

## **A cognitive study of the conceptualization of "eye" in Arabic Idioms**

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### **Objectives of Study**

Regarding the findings of cognitive linguistics, a field that scrutinizes language in the context of human cognitive experience, the structure of language is a precise manifestation of cognition, which pertains to the information stored in the human mind. (Lee, 2001:2) The formation of the conceptual structure of the human mind is influenced by various experiences, including those received by the body. The principle of "embodied cognition" is a central tenet of the cognitive approach to language, which explores this topic in depth. The prevalence of organ-based terminology across languages suggests that individuals possess a comprehensive understanding of external phenomena through the lens of bodily anatomy and physiology as well as function.

The production of concepts related to the body is influenced by cultural and social factors, as evidenced by variations in the emphasis placed on specific organs and how they are conceptualized, despite the universal nature of bodily conceptualization. Put differently, the analysis of lexicon and terminology related to bodily organs suggests that diverse societies conceive distinct anatomical regions as the spatial location of the psyche, potentially emphasizing specific bodily organs in this regard.

The Arabic language, akin to other contemporary languages, has not overlooked the body as a universal concept, as evidenced by the presence of expressions such as Ghaliz al-Qalb, Raas al-Mozou, Ayn al-Haqiqah, and numerous other fundamental organ terms, each of which pertains to a specific body part. The term "eye" exhibits a notable prevalence across numerous languages worldwide as a designation for the organ of sight. The author was motivated to conduct independent research utilizing a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the conceptualizations of the term "Ayn" which means eye. It is noteworthy to mention that the analysis of semantic stimulation of terms involves the utilization of conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, and conventional knowledge as mechanisms.

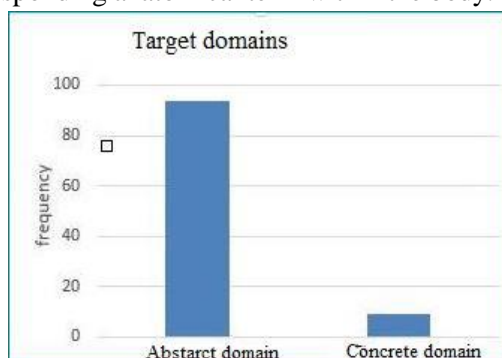
### **Method and Material**

The cognitive capacity of the "eye" organ and its function in representing both mental and physical states have rendered it a subject of interest for linguists, who have employed a variety of terminologies based on this organ to conceptualize a broad spectrum of themes and meanings. The Arabic language has demonstrated an appreciation for the cognitive capacity of the term "Ayn," (eye) as evidenced by the considerable number of lexical items that are derived from this anatomical designation. This study conducted a

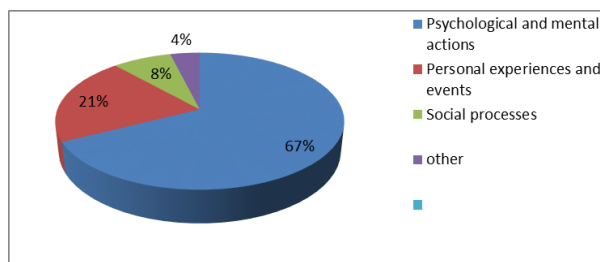
cognitive analysis on terms that include the word "Ayn" from a linguistic corpus consisting of over 7,000 terms from the three-volume cultural work "Al-Ma'jam al-Musa'i Lel-Tabir al-Istlahi fi Al-Lagha Al-Arabiya" authored by Mohammed Mohammad Dawood. The terms that were extracted were subjected to analysis, utilizing the classification of Zoltan Kovecses, which identifies the most prevalent target domains.

## Findings

Data analysis indicated the efficacy of utilizing the term "Ayn" to denote the organ in question and its corresponding anatomical term within the body.



The first figure shows that abstract target domains have a greater share than concrete domains.



The second figure depicts the frequency distribution of the target domain, wherein it is observed that the "psychological and mental functions" domain exhibit a statistically significant difference from the other domains.

## Conclusion

The findings of the current study suggest that the term "Ayn" in the Arabic language serves as a cognitive instrument for the conceptualization of various domains. The majority of these domains are abstract and amenable to modification for the prevailing target domains commonly denoted as "Kovecses". The domain of "psychological and mental functions" exhibits the greatest frequencies among the designated target domains.

The domain of "psychological functions" draws upon the conceptual metaphor that "emotions are liquid in a container." This serves as the foundation for the development of the metaphorical expression "the eye is a container of feelings," as well as the conceptual metonymy of "the effect of feeling instead of feeling," which is a component of the broader metaphor "body is a container." The aforementioned component of language serves as the cognitive mechanism responsible for conceptualizing a range of affective states.

The conceptual metaphor "mental is bodily" is a widely utilized conceptual metaphor by creating "knowing/understanding/thinking/seeing" which were used to describe mental functions such as thinking, understanding, and knowing.

The utilization of the conceptual metaphor "the eye is human" and conventional physical knowledge is deemed as highly pragmatic tools in the conceptualization of the domains of tangible and physical experiences.

## References

Lee, D (2001), "Cognitive Linguistics", New York, Oxford University Press.

## Abstract

Cognitive linguistics research has revealed that the human body and its physical experiences are integral components of cognitive architecture. The concept of "embodied cognition" is a fundamental principle within the Cognitive linguistics. The utilization of linguistic expressions to depict abstract notions is a manifestation of a fundamental principle. This phenomenon is ubiquitous across all languages and presents a viable avenue for investigating the cognitive and cultural conceptualizations of various ethnic groups. Utilizing the descriptive-analytical approach, the current study has examined the term "Ayn" in the three-volume work of "Al-Maajm al-Musaoi Lal-Tabir al-Istalahi fi Al-Lagha Al-Arabiya" authored by Mohammed Mohammad Dawood. The objective of this investigation was to ascertain how Arabic speakers have employed this term in conceptualization and to identify the specific regions where it is most frequently used. The findings of the data analysis suggested that the term "Ayn" in this language serves as a cognitive instrument that conceptualizes multiple target domains, many of which pertain to abstract domains. These target domains align with the ones introduced by Kovecses (1946), including "psychological and mental states and actions," "experiences," and "social processes." Notably, the frequency of the "psychological and mental performance domains" is noteworthy among these domains. The cognitive examination of these concepts can be customized to the cognitive processes of conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, and conventional knowledge. The metaphorical mappings "eye is a container," "eye is a person," and metonymy of "a tool instead of an action" is noted to be among the most prevalent.

**Keywords:** Cognitive linguistics, Embodied cognition, Conceptualization, "Ayn" body organ



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