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The eyes for sight and mind[☆]

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Abstract

This is a study of metonymic and metaphoric expressions containing body-part terms for the eye(s) in Chinese. It also discusses similar expressions in English in order to provide a cross-linguistic perspective. It is found that Chinese and English share the conceptual metonymy PERCEPTUAL ORGAN STANDS FOR PERCEPTION and the conceptual metaphors SEEING IS TOUCHING and THINKING, KNOWING, OR UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING. At the level of linguistic instantiation, however, there are both similarities and differences between the two languages. These similarities and differences take three major forms: (1) similar expressions with similar meanings, (2) similar expressions with different meanings, and (3) different expressions with similar meanings. It is shown that, despite the fact that imagination is involved in these metonymic and metaphoric expressions, they seem to have experiential roots in common bodily experiences as they arise from the interaction between culture and body.

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1. Introduction

In this study, I attempt to analyze the metaphoric and metonymic nature of the Chinese compounds and idioms that contain the body-part terms for ‘eye(s)’ from a cognitive linguistic perspective (Barcelona, 2000a; Dirven and Pörings, 2002; Gibbs

[☆] While using the English word mind in the title of this paper, I am aware that words of this kind could be language-specific and should be used with care in doing cross-linguistic analysis. Differences in categorization and lexicon across languages and cultures have in part motivated the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) advocated by Wierzbicka and her colleagues (see, e.g., Wierzbicka, 1992, 1999; Goddard and Wierzbicka, 1994).

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and Steen, 1999; Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, 1999; Panther and Radden, 1999). According to cognitive linguistics, metaphor and metonymy are cognitive mechanisms that give rise to conceptual projection. Metaphor involves conceptual mappings across different experiential domains; the target domain is understood in terms of the source domain. For metonymy, on the other hand, conceptual mappings take place across different subdomains within the same common, or superordinate, experiential domain so that the source domain mentally activates the target domain (Barcelona, 2000b). In actuality, however, “the distinction between metaphor and metonymy is scalar, rather than discrete: they seem to be points on a continuum of mapping processes” (Barcelona, 2000b: 16), and they are often mingled together in complicated interaction and combination. It has been noted that metonymy may be a more fundamental cognitive phenomenon than metaphor (Panther and Radden, 1999) and, in many cases, metaphor may be motivated by metonymy (Barcelona, 2000c).¹ At the linguistic level, metaphor and metonymy are main motivating forces behind much of semantic evolution and extension.

In Chinese, the two basic body-part terms for the eyes are yan ‘eye(s)’ and mu ‘eye(s)’, the latter being a more formal counterpart of the former. Besides, the disyllabic word yanjing, which literally means ‘eye(s) and eyeball(s)’, is also commonly used for ‘eye(s)’ in modern Chinese. I believe that the large number of compounds and idioms involving ‘eye(s)’ in the Chinese lexicon reflect the importance of our eyes as organs of sight in particular, and of cognition in general.

As the old Chinese sayings go:

- (1) a. Bai wen bu-ru yi jian.
 hundred hearing not-as-good-as one seeing
 ‘It is better to see once than to hear a hundred times.’
- b. Yan-jian wei shi, er-wen wei xu.
 eyes-seeing is solid ears-hearing is void
 ‘What one sees is real whereas what one hears may not.’

Both of these sayings stress the belief that seeing for oneself is better than hearing from others. They highlight the importance of our eyes as our organ of vision in getting to know the world in which we live. With our eyes we see and read. Seeing and reading are important channels through which we expand the territory of our knowledge and cognition. As indicated by the sayings, our eyes, i.e. vision, are more important than our ears, i.e. hearing, although they both are our essential organs of perception.

¹ In cognitive linguistics, while metaphor is well defined, metonymy has given rise to some controversy in terms of how it works. For current issues and recent developments in cognitive linguistic studies of metaphor and metonymy, see Barcelona (2000a), Dirven and Pörings (2002), Gibbs and Steen (1999), and Panther and Radden (1999).

The eyes are important not only for what they do, but also for how they look. They are important physical features that constitute people's identity. While the face is the most distinctive part of a person, both physically and socially (Yu, 2001a), its focus is really where the eyes are, paralleled by the brows (Yu, 2002). In Chinese, the eyes and brows are paired together both conceptually and linguistically as high-lights of the face, the latter as a whole being the barometer of emotions and states of mind (Yu, 2001a, 2002). The compounds in (2), illustrated in (3), serve as good exemplification.²

- (2) a. mei-yan (brow-eye) 'appearance; looks'
 b. mei-mu (brow-eye) 'features; looks; logic (of writing); sequence of ideas; prospect of a solution; sign of a positive outcome'
 c. mian-mu (face-eye) 'face; features; look; appearance (of things); self-respect; honor; sense of shame; face (as dignity)'
- (3) a. Xiao guniang mei-yan zhang de hen jun.
 little girl brow-eye look COM very pretty
 'The little girl is very pretty.'
- b. Jihua you le mei-mu.
 plan have PRT brow-eye
 'The plan is beginning to take shape.'
- c. Ta zhengzhi mian-mu bu qing.
 he political face-eye not clear
 'He is of dubious political background.'

Apparently, the compounds in (2) have developed their metonymic and metaphoric meanings to various extents. Underlying these semantic extensions are some conceptual metonymies and metaphors, such as THE PART STANDS FOR THE WHOLE and THE MIND IS A BODY. Thus, brows and eyes are such important features of the human face that they together stand for the whole face or looks (2a and 2b). Furthermore, (2b) is also mapped metaphorically onto an abstract domain to refer to the 'face' of abstract things. If people's brows and eyes are pretty, they are 'good-looking' as a whole (3a). If things, concrete or abstract, start to show their 'brows and eyes', then they have already gained a 'face' and taken 'shape' (3b). Similarly, 'face and eyes' in (2c) are so important that they can stand for the whole

² In collecting Chinese and English data I used the following sources: Lü and Ding, 1980, 1989, 1996; Wei, 1995; Wen, 1996; Wu, 1993; Lakoff, 1993b; Worrall, 1975; *Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms* (Cambridge University Press, 1998); *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (New edition, Oxford University Press, 1976); and *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Longman, 1978). A character version of the Chinese examples is provided in the appendix. All the examples are numbered in the appendix as they are in the main text. Those in square brackets occur unnumbered within the text. For glossing purposes, MOD=modifier marker, COM=complement marker, and PRT=particle, used in a broad sense.

look of a person. As in (3c), they also refer to the abstract look, say, ‘political appearance’, of a person.³

The importance of the eyes in what we do and who we are is certainly reflected in the Chinese language. In this study, which is part of my recent attempt to investigate the role of the body in human meaning and understanding (see also Yu, 2000, 2001a, b, 2002, 2003a, b, c), I examine how Chinese compounds and idioms involving the body-part terms for ‘eyes’ have derived their metonymic and metaphoric meanings based on the role of the eyes as part of our body. In Section 2, I discuss the Chinese way of talking about ‘seeing with the eyes’. In Section 3, I discuss how ‘seeing with the eyes’ is mapped onto thinking, knowing, understanding, and other mental activities. In Section 4, I discuss English idioms with *eye(s)*. In Section 5, I take a comparative perspective on similarities and differences between the two languages. Section 6 presents the conclusion.

2. The eyes for sight in Chinese

In Chinese, seeing with one’s eyes is often talked about in terms of a ray of ‘light’ traveling from the eyes to the target (Yu, 2001b). Underlying the linguistic expressions is the common image schema, SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, upon which several conceptual metaphors operate, including EYES ARE LIGHT SOURCES and SEEING IS REACHING OUT AND TOUCHING. That is, seeing involves ‘spatial movement’ and ‘physical contact’, the contact between the traveling ‘eye light’ or, sometimes, even the eyes themselves and the target. For instance,

- (4) a. mu-guang (eye-light) ‘eye; sight; vision; view; gaze; look’
 b. yan-guang (eye-light) ‘eye; sight; foresight; insight; vision’
 c. mu-ji (eye-hit) ‘see with one’s own eyes; witness’
 d. mu-ji zhe (eye-hit person) ‘eyewitness; witness’

As in (4a) and (4b), the eyes are ‘light sources’ that can extend a ray of ‘light’ to the target. Thus, seeing with one’s own eyes literally means ‘one’s eye hits the target’ (4c), and an eyewitness is ‘a person whose eye has hit the target’ (4d). In other words, seeing takes place when one’s eye ‘reaches’ the target. Example (5) contains two sentences illustrating (4a) and (4b).

- (5) a. Liang ren-de mu-guang peng-dao yiqi.
 two persons’ eye-light bump together
 ‘The two persons’ eyes met’ (lit. Their eye lights bumped each other).
 b. Ta-de yan-guang ruili, shenme shiqing dou man-bu-guo ta.
 her eye-light sharp-pointed whatever things all unable-hide-from her
 ‘You can hide nothing from her sharp eyes.’

³ Readers are referred to Yu (2001a) for a detailed discussion of ‘face’ as self-respect, honor, sense of shame, dignity, and so on.

(5a) shows that when two persons' eyes meet, their 'eye lights' actually 'bump into' each other in the air. The 'eye light' that moves in space has force, it has a sharp point, as it were, that can penetrate like a dagger. In Chinese, as in (5b), the 'eye light' is often modified or predicated by such adjectives as *ruili*, *xili*, and *fengrui*, which all primarily mean 'sharp-pointed' or 'sharp-edged' and are associated with weapons like daggers and swords. So, the use of these adjectives is metaphorical in that they cause the 'eye light' to acquire properties of metal weapons. Note that in (5b) the 'eye light' itself is also subject to a metaphoric interpretation in which the person actually gets to 'know', rather than sees with her own eyes, all the things happening around her (I will come back to this point in Section 3). In fact, the BODY PART FOR PERSON metonymy is also at work in the instance.

The compounds in (6) all describe various ways of seeing or viewing. They manifest the metonymy PERCEPTUAL ORGAN STANDS FOR PERCEPTION. At the same time, they seem to be metaphorical, too, since they suggest that seeing is 'reaching out and touching'.

- (6) a. *guo-mu* (pass-eye) 'look over so as to check or approve; read quickly through'
 b. *ju-mu* (raise-eye) 'raise one's eyes (to look into the distance)'
 c. *ji-mu* (reach the utmost point-eye) 'look as far as the eye can see'
 d. *qiong-mu* (reach the limit-eye) 'look as far as the eye can see'
 e. *zong-mu* (release-eye) 'look as far as one's eyes can see'
 f. *cheng-mu* (give free rein to-eye) 'look as far as the eye can see; look into the distance'
 g. *fang-yan* (let go/set free-eye) 'take a broad view; scan widely'
 h. *zhuo-yan* (put to-eye) 'see/view from the angle of; have sth. in mind'

When people look over or read through something, that something 'passes their eye light' (6a), just as in 'scanning'. As people look into the distance, they 'raise their eyes' so that 'the eye light will travel farther' (6b). To look as far as the eye can see means that one makes 'the eye light reach the utmost point or limit' (6c and 6d). To do this, one needs to 'let the eye light go as far as it can' (6e, 6f, and 6g). Example (6h) is usually used in a metaphorical sense. When you 'put your eye (light) to something', you actually set a 'viewpoint' that shapes your 'view' of the whole situation. Example (7) is a saying that makes use of this metaphor.

- (7) Da-chu zhuo-yan, xiao-chu zhuo-shou.
 large-place put to-eye small-place put to-hand
 'Keep the general goal in sight (or bear larger interests in mind) while taking hold of the daily tasks' (lit. Put one's eyes to large things, and put one's hands to small things).

That is, one should 'think big' and 'act small'. Only when you 'see' the general goal and 'handle' the ordinary tasks day in and day out can you actually succeed. Here the verb *zhuo* 'put to' suggests actual contact between the 'eyes' and the 'hands' on one side, and the 'big things' and 'small things' on the other, but this 'contact' should be interpreted metonymically or even metaphorically. Metonymically, we

have, here, PERCEPTUAL ORGAN FOR PERCEPTION (OR EYES FOR SEEING) and INSTRUMENTALITY FOR ACTIVITY (OR HANDS FOR DOING). In reality, however, this saying may simply describe a situation in which people ‘keep the general goal in mind while working on the daily tasks’. That is, they do not see their goal with their eyes at all, and they do not necessarily work with their hands. In that case, the use of words *yan* ‘eye(s)’ and *shou* ‘hand(s)’ is metaphorical in this saying.

The compounds in (6) all describe a person who sees in a certain manner. There are also many compounds involving ‘eyes’ that describe the target that in one way or another attracts people’s attention. In this case, the metaphor is CAUSING TO SEE IS CATCHING THE EYE (LIGHT), in addition to the metonymy PERCEPTUAL ORGAN STANDS FOR PERCEPTION. The compounds in (8) are some examples.

- (8) a. re-yan (invite/provoke-eye) ‘conspicuous; showy’
 b. zhao-yan (beckon-eye) ‘eye-catching’
 c. chu-yan (touch-eye) ‘eye-catching; striking; conspicuous’
 d. da-yan (beat-eye) ‘catch the eye; attract attention’
 e. zha-yan (prick-eye) ‘dazzling; offending to the eye; loud; offensively conspicuous’
 f. ci-mu (thorn/stab-eye) ‘dazzling; offending to the eye’
 g. duo-mu (seize-eye) ‘catch the eye; dazzle the eyes; be striking to the eye’
 h. lüe-mu (brush past-eye) ‘sweep past one’s eye’

In these compounds, the target seems to be animate and have force of its own. It ‘attracts’ one’s attention by contact with one’s ‘eye light’ or eyes themselves. Thus, it can ‘invite’ or ‘provoke’ the eyes (8a), ‘beckon’ to the eyes (8b), ‘touch’ or ‘beat’ the eyes (8c and 8d), ‘prick’, ‘thorn’, or ‘stab’ the eyes (8e and 8f), or even ‘seize’ the eyes (8g). Example (8h) is different in that it describes a situation in which the target ‘sweeps in and out of one’s eyesight’ very quickly. The eyesight, however, is the range of one’s ‘eye light’. In these examples, seeing takes place when the target ‘comes into one’s sight’ or ‘catches one’s eye’. Either way, there is ‘physical contact’ involved.

In this section, we have seen how Chinese, using the compounds and idioms containing ‘eye(s)’, describes seeing with one’s eyes. The conceptual metonymy involved is PERCEPTUAL ORGAN STANDS FOR PERCEPTION. Moreover, seeing is also described metaphorically in terms of ‘touching’, that is, as contact between the eye (light) and the target. The underlying conceptual metaphor is SEEING IS TOUCHING. The eyes can send the ‘eye light’ to the target. Conversely, the target can catch the ‘eye light’ or even contact the eyes directly. Of course, the distance the ‘eye light’ can travel is limited. The limits constitute one’s eyesight.

3. The eyes for mind in Chinese

The metonymic and metaphoric use of the body-part terms for ‘eyes’ has been found in various domains in Chinese. For instance, it has been found in the domain of time (see Yu, 1998, 1999), as exemplified by the following words:

- (9) a. yan/mu-qian (eye-front) ‘at the moment; at present; now’
 b. yan-kan (eye-see) ‘soon; in a moment’
 c. zhuan-yan (turn-eye) ‘in the twinkling of an eye; in an instant; in a flash’
 d. zha-yan (blink-eye) ‘very short time; wink; twinkle’

Note that in Chinese, as well as in English, the future is ‘ahead of us’ whereas the past is ‘behind us’ (see, e.g. Lakoff, 1990, 1993a; Yu, 1998, 1999). Thus, what is ‘right before our eyes’ is ‘now’ in time (9a), and what our eyes ‘see right before us’ is ‘soon’ to happen (9b). In these two examples, the spatial is mapped onto the temporal, and the physical onto the abstract, so they are metaphoric. Examples (9c) and (9d) are based on our bodily experience with our eyes: rolling or blinking our eyes takes just an instant of time. They are metaphoric with an apparent metonymic basis.

In this section, I focus on the compounds and idioms involving ‘eye(s)’ that do not describe seeing per se, but states or activities of the mind. In the previous section, there was a predominant pair of conceptual mappings: the first one is metonymic, and the second is metaphoric, namely: PERCEPTUAL ORGAN STANDS FOR PERCEPTION and SEEING IS TOUCHING. In both of these cases, seeing is the target domain, with mappings from more concrete source domains (the eyes and touching). The examples to be considered in this section retain that pair of conceptual metonymy and metaphor and extend the pair to a new predominant metaphor, MENTAL FUNCTION (thinking, knowing, and understanding) IS PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE (seeing), on which my discussion will concentrate.

As illustrated by the following saying, our eyes, as organ of sight, are connected to our heart and mind:

- (10) Yanjing shi xinling-de chuanghu.
 eyes are heart/mind’s window
 ‘One’s eyes are the windows into one’s heart/mind.’

One’s mental states and activities include emotions and feelings. In Chinese, there are a large number of compounds and idioms involving ‘eye(s)’ for the description of emotions because the eyes, paired with brows, are conceived of as most expressive of emotions. In what follows, however, I will not include those compounds and idioms because I have dealt with them elsewhere (see Yu, 1995, 1998, 2002). Instead, I will concentrate on the description of mental states and activities other than emotions and feelings. The linguistic instances, in one way or another, all manifest the conceptual metaphor THINKING, KNOWING, OR UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING, which can be seen as a sub-version of the central metaphor THE MIND IS A BODY (see, e.g. For-tescue, 2001; Jäkel, 1995; Johnson, 1992; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Radden, 1996; Sweetser, 1990; Turner, 1991; Yu, 2001b). As will be seen shortly, THINKING, KNOWING, OR UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING entails two related mappings, MENTAL CAPABILITY IS EYESIGHT and MENTAL CAPACITY IS EYESHOT.

In the previous section, I showed that the Chinese talk about seeing in terms of ‘eye light’ sent from the eyes to the target. The ‘eye light’ is also mapped onto the domain of mental states and activities, as exemplified by (11).

- (11) a. Ta you zhengzhi yan-guang.
 he has political eye-light
 ‘He has political foresight.’
- b. Ta kaishi yong xin-de yan-guang lai guancha zhouwei shiwu.
 he begin use new eye-light to observe around things
 ‘He began to view everything around him in a different light (lit. a new eye light).’
- c. Women yinggai yong chang-yuan de yan-guang kan
 we should use long-far MOD eye-light see
chang-qi de fazhan qushi.
 long-term MOD developmental trend
 ‘We should take a long-range vision (lit. use a long-far eye light) to view the long-term developmental trend.’

In (11a), the person has the mental ability to predict and perhaps influence, for instance, the outcome of a current political situation. In (11b), the person now thinks and understands things around him differently, with a newly adopted outlook or perspective, which is ‘eye light’ in the Chinese original. In the English translation, ‘eye light’ is rendered as ‘light’, which of course affects the result of ‘viewing’ or ‘seeing’ as well. Example (11c) contains metaphorical mappings from the spatial to the temporal domain and from the physical to the mental domain, as is also reflected in the English translation. As we take a ‘long-range vision’, we ‘see far into the future’.

The idioms in (12) further illustrate the metaphorical sense of ‘eye light’. The farther one’s ‘eye light’ can extend, the better one’s mental vision is.

- (12) a. mu-guang yuan-da (eye-light far-large) ‘far-sighted; farseeing’
 b. mu-guang duan-qian (eye-light short-shallow) ‘short-sighted’
 c. mu-guang ru-ju (eye-light like-torch) ‘eyes blazing like torches-looking ahead with wisdom; far-sighted’
 d. mu-guang ru-dou (eye-light like-bean) ‘vision as narrow as a bean-of narrow vision; short-sighted’

Note that these idioms really refer to one’s mental capability rather than to physical eyesight. If someone’s ‘eye light’ is ‘far and large’, this person has great wisdom and predictive power. On the other hand, if someone’s ‘eye light’ is ‘short and shallow’, this person lacks intellectual wisdom and can only ‘see what lies right in front of the eyes’. The contrast between mental ‘farsightedness’ and ‘shortsightedness’ is brought out by the simile added to the metaphor in (12c) and (12d). A torch is something that helps people see farther in the dark. When one’s ‘eye light’, like a torch, travels farther in the dark, the seeing person is one of vision and wisdom. If one’s ‘eye light’ is as tiny as a bean, it will not help the person ‘see’ in the dark, and the person is one of narrow vision and little wisdom. In other words, one’s mental capacity depends on how ‘bright’ one’s eyes are, as further illustrated by the idioms in (13).

- (13) a. yan-ming xin-liang (eye-bright heart-light) ‘see and think clearly; be sharp-eyed and clear-headed’
 b. xin-ming yan-liang (heart-bright eye-light) ‘see and think clearly; be sharp-eyed and clear-headed; be able to see everything clearly and correctly; be clear-minded and clear-sighted’

Examples (13a) and (13b) are synonymous. They emphasize the parallel relation between ‘seeing’ and ‘thinking’. If one ‘sees’ clearly, one also ‘thinks’ clearly. If one is ‘clear-minded’, one is ‘sharp-eyed’ as well. As we can see, ‘brightness’ of the eyes is really important: ‘brighter’ eyes are ‘sharper’ in vision. This is also illustrated by the idiomatic expressions in (14).

- (14) a. ming-yan ren (bright-eye person) ‘a person with a discerning eye; a person of good sense’
 b. ca-liang yanjing (rub-shining eye) ‘remove the scales from one’s eyes; keep one’s eyes shined/polished; sharpen one’s vigilance’
 c. shi-mu yi-dai (wipe-eye to-wait) ‘rub one’s eyes and wait; wait and see; wait expectantly (for sth. to happen); wait for the result anxiously’
 d. gua-mu xiang-kan (scrape-eye PRT-see) ‘look at sb. with new eyes; treat sb. with increased respect; regard sb. with special esteem’
- (15) a. Women yao ca-liang yanjing shipo tamen-de yinmou.
 we should rub-shine eyes see-through their schemes
 ‘We should sharpen our vigilance and guard against their schemes’ (lit. We should rub and shine our eyes so as to see through their schemes).
- b. Gu ren yun, “Shi bie san ri bian dang gua-mu xiang-kan”.
 ancient people say scholar away three days should be scrape-eye
xiang-kan”.
 PRT-seen
 ‘The ancients say, “A scholar who has been away three days must be looked at with new eyes.”’

As in (14a), a ‘bright-eyed person’ in Chinese is a person of good sense. (14b–d) all evoke the same image, that is, people have to ‘polish’ or ‘shine’ their eyes in order to ‘see’ better. Thus, they need to ‘shine their eyes by rubbing them’ to sharpen their vigilance (14b). When they anxiously ‘wait and see’, they ‘wipe their eyes’ to ‘polish’ them (14c). In (14d), the eyes are ‘polished’ by ‘scraping’ them. This is what happens when people ‘look at someone with new eyes’ or treat someone with increased respect. Example (15) provides sentential examples of (14b) and (14d). Example (15b) is a classic saying, which emphasizes the fact that a scholar can learn a lot and, therefore, ‘take on a new look’ in just three days. A ‘new look’ beyond recognition must be ‘seen with new (scraped) eyes’.

As we know from our bodily experiences with the eyes, we can see when our eyes are open, and cannot when they are closed. We tend to open our eyes widely when

we are alert. We tend to turn our eyes away from the person with whom we have fallen out. If our eyes are blocked by something, we cannot see even if our eyes are open. If our eyes are blind, we of course can see nothing. All this is reflected in the metaphorical use of metonymy-based compounds and idioms involving ‘eye(s)’, as in (16).

- (16) a. kai-yan (open-eye) ‘open one’s eyes; widen one’s view (or horizons); open one’s mental horizon; broaden one’s mind’
 b. bi-mu se-ting (close-eye stop-hearing [by plugging one’s ears]) ‘shut one’s eyes and stop one’s ears-cut oneself off from reality; turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to’
 c. deng-yan (stare-eye) ‘open one’s eyes wide; stare; glare’
 d. fan-mu (reverse-eye) ‘fall out; have a falling-out’
 e. zhang-yan fa (block-eye method) ‘cover-up; camouflage; throw dust in people’s eyes; a deceptive trick; means of camouflaging; a method to deflect suspicion from oneself’
 f. mang-mu (blind-eye) ‘blind; blindly’
 g. xia-yan (blind-eye) ‘blind’

Apparently, various metonymies, such as CAUSE FOR EFFECT, PRECONDITION FOR RESULT, MANNER FOR ATTITUDE, are operating in these examples, but our central interest here is in the conceptual metaphor: THINKING, KNOWING, OR UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING or, more generally, MENTAL FUNCTION IS PERCEPTION.

In (17a), a sentential example is provided for (16a). In this sentence, ‘open one’s eyes’ really means ‘widen one’s horizon of knowledge’. Example (17b) is somewhat different: here, the person’s ‘eyes open widely’ at the sight of money. That is, he is greedy. In (17c), ‘with one’s eyes open’ means ‘with full awareness’ while ‘with one’s eyes shut’ suggests ‘willingness and readiness (to accept the bad consequences)’.

- (17) a. Zhege zhanlanhui zhen jiao ren kai-yan.
 this exhibition really make people open-eye
 ‘The exhibition is a real eye-opener.’
 b. Ta zhege ren jian-qian yan-kai.
 he this person see-money eye-open
 ‘He’s such a person who is wide-eyed at the sight of money (i.e. greedy).’
 c. Wo zheng yan zuo, he yan shou.
 I opening eyes do shutting eyes accept
 ‘I did (it) with my eyes open, and I will accept (it, or its consequence) with my eyes shut (i.e. be willing and prepared to accept its consequence).’

The idiomatic saying in (18a) below is related to (16b). Each human being has two eyes. If a person ‘opens one eye’ and ‘closes the other’, then this person is pretending not to ‘see’ something that he actually ‘sees’. People sometimes don’t want to see something bad, because ‘what is out of sight is out of mind’ (18b).

- (18) a. zheng yizhi yan, bi yizhi yan
 open one eye close one eye
 ‘turn a blind eye to sth.; close one’s eyes to sth.; wink at sth.’
- b. yan bu jian, xin bu fan
 eyes not see heart not worry
 ‘what the eye doesn’t see the heart doesn’t worry about—out of sight, out of mind’

The sentence in (19a) illustrates (16c). When people work on something with ‘staring eyes’, they take it seriously and deal with it with no reservation. The people in (19a) dare to work on management with their ‘eyes staring’. The ‘staring eyes’ in this case is originally associated metonymically with people’s attitude toward their work, but is now used metaphorically, regardless of the metonymic link between manner and attitude, to describe their mental state of being bold and brave. Examples (19b) and (19c) respectively exemplify (16e) and (16f). Apparently, they are about people’s mental ‘blindness’ rather than their inability to see physically.

- (19) a. Women gan yu deng-qi-yan-lai zhua guanli.
 we dare to staring-eyes work-on management
 ‘We dare to work on management with our eyes staring (i.e. boldly, bravely).’
- b. Ta mang-mu leguan.
 he blind-eye optimistic
 ‘He is unrealistically (lit. blindly) optimistic.’
- c. Wozhen xia-le-yan, ba-ta-dangzuo hao ren le.
 I really blind-PRT-eye take-him-for good person PRT
 ‘I was so blind as to take him for a gentleman.’

In real life, blind people cannot see; in metaphor, however, it is possible that seeing people still cannot ‘see’, as illustrated by the idioms in (20).

- (20) a. mu-wu-faji (eye-not have-law and discipline) ‘act in utter disregard of law and discipline; flout law and discipline’
- b. mu-zhong wu-ren (eye-inside no-people) ‘consider everyone beneath one’s notice; be supercilious; be overweening’
- c. mu-kong-yiqie (eye-void of-all) ‘consider everybody and everything beneath one’s notice; be supercilious’
- d. you-yan-bu-shi-Taishan (have-eye-not-recognize-Mount Tai) ‘have eyes but not see Mount Tai; entertain an angel unawares’

In (20a–c), when the idioms say that law and discipline, people, and things do not exist ‘inside one’s eye’, it actually means that they do not exist inside this person’s mind. That is, the person either disregards or ignores them, mentally. In (20d),

Mount Tai is a well-known mountain in China, and is taken as a symbol of great weight or import. Those who do ‘not see Mount Tai with their eyes’ do not recognize the great importance of someone or something.

In contrast, those who have extraordinary mental capability and wisdom are often said to ‘have a unique eye’, distinguished from all others, as the idioms in (21) say.

- (21) a. bie-ju zhi-yan (distinctively-have one-eye) ‘be able to see what others cannot; penetrating eye that sees things others cannot see; have an original view/opinion’
 b. du-ju hui-yan (uniquely-have intelligent-eye) ‘have exceptional insight; discern what others don’t; have mental discernment/perception’

In addition, one’s distinctive use of eyes can represent one’s attitude toward someone or something. However, the MANNER FOR ATTITUDE metonymy is often used metaphorically regardless of its experiential basis. For instance,

- (22) a. ling-yan xiang-kan (different-eye PRT-see) ‘regard (or look up to) sb. with special respect; give sb. special treatment; view sb. in a new, more favorable light; see sb. in a new light; treat sb. with special consideration’
 b. leng-yan xiang-kan (cold-eye PRT-see) ‘look coldly upon; look at coldly; look unfavorably upon; look with a cold eye; give sb. the cold eye’
 c. leng-yan xiang-dai (cold-eye PRT-treat) ‘snub sb.; give sb. the cold shoulder; turn the cold shoulder on sb.; give sb. the frozen mitt’
 d. leng-yan pang-guan (cold-eye side-look on) ‘look coldly from the sidelines at; look on as a disinterested bystander; look on indifferently or unconcerned; stand aloof and look on with cold indifference; take a detached point of view’

Example (22a) is somewhat related to (14d) above. A different attitude is manifested in a different eye look. Examples (22b–d) all involve ‘cold eye(s)’, which means either ‘cool detachment’ or ‘cold shoulder’ in attitude. It is worth noting that re-yan (hot-eye) is not a lexicalized item in Chinese. Yet, re-xin (hot-heart) means ‘enthusiastic’ or ‘warmhearted’ (cf. 23c). Chinese does have yan-re (eye-hot) as a lexical item, meaning ‘cast covetous eyes at sth.’, ‘eye sth. covetously’, or ‘be envious’ (see also Yu, 2002).

Finally, (23) provides a group of idioms that involve ‘eye(s)’ and another body part. The metaphorical nature of these idioms is obvious.

- (23) a. yan-da xin-fei (eye-big heart-fat) ‘be proud and arrogant’
 b. yan-gao xin-ao (eye-high heart-haughty) ‘be proud and haughty’
 c. leng-yan re-xin (cold-eye hot-heart) ‘outward indifference but inward fervency; affected indifference’
 d. ming-mu zhang-dan (bright-eye stretched-gallbladder) ‘brazenly; flagrantly’
 e. yan-gao shou-di (eye-high hand-low) ‘have high standards but little ability; have great ambition but little talent; have sharp eyes in criticizing others but clumsy hands in doing things oneself’

Examples (23a) and (23b) once again stress the close relationship between the ‘eyes’ and the ‘heart’ (cf. 13a and 13b). ‘Big-eyed’ and ‘fat-hearted’ people are proud and arrogant (23a). Their eyes are so ‘big’ and their heart is so ‘fat’ that others appear very ‘small’ in their eye or heart. It is interesting to note that in English, people who think too highly of their own importance have a ‘big head’ whereas those who are ‘big-hearted’ are generous people. In (23b), proud and haughty people have ‘high eyes’ and a ‘haughty heart’. Apparently, people with their eyes ‘high’ either ‘look down upon’ or ‘look over’ other people. Example (23c) describes a situation in which the person has ‘cold eyes’ but a ‘hot heart’ (cf. 22b–d), and the outward and the inward do not match. In (23d), the internal organ involved is the gallbladder, which is responsible for one’s courage, according to the theory of internal organs in Chinese medicine (Chen, 1989; Wang et al., 1997). The idiom is derogatory in meaning nowadays. Those who have their ‘eyes bright’ (i.e. eyes glaring) and ‘gallbladder stretched’ are brazen and flagrant. The ‘glaring eyes’ refers to a mental attitude, and a ‘stretched gallbladder’ has a larger capacity of (negative) ‘courage’ (see also Yu, 1995, 2002, 2003a).

The last example, (23e), coordinates ‘eyes’ with ‘hands’. As already mentioned, ‘high eyes’ are associated with pride and haughtiness (cf. 23b). This accords with the metaphorical conceptualization that what is perceived as superior is ‘higher’ in space, and vice versa. The hands are our most important external body parts with which we do things (see Yu, 2000, 2003c). The idiom as a whole describes people whose ability does not match their wishes, or who are too critical of others’ ability while they themselves are not capable at all. The division of labor for the eyes and hands as parts of our body is such that our eyes set goals and our hands act to achieve those goals. While we can ‘aim high’ with our eyes, our aim may be too high for us to ‘reach’ with our hands. What (23e) implies is that people should be realistic and tolerant. It is interesting, for our purpose, to note that the abstract concepts are expressed via metaphor that is bodily based and derived from metonymy.

In this section, I have presented data from Chinese evidencing that some mental states and activities are expressed in metonymic and metaphoric terms of how one’s eyes behave and see. Metonymy describes the physical conditions of the eyes that accompany, or ‘go along with’, certain states and activities of the mind so that the description of the former suggests or activates the latter (THE PHYSICAL FOR THE MENTAL). Based on metonymy, metaphor goes further and refers to certain states and activities of the mind in terms of physical conditions of the eyes that do not really fit, or ‘come along’ (THE MENTAL AS THE THE PHYSICAL). Via metaphor, for instance, physical eyesight is mapped onto mental capability, and physical eyeshot is mapped onto mental capacity. The metonymies and metaphors discussed here (which are intertwined with each other) seem to result from the role our eyes play as part of our body. As ‘windows’ into our mind, our eyes ‘show’ what we think. As organs of sight, they are major channels of cognition through which we get to know and understand the world: what we see, and how we see it, largely determine our knowledge and cognition of the world. In short, the metaphor (THE MENTAL AS THE PHYSICAL) is based on the metonymy (THE PHYSICAL FOR THE MENTAL), and the metonymy is rooted in common bodily experience.

4. The eyes for sight and mind in English

Lakoff (1993b) has discussed metaphors for perception in English. The general metaphor is PERCEPTION IS CONTACT BETWEEN PERCEIVER AND PERCEIVED, with two special cases: PERCEIVING IS TOUCHING and PERCEPTION IS RECEPTION. With respect to seeing, the more specific metaphor is SEEING IS TOUCHING. The use of the body-part term eye(s) in some cases, however, can be seen as involving the metonymy EYES STAND FOR SEEING (OR PERCEPTUAL ORGAN STANDS FOR PERCEPTION) that works in interaction and combination with the metaphor. First look at (24):

- (24) a. My eyes picked out every detail of the pattern.
 b. I've loved him ever since I first laid/set eyes on him.
 c. I can't take my eyes off her.
 d. His eyes are glued to the TV.
 e. Would you mind casting your eye over my essay and giving me your comments?
 f. They made eye contact.
 g. The dress in the window caught her eye when she passed the store.

While each of the above examples presents a unique way of interaction between the perceiver, his or her eye(s), and the perceived, they all suggest physical contact of some kind between someone's eye(s) and the target. The idiomatic collocations in (25) provide further exemplification. These expressions, which all mean that the target is 'eye-catching', make the target animate, so as to 'come into contact with one's eye(s)'.

- (25) a. take sb.'s eye
 b. jump to the eye(s)
 c. leap to the eye
 d. strike the eye
 e. hit sb. in the eye

What is more interesting is that the metaphor THINKING, KNOWING, OR UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING is richly manifested in English, just as it is in Chinese. This is reflected in the metonymic and metaphoric nature of the English idioms containing the body-part term eye(s).

- (26) a. She is nothing but a slave in her husband's eyes.
 b. It's just a gleam in my eye.
 c. He cast a professional economist's eye over the problem.
 d. The scientists at the meeting all cast a skeptical eye on that theory.

In (26a), the idiom in one's eyes means 'in one's opinion' or 'in one's mind', since how one 'sees' determines how one 'thinks'. In (26b), gleam in one's eye refers to 'a hazy idea in one's mind' given that the eyes are 'windows' into the mind. In (26c),

the person ‘views’ the problem from the ‘perspective’ of a professional economist. The ‘eye’ is ‘tinted’ by the special knowledge and mentality of a person with professional training in economics. The ‘eye’ in (26d), however, stands for the scientists’ mental attitude toward the theory. Again, the way they ‘look at’ the theory reflects how they think about it. All these examples are special cases of THINKING, KNOWING, OR UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING.

As can be seen, there is a close relationship between ‘sight’ and ‘mind’. A particular way of thinking, knowing, and understanding often derives from a particular way of seeing. Metonymy usually alludes to physical aspects associated with certain mental processes (THE PHYSICAL FOR THE MENTAL), whereas metaphor maps the physical onto the abstract domain of mental states and activities (THE MENTAL AS THE PHYSICAL). They are often tightly intertwined.

- (27) a. There were lots of dresses to choose from, but none of them really caught my eye.
 b. I’ve got my eye on a really nice sofa—I just hope we can afford it.
 c. He only has eyes for his beautiful wife.
 d. She has an eye for detail.
 e. All eyes are on the Prime Minister to see how he will respond to the challenge to his leadership.
 f. With an eye to the upcoming election the President has hired a new speech-writer.

Note that the phrase to catch one’s eye in (27a) is slightly different from the same one in (24g). It adds mental dimensions of ‘liking’ and ‘interest’ to the meaning of ‘being seen and noticed’ in the previous case. So does the eye in (27b), which suggests a ‘desire to possess’ on the part of the perceiver. Example (27c) expresses a man’s mental state, in which he is only interested in, and attracted to, his wife. Example (27d) is about a particular quality of a person, namely, her close attention to detail. Both (27e) and (27f) have to do with attention, too, but they differ in the degree of abstraction. In (27e) it is possible for people to ‘watch’ the Prime Minister in both physical and abstract senses, but the ‘upcoming election’ in (27f) is an event that cannot be ‘seen’ until it is ‘here’. These examples manifest the conceptual metaphors LIKING IS SEEING and PAYING ATTENTION IS SEEING. It is worth noting that both of these metaphors have a metonymic basis constructed from our bodily experience: our eye tends to be oriented toward what we like and where our attention is.

When people close their eyes for some reason, they cannot see. On the other hand, when their eyes are opened, they are able to see things they cannot see when their eyes are closed. Our bodily experiences with the eyes provide an experiential grounding for metaphors in language. In other words, these metaphors are motivated by, or based on, metonymy. For instance,

- (28) a. You can’t just shut your eyes to your problems and hope they’ll go away.
 b. The president turned a blind eye to corruption within his administration.

- c. I'll close my eyes to your mistake this time, my boy, but don't let it happen again.
- d. It was a mistake, and I did it with my eyes shut.
- e. He's finally opened his eyes to what has been going on behind his back.
- f. The way he deceived me opened my eyes to his true character.
- g. Living in an Indian village was a real eye-opener for all of us.
- h. It was difficult to succeed in the acting profession but I went into it with my eyes open.

The expressions in (28a–d) are all based on the bodily image of closing one's eyes, while those in (28e–h) find their bodily roots in opening one's eyes. The underlying metaphors are *PAYING ATTENTION IS SEEING* and *THINKING, KNOWING, OR UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING*, as well as their corresponding forms in negation.

Sometimes it is not enough to 'see with open eyes', and one has to do more in order to 'see' better, as shown by the following English idioms.

- (29) a. keep one's eyes open
 b. keep one's eyes polished
 c. keep one's eyes peeled
 d. keep one's eyes skinned

All these idioms mean 'keep a sharp look-out' or 'watch very carefully for something'. To watch carefully, of course, one has to 'keep one's eyes open', but that may not be enough. One can also make one's eyes 'shine' by 'polishing', 'peeling', or 'skinning' them (cf. 14b–d). Remember that *EYES ARE LIGHT SOURCES* (as in Chinese). More 'shining' eyes shed more 'light' and therefore 'see' better.

The examples in (30) below contain some more metaphorical expressions with eye(s).

- (30) a. We see eye to eye on most important issues.
 b. Anyone can see with half an eye that you're in love with her.
 c. He tried to throw dust in my eyes, but I knew he was lying.

People in complete agreement with each other 'see each other in the eye' (30a). If something can be seen without using one's full visual power, it must be obvious (30b). If people have dust in their eyes, they of course cannot see well (30c). What happens with examples like these is that the bodily experiences are mapped metaphorically onto more abstract concepts, such as agreement, obviousness, and deception. The metaphor, with its concrete experiential basis, helps us better understand those more abstract concepts.

5. A comparative view

Having presented data from both Chinese and English involving the body part 'eye(s)', I would like to touch upon some similarities and differences between these

two languages. First, it seems that both Chinese and English share the conceptual metonymy PERCEPTUAL ORGAN STANDS FOR PERCEPTION, or EYES FOR SEEING, and the conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING. That is, in both languages seeing is described in terms of the eye(s) and their physical contact with the target. For instance, both Chinese and English have a special case of SEEING IS TOUCHING, in which the target is animate in a metaphorical sense and ‘acts’ in a certain manner to ‘catch’ one’s eye. The examples in (8) for Chinese and those in (25) for English display a certain level of semantic similarity between the two languages.

While Chinese and English have the same conceptual metaphor SEEING IS TOUCHING, a difference seems to exist in the way the conceptual metaphor is manifested in each language. Lakoff (1993b) argues that in English the eyes are often understood as ‘limbs’ that can ‘reach out’ and ‘touch’ the target they see (see, e.g., 24a). On the other hand, in Chinese, as I have observed and discussed in Section 2, seeing is generally understood as the eyes sending out ‘eye light’ that ‘touches’ the target they see. My observation, nevertheless, does not exclude the possibility that the eyes-as-limbs metaphor is somehow dormant in Chinese; it may be activated in novel metaphorical expressions. In a similar vein, the metaphor SEEING IS CONTACT BETWEEN THE EYE LIGHT AND THE TARGET may also exist in English. I assume that the English word *eye* in its singular form, when meaning ‘power of seeing’, may be conceptualized as a beam of light extending from the eyes to the target. In fact, this conceptualization is sometimes manifested visually in Western cartoons and science fiction movies.

A second commonality between Chinese and English is that both languages share the conceptual metaphor THINKING, KNOWING, or UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING. Under this metaphor, the body-part terms for the eyes are used metaphorically to describe mental states and activities. The metaphorical expressions seem to be rooted in some common bodily experiences with the eyes. For instance, one has to open one’s eyes to ‘see’, and one cannot ‘see’ with closed or blind eyes.

In sum, both Chinese and English share the metonymic and metaphoric mappings that can be presented schematically as in Fig. 1. At the lower level, there are two mappings onto the same target domain, the perceptual experience of seeing. One is a metonymic mapping from the perceptual organ of eyes; the other is a metaphoric mapping from the physical action of touching. At the upper level, the perceptual experience of seeing now serves as the source domain, and is metaphorically mapped onto the mental function of thinking, knowing, or understanding, the target domain. These mappings, metonymic and metaphoric, show how ‘lower’ bodily experiences work their way up to help conceptualize ‘higher’ mental experiences, or how the more abstract is understood in terms of the more concrete.

While Chinese and English share the general conceptual mappings of metonymy and metaphor, at the linguistic level, however, there are both symmetrical and asymmetrical correspondences in the two languages. The correspondences in expression and meaning across the language boundary may take three major forms: (1) similar expressions with similar meanings, (2) similar expressions with different meanings, and (3) different expressions with similar meanings. Let me illustrate these forms with some examples. Consider the following pair.

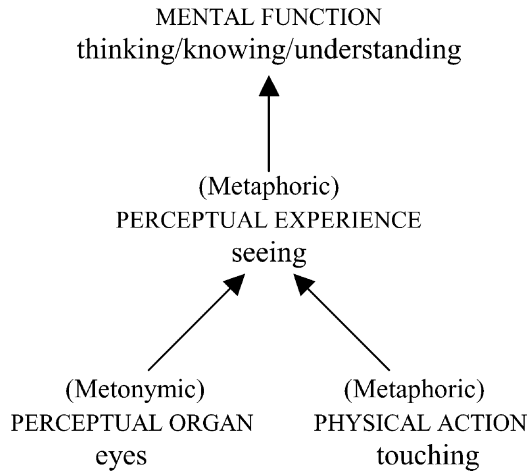


Fig. 1. Metonymic and metaphoric mappings shared by Chinese and English.

- (31) a. I can do it with my eyes shut.
- b. Na wo bi-zhe yanjing dou neng zuo.
 that I closed eyes still can do
 'I can do that with my eyes shut.'

This is an example of similar expressions with similar meanings, that is, one knows something very well and can do it 'with great ease'. The match seems to be parallel in both form and meaning. The English idiom with one's eyes shut, however, has a different meaning, 'without full awareness' (see 28d), that is not matched by the Chinese expression. This means that the match between the two expressions is still partial. For another example, let me refer back to (28h) for English and (17c) for Chinese. In both of these examples, 'with one's eyes open' roughly means 'knowing about all the problems there could be with something that one wants to do'. However, in the second half of (17c), 'with one's eyes shut' does not mean either 'without full awareness' or 'with great ease', but means something like 'disregarding, and ready for, the consequences'. In fact, there may not be many full matches parallel in both form and meaning across languages. For instance, in both Chinese and English people can 'shine' their eyes in order to 'see' better, but in English the eyes are 'polished', 'peeled', or 'skinned' (see 29 above) whereas in Chinese they are 'rubbed', 'wiped', or 'scraped' (see 14 above). Yet, the overall image and the metaphorical reasoning behind the expressions are quite similar. Expressions of this kind are imaginative in nature, but they are still experientially grounded in the very nature of our eyes as organ of sight. They can mean what they mean because we have the kind of eyes we have.

Now, let us look at an example of similar expressions with different meanings. In both Chinese and English, the image of having eyes in the back of one's head is used, but with different meanings based on different kinds of reasoning.

(32) a. Parents of young children have to have eyes in the back of their heads.

b. Ni yanjing zhang dao hou-nao-shao shang la?
 you eyes grow to back-of-the-head on PRT
 ‘Do you have your eyes grown on the back of your head?’

In the English sentence, if people ‘have eyes in the back of their heads’, they ‘know everything that is happening around them’ thanks to their having ‘extra eyes’, on both sides of their heads. In contrast, in the Chinese sentence, ‘having one’s eyes grown on the back of one’s head’ means ‘having one’s (two) eyes in a wrong place’, and the consequence is that one ‘cannot see what one is supposed to see’. Remember that our face, on which our eyes should grow, is on the ‘interactive side’ of our body (see Yu, 2001a for a detailed discussion). The eyes in the back of one’s head are on the ‘wrong’ side. It is worth mentioning here that (32b) is an idiomatic Chinese expression, often cast in the form of a rhetorical question and used to blame someone. Relevant to the above contrast is the following Chinese sentence taken from actual discourse:

(33) Ren ma, dou shi you qian yan mei hou yan de.
 humans PRT all PRT have front eyes don’t-have back eyes PRT
 ‘It is human to have only front eyes, not back eyes.’

This sentence emphasizes humans’ limitation in thinking, knowing, and understanding by referring metaphorically to the structure of their bodies. Humans can only have a ‘one-sided view’ at a time, although it might be desirable to be able to ‘see’ both front and back at the same time, as in (32a).

A good example of different expressions with similar meanings is found in (18a) for Chinese and (28b) and (28c) for English. In Chinese, when pretending not to notice something bad or allowing the person who did it to go ‘unnoticed’ or unpunished, people would ‘have one eye open and the other eye closed’. ‘With one eye open’, they have actually ‘seen’ what is going on. ‘With the other eye closed’, they pretend not to ‘see’ it. On the other hand, in English people simply ‘turn a blind eye’ or ‘close their eyes’ to the bad thing they do not want to deal with. That is, they do not want to, or pretend not to, see something they have already seen. Here, different bodily images (with one eye open and the other eye closed vs. with both eyes closed or ‘blind’) contribute to a common metaphor, PAYING ATTENTION IS SEEING, in both languages.

At this point, it is interesting to mention another English example in contrast with the Chinese example (18a). When talking about his experience of watching the soccer games of the World Cup in Japan and Korea live on TV during his usual sleeping hours (late night and early morning), an American said, “I watched those games with one eye open and the other eye closed”. In this case, the expression ‘with one eye open and the other eye closed’ describes his ‘suffering entertainment’ in the experience. Obviously, it differs in meaning from the similar Chinese expression in (18a).

The examples mentioned above merely illustrate how two languages can be similar or different in their match-ups between expression and meaning. But these are just surface linguistic phenomena and, no matter how similar or different, they are governed by their underlying conceptual metaphors, such as THINKING, KNOWING, or UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING and PAYING ATTENTION IS SEEING, which, shared by both languages, are grounded in our common bodily experiences with our eyes as the most important organ of perception and cognition. At the same time, while human beings all have similar bodies that function in similar ways, cultures may attach different values to, and make different interpretations of, certain parts of the body and certain aspects of the bodily experience (see also Yu, 2000, 2001a,b, 2002, 2003a, c). That is how, and why, in different languages, different bodily images may converge to the same metaphorical import, and the same bodily image may diverge into different metaphorical interpretations.

In summary, there is a broad range of common bodily experiences that serve as the breeding ground for conceptual metonymies and metaphors beneath their linguistic manifestations. In each language, however, only a portion of it is cultivated, as determined by cultural preferences. The existence of uncultivated areas accounts for the phenomenon in which a particular metonymic or metaphoric expression in one language is readily understandable in another even though it has no equivalent in that language. It should be pointed out that the stress on common bodily experiences as breeding ground for metonymy and metaphor does not deny the fact that there are metonymies and metaphors that fall outside its boundaries. It can be hypothesized, however, that those originating outside are culture-specific and, for that matter, may be more opaque in comprehension, especially to speakers of other languages.

6. Conclusion

In talking about the ‘turn toward the body’ in contemporary scholarship in the human sciences, Csordas (1994: 1) says:

Much has been written about the body in recent years. Beginning in the early 1970s, and with increased energy in the late 1980s, the body has assumed a lively presence on the anthropological scene, and on the stage of interdisciplinary cultural studies. Feminist theory, literary criticism, history, comparative religion, philosophy, sociology, and psychology are all implicated in the move toward the body.

Notably, the list of disciplines mentioned does not include linguistics. Linguistics may have made a slower turn in this intellectual move. However, in the field of linguistics during the past two decades, a branch known as cognitive linguistics has been leading in this turn. In cognitive linguistics, a central concern is the role of the body, and its interaction with culture, in human meaning and understanding.

According to cognitive linguistics, our embodiment in and with the physical and cultural worlds sets out the contours of what is meaningful to us and determines the ways of our understanding (Johnson, 1987, 1999). From the cognitive perspective, metonymy describes the bodily ‘that is’, whereas metaphor describes the bodily ‘that might have been’. That is why cognitive linguistics postulates a metonymic basis for metaphor (see, e.g. Barcelona, 2000a, b, c; Dirven and Pörings, 2002; Panther and Radden, 1999).

In this study, I have discussed the metonymic and metaphoric nature of Chinese compounds and idioms involving body-part terms for ‘eye(s)’. I have also adopted a cross-linguistic perspective, taking into account English idioms containing *eye(s)*. I have found that the two languages share the conceptual metonymy PERCEPTUAL ORGAN STANDS FOR PERCEPTION, and the conceptual metaphors SEEING IS TOUCHING, THINKING, KNOWING, OF UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING, and PAYING ATTENTION IS SEEING. At the level of linguistic instantiation, there are both similarities and differences in the metonymic and metaphoric expressions between Chinese and English. Whether similar or different, these expressions seem to have an experiential grounding in our common bodily experiences with the eyes. Apparently, human imagination is involved in the use of metonymy and metaphor investigated here, but this imagination seems to be rooted in the basic structure of our body, and in the division of labor for our body parts. Very often, metonymy and metaphor emerge in the interaction between body and culture. While the body is a potentially universal source domain for metonymies and metaphors that structure abstract concepts, cultural models set up specific perspectives from which certain aspects of bodily experience or certain parts of the body are viewed as especially salient and meaningful in the understanding of those abstract concepts (see Gibbs 1999; Yu, 2000, 2001a, 2002, 2003a, c). Systematic studies of linguistic data should be able to shed light on how this happens, and cross-linguistic studies of metonymies and metaphors may reveal cultural differences and potential universals in human cognition.

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Appendix. The character version of the Chinese examples

[眼、目、眼睛] (1) a. 百闻不如一见。b. 眼见为实，耳闻为虚。(2) a. 眉眼 b. 眉目 c. 面目 (3) a. 小姑娘眉眼长得很俊。b. 计划有了眉目。c. 他政治面目不清。(4) a. 目光 b. 眼光 c. 目击 d. 目击者 (5) a. 两人的目光碰到了一起。b. 她的眼光锐利，什么事情都瞒不过她。[锐利、犀利、锋锐] (6) a. 过目 b. 举目 c. 极目 d. 穷目 e. 纵目 f. 骋目 g. 放眼 h. 着眼 (7) 大处着眼，小处着手。(8) a. 惹眼 b. 招眼 c. 触眼 d. 打眼 e. 扎眼 f. 刺眼 g. 夺目 h. 掠目 (9) a. 眼/目前 b. 眼看 c. 转眼 d. 眨眼 (10) 眼睛是心灵的窗户。(11) a. 他有政治眼光。b. 他开始用新的眼光来观察周围事物。c. 我们应该用长远的眼光看长期的发展趋势。(12) a. 目光远大 b. 目光短浅 c. 目光如炬 d. 目光如豆 (13) a. 眼明心亮 b. 心明眼亮 (14) a. 明眼人 b. 擦亮眼睛 c. 拭目以待 d. 刮目相看 (15) a. 我们要擦亮眼睛识破他们的阴谋。b. 古人云，“士别三日便当刮目相看。” (16) a. 开眼 b. 闭目塞听 c. 瞪眼 d. 反目 e. 障眼法 f. 盲目 g. 瞎眼 (17) a. 这个展览会真叫人开眼。b. 他这个人见钱眼开。c. 我睁眼做，合眼受。(18) a. 睁一只眼，闭一只眼 b. 眼不见，心不烦 (19) a. 我们敢于瞪起眼来抓管理。b. 他盲目乐观。c. 我真瞎了眼，把他当作好人了。(20) a. 目无法纪 b. 目中无人 c. 目空一切 d. 有眼不识泰山 (21) a. 别具只眼 b. 独具慧眼 (22) a. 另眼相看 b. 冷眼相看 c. 冷眼相待 d. 冷眼旁观 [热心、眼热] (23) a. 眼大心肥 b. 眼高心傲 c. 冷眼热心 d. 明目张胆 e. 眼高手低 (31) b. 那我闭着眼睛都能做。(32) b. 你眼睛长到后脑勺上啦? (33) 人嘛，都是有前眼没后眼的。

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