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EMOTION AND CULTURE OF EYE METAPHORS IN MANDARIN, SPANISH  
AND GERMAN

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Abstract

This study attempts to give a cognitive semantic study of eye expressions (EEs) in Chinese, Spanish and German. The majority of the data are collected from corpora and dictionaries. The research questions are: (1) Is the BODY IS STATIC hypothesis proposed by Hsieh and Lu (2012) valid? (2) Do the verbs in EEs showing emotions suggest something? And, (3) what cultural aspects do the EEs in three languages involve? The results show that the analysis of semantic molecules and tenors of the EEs confirm the validity of BODY IS STATIC hypothesis. The verbs of the EEs play an important role in expressing emotion. The verbs that are inherited for other body parts, such as for hand, mouth, are extended to the sight domain and assist such emotion communication effectively. Bodily experiences work in linguistic as a whole as well. Finally, cultural aspects of social behavior and social communication in the specific social groups are shown. They are all revealed through a cross-cultural linguistic comparison.

Key words: eye metaphor, cognitive semantics, semantic molecules, BODY IS STATIC

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1. Introduction

Cognitive linguists launch that conceptual metaphor about emotion are motivated through recurrent bodily experiences (e.g., Gibbs & Wilson 2002, Tendahl 2009). Among a great number of studies on body-part expressions (e.g. Šileikaite 1997, Yu 2000, 2001, Tsao, Tsai and Liu 2001, Zacharenko 2004, Maalej 2004, Wang 2005, Li 2007, Ro, Friggel, and Lavie 2007 ), some of them research on eyes, e.g., Sweetser (1990) has a mind-as-body hypothesis in which she suggested that physical-domain verbs frequently come to have speech-act and/or mental-state meanings, and mental-state verbs come to have speech-act meanings, while the opposite directions of change do not occur. Mugu (2002) focuses on structural and semantic analysis of some polysemous body-part words, including *eyes*, in Russian, German, and the Adug languages. Yu (2004) compared Chinese and English to detail the conceptual metaphors containing *eyes*.

Some work on emotion. For example, Kövecses (2000) studies metaphor and emotion, in which language, culture and body in human feeling are the main concern. Huang

(2002) has a cognitive perspective on Tsou language, the emotion and body. Hsieh and Lu (2012) study body-part expressions in Chinese and Spanish and proposed BODY IS STATIC hypothesis.

This study examines the body-part vehicle *eyes* in Mandarin Chinese (hereafter Chinese), Spanish and German in order to provide a cross-linguistic comparison for the purpose of exploring: (1) The validity of BODY IS STATIC hypothesis, and (2), (2) emotions that EEs express and the role their verbs play, and (3) what do the EEs imply the respective cultural aspects?

This paper will be presented in the following way: (1) introduction, (2) research framework, (3) we analyze the data and present the semantic molecules and the meaning of the *eye* expressions in order to test BODY IS STATIC. Further, we (4) look into the related emotion expressions by focusing on the verbs, and (5) present the cultural features. Finally, (6) is the conclusion.

## 2. Research framework

We define our data and present the theoretical background of this study in this section.

An *eye expression* is defined in this study as any Chinese, Spanish or German expression that encodes the body-part vehicle *eyes*, without recourse to a separate definition of metaphor, or of metonymic blending. That is to say, the expressions in the present corpora are fixed expressions (Alexander, 1978; Carter, 1987; Moon, 1998), including: metaphors, similes, proverbs, sayings, frozen collocations, grammatically ill-formed collocations, and routine formulae. In other words, they are not ad-hoc terms, or freely generated phrases.

The Chinese vehicle *eye* is shared by *mu4* 目 and *yan3* 眼. They are synonyms with the minor difference dwell in that *mu4* 目 is the first written representation for Chinese *eyes*, while *yan3* 眼 appears afterwards.

The majority of the EEs were gathered from *Chinese Mandarin Online Dictionary* (Committee of Official Language Promotion 1998) and *Web edition of Lin Yutang's Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage* (The Chinese University of Hong Kong 1999), and the Spanish data from *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual of Real Academia Española* and *Lanbridge Diccionario Manual Español Chino* (Alvarez 1999). The German data are taken from *Kluge: Etymologisches Wörterbuch Der Deutschen Sprache* (Seebold 2002) and *Lexikon der Sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* (Röhrich 1991). A minor percentage of the data is gathered from other sources, such as books, newspapers, radio broadcasts, and TV programs on economy topics, books. The amount of the data is listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Data collected

<i>Eye expressions</i>	Chinese	Spanish	German
N	157	151	138

This study will test the validity of the BODY IS STATIC hypothesis (Hsieh & Lu 2012). Meanwhile, semantic molecules (Goddard 1998) and cultural representation are essential background of the study. We will introduce them in turn in the following.

Hsieh and Kolodkina (2009) believe that BODY IS FUNCTION is a cognitive model of body-part expressions based on an observation in *hand* expressions in Chinese, Russian and English. Hsieh and Lu (2012) test the cognitive model and further propose BODY IS STATIC that the *hand* expressions tend to describe static objective or entity, rather than active activities. They assume that just like the human body itself, it is processing and working every minute and second, yet as long as a person lives, a static state or calm position is what it desires or functions for, thus the breaks between school classes, the eight-hour sleep at night, etc. Even when people are working, a peaceful mind earns much better outcome. With the aid of force dynamics (Talmy 1988, 2000a), Hsieh and Lu describe the way entities interact with reference to force and depict the hypothesis of BODY IS STATIC as show in Fig. 1.

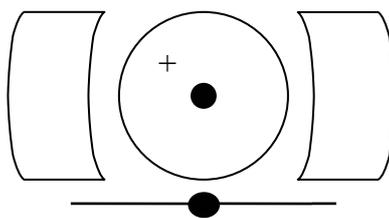


Figure 1. BODY IS STATIC in terms of force dynamics

Figure 1 displays that the agonist (the human body) is represented by O and the antagonist (the outside activity) is represented by  $\square$ . The interaction of forces is able to manifest its tendency and remain in place as the line and the  $\bullet$  below the agonist and antagonist shows. The body tends to a static condition. The scenario reads that though there are forces going on, in and around human body, a static position is the best that the intrinsic force tends to function for. Body-part expressions are cognitively modeled in the system BODY IS STATIC.

In order to test the BODY IS STATIC hypothesis, we will analyze semantic molecules and tenors (meaning) of the EEs in Chinese, Spanish and German.

Semantic molecules was proposed by Goddard (1998) who develops Wierzbicka's (1985) approach about semantically complex words in explications and concludes that the *tiger* explication as evidenced by the expressions *a game of cat and mouse*, *a catnap*, *a catfight*, etc. "contains many semantically complex words, such as: animal, jungle, cat, black, stripes, yellow, sharp, claws, teeth, kill, zoo, fierce, powerful, afraid ... they function as units ('semantic molecules')" (1998:247). Semantic molecules are "composed directly of 'primitive semantic features'" (1998:255).

Semantic molecules are extracted from the meaning of *eye* in expressions like *con mucho ojo* 'with-many-eye = carefully', which indicates that *eye* in Spanish carries the

semantic molecule +attention.<sup>1</sup> From *lao3yan3hun1hua1*老眼昏花 ‘old-eye-confused-blur = to mis-perceive something from a moment of confusion’, we see that *eye* connotes +vision and +judgment.

Culture, from an anthropological perspective, according to Nostrand’s (1978, see Stern 1993), involves extensive topics, including language, paralanguage, body language, value systems, contemplating habits, the shared assumption of reality, and so on. Kao (1997: 350) precisely puts that languages are the vehicles of a culture. A language reflects the history, the culture and the life of a nation. It also reveals most of the values and the thoughts of the nation. It is the root of culture. This study will investigate the respective cultures linguistically from the points of EEs.

### 3. BODY IS STATIC

In this section, we examine the semantic molecules of *eye* in EEs and tenors of the *eye* expressions in Chinese, Spanish and German for the attempt to answer the research questions one, whether BODY IS STATIC is valid.

#### 3.1. The semantic molecules

Semantic molecules reveal how a linguistic vehicle is used in a language semantically; how the vehicle expresses meaning. We list the significant semantic molecules of EEs in Chinese, Spanish and German in Table 2 below.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Convention:

semantic molecules	+	+action
tenors	“”	“state”
vehicles	italics	<i>eye</i>
cognition	all capital	MANNER, MIND

<sup>2</sup> We see that Table 2 does not list all semantic molecules of *eyes* in Chinese, Spanish and German, because of variations in region usages or situational contexts. Besides, some semantic molecules are not listed because they cover only one or two expressions, such as +ability, +angry in Chinese, +life, +expression in Spanish, +eyesore, +surprise in German.

Table 2. Significant semantic features of *eye* expressions in the three languages

Chinese		Spanish		German	
1 judgment	37 (23.57%)	attention	15 (9.93%)	eyesight	9 (6.52%)
2 vision	32 (20.38%)	eye	14 (9.27%)	eyes	5 (3.62%)
3 love	19 (12.10%)	vision	10 (6.62%)	affection	4 (2.90%)
4 presence	14 (8.92%)	thinking	7 (4.64%)	liking	4 (2.90%)
5 attention	11 (7.01%)	see	6 (3.97%)	understandin g	3 (2.65%)

The semantic molecules +judgment, +vision rank high in Chinese, +attention, +eye in Spanish, and +eyesight, +liking in German. We see that not only BODY IS FUNCTION (Hsieh & Kolodkina 2009) is shown, each examining language focuses on different functions of human eyes. The Chinese +judgment, +vision indicate more the “inside story” of the eyes, as the examples in (1) below show, mentioning about certain viewpoint and attitude of mind. The Spanish +attention, +eye give attitude of caution besides the appearance, as in (2). The German +eyesight, +liking emphasize on the ability of the eyes and also the feeling that eyes can show, as in (3). This is not to say that no German EEs are linked with +judgment or +attention, and no Mandarin EEs are associated with +liking, etc. There are, but they are not significant. The percentages of the semantic molecules demonstrate the preference of using the vehicle *eye* in expressing meaning in each language.

(1) Chinese +judgment and +vision:

- a. *ling4yan3xiang1kan4* 另眼相看 ‘another-eyes-mutual-look = to look at somebody in a different light’
- b. *leng3yan3* 冷眼 ‘cold-eye = cool detachment’
- c. *mang2mu4* 盲目 ‘blind-eye = blindly (in mind)’
- d. *mu4guang1ru2dou4* 目光如豆 ‘eye-sight as-bean = extremely shortsighted, myopic view of things’

(2) Spanish +attention and +eye:

- a. *dormir con los ojos abiertos* ‘sleep with the eyes opened = on the alert’

b. *Con un ojo durmiendo, con otro velando y viendo* ‘with an eye sleeping, with the other watching and seeing = to turn a blind eye to something’

c. *cuatro ojos* ‘four eyes = four-eyes’

d. *guiñar un ojo (los ojos)* ‘wink an eye (the eyes) = to make faces’

(3) German +eyesight and +liking:

a. *mit offenen Augen durch die Welt gehen* ‘with-open-eyes-through-the-world-go = walk about with one's eyes open’

b. *ein Augenmaß haben wie ein Rettich* ‘an-eye measure-have-like-a-radish = to have a sense of distance like a radish; to have a very good eyesight’

c. *etwas im Auge haben* ‘something-in-the-eye-have = have something in one's eye; have one's eye on something’

d. *jmdn./etwas im Auge behalten* ‘someone/something-in-the-eye-keep = keep an eye on somebody/bear or keep something in mind’

Hilpert (2007) has a chained metonymy model. He proposed four conceptual mappings that produce semantic extension (chained metonymy): perceptual function chains, instrument for action chains, body parts are container chains, and body parts are parts of physical object chains (Hilpert, 2007). Below are some of the mappings.

(4) brains (brain) → cognitive tool → intelligence

hair-raising (hair) → sensation/intuition → eventful

eyed (eye) → vision → attention

nose → olfactory sensation → observe/inspect

jaw-dropping (jaw) → sensation/physical appearance → amazement

nail-biting (fingernail) → sensation/habit → nervous

The chain *eyed (eye) → vision → attention* is true with evidence from semantic molecules of the three languages. The molecules +vision and +attention both rank high in all three languages. Vision and attention are static spheres of the eyes; they require concentration. Hilpert's chain coincides with the hypothesis BODY IS STATIC.

On the other hand, MIND and EMOTION are two important semantic domains of the EEs. We can see that, first, most of the semantic molecules are related to the function of human eyes, seeing, looking, etc. If we look at the data more closely, mental state like +thinking in Spanish and emotion like +love, +angry in Chinese, +happy, +disgusting in Spanish, +liking, +surprise in German all direct to MIND and EMOTION. They are hyponyms of the two semantic domains. Hsieh & Kolodkina (2009) worked on BODY AS EMOTION in body-part terms for the *eye(s)* and *hand(s)* in Mandarin Chinese, Russian and English. They found that BODY AS EMOTION as a particular conceptual model is characteristic only of Chinese. In Russian, BODY AS EMOTION is subcategorized in BODY AS FUNCTION.

Second, focusing on MIND, we see that it is highlighted in the EEs of all three languages, such as +judgment in Chinese, +attention, +thinking in Spanish, +understanding in German. Among them, Spanish lays more emphasize on MIND than the other two languages as we can see that +attention, +thinking are significant semantic molecules and other semantic molecules like +mind, +judgment, +trust are all hyponyms of MIND.

MIND is usually static; it is an element of BODY IS STATIC. Yet, EMOTION could cause violence. We will move on to examine the meaning of the EEs for a clearer picture.

### 3.2. The tenors

Semantic molecules are for the vehicle *eye* itself. The meaning of the EEs (i.e. tenor) can give a broader view than what the linguistic vehicle *eye* renders and can provide a different means for testing BODY IS STATIC. We list the significant tenors of EEs in Chinese, Spanish and German in Table 3.

Table 3. Important tenors of *eye* expressions in the three languages

	Chinese		Spanish		German	
1	characteristics of other body parts <sup>3</sup>	24 (15.29%)	action	86 (56.95%)	action	29 (21.01%)
2	state	22 (14.01%)	state	50 (33.11%)	state	24 (17.39%)
3	thoughts	15 (9.55%)	behavior	30 (19.87%)	emotional movement	11 (7.97%)
4	action	14 (8.92%)	mode	24 (15.89%)	emotion	9 (6.47%)
5	emotion	10 (6.37%)	appearance	21 (13.91%)	characteristics of other body parts	9 (6.47%)
6	object	9 (5.73%)	attitude	18 (11.92%)	behavior	8 (5.8%)
7	emotional movement	9 (5.73%)	perception	15 (9.93%)	perception	8 (5.8%)
8	attitude	8 (5.10%)	object	14 (9.27%)	mode	5 (3.62%)
9	behavior	7 (4.46%)	emotion	14 (9.27%)	object	5 (3.62%)
10	perception	7 (4.46%)	characteristics of other body parts	10 (6.62%)	thoughts	5 (3.62%)

The Table shows that Chinese *eye* not only is often used to describe the “characteristics of other body parts” (15.29%, top one), but also popular in expressing “states” (14.01%, top two). The “state” refers to a condition or way of being that exists at a particular time of the human eyes, as well as indicating how the vehicle *eye* is being linguistically. Some examples denote the tenor “state” are given in (5) below. The example (5a) is the way of the eyesight due to aging or disease, (5b) is the condition when the eyes are provoked, and (5c) describes the being of the human body.

<sup>3</sup> An example of “Characteristics of other body parts” is *Adleraugen* ‘eagle eyes = to have a very good eyesight’.

Spanish has the greatest amount of expressions related to eyes-movement when comparing with German and Chinese. Though the “action” in Spanish (56.95%) seems to oppose to STATIC, if we look at this tenor closely, we see that the examples in (6) all show a static kind of action. Such expressions not only emphasize on physical vision, but also consist of mind and thoughts. For example, many of the expressions have the meaning of being able to see clearly or to distinguish or figure out a situation (*abrírsele los ojos (a alguien)* ‘open oneself the eyes to someone = be cognizant of’), to convey a message (*hacer una seña guiñando los ojos* ‘make a sign winking the eyes’), and the attitude or the ways to get along with people or to deal with matters (*mirar con buenos (malos) ojos* ‘look at with good (bad) eyes = to treat someone good (or bad)’), yet the action of winking eyes or widely opened-eyes occurs most often in the expressions of conveying a message. Hence, it is obvious that eye-movement is used more often to express one’s inner thoughts in Spanish, not an outer activity, but a static manifestation.

(5) The tenor “state”:

- a. *lao3yan3hun1hua1* 老眼昏花 ‘old-eye-confused-blur = Presbyopia; to mis-perceive something from a moment of confusion’
- b. *ci4yan3* 刺眼 ‘thorn-eye = strong, provoking lights or colors; something eye-catching that offends others’
- c. *no poder cerrar los ojos al morir* ‘not able to close the eyes to die = turn over in one's grave’
- d. *nublársele a uno los ojos* ‘cloud oneself to one the eyes = giddy’
- e. *sich Maden in die Augen schlafen* ‘itself-maggots-in-the-eyes-sleep = to sleep very long’
- f. *unter vier Augen* ‘under-four-eyes = in private’

(6) Spanish “action”:

- a. *ojo alerta* ‘eye alert = look out’
- b. *ojo avizor* ‘eye alert = advert’
- c. *abrir desmesuradamente los ojos* ‘open disproportionately the eyes = to open the eyes’

In addition to the top tenors, most of the tenors in Table 3 concern with certain kinds of STATE. “Characteristics of other body parts”, “state”, “thoughts”, “object” and “perception” in Chinese, “state”, “appearance”, “perception”, “object” and “characteristics of other body parts” in Spanish, and “state”, “characteristics of other body parts”, “perception”, “object” and “thoughts” in German. In (7) we give some examples of this kind. The body-part vehicle *eye* express more notion domain than motion domain, just as *hand* expressions suggested (Hsieh & Lu 2012). Once again BODY IS STATIC is verified.

(7) The domain STATE:

- a. *liu3yan3* 柳眼 ‘willow-eyes = long, slender eyes’
- b. *yu2mu4hun4zhu1* 魚目混珠 ‘fish-eye-mix-pearl = pass off fish eyes as pearls; pass off the sham as the genuine’
- c. *a ojos vistas* ‘to eyes seen = clearly’
- d. *alrededor de los ojos* ‘around of the eyes = the eye socket’
- e. *ganz kleine Augen haben* ‘completely-small-eyes-have = be all sleepy’
- f. *ein Auge auf jmdn./etwas haben* ‘an-eye-on-someone/something-have = to keep an eye on somebody/something; to have taken a fancy to somebody/have one's eye on something’

The examining of tenors of EEs indicates BODY IS STATIC. We now go on for the next research question, whether the emotions that EEs express and the role their verbs play.

#### 4. Emotion

“Emotion” and “emotional movement” are important tenors of EEs in the three languages. Emotion and emotional movement rank number 5 and 7 in Chinese, No. 9 in Spanish (emotion), and No. 4 and 3 in German. We will discuss emotion in this section. In the above discussion about semantic molecules, we mentioned that BODY AS EMOTION is studied in Hsieh & Kolodkina (2009) for the *eye(s)* and *hand(s)*

expressions in Chinese, Russian and English. Here we will further discuss about EEs for their emotion expressions and look at them in a different way.

The verbs of emotion related EEs are “borrowed”, as we can see in the following examples:

(8) Emotion EEs with borrowed verbs:

- a. *mei2kai1yan3xiao4* 眉開眼笑 ‘eyebrow-open-mouth-laugh = beam with joy; a person with a discerning eye; a person of good sense’
- b. *leng3yan3* 冷眼 ‘cold-eye = cool detachment’
- c. *comer(se)/devorar con los ojos* ‘to-eat(oneself)/devour with the eyes = hate someone to the bones’
- d. *andar/ir con (cien) ojo(s)* ‘walk/go with (hundred) eye(s) = be careful’
- e. *Er hat sich die Zwiebel selbst gezogen, die ihm in den Augen beißt* ‘he-has-him-the-onion-self-pulled, that-him-in-the-eyes-bite = he has picked the onion which stings in his eyes by himself; he is responsible by himself for his’
- f. *etwas ins Auge fassen* ‘something-in-the-eye-seize = consider something; think about something’

The verbs are metaphorically extended from those intrinsically for mouth, hands, etc. For example, (8a) is from mouth (*hsiao4* ‘smile’), (8b) from skin (*leng3* ‘cold’), (8c) from mouth (*comer* ‘to-eat’) (8d) from feet (*andar/ir* ‘to walk/go’), (8e) from mouth (*beissen* ‘bite’), and (8f) from hand (*fassen* ‘seize’). Emotion is a complex state of mind influenced by psychophysiological effect and environment/conjuncture. Emotion is associated with mood, temperament, personality, disposition, and motivation (Oxford Dictionary of Sports Science & Medicine). It seems that an integration of the eyes and other bodily functions and experiences will show emotion together. Consequently, the verbs are used freely or borrowed from other agent specific motions.

*Machen* is a popular dummy verb in German, as in the examples, *fertigmachen* ‘to finish’, *weitermachen* ‘to continue’, and *nachmachen* ‘to imitate’. Talmy (2000b:284) points out that dummy verbs is a system of generic verbs that “can act, in effect, as

syntactic ‘placeholders’ while conveying relatively generic or neutral semantic content and thus permitting the sentence to proceed to the satellite, whose semantic content is the relevant factor”. That is, such dummy verbs act for other verbs and collocate with certain semantic domains. The dummy verb is in construction with specific co-event verbs (Talmy 2000b:285). We see that the German *machen* ‘make’ is collocated with specific co-event, in the case of EEs, emotion related as illustrated in examples in (9). Dummy verbs do not appear in Chinese EEs.<sup>4</sup> The Spanish *hacer ojo* ‘make eye = wink’ has similar behavior, though not as obvious an emotion performer as the German *machen* does.

(9) German EEs with *machen*:

- a. *Stielaugen machen* ‘goggle-make = to make stalk eyes; to look greedily and envious’
- b. *Augen machen wie ein (ab)gestochenes Kalb* ‘eyes-make-like-a-poked-calf = to look/ to make a face like a stuck calf; to look helpless and confused’
- c. *(große) Augen machen* ‘(large)-eyes-make = to make (large) eyes; to be surprised, astonished’

At last, let us look at how the eyes in the three languages show affection. In Chinese, the *tao2hua1yan3* 桃花眼 ‘peach-flower-eyes’ are eyes that are good at sending emotion, *mu4tiao1xin1zhao1* 目挑心招 ‘eye-raise heart-beckon’ means flirting, and *wang4yan3yu4chuan1* 望眼欲穿 ‘look-eye-want-penetrate’ indicates aspire earnestly. In Spanish, *alegrarse (a alguien) los ojos* ‘be-pleased-with-somebody-the-eyes’ is beaming with joy, and *ojos vivos de una mujer* ‘eyes-lively-of-a-woman’ indicates ‘with enthusiasm in the eyes’, etc. It is noted that the *tao2hua1yan3* in Chinese implies the charming eyes that can seduce the opposite sex and prompt to cause affair and trouble. *Mu4tiao1xin1zhao1* suggests a seduction of a man or a woman. We see that in Chinese culture, in comparison with Spanish, it is considered to be disapproving and harmful that eyes show affection.

<sup>4</sup> Chinese dummy verbs are for example *jin4xing2* 進行 ‘move forward-go = progress’ (e.g., *jin4xing2diao4cha2* 進行調查 ‘move forward-go-tune-search = investigation in progress’), *jia1yi3* 加以 ‘plus-with = in addition’ (*jia1yi3pi1ping2* 加以批評 ‘plus-with-approve-comment = further criticize’) (Yu, Zhu and Duan 2005) or *zuo4* 做 ‘do’ (*zuo4fu2wu4* 做服務 ‘do-clothes-matter = service’, *zuo4song4huo4* 做送貨 ‘do-deliver-goods = deliver the goods’).

In German, EEs show faithful love (10a-10b) and hatred (10c-10d). People can be so hated each other that ‘someone is a thorn in the other’s eyes’, but can be so loved that ‘one has only eyes for this person’, and so the eyeball is the precious dear (10e). In German, it is thus ‘with a laughing and a crying eye’ as in (10f).

(10) German EEs show affections:

- a. *ein Auge auf jmdn./etwas haben* ‘an-eye-on-someone/something-have = to keep an eye on somebody/something; to have taken a fancy to somebody/have one's eye on something’
- b. *nur Augen für jmdn. haben* ‘only-eyes-for-someone-have = have eyes only for somebody’
- c. *einem ein Dorn im Auge sein* ‘someone-a-thorn-in-the-eye-be = to be a thorn in someone's eye; to be a thorn in one's flesh’
- d. *einem ein Stachel im Auge sein* ‘someone-a-thorn-in-the-eye-be = to be a thorn in someone's eye; to be a thorn in someone's side’
- e. *jemandes Augapfel sein* ‘somebody's-eye-apple-be = be someone's eyeball; to be very dear to someone’
- f. *mit einem lachenden und einem weinenden Auge* ‘with-a-laughing-and-a-crying-eye = with mixed feelings’

## 5. The cultural presentation

Cultural features are revealed from EEs when compare different languages. We read Chinese history or legendary story in EEs. Example (11a) is from one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, *ShuiHuZhuan* 水滸傳 (*Outlaws of the Marsh*, Mid-16 century). In Chapter 2, the author Shi Nai-an (AD. 1296-1370) says, “Master, you are so powerful; you must be a chief instructor. I have just entertained an angle unawares!” where the admiration to a master is expressed. (11b) is from *HanShi WaiZhuan* 韓詩外傳 (*Disconnection*)<sup>5</sup> with the original text *bai2gu3lei4xiang4*,

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<sup>5</sup> The author Han Ying wrote it at around 150 B.C. It was first printed around year 1041-1048.

yu2mu4hun3zhu1 白骨類象, 魚目似珠 ‘skeletons are more or less similar and hard to be differentiated, and so do fish eyes and pearls’. Therefore, this expression suggests the concept of passing off the sham as the genuine.

Phoenix is the special mascot in Chinese culture. Chinese women are often associated with phoenix, dan1feng4yan3 丹鳳眼 ‘red-phoenix-eyes’ is one of the features for Chinese women. It indicates a form of eyes with raising corners or the horizontal, long and elegant eyes, which are considered to be like the legendary phoenixes’ eyes. On the other hand, people generally regard the women with (11c) tao2hua1yan3 as a figure of bad omen because they believe that a woman has a pair such eyes could weaken men and cause them to fall from virtue.

In German, (11d) is said to be used since 16th century when the playwright Hans Sachs had a written polemics with his colleagues in Augsburg with the title ‘who has the calf hit in the eyes’ (*Wer hat das Kalb ins Aug geschlagen*; Röhrich 1991:794). *Die Augenschenken* ‘the-eyes-spare = to spare the eyes; to sleep’ is a humorous saying used since World War I when the soldiers started to say ‘to sleep’ this way. *Blauäugig sein* ‘blue eyed-be = to be blue-eyed’ means being innocent or naive. Many Germans have blue eyes. The blue eyes is for the Germans a symbol of faithfulness and innocence because new born babies there have blue eyes. Also that one can see through such people easily as they are naïve (Röhrich 1991:1210). *Das Auge des Gesetzes* ‘the-eye-of-the-law’ refers to the police was popularized since Schillers’ work Song of the Bell (*Lied der Glocke*) where the policemen act as the executive officers of the law is described.

In Spanish, example (11f) can be traced back to one anecdote that occurred to a famous sergeant of Castilla, don Álvaro of Luna, during one of his hunting (Paulo 2008). He met a beggar whose face had two terrible scars on his eyes. Since his face impressed don Alvaro so much that he asked the poor man to tell his story. He said that he dad raised a crow that he captured a crow from mountain since it was small. Since he took good care of it, it became bigger and bigger. One day when he was feeding it, it flew to hurt his eyes and he became blind. After having heard of the story, don Alvaro ironically expressed to his friends of hunting the following saying *Cría cuervos y te*

*sacarán los ojos* ‘you-raise crows and they-will-take-out the eyes = a snake in the bosom’. The saying has even since been used to imply ungrateful people.

In (11g), *bailarle (a alguien) los ojos* ‘dance (to someone) the eyes = bliss’, the verb associates with dancing, one important cultural element of the Hispanic world. For example, flamenco and salsa are famous dancing that has been considered as typical cultural activities for Hispanic people. Besides, (11h) indicates that horse was the main transportation of knight that represented an important class of social system in the history.

(11) EEs tell history or stories:

- a. *you3yan3bu4shi4tai4shan1* 有眼不識泰山 ‘have-eye-not-recognize-Mount Tai= entertain an angle unawares’ from Violet
- b. *yu2mu4hun4zhu1* 魚目混珠 ‘fish-eye-mix-pearl = pass off fish eyes as pearls; pass off the sham as the genuine’
- c. *tao2hua1yan3* 桃花眼 ‘peach-flower-eyes = eyes to be good at sending emotion; a charming eye’
- d. *Das Kalb ins Auge schlagen* ‘The-calf-in-the-eye-hit = to hit the calf in the eye; to scandalize’
- e. *die Augen sind größer als der Magen (od. Bauch)* ‘the-eyes-are-bigger-than-the-stomach-(or belly) = to put more food on one's plate than what one can eat’
- f. *Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos* ‘you-raise crows and they-will-take-out the eyes = a snake in the bosom’
- g. *bailarle (a alguien) los ojos* ‘dance (to someone) the eyes = bliss’
- h. *El ojo del amo engorda al caballo* ‘the eye of-the owner fat to-the horse = to be selfish’

Some EEs are funny. There are many *si4yan3tian2ji1* 四眼田雞 ‘four-eyes-farm-frog = person wearing shortsighted spectacles’ in Taiwan. And it is said as *die2po4yan3jing4* 跌破眼鏡 ‘fall-break-eyes-mirror; one's glasses fell broken’ when things happened exceeding one's expectation. The eyesight of mice is ironically used in Chinese. *shu3mu4zun4guan1* 鼠目寸光 ‘mouse-eye-inch-light = a mouse can see only

an inch' is criticizing someone's shortsighted. *Shu3yan3*鼠眼 'mouse-eyes' describes narrow slits of eyes. The state of the eyes give clue of the human relations, so when people have the same opinions or like each other, they are *dui4yan3*對眼 'yes-eyes', and *yan3shou2*眼熟 'eye-mature' points out 'looking familiar'.

As for German EEs, the Germans can *danken mit einer Träne im Knopfloch und einer Nelke im Auge* 'thank-with-a-tear-in-one's-buttonhole-and-a-carnation-in-the-eye' which means thanking someone ironically moved to tears. They can also *mit offenen Augen schlafen* 'with-open-eyes-sleep' when one is daydreaming. Humorously, *Er hat ein Augenmaß wie ein Rettich, nur nicht so scharf* 'he-has-a-sense of distance-like-a-radish, only-not-so-sharp = he has a sense of distance like a radish, but his is not as sharp' says 'he has a bad eyesight'. However, *mit einem blauen Auge davonkommen* 'with-a-blue-eye-get away = to get away with a blue eye; to get out of danger with only a small loss' is not as funny.

In Spanish, it is interesting to find contrastive expressions with eyes, for example, *ser el ojo derecho de uno* 'to-be the eye right of one = to be a trusted followe' and *entrar por el ojo derecho* 'to-enter through the eye right = to be accepted friendly' while *entrar por el ojo izquierdo* 'enter through the eye left = not to be accepted pleasantly'. The right eye is associated with confidence in contrast to the left side with antipathy. The right side has been related to a more positive sense while the left side connected with a negative sense.

Eyes is an outstanding feature on face, Chinese and German use more animals and plants to describe the eyes. For beautiful eyes, *dan1feng4yan3*丹鳳眼 'red-phoenix-eyes = a form of eyes with raising corners', *Reh Augen* 'deer-eyes = beautiful blue eyes'. For eyesight, *Adleraugen* 'eagle eyes = to have a very good eyesight', *eulenäugig* 'owl-eyed = to have an excellent night eyesight', and *ojos de lince* 'eyes of lynx = sharp eyes', they all indicate admiration of keen eyesight. Chinese and German akin to compare human eyes with animals because animal's beautiful eye shape or special eyesight, as we can see also in some of the above examples.

The EEs used to describe the appearance of the eyes often connote something else, such as eyesight, mood, or personality, e.g., *eulenäugig* ‘owl-eyed’ means having an excellent night eyesight. *hu3yan3* 虎眼 ‘tiger-eyes’ refers to a angry look, and *bai2ge1yan3* 白鴿眼 ‘white-dove-eyes’ is a look of disdain.

Interestingly, ‘eagle eyes’ is given in all three languages. It means keen eyesight in German (*Adleraugen haben* ‘eagle eyes-have = to have eyes like a eagle; to have a very good eyesight’), but sharp expression in one’s eyes in Chinese (*ying1yan3* 鷹眼 ‘eagle-eyes = sharp expression in one's eyes’). Spanish behaves more like German, *tener ojo de águila* ‘to-have eyes of eagle = to have eyes like a hawk’ tends to mean the good eyesight. While German and Spanish focus on the super ability of the eagle eyes, Chinese takes the awe-struck quality of the eagle eyes.

Some EEs give life teaching. In Chinese, the Doctrine of Mean is a metaphysical philosophy. It emphasizes on against the extreme and not to stick to the same old principles. Thus the EE *zheng1yi4zhi1yan3*, *bi4yi4zhi1yan3* 睜一隻眼, 閉一隻眼 which literally means ‘open-one-eye, close-one-eye’ and refers to ‘turn a blind eye to something’. It is totally alright being ‘about right’ or ‘almost correct’ in Chinese culture; an exact correctness is not a Chinese pursuit.

In German, *Es fällt ihm wie Schuppen von den Augen* ‘It-falls-it-like-sheds-of-the-eyes = Something is very clear suddenly; finally someone understands something’ and *Einem ein Stachel im Auge sein* ‘someone-a-thorn-in-the-eye-be = to be a thorn in someone's side’ are from Bible. The Christians and Catholics have occupied one third of the population in Germany. Christmas is the greatest annual festival for the whole country. There are well-known passages widely used in German language and become part of German concepts and culture.

Spanish EEs also give life teaching. For example, *ojo por ojo* ‘eye for eye = an eye for an eye’,<sup>6</sup> *ojos que no ven, corazón que no llora/siente* ‘eyes that no see, heart that no

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<sup>6</sup> This EE is from the Bible (Matthew 5: 38) and is popular in all three languages, so the Chinese *yi3yan3huan2yan2* 以眼還眼 ‘with-eye-return-eye = an eye for an eye’ and the German *Auge um Auge* ‘an eye for an eye = the punishment for something will be the same as the offense’.

cry/feel = what the eye doesn't see, the heart does not grieve over', and *Cuatro ojos ven más que dos* 'four eyes see more than two = two heads are better than one'.

The EEs reveal cultural aspects of the languages; the history, the stories, life teaching, semantic preferences of collocation of respective EEs as well as cultural humor in Chinese, Spanish and German.

## 6. Conclusion

This study presents EEs in Chinese, Spanish and German to first examining the semantic molecules in order to test the hypothesis of body-part cognitive model BODY IS STATIC proposed by Hsieh & Lu (2012). As it is not completely apparent after the examination, we go on to study the tenors of the EEs. The top significant tenors of EEs and most of the tenors listed in Table 3 tend to indicate static manifestation that the EEs express more of the notion domain but less motion domain. BODY IS STATIC is confirmed.

We further recapitulated two themes that have surfaced sporadically during the course of our research.

Many EEs express emotion. We found that the verbs of the EEs play an important role in such emotion communication. The verbs that are inherit for other body parts, such as for mouth (bite, smile), skin (cold, hot), hands (cover, seize), and feet (walk), are borrowed or extended to the sight domain and assist the agent *eyes* to express emotion effectively. Bodily experiences work incorporately, for body and in linguistic.

Keesing (1981) exhibits that culture is a pattern of social behavior and social communication of a specific social group. The EEs tell cultural aspects of the languages such as the history and life teaching. The semantic preferences of collocation of respective EEs in Chinese, Spanish and German are revealed and briefly explained in terms of several fundamental cognitive linguistic premises.

Through this cross-linguistic study, we have provided new and further evidence in supporting the cognitive model of body-part expressions in languages, BODY IS STATIC, that is possibly universal, concluded from previous results related to cognitive semantic research of body parts including *hands* and *eyes* in different languages. Besides, contrastive analysis of different and specific linguistic features parametrically reflect the cross-cultural aspects such as life style and historical background. In conclusion, both universal and parametric findings have enhanced our linguistic knowledge from cultural perspectives and vice versa.

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