- bar because it implies a number of projections of a certain level or bar (cf. Jacondoff 1977). It states that in a phrase of the form XP, where X is a lexical category, all X have the same properties. Any XP is a constituent having an obligatory element as the head of the phrase. The head is a category whose properties determine the structure of the phrase and dominate the other members in the constituent. The head projects a phrase (cf Chomsky 1989, Carnie 2013). Thus, the model employs fundamental phrase structure rules where a major element; its head develops to incorporate other elements that complement its meaning (cf. Conde, 2005).

The phrase structure rules

(7) (For any lexical category X, X^0 = Head)
XP ------- Specifier X^1
X^1---------X^0 Complement (= YP*)

The basic structure of a phrase (XP) is illustrated on Fig (1).

Figure 1: Illustration of basic Phrase Structure Rules

The discussion in this study is formalised on the X-bar theory as well as the Entailment and Binding model. The X-bar theory shows the dynamism in the functions and syntactic category of ideophones but Entailment and Binding (EN-BI) accounts for the polarity sensitivity in the distribution of ideophones. The adoption of the two models is suitable because the study is a syntax-semantics account on ideophonic polarity sensitivity and it fits into the aims of the EN-BI licensing approach. This approach intends to address the limitations in either a purely semantic or syntactic approach yet combining the strength of both.

3.0 Methodology

According to Duranti (1997), ideophones are used in speech to represent the speaker`s psychological inner state of affairs towards a given state or experience and the persons involved. This statement highlights the expressive nature of ideophones and their ability to be used to express the speaker's emotions such as pain, pleasure, sorrow, love, hatred, and the likes. The psychological use of ideophones in speech is very true in the case of Akan. It is as a result of these properties that Agyekum (2008) drew data from Akan concert parties, comedies as well as Akan oral and written literature.

Similarly, this paper draws its data from the Akan music industry, the Akan radio and television media space. In the quest of these industries to entertain, educate and inform vividly, the music and media industries are known for the use of emotive language to achieve their goal. Hence, this study draws excerpts of data extensively from Akan radio and television news presentation, reportage, and Akan song lyrics. An example is the midday and evening Akan news presentation on Angel TV/Radio tagged as "*orgasm news*" and the "*one-corner*" lyrics. This is supported by an excerpt of data on ideophones coined and used in people's daily interactions in casual speech and informal contexts. Radio/TV reporters, presenters and other informal users of ideophone contacted in the course of the study explained that, the device helps to achieve accuracy and paint a vivid picture of an event. It is from these industries and casual conversation with other people that the study derives varieties of Twi and Fante ideophones for the discussion.

4. Syntactic Category of Akan Ideophones

The debate on the syntactic category of ideophones continues to be a matter of divided opinion. In this debate, Dryer (1997), Croft (2001), Laughlin (2007), Haspelmath (2007), Beck (2008) among others identified ideophones in their various language of research as part of the other major lexical classes while other scholars such as Alpher (1994), Agyekum (2008), Kanu (2008), treated ideophones as an independent word class. In this section, we demonstrate the functional dynamism as well as the distributive relationship of Akan ideophone to make a case in support of Agyekum (2008) that ideophones form a distinct word class in Akan.

However, to discuss word classes, it suffices to indicate that word classes are generally determined through semantic, morphological, or syntactic criteria. Due to the pitfalls associated with each of the criteria, Beck (2002) observes that adopting one single criterion for the determination of a word class is inadequate. This is because some word forms such as Akan ideophones are known to have multiple meanings, and for that reason, adopting the semantic criteria might be problematic.

Hence, we proceed to conduct a test for noun, verb, adjective, and adverb on Akan ideophones using the syntactic criteria. This is necessary because, according to Baker (2003), syntactic function and distribution tend to be the most effective criteria. Data (8) below shows a group of sentences labeled group A, B, C, and D for a test on noun, verb, adjective and adverb respectively.

(8)

Group A - Test for noun

a. **Me-te-e   timtim   nnora.**
1SG[3]-hear-PST   IDEOPH   yesterday
'I heard the sound yesterday'

b. **Abɔfra no   a-n- ka   boe**
Child   DEF   PRF-NEG-say   IDEOPH
'The child didn't say anything'

c. **Huute   mpo   papa   no   n-ni**
IDEOPH   FOC   man   DEF   NEG- have
'The man has nothing.'

d. **Kookoo   bi   a-ba   me   yam**
IDEOPH   DEF   PRF-come   1SG   stomach
'My stomach is stormy.'

e. **Twurododo   mpo   a-n-yɛ   toa   no   ma   na   kokoko**
IDEOPH   FOC. PRF-NEG-do bottle DEF   full   FOC.   drops IDEOPH
'Even a continuous flow of water couldn't make the bottle full how much more mere drops.'

It is possible that Akan ideophones can pick up nominal functions. For instance, in group (A), the ideophones in the sentences (8a- e) occupy a nominal slot. That is, the ideophone *tintim* and *boe* in sentence (8a and b) respectively are in the object position in their various sentences. They, therefore, perform the role of an object to the transitive verbs in the sentences. That notwithstanding, an ideophone can perform a subject function in a sentence as in example (8c -e) where the ideophone swaps the subject position for emphasis. In this, the ideophone; *kookoo* (stormy), *huute* (nothing) and *twurododo* (waterfall) respectively function as subjects in the sentence (8c - e). This object and subject function of the ideophone is evidenced irrespective of the failure of the ideophones to inflect morphologically for number or case. This shows the syntactic dynamism and distinctiveness of Akan ideophones.

(9)   **Group B – Test for verb**
a. **Abɔfra no   a-pupu   a-gu   hɔ**

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[3] The abbreviations have been defined as follows: 1SG (First person singular), PST (Past), IDEOPH (Ideophone), DEF (Definite), PRF (Perfect), NEG (Negation), FOC (Focus), 2SG (Second person singular), LOC (Locative), PL (Plural), STAT (Stative), CONJ (Conjunction), FUT (Future), Fa (Fante).

Child   DEF   PRF.defecate IDEOPH   PRF.lie   there

'The Child has defecated over there.'

b. **Obiara   bombom   fam**

Everybody sit heavily IDEOPH   floor

'Everybody is sitting on the floor.'

c. **Maame no   bee   m-mɔfra   no**

Woman DEF   scorn IDEOPH   PL- child   DEF

'The woman scorned the children.'

d. **Dɔkota   no   de   panɛ no   doee   Kofi to**

Doctor   DEF   use   syringeDEF inject IDEOPH   Kofi   buttocks

'The Doctor used the syringe to inject Kofi's buttocks hardly.'

In group B, a similar set of ideophones are now seen occurring in a verbal slot in their respective sentences. These ideophones signify action or a state of being. This is usually the sound or noise associated with the action that is eventually replacing the actual verb as a synonym. For instance, the ideophones in the examples (9a-d) connote an action. The verb in example (9a) symbolizes the farting sound made when defecating while (9b) symbolizes the noise in bouncing the buttocks on the floor while (9c, d) represent the sound of a shout and the yell of pain respectively. For these symbolisms, they have been creatively used as verbs hence their ability to occupy the verb slot in examples (9a- d). Ideophonic verbs can be transitive as in examples (9b- d) having a direct object and intransitive as in example (9a).

(10)   **Group C - Test for Adjective**

       a. **Me-m-pɛ   nantɛɛ   dwondwondwon   no**

          1SG-NEG-like   walking   aimless IDEOPH   DEF

          'I don't like aimless walking.'

       b. **Ne   tiri - m   a-yɛ   hee!**

          3SG   head –LOC   PRF-make   noise IDEOPH

          'S/he is confused.'

       c. **Gya hoo   wɔ   fie**

          Fire   bounty IDEOPH   be.STAT   house

          'There is a bounty of fire in the house.'

Moreover, the ideophones in group C take up an adjectival function. Some are attributive and others predicative. In this regard, the ideophone; ***hee*** (noisily) in example (10b) is functioning as

a predicative adjective but ***dwondwondwon*** (aimless walking) and ***hoo*** (bounty) in example (10a) and (10c) respectively are functioning as attributive adjectives that modify the noun head.

(11)   **Group D – Test for Adverb**

a.   **Abaa no   a-bu   penpen!**
    Stick   DEF   PRF-break   noisily IDEOPH
    'The stick had broken noisily.'

b.   **Tam   no   tse-e-w   tseee!** (Fa.)
    Cloth   DEF.   torn-PST   IDEOPH
    'The cloth torn apart'

c.   **Kofi   a-di   sotorɔ   wam!**
    Kofi   PRF-eat   slap   IDEOPH
    'Kofi was slapped heavily.'

Finally, the ideophones in group D assume one of the functions of an adverb. In this context, the ideophones qualify the verb. For instance, the ideophone; ***penpen*** (noisily) in example (11a) is an adverb of degree that indicates the frequency of the action in the verb but ***wam*** (heavily) in example (11c) shows the gravity of the slap. From the above illustrations, it is obvious that Akan ideophones have a wide syntactic distribution that affects their function in a sentence. The set of sentences from groups A – D illustrate the variety of syntactic functions and distribution in Akan ideophones. We then proceed to further demonstrate this distribution on the X-bar theory.

4.1 The Distribution of Akan Ideophones

In highlighting the distribution and relationship between various words in a sentence, the X-bar model which focuses on the stringing of words together and projections to form various phrase constituents and other units can be useful. Thus, in the quest to demonstrate the distribution and grammatical relationship within some of the sentences in Group A-D, we adopt the X-bar model below for this purpose. However, except in Fig. (2), intermediary nodes are avoided in the subsequent diagrams. This is on grounds of simplicity and emphasis on the dynamism and switch from the various lexical categories in the final nodes. Figure (2) below shows the relationship and function of the various lexical items involved in one of the sentences from group (D).
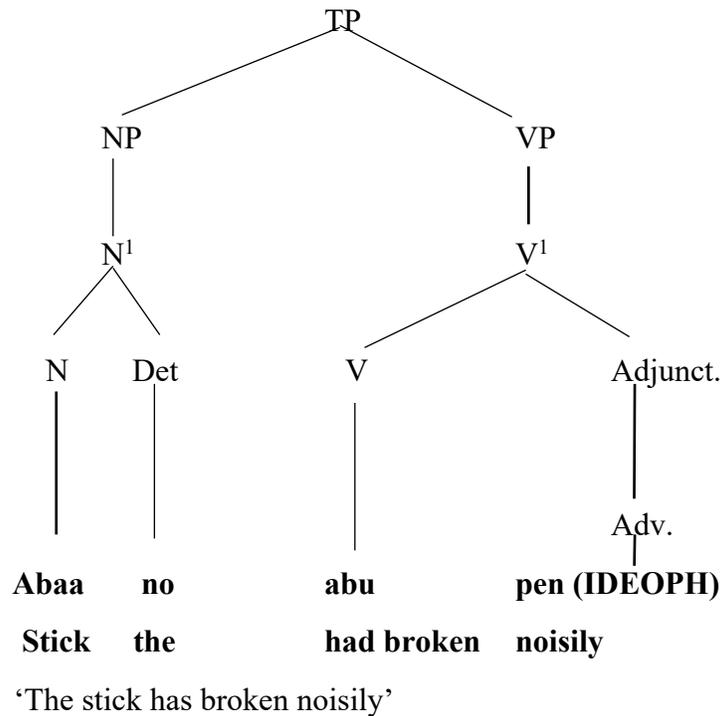
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                              TP
                    ┌──────────┴──────────┐
                   NP                      VP
                    │                       │
                   N¹                      V¹
               ┌────┴────┐          ┌───────┴───────┐
               N        Det         V            Adjunct.
               │         │          │               │
               │         │          │             Adv.
               │         │          │               │
             Abaa       no         abu         pen (IDEOPH)

             Stick      the     had broken      noisily
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'The stick has broken noisily'

Figure (2): **Ideophone functioning as an Adverb**

As illustrated on figure (2) above, the sentence is made of a Noun Phrase (NP) and a Verb Phrase constituent. The NP constituent has the determiner *no* (the) and the noun head; ***Abaa*** (stick) occupying the subject position in the sentence. The predicate component has the VP constituent which comprises the verb head*; **abu*** (had broken) and a modifier. The modifier to the verb head in the post-verbal slot is an adjunct in the realization of an ideophone; ***pen*** (noisily). This ideophone modifier functions as an adverb of manner that underscores the intensity of the verb. This ideophone and the others in group D are adjunct in a post-verbal slot. Thus, by modifying the verb, they can be said to be performing one of the functions of an adverb in their respective sentences. Aside from functioning as a modifier to a verb, an ideophone can undertake nominal functions. This is illustrated on figure (3) below.
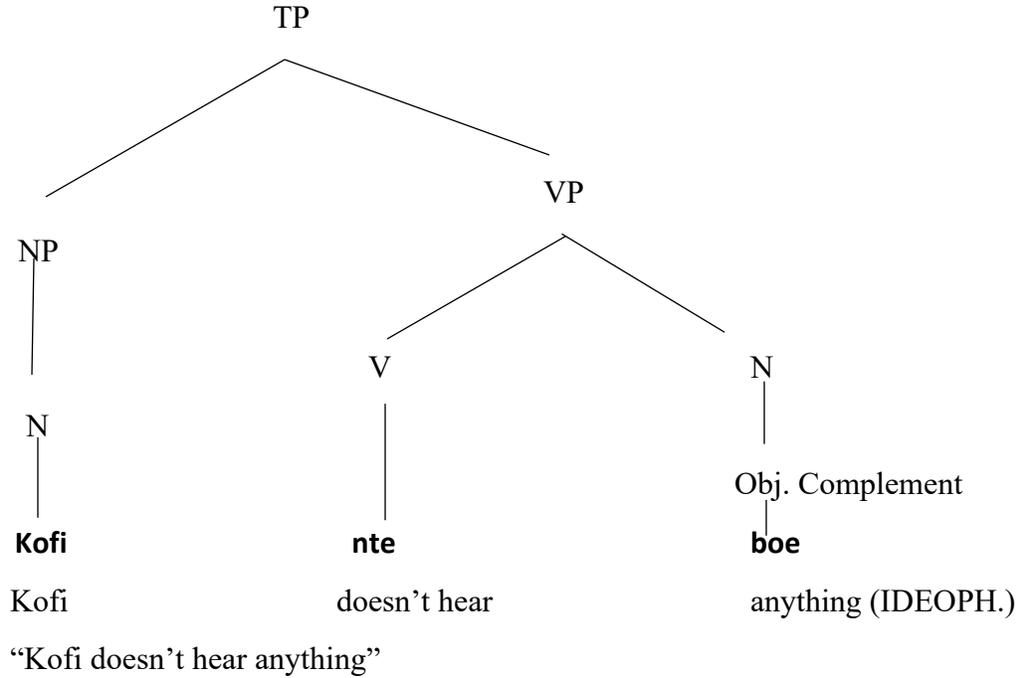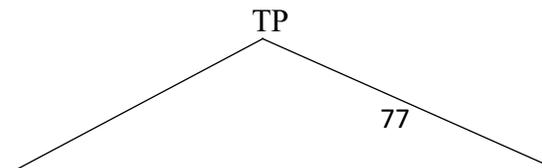
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                              TP
                    _____
                   /                        \
                  NP                          VP
                  |                  _____
                  |                 /                 \
                  N                 V                   N
                  |                 |                   |
                  |                 |            Obj. Complement
                Kofi               nte                 boe
                Kofi           doesn't hear      anything (IDEOPH.)

            "Kofi doesn't hear anything"
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Figure (3): **An illustration of an ideophone functioning as a noun**

The above figure exemplifies that an ideophone can function as a noun in a sentence. This is evidenced in the VP constituent that is made of an NP. The VP has a transitive verb; *nte* 'does not' as its head. Therefore, as usual of transitive verbs, the (V) requires a nominal complement to support the transfer of the action in the verb. With nominal qualities, the ideophone; *boe* 'anything' tends to fill that slot as an object to the transitive verb; *nte* 'does not' in the sentence. Similar ideophones in group (A) above, such as *timtim* 'sound' in example (8a) and *boe* 'nothing' in example (8b) function as the object to the verbs in their respective sentences. Meanwhile, *huute* 'nothing' and *kookoo* 'stormy' in example (8c) and (8d) respectively are subjects. This reinforces the assertion that some Akan ideophones have nominal functions. Next, the adjectival function in Akan ideophones as exemplified in Group (C) example (10c) is illustrated on figure 4 below.
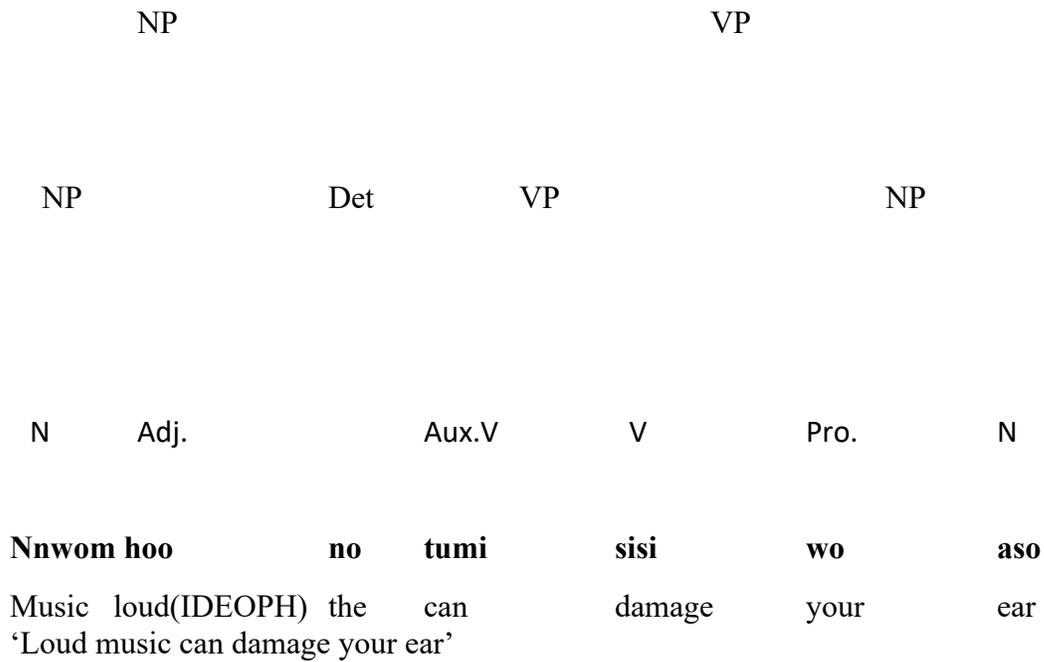
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                              TP
                    _____
                   /             77         \
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NP   VP

NP   Det   VP   NP

N   Adj.   Aux.V   V   Pro.   N

Nnwom hoo   no   tumi   sisi   wo   aso

Music   loud(IDEOPH) the   can   damage   your   ear
'Loud music can damage your ear'

Figure (4): An Ideophone functioning as an adjective

Figure (4) shows the relationship between the words involved in the sentence; ***Nnwom hoo no tumi sisi wo aso*** 'The loud music can damage your ears'. On this diagram, it is demonstrated that apart from the NP constituent in the object position, there is another NP constituent preceding the main verb. This second NP is functioning as the subject in the sentence. However, modifying the nominal head in the NP is an ideophone; ***hoo*** 'loud' that stresses the loudness of the noun head. As an attributive modifier, the ideophone stands adjacent to the noun head it modifies. Similar relational analysis can be made on example (10a) in group C which has another ideophone; ***dwondwon*** 'aimless' in attributive function. Nevertheless, the ideophone in example (10b) in group (C) is predicative. This further reinforces the adjectival dynamism in Akan ideophones.

The final possible major word class role that an ideophone takes up is the verbal function. This verbal function is exemplified in the sentences in group (B) above. Therefore, Figure (5) below illustrates the verbal function of an ideophone as stated in example (9a).
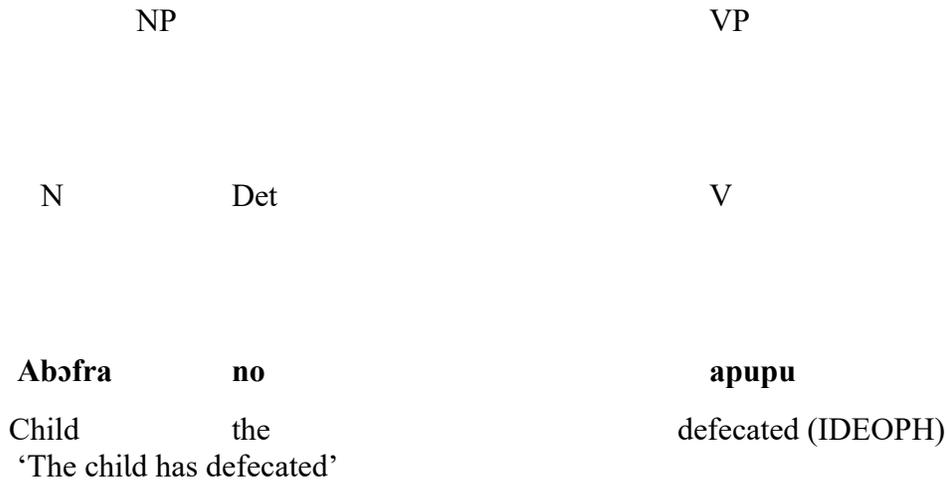
TP

NP	VP

N Det	V

Abɔfra **no**	**apupu**
Child the	defecated (IDEOPH)

'The child has defecated'
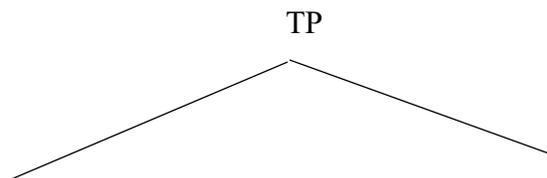
Figure 5: **An illustration of ideophone functioning as a verb**

Figure (5) shows that an ideophone can play a verbal function in a sentence. In this illustration, the head verb in the VP constituent is an ideophone; ***apupu*** 'defecated'. As indicated earlier, this is the farting sound associated with the action of defecating. Hence, through sound symbolism, it creatively functions as a synonym to the actual verb. This shows the ability of the ideophone; *pupu* 'defecate' to fill the predicate slot in the sentence as the principal verb. Similar connotative analysis and sound symbolism can be drawn on the other verbs in Group (B). Thus, the verbal function adds up to the nominal and other modifying roles that Akan ideophones can play. It is therefore not misplaced that Schachter (1985) postulates that a key criterion for defining a part of speech is their grammatical function but not the semantic senses. Accordingly, from the exemplification in Group A- D, and the subsequent distributional analysis on the various tree diagrams, it is shown that Akan ideophones do not have a single general function. In this respect, an ideophone can function as a noun, adjective, verb, or even an adverb. The multiplicity of function among Akan ideophones from noun to verb, adjective, and then an adverb role reinforces the syntactic dynamism in Akan ideophones. It is therefore difficult to subsume all Akan ideophones under any particular major class. Neither will it be easy to categorize them into four.

In summary, the discussion has shown that ideophones can perform nominal and verbal functions. Moreover, it can assume the functions of an adjective as well as one of the functions of an adverb. This syntactic dynamism together with its rare arbitrariness highlights the distinctiveness in Akan ideophones. Again, new forms of ideophones continue to be creatively introduced to increase the existing stock. Therefore, following Agyekum (2008), Akan ideophones should be treated as a unique independent major word class than integrate it as part of the existing part of speech. That is, with their unique features, Akan ideophones constitute an independent class with multiple functions.

4. 2 Collocations in Akan Ideophones

Many scholars such as Childs (1994) and Dingemanse (2012) have asserted that ideophones are mostly relevant in declarative sentences. However, Akan ideophones can occur both in affirmative and non-affirmative sentences. For this reason, Akan ideophones can be syntactically categorized into two major groups depending on their sensitivity to the polarity of the verb that collocates with it in a sentence. The two categories of ideophones that we derive based on polarity sensitivity are; Affirmative or Positive Polarity Ideophones (API/PPI) and the Negative Polarity Ideophones (NPI). This type of ideophonic classification is not misplaced because according to Akanbi (2014), ideophones have their form of verbs that collocate with them in a sentence. In Yoruba for instance, Akanbi (ibid) opines that the tone of the ideophone determines its verbal collocant. Consequently, a change of tone in the ideophone affects the type of verb to be selected in a Yoruba sentence.

However, in Akan, it is rather the polarity of the verb that determines the selection of a particular type of ideophone to collocate with in a sentence. As already indicated, it is based on these collocations that Akan ideophones can be categorized accordingly. The first category is the type that only accepts or co-occurs with positive verbal items in the affirmative polarity. Such ideophones are often stringed with affirmative verbs in a sentence. As a result, a negative inflection in the verb affects the acceptability of the sentence. That is, an Affirmative or Positive Polarity Ideophone dominantly requires an affirmative verb to collocate with it in a sentence, and failure to collocate with a positive verb renders the sentence unacceptable, odd and subject to several inferences. Sometimes, the demand for an affirmative verb is so dominant that when an API collocates with a negated verb, the sentence still maintains its affirmative meaning despite the negation in the verb. An alternative meaning that the unintended negation could bring to the sentence is that the action in the verb occurred but perhaps not in the manner or intensity as captured by the ideophone. Thus, negation in a verb collocating with an API becomes recessive, failing to nullify the affirmative dominance and the gravity expressed by the verb. Hence, this type of ideophone known as the Affirmative Polarity Ideophone is sensitive to the polarity of the verb collocating with it in a sentence. For this reason, it often requires an affirmative verb to collocate with it.

The above syntax-semantics description fittingly identifies the following ideophones as part of the API category. This includes; ***kumm, sam, puw, twom, tsimm, hoo, kimkim, ha, suu, booboo, doe, wam, koow, bam, torom, dwee, hamham, toe.*** These ideophones usually function as an adverb of degree or manner. According to Biber & Finnegan (1988) and Rhee (2016) adverbs of degree and manner are subjective speaker-oriented adverbs but infer specificity in positive polarity than in negation on the sense continuum. That is, a verbal negation for an API results in an increasing sentential vagueness. In this regard, the following group of sentences further illustrate that Affirmative Polarity Ideophones (API) collocate with affirmative verbs in a sentence and negating the verb affects the acceptability and precision of the sentence. Illustrating the polarity sensitivity of API, we test its collocation with positive verbs in affirmative sentences as in (12a -i) against its negated counterparts in (13a -i).

(12) Collocation in Affirmative Polarity Ideophones

      AFFIRMATIVE SENTENCES

a. **W-a-bɔ**   **Ama asom too!**
3SG-PRF-hit   Ama   cheek IDEOPH
'S/he has slapped him hard`

b. **Ɔ-de**   **nsu**   **a-gu**   **ne**   **ho**   **sam!**

3SG-hasPST water PRF-pour   3SG   REFL   IDEOPH
'S/he has completely poured the water over herself'

c. **Ɔ-bu**   **mmɔre**   **no**   **mu**   **waa!**
3SG-break   corn dough   DEF   LOC   IDEOPH
'S/he completely breaks the corn dough.'

d. **Ɔ-nante**   **kimkim!**
3SG-walk.STA   IDEOPH
'S/he walks majestically.'

e. **Aboa**   **no**   **ka-a**   **no**   **doee!**
Animal   DEF   bit-PST   3SG   IDEOPH
'The animal bit him hard`

f. **Yaw a-hwe**   **fam timm!**
Yaw   PRF-fall   down IDEOPH
'Yaw has fallen hard'

g. **Kofi   a-bɔ**   **fam kumm!**
Kofi   PRF-hit   down IDEOPH
'Kofi has fallen hard.'

h. **Wɔ-a-gye**   **torom**   **kɔ**
3PL-PRF-give   IDEOPH   go
'They had run away.'

i. **Akua mene**   **fufu**   **no**   **kwan!**
Akua swallow.STA fufu   DEF   IDEOPH
'Akua hurriedly swallows up the fufu.'

(13)   NEGATED SENTENCES

a. **Ɔ-a-m-bɔ**   **Ama**   **asom**   **too! (Fa.)**

3SG-PRF-NEG-hit   Ama   cheek   IDEOPH

'S/he had not slapped her hard.'

b. **W-a-m-fa**   **nsu   a-n-gu**   **ne   ho   sam!**
    3SG-PRF-NEG-take   water   PRF-NEG-pour   3SG   REFL IDEOPH
    'S/he had not completely poured the water on herself.'

c. **Ɔ-m-mu**   **mmɔre   no   mu   waa!**
    3SG-NEG-break   corn dough   DEF   LOC   IDEOPH
    'S/he does not completely break the corn dough.'

d. **Ɔ-n-nante**   **kimkim!**
    3SG-NEG-walk   IDEOPH
    'S/he does not walk majestically.'

e. **Aboa   no   a-n-ka   no   doee!**
    Animal   DEF   PRF-NEG-bite   3SG   IDEOPH
    'The animal didn't bite him hard.'

f. **Yaw   a- n-hwe   fam   timm!**
    Yaw   PRF-NEG-fall   down   IDEOPH
    'Yaw had not fell down hard.'

g. **Kofi   a-m-mɔ   fam   kumm!**
    Kofi PRF-NEG-hit   down   IDEOPH
    'Kofi had not fallen hard.'

h. **Wɔ-a-n- nye   torom   a-n-kɔ**
     3PL-PRF-NEG-take IDEOPH   PRF-NEG-go
     'They have not run away.'

i. **Akua a-m-mene   fufu   no   kwan!**

    Akua   PRF-NEG-swallow.STA   fufu.   DEF   IDEOPH
    'Akua did not hurriedly swallow up the fufu.'

From the constructions above, the affirmative sentences in (12a- i) are more acceptable and relatively unambiguous than in (13a- i) which are unacceptable and relatively ambiguous. For instance, example (13i) can mean, he/ she swallowed the fufu but not ***kwan*** 'hurriedly' as in the manner described by the ideophone but maybe ***wom****!* 'once', ***kukuro*** 'heavily', ***hamham*** 'fast'. Any of the three inferences make it ambiguous yet the possible interpretation that the swallowing event did not happen at all cannot be ruled out especially in the context of a quick retort to deny a

swallowing allegation in that description. Several other extrapolations can be done as a result of the poor verbal polarity and adverb collocation which widens the continuum of inferences.

It is apparent from (13a- i) that, except the negation, the sentences have the same constituent as its counterpart in (12a- i). This suggests that the ideophones are sensitive to the polarity of the verbs. Thus, omitting the ideophone to derive; *Akua ammene fufu no* 'S/he didn't swallow the fufu' produces a simple and relatively acceptable version. However, *Akua ammene fufu no kwan* is vague, odd and perhaps ambiguous as compared to; *Akua amene fufu no kwan* which is unambiguous and precise. The implication is that the set of ideophones in sentence (12a -i) are Affirmative Polarity Ideophones which perform better in a positive environment. Consequently, API collocate or co-occur with verbs in a positive mood for acceptability and precision. This is possible because the negated counterparts of the positive sentences in (12a - i) are vague. The ambiguity is probably because the presence of API type of ideophones in the sentence conflicts with the negative property of the verb. On this account, sentences in (12a -i) are relatively acceptable and unambiguous than their negated counterparts in (13a - i).

Since the ideophones are functioning as adverb of degree or manner in (12a- i), they are bias evaluatives and can be analysed as speaker-oriented adverbs that better collocate with PPIs. This position is plausible because PPI-status and adverbs operate on referentiality and speaker commitment. (cf. Ernst 2008; Giannakidou 2008). In this view, without proper affirmative verb correspondence to the adverb of degree/ manner (i.e API/ PPI), the collocation turns to be faulty. This is the case in example (13a- i), whereby the sentences lack speaker commitment and proper referentiality. For this reason, example (13a- i) are vague and under-specified to describe what actually happened. Nevertheless, with proper affirmative verb correspondence to adverb of degree/manner (i.e API/ PPI) as in example (12a- i), the sentences have proper speaker commitment and referentiality. For this reason, example (12a- i) is unambiguous, precise and more acceptable than example (13a -i).

Owing to the vagueness in example (13a- i), several meanings or extrapolations can be deduced. As briefly indicated above, one of them is the idea of word negation otherwise known as the semi-negation type of interpretation identified by Cygan (1974). In this negation, the interpretation is that the action in the verb happened or is still in the affirmative only that perhaps it did not happen in the intensity as described by the ideophone but in another manner[4]. In this interpretation, negation only affects the ideophonic modifier and it is this same interpretation that Amfo (2010) terms as the narrow negation. In Akan structure, the negator skips the affixed verb but rather affects the modifier. This underscores the affirmative dominance in the API of sentences in (13a- i) and the inability of the negation in the verb to fully nullify the affirmative dominance. Additionally, this interpretation shows that the API is sensitive to the polarity of the verb and only collocates with affirmative verbs. Failure to do so brings vagueness in the sentence.

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[4] The omission is necessary to resolve the oddness resulting out of the poor API to negated verb collocation. The resolution get rid of the redundant API for an explicit negation (cf. Xaing et. al 2014).

The other possible meaning that can be deduced from the sentences in (13a -i) requires the omission of the redundant API. This removal will do away with the conflict between the API and the negated verb. In effect, sentence (13f) will read; *Yaw anhwe fam* meaning 'Yaw did not fall down'. This interpretation without the API is relatively clearer and allows the negation in the verb to operate fully on the verb. This other interpretation is under the assumption that the action in the negated verb is empty or did not happen. This will then render the ideophone redundant. This meaning is identified by Xiang et. al (2014) as explicit negation. According to Xaing et al (ibid) explicit negation refers to the negation expressed as part of the asserted meaning (sentence meaning) of an utterance. Adopting the morphological merger negation account of Saah (1995), the negative phrase is projected before the verb as a complement. The focus is therefore on the overt inflectional negation affixed to the verb to mark negation in (3Ai-ix). That is, the overt negation in (3Ai-ix) is binding on the adjoined verbs but not the API. Thus, the interpretation could be that the negator affects only the API modifier. This allows the verbs to be positive. The other

interpretation is borne out of the view that the negator affects only the verb making the API redundant because its inclusion brings vagueness. The latter interpretation drops the redundant or conflicting API. This simplifies the sentence from being too wordy and odd. That is; *wammɔ n`asom* 'S/he didn't slap him', *Wamfa nsu angu ne ho* 'S/he didn't pour the water on himself'. This interpretation eliminates the redundant yet conflicting API because the negation in the verb makes the API unwanted.

However, the addition of the API; *too!, sam*! to the sentence in (13a, b) respectively reinforces the dominant affirmative sense over the recessive negation in the verb. This re-introduction of the API suggests the semantic sense that the action in the verb is positive but perhaps carried out in a different manner of intensity than the one in the ideophone. This is usually the case in the context of a quick retort that targets to negate only the API but without ample time to provide an alternative ideophone.

Aside from the drop of the redundant API to resolve the vagueness for explicit negation, Xiang et al (2014) recommends the strategy of constituent clefting. This strategy is also described in Ampofo (2015), as constituent negation. The strategy works on the latter interpretation deduced from (13a- i) whereby the negation affects only the API leaving the verb positive. This strategy of constituent clefting introduces another negation item on one API constituent to fully clamp down on the affirmative dominance while introducing another free API to describe the different manner in which the action occurred. Applying this constituent negation, sentence (13a and i) respectively will produce (14a-b):

(14a)	N-yɛ	**too**	na	ɔ-bɔɔ	n'-asom	na
	NEG.STAT.be	IDEOPH.	CONJ.	3SG-PST.beat	3SG-cheek	CONJ.
	mmom	**wam**!				
	FOC.	IDEOPH.				

'S/he didn't give him a resounding slap but a dirty one.'

(14b).	N-yɛ	**kwan**	na	ɔ-men	fufu	no	na
	NEG.STAT.be	IDEOPH.	CONJ.	3SG-swallow	fufu	DEF.	CONJ.
	mmom	**wom.**					
	FOC.	IDEOPH					

'S/he didn't only swallow the fufu hurriedly but at once.'

Constituent clefting or negation as applied above only negates the focus constituent to fully nullify the affirmative sense in one API while introducing another free API to better describe the gravity of the action. This resolves the vagueness because other than describing the intensity of the slap as *sew!, fam!, paa! too!,* the clefting provides a precise description as *wam!.* Similarly, the other sentences in (13a- i) can be subjected to the constituent clefting resolution strategy. As indicated, the other alternative resolution strategy is the removal of all ideophones from (13a- i) sentences so that the negation affects only the verb.

However, the polarity sensitivity of the API/ PPI in (12a-i) can be formalised on the Entailment and Binding theory (EN-BI) of Progovac (1993). This theory makes two central postulations that are applicable to the polarity sensitivity of the ideophones in this context. It states that for a Positive Polarity Item (PPI) to occur in a sentence, it needs to be licensed by a zero negation in the verb. Moreover, the PPI and the positive verb are clausemates and reside in the same clause as the locality domains for a proper binding relationship. Consequently, the PPI and the positive verb can be co-indexed as clausemates to foster the referential relationship (cf. Ladusaw 1980; Progovac 1991; 1993). Failure of the PPI to adhere to the affirmative polarity of the verb affects the acceptability and precision of the sentence.

This polarity sensitivity can be illustrated on (UE-BI) by matching the sentences on API in (12a-i) to their counterparts in (13a- i) as done below in (15) and (16).

(15)

a. Aboa   no   kaa$_x$ no   doee$_x$!

   Animal DEF. bitePST   3SG. IDEOPH

   'The animal bit him hard.'

b. Kofi a-bɔ$_x$ fam   kumm!$_x$

   Kofi PRF-hit   down   IDEOPH

   'Kofi has fallen hard.'

(16)

a. * Aboa no a-n-ka$_y$ no doee$_x$!

 Animal DEF. PRF-NEG-bite 3SG IDEOPH

 'The animal didn't bite him hard.'

b. *Kofi   a-m-mɔ$_y$ fam kumm$_x$!

 Kofi   PRF-NEG-hit down IDEOPH

  'Kofi has not fallen hard.'

Unlike the vague sentences in (16a-b), the examples in (15a-b) are precise and acceptable. This is because the ideophones are API/PPI functioning as an adverb of degree under strong speaker subjectivity (cf. Ernst 2008; Giannakidou 2008). That is, the API is bias for a positive verb and requires zero verbal negation to license its usage as in the negation free environment in the sentences in (15a-b). Therefore the API; *doee!, kumm!* in the examples in (15) are licensed and comfortably binds on the affirmative verb in the same clause as it locality domains. Thus, the positive verb and the API are coreferential, binding on each other to show speaker commitment and therefore bear the same co-indexation. The API and the affirmative verb collocation are licensed with a polarity acceptable agreement.

However, the examples in (16a-b) are vague, odd and perhaps unacceptable. This oddity originates from the fact that the API; *doee!, kumm!* is unlicensed on a negated verb. The negation in the sentences in (16) is a violation of the API`s biasness for affirmative verbs. Though clausemates in the same locality domains, there is no proper binding relationship or agreement between the API and the negated verb due to the polarity sensitivity violation. The poor binding relationship, the violation and its resultant disagreement is highlighted with the varying indexation on the negated verb and the API. Thus, the sentences in (16) are relatively vague and unacceptable. It is the agreement in polarity sensitivity that renders all the other sentences in (12a- i) relatively acceptable than its odd counterparts in (13a-i) that breach the polarity sensitivity of the API. The unacceptability and oddity can be resolved through an omission of the unlicensed API or constituent clefting as indicated above.

However, like Upward Entailing (UE) functions which preserve or enhance inferences from set to superset, the positive predisposition in the API as a degree modifier enriches the affirmative inference. In the context of the examples above, the API; *doee!* and *kumm!!* indicate the extent to which the action occurred for a strong speaker commitment. Below is an exemplification on UE:

(17) *Aboa no kaa no doee!!* [entails] *Aboa no kaa no.*

This comparison in (17) shows inference from a relatively specific and positive subset *[Aboa no kaa no doee!]* to a general yet still positive superset *[Aboa no kaa no]*. This is a UE inference showing that API/PPI`s are licensed in a UE environment. The UE relation on the rightward sentence confirms the explicit negation possibility as in **Aboa no anka no doee*! [entails] *Aboa no anka no**. The alternative meaning could be that the action in the verb occurred in another manner.

4.3 Negative Polarity Ideophones (NPI)

Examining the sensitivity of Akan ideophones to the polarity of the verb has produced the type of ideophones labeled as the Affirmative Polarity Ideophones (API) that collocate with affirmative verbal items. Still assessing the sensitivity of the ideophones to polarity identifies another category of ideophones known as the Negative Polarity Ideophones (NPI). This group of ideophones syntactically co-occur with negated verbs in negative sentences. It is due to their syntactic behaviour of collocating with negated verbs that make them fit for the description as Negative Polarity Ideophones (NPI). According to Penka & Zeijlstra (2010), negative polarity items refer to words or expressions that can only occur in a context that is in some sense negative. If such ideophones occur in a syntactic environment without negation, the sentence becomes odd and unacceptable. That is, NPIs are constrained to collocate with only negated verbs rather than affirmative verbs. Their syntactic occurrence is closed and is predictable. Though ideophones are often used spontaneously in an informal context, it is for this fixity and predictability of their environment that makes them seem idiomatic. Unlike other parts of speech, ideophones hardly have an independent semantic or denotational meaning (cf. Bodomo, 2006). Owing to this feature, they usually require to be contextualized to determine meaning. It is in line with this semantic property that the meaning of an NPI need not be derived in isolation unless fixed in its appropriate context of a negated verb phrase environment. Consequently, ideophones are rarely captured in the lexicography to be assigned a literal denotative meaning. Subsequently, in the definition of Lawler (2007) negative polarity items apply to all lexical items, fixed phrases, or syntactic construction types that demonstrate an unusual behaviour around an affirmative sense. This unusual behaviour in NPI regarding affirmation is attributable to its inherent polarity sensitivity towards negated items. Therefore, with this seeming fixity of expression and predictability of occurrence, NPI fit the description as negative polarity item. Examples of such NPI in Akan include: *aga, hwee, huw, baw, taw(u), atsen, gyina, fi, huute, agyei, tsee , boe* among others. The set of sentences below testifies to the assertion that NPIs collocate with negated verbs in negative sentences and are most acceptable in their negated syntactic environment. In testing for the polarity sensitivity of NPI, the syntax-semantics of the negated group of sentences in (18a- f) are compared to their affirmative counterparts in (19a- f) below:

(18) Collocation in Negative Polarity Ideophones

     NEGATED SENTENCES

a. **Araba**   **n-nim**   **tee**
Araba   NEG-know   IDEOPH
'Araba does not know anything at all.'

b. **Abɔfra**   **no**   **n-te**   **boe**
Child   DEF   NEG-hear   IDEOPH
'The child does not understand anything at all.'

c. **Obiara**   **re-n-yɛ**   **mo**   **huute**
Nobody   PROG-NEG-do   2PL.   IDEOPH
'Nobody will do anything to them.'

d. **Nnɛ**   **yɛ-a-n-kɔ**   **baw**
Today   1PL-PRF-NEG-go   IDEOPH
'Today we didn't go anywhere at all.'

e. **Abɔfra**   **no**   **a-n-sua**   **huw**
Child   DEF   PRF-NEG-learn   IDEOPH
'The child didn't learn anything at all.'

f. **Wɔ-a-n-ka**   **agyei**   **ana**   **o-ru-wu (Fa.)**
3SG-PRF-NEG-say   IDEOPH   before   3SG-PROG-die
'S/he didn't say anything at all before s/he died.'

(19)   AFFIRMATIVE SENTENCES

a. **Araba**   **nim**   **tee***
Araba   know   IDEOPH
'Araba knows anything at all.'

b. **Abɔfra no**   **te**   **boe***
Child   DEF   hear   IDEOPH
'The child understands anything at all.'

c. **Obiara**   **re-yɛ**   **huute ***
Nobody   PROG-do   IDEOPH
'Nobody will do anything to them.'

d. **Nnɛ**   **yɛ-a-kɔ**   **baw***
Today   1PL-PRF-go   IDEOPH

'Today we went anywhere at all.'

e. **Abɔfra no**   **a-sua**   **huw***

 Child   DEF   PRF-learn   IDEOPH

 'The child learnt anything at all.'

f. **Wɔ-a-ka**   **agyei**   **ana**   **o-ru-wu (Fa)***

 3SG-PRF-say   IDEOPH   before   3SG-PROG-die

 'S/he said anything at all before s/he died.'

From the above sentences, it is obvious that the sentences in (18a- f) are more acceptable than their counterparts in (19a-f). The acceptability in (18a-f) is attributable to the existing syntactic environment whereby the occurring NPI rightly collocates with their corresponding negated verbs as collocants. As a result, the sentences in (18a- f) are acceptable. However, the counterparts in (19a-f) are unacceptable. What is undermining the acceptability of sentences in (19a- f) is the absence of negation in the verbs co-occurring with the NPI. The underlying reason for this unacceptability is the fact that the NPI has a dominant negative sensitivity. On this account, the NPIs demand negation in the verb as prerequisite for its occurrence in a sentence. This demonstrates that NPIs are more sensitive to negation but recessive to affirmative verbs. Negation is obligatory for meaning in NPI occurring sentences. Thus, in the absence of negation as a collocant for NPIs, the acceptability of the sentence breaks down and affects its meaning. This is illustrated in the affirmative sentences in (19a-f) above.

 Like the APIs, entailment and binding theory of Progovac (1991; 1993) can account for the polarity sensitivity of the NPIs. As indicated, Progovac (1993) observes that for an NPI to occur in a sentence, it requires a negator on the verb as its licenser. Also, the NPI and the negator are to reside in the same clause as the locality domain for proper binding relationship. Thus, the licenser and the licensee are clausemates to fulfill locality domain conditions. Accordingly, the NPI and the negated verb can be co-indexed to highlight the binding and referential relationship. A violation of the negative polarity sensitivity of the verb affects the acceptability of the sentence.

The negator and its corresponding NPI modifier acts as an inference reversal on the verb. This triggers DE functions which are inference reversal from set to subsets. This probably inclines the expression towards NPI and deepens negativity (cf. Fintel 1999).

However, on the binding framework, the polarity sensitivity can be demonstrated through the matching of negative sentences on NPI in examples (18a-f) to their affirmative counterparts in (19a-f) as exemplified in (20) and (21) below.

(20)

a. **Araba**   **n-nim$_x$**   **tee$_x$**

 Araba   NEG-know   IDEOPH

 'Araba does not know anything at all.'

b. **Abɔfra   no   n-te$_x$ boe$_x$**

   Child   DEF   NEG-hear   IDEOPH

   'The child does not understand anything at all.'

(21)

a. ***Araba   nim$_y$ tee$_x$**

   Araba   know   IDEOPH

   'Araba knows anything at all'

b. ***Abɔfra   no   te$_y$ boe$_x$**

   Child   DEF   hear   IDEOPH

   'The child understands anything at all'

From the comparison above, it is obvious that the sentences in (20a-b) are acceptable than (21a-b). Nevertheless, except the negation in (20), they share the same constituent. The acceptability of (20a-b) stems from the fact that the occurrence of the NPI; *tee, boe,* is licensed by the negator in the VP. The NPI presupposes negativity and as a result requires an equal negator to warrant its occurrence. This fulfills Progovac (1993) condition that the licenser of an NPI is a negator in the verb. Moreover, the negator and the NPI resides in the same clause and that satisfies the locality domain condition. Consequently, there is adequate binding relationship and correspondent between the negator and the NPI. Therefore, to highlight the referentiality and binding correlation, the negated verb and the NPI are co-indexed. The co-indexation shows the agreement between the negated verb and the NPI as collocants. Due to the fulfillment of the licensing condition as well as the locality domain condition and binding relationship, the sentences in (20a-b) are acceptable. It is the same rule satisfactions that make all the other sentences in (18a-f) acceptable.

However, sentences in (21) are flawed with a violation of the licensing rule. Hence the sentences are unacceptable and odd. The violation of the licensing condition originates from the zero negation in the verb. Therefore, the NPIs in the sentences in (21) are unlicensed and uninvited. This results in a conflicting polarity sensitivity and disagreement between the affirmative verb and the NPI. This is shown by the varying indexation of the positive verb and the NPI. Though locality domain is fulfilled, the breach of the polarity sensitivity of the NPI makes the sentences in

(21a-b) odd and unacceptable. It is this breach that affects the acceptability of all the other sentences in (19a-f).

Also, DE reversal inferences are triggered by the negation in the verb and the NPI that increasingly deepens negativity downward from a set to subset. This can be demonstrated on the DE relations below:

(22) ***Araba nnim*** [entails] ***Araba nnim tee***.

This relation shows inferences from a relatively general and negative superset; *[Araba nnim]* to a deeper negative inference as a subset *[Araba nnim tee]*. This is DE inference showing that NPI`s are licensed in a DE environment. This is because same DE inference relation cannot be drawn from the sentences in (21a-b) as shown below: ***Araba nim* [entails] *Araba nim tee** This latter relation is conflicting.

4.4 The Negative Polarity Ideophones (NPI) and Tense Aspect Mood (TAM)

According to Carnie (2013), tense refers to the time of an event relative to the time at which the sentence is either spoken or written. Like the negation, the Akan tense aspect inflection is not segregated from the verb. Thus, assessing the polarity sensitivity of NPIs, it is also essential to note that the licensed NPI is only ready to collocate with any verbal phrase (VP) in the tense aspect mood having a negative component. In effect, the NPI objects to the affirmative mood as well as any affirmative tense aspect mood. Any affirmative sense in a verbal phrase irrespective of the tense aspect violates the syntactic condition for co-occurrence with an NPI. The NPI and any variety of affirmative tense are therefore impermissible in a sentence. In this regard, it is plausible to indicate that the licensing NPI demands negation in the VP as well as all other negative tense aspects mood. Differently put, the NPI sensitivity prevents any tense aspect mood devoid of negation. The NPI cannot bind any other tense aspect of the VP unless it is negated to command a binding relationship between the negated sense and the NPI. The implication is that the NPI is open to only verb forms in their various tense aspect having a negated inflection while it blocks all non-negated tense aspect mood (TAM). Dataset (23 - 30) below illustrate this point. In the data, all sets of sentences under group (A) are in the affirmative mood of the tense-aspect while their counterparts under the (B) group are negated.

(23)   AFFIRMATIVE PROGRESSIVE TENSE ASPECT : GROUP A

   a. **Abɔfra**   **no**   **re-hu**   **huute***
    Child   DEF   PROG-know IDEOPH
    'The child is knowing anything at all.'

b. **Obiara**   **re-sua**   **boe***
Everyone   PROG-learn   IDEOPH
'Everyone is learning anything at all'

c. **O-ru-twa**   **tsew**   **wɔ**   **skuul* (Fa.)**
1SG-PROG-score   IDEOPH   LOC   school
'S/he is scoring anything at all in school'

(24)   NEGATED PROGRESSIVE TENSE ASPECT: GROUP (B)

a. **Abɔfra**   **no**   **re-n-hu**   **huute**
Child   DEF   PROG-NEG-know   IDEOPH
'The child will not know anything at all.'

b. **Obiara**   **re-n-sua**   **boe**

Everyone   PROG-NEG-learn   IDEOPH
'Everyone is not learning anything at all.'

c. **O-ru-nn-twa**   **tsew**   **wɔ**   **skuul (Fa.)**

1SG-PROG-NEG-score   IDEOPH   STAT.be   school
'S/he is not scoring anything at all in school.'

It is apparent from the set of sentences in the progressive tense that while the affirmative progressive tense in (23a- c) are unacceptable and obscured in meaning, its negated progressive counterparts in (24a-c) are acceptable and meaningful.

(25)   PERFECT TENSE ASPECT IN AFFIRMATIVE: GROUP A

a. **Kyerɛkyerɛnyi no**   **a-kyerɛ**   **tsew** (Fa)**

Teacher   DEF   PRF-teach   IDEOPH

'The teacher taught anything at all.'

b. **Kofi** **a-ka**   **agyei**   **mpo****
Kofi   PRF-say   IDEOPH   FOC
Kofi   said anything at all.'

c. **Wɔ-a-tɔ**   **tee**   **wɔ**   **dwa**   **no**   **mu****
3PL-PRF-buy IDEOPH   STAT.be   market DEF   LOC
'They bought anything at all in the market'

(26)   NEGATED PERFECT TENSE ASPECT : GROUP B

i. **Kyerɛkyerɛnyi**   **no**   **a-nn-kyerɛ**   **tsew (Fa.)**
   Teacher   DEF   PRF-NEG-teach   IDEOPH
   'The teacher didn't teach anything at all.'

ii. **Kofi**   **a-n-ka**   **agyei**   **mpo**
    Kofi   PRF-NEG-say   IDEOPH   FOC
    'Kofi even didn't say anything at all.'

iii. **Wɔ-a-n-tɔ**   **tee**   **wɔ**   **dwa**   **no**   **mu**
     3PL-PRF-NEG-buy   IDEOPH STAT be   market   DEF LOC
     'They didn't buy anything at all in the market.'

Moreover, it is obvious from the set of sentences in the perfect tense aspect that while the affirmative perfect tense in (25a-c) are unacceptable and obscured in meaning, its negated perfect tense counterparts in (26a-c) are acceptable and meaningful.

(27) FUTURE TENSE ASPECT IN AFFIRMATIVE (Fa) **:** GROUP A

   a. **Asɛm no**   **be-si**   **huw***
      Case   DEF   FUT-end   IDEOPH
      'The case will end anything at all.'

   b. **Ɔ-bɛ-yɛ**   **huute***
      3SG-FUT-do   IDEOPH
      'S/he will do nothing at all.'

   c. **O-bo-twa**   **tsew***
      3SG-FUT-score   IDEOPH
      'S/he will score anything at all.'

(28) NEGATED FUTURE TENSE ASPECT : GROUP B

   a. **Asɛm no**   **nn-ke-si**   **huw (Fa)**

      Case   DEF   NEG-FUT-end   IDEOPH
      'The case will not end anything at all'

   b. **Ɔ-nn-kɛ-yɛ**   **huute (Fa)**

      3SG-NEG-FUT-do   IDEOPH
      'S/he will not do nothing at all.'

   d. **O-nn-ko-twa**   **tsew (Fa)**

      3SG-NEG-FUT-score   IDEOPH
      'S/he will not score anything at all.'

Also, it is evident from the set of sentences in the Fante future tense aspect that while the affirmative future tense in (27a-c) are unacceptable and obscured in meaning, its negated future tense counterparts in (28a-c) are acceptable.

(29) PAST AFFIRMATIVE TENSE ASPECT**:** GROUP A

    a. **Obi**   **ka-a**   **fe**   **mpo**   **wɔ**   **ha***
       Somebody say-PST IDEOPH FOC   STAT.be   here
       'Somebody said anything at all here.'

    b. **Ama** **hunu-u**   **boe**   **wɔ**   **sukuu***
       Ama   Know-PST   IDEOPH   STAT.be   school
       "Ama   knew anything at all in school.'

(30)   NEGATED PAST TENSE ASPECT **:** GROUP B

    i. **Obi**   **a-n-ka**   **fe**   **mpo** **wɔ**   **ha**
       Somebody   PRF-NEG-say   IDEOPH   FOC STAT.be   here
       'Somebody didn't say anything at all here.'

    ii. **Ama** **a-n-hu**   **boe**   **wɔ**   **skuul (Fa.)**
       Ama   NEG-know   IDEOPH   STAT.be   school
       'Ama did not know anything at all in school.'

It is obvious from the above sentences that the affirmative sentences in group A, that is (23, 25, 27, 29) are unacceptable and obscured than their reversed counterparts in group B (24, 26, 28, 30). The unacceptability in group (A) sentences stems from the fact that those sentences have no negated inflections in the VP. The absence of the negation undermines the syntax and semantics of the sentences in group (A) irrespective of the variety in the tense aspect. This solidifies the conclusion that negation in the VP is obligatory for the NPI to properly function. Again, it shows that the licensing negation collocates with the NPI. With the provision of negation, the sentences in the group (B) are bound to be acceptable irrespective of the tense aspect. Also, the binding locality condition for negation is between the NPI and the negated VP head in the same clause. On this account, there is an agreement between the licenser and the licensee and within the binding locality domains. It is in line with this that Ampofo (2015) notes that the relationship between the sensitive item and its collocants is crucial to the acceptability of the sentence. In this context, the sentence breaks down if it fails to respond rightly to the polarity sensitivity of the NPI. In summary, the illustrations and comparisons, demonstrate that it is syntactically obligatory for NPIs to collocate with negated VP irrespective of the tense aspect. Negation is a must to match with an NPI in a sentence.

5. Conclusion

The paper has outlined the syntax-semantics features of ideophones in Akan. It contributed to the discussion on the word class of ideophones. It was demonstrated that syntactically, ideophones commonly function as modifiers to verbs. However, they do function as nominals, verbs, and also as predicative and attributive adjectives. The various tree diagrams and the phrase constituents in the X-bar theory established this syntactic relationship. This shows that Akan ideophones exhibit some morphosyntactic dynamism. Owing to the multiplicity of function in ideophones, it will be misplaced to subsume all Akan ideophones under a particular word class as either adverb, adjective, nouns, or verbs. Therefore, with these syntactic peculiarities and multiplicity of function, Akan ideophones should be treated as a distinct autonomous word class that has multiple function depending on the context of usage.

Besides, the conclusion that ideophones in Akan form a dynamic word class, it was also demonstrated that ideophones in Akan have a sensitivity to polarity. A close examination of polarity in ideophones led to the assertion that ideophones in Akan can be categorized into two based on their polarity sensitivity. The first category is the Affirmative Polarity Ideophones (API) which only collocate with non-negated (affirmative) verbs. The other category is the Negative Polarity Ideophones (NPI), which only collocate with negated verbs in sentences. Accounting on the theory of entailment and binding, it was proven that the failure of an API to collocate with a non-negated (affirmative) verb makes the sentence vague. This shows that there is a syntax-semantics distortion in the vague sentence that subjects it to several interpretations. Again, API has a strong dominance for an affirmative sense and therefore calls for an affirmative verb. Thus, it objects to any form of verbal negation irrespective of the tense aspect mood. The implication is that, negation is recessive or completely absent in API-occurring sentences. Where there is an API type of ideophone in a sentence, the verb in the predicate is expected to heed to the polarity sensitivity of the ideophone by being in the affirmative sense. Failure to do so results in a vagueness that can be resolved through constituent clefting.

Conversely, if an NPI collocates with an affirmative verb, the sentence breaks down syntactically. Hence, it was confirmed that API collocates with only non-negated verbs in a sentence while NPI collocates solely with negated verbs regardless of the tense aspect. NPI is dominant to negation but recessive to affirmation, which makes negation mandatory for an NPI to be stringed in a sentence. As shown in Progovac (1993) postulations on the entailment and binding theory, NPI licenses by predicting and selecting a negated VP as its collocant whiles an API licenses by predicting the selection of a positive verb as its collocant.

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