

## WHAT DOES *HAND* EXPRESS IN CHINESE AND SPANISH?\*

¿QUÉ COMUNICA LA EXPRESIÓN *MANO*  
EN CHINO-MANDARÍN Y EN ESPAÑOL?

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### ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the body-part *hand* in Mandarin Chinese and Spanish with the majority of the data taken from *Chinese Mandarin Online Dictionary* and *Web edition of Lin Yutang's Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage*. The Spanish data were obtained from *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual de la Real Academia Española* and *Lanbridge Diccionario Manual Español-Chino*. The research questions are: (1) What meanings do the *hand* expressions in both languages convey? (2) What are the meanings based on? (3) Is there a cognitive model behind them? The answer of the third question is based on that of the first two. We found that (a) +people, +action, and +power are the most frequently occurring semantic molecules for *hand* expressions, (b) the favorite underlying conceits that generate *hand* expressions are 'behavior' and 'function', (c) BODY IS FUNCTION proves true, and (d) we propose that BODY IS STATIC is more fundamental based on the observation in *hand* expressions.

*Keywords:* Body part, hand, cognitive semantics, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, underlying conceits.

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## RESUMEN

Este estudio se centra en investigar el sentido de las frases hechas que conllevan el término *mano*, tanto en el idioma chino-mandarín como en español. La mayoría de los datos en chino se extrajeron del *Chinese Mandarin Online Dictionary* y del *Web Edition of Lin Yutang's Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage*. Los datos en español se obtuvieron del *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual de la Real Academia Española* y del *Lanbridge Diccionario Manual Español-Chino*. Las preguntas planteadas en este estudio son: 1) ¿Qué sentidos comunican las expresiones sobre la palabra *mano* en ambas lenguas? 2) ¿En qué se basan estos sentidos? 3) ¿Existe un modelo cognitivo detrás de ellos? La respuesta de la tercera pregunta se basa en las primeras dos. Se concluye que: a) [+gente], [+acción], y [+poder] son las moléculas semánticas que ocurren con más frecuencia, b) los enlaces semánticos subyacentes favoritos que generan las expresiones son 'comportamiento' y 'función', c) el principio EL CUERPO ES FUNCIÓN, propuesto por Hsieh & Kolodkina (2009) se verifica como verdadero; finalmente d) se propone que el principio EL CUERPO ES ESTÁTICO, basado fundamentalmente en el análisis de dichas expresiones.

*Palabras clave:* Cuerpo humano, mano, semántica cognitiva, español, chino-mandarín, enlace semántico subyacente.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The human body or, more abstractly, the body schema, is a potentially universal source domain for metaphors structuring abstract concepts (Gibbs, 1999). There are a great number of studies on body-part expressions or metaphors. Some are contrastive studies (Aleksienko & Khordy, 1999; Nad, 1996; Nad, 1997; Šileikaite, 1997; Mugu, 2002; Sakarund & Fuller, 2003; Iñesta Mend & Pamies Bertrán, 2002), while others focus on specific body-part expressions related to *eyes, legs, face, finger* etc. (Zacharenko, 2004; Yu, 2000, 2001; Maalej, 2004; Ro, Frigand & Lavie, 2007; Wang, 2005; Olza, 2011). Additionally, there is Sweetser's (1990) mind-as-body hypothesis. Kövecses (2000) studies metaphor and emotion, in which language, culture and body in human feeling are the main concern. Huang (2002) focuses on the Tsou language and presents a cognitive perspective on language, emotion and body. Hilpert (2007) proposed four conceptual mappings that produce meaning extension: perceptual function chains, instrument for action chains, body parts are container chains, and body parts are parts of physical object chains.

Among the above-mentioned research works, Hsieh & Kolodkina (2009) have proposed BODY IS FUNCTION. We will test the validity of this proposal and also argue that there is more fundamental cognition behind body-part expressions.

This study focuses on compounds and idiomatic expressions containing the body-part term (i.e. the vehicle) *hand* in Mandarin Chinese (hereafter Chinese) and Spanish in order to provide a cross-linguistic comparison.

The research questions of the present study ask: (1) What meaning do the *hand* expressions in both languages convey? (2) What are the meanings based on? (3) Is there a cognitive model behind them? The answer to the third question is based on that of the first two.

The main bulk of this paper is organized as follows: (1) introduction, (2) research framework, where we give the data source and introduce the theoretical background of the study. In (3), we analyze the data, present the semantic molecules, analyze the meaning of the *hand* expressions and then delve into why hand is used in the expressions (i.e. the underlying conceit). Further, we (4) look into the cognitive model of the *hand* expressions and (5) present the cultural features. Finally, (6) concludes the present work by highlighting the findings and significance of the study.

## 2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

A *hand expression* is defined in this study as any Chinese or Spanish expression that encodes the body-part vehicle *hand*, 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. They are not ad-hoc terms, or freely generated phrases.

The majority of the Chinese *hand* expressions 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). The Spanish data were gathered from *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual of Real Academia Española* and *Lanbridge Diccionario Manual Español Chino* (Alvarez, 1999). A minor percentage of the data were gathered from other sources, such as books, newspapers, radio broadcasts, and TV programs. The corpus contains 189 Chinese and 240 Spanish *hand* expressions so far.

We have adopted the approaches of semantic molecules and underlying conceits when examining the corpus in this study. We now introduce them in turn in the following paragraphs.

Influenced by Labov's (1973) denotation-conditions approach, Wierzbicka (1985) studied animal terms by giving explications that contain many semantically complex words. For instance, the explication of *tiger* in English is:

*tigers* =

- a. a kind of animal
- b. they live in the jungle  
people keep some of them in special places (zoos)  
so that people can go there to see them
- c. they look like cats and they move like cats  
but they are very much bigger than cats
- d. they are yellowish with black stripes  
they have big sharp claws and big sharp teeth
- e. they kill and eat other animals and people
- f. people think of them as fierce and powerful  
people are afraid of them (Wierzbicka, 1985: 164).

Goddard further develops Wierzbicka’s approach and concludes that the *tiger* explication “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). Furthermore, semantic molecules are “composed directly of ‘primitive semantic features’” (1998: 255), and can be supported by linguistic evidence such as the following expressions: *a game of cat and mouse*, *a cat-nap*, *a catfight*, etc. (1998: 249). Other semantic molecules are for example:

Body-part words: mouth, hand, fingers, feet

Action verbs: pick up, put down, chase, kill, eat, drink

Shape and dimension words: long, flat, round, etc. (Goddard, 1998: 254).

Semantic molecules are extracted from the meaning of *hand* in expressions like *tener (much) mano* ‘to have (many) hands = have authority or influence’, which indicates that *hand* in Spanish carries the semantic molecule +influence or +power<sup>1</sup>. From *shou3ji1* 手跡 ‘hand-mark = someone’s original hand writing’ in Chinese, we see that *hand* connotes +personal and +writing.

Underlying conceits refer to the association between the vehicle in the real world and the meaning of the expressions. For example, the underlying conceit of most bird expressions focuses on the aptitude of birds for singing and flying resulting in the following expressions: *bu2yi4er2fei1* 不翼而飛 ‘no-wing-and-fly = has got lost,’ and *cha1chi4nan2fei1* 插翅難飛 ‘stick- wing-hard-fly = hard to

<sup>1</sup> Convention:

semantic molecules	+	+action
underlying conceits	“	‘behavior’
vehicles	italics	<i>Hand</i>
cognition	all capital	RESULT

escape’, etc. (Hsieh, 2009: 149). Take an example from the data of the present study: *yan3gao1shou3di1* 眼高手低 ‘eyes-high-hand-low = high in aim, but low-rate in execution, that is, this expression refers to one who has high ambition, but no real ability; or fastidious and demanding, but inept’. Here *hand* is used because in reality human hands work.

Semantic molecules and underlying conceits are useful means to analyze metaphors. We will try to answer our first research question by means of semantic molecules, and the second question in terms of underlying conceits.

### 3. *HAND* IN CHINESE AND SPANISH

In this section, we will try to answer research questions one and two. To answer the first question, what meaning do the *hand* expressions in both languages convey, we will analyze the data and present the semantic molecules of the *hand* expressions. To answer the second question, what are the meanings based on, we delve into the underlying conceits before further examining the cognitive model of these expressions in the next section.

#### 3.1 The semantic molecules

Semantic molecules reveal how a linguistic vehicle is semantically used in a language; that is, how the vehicle expresses meaning. We list the most frequently occurring semantic molecules of *hand* expressions in Chinese and Spanish in Table I below. As Table I shows, the semantic molecules of Spanish *hand* are more diverse, while Chinese is more centered around a single semantic molecule. The most frequently occurring are +people (N = 43) in Chinese and +action (N = 26) in Spanish. Moreover, the percentages of the most frequently occurring expressions are higher in Chinese than in Spanish, occupying 17.9% and 12.3%, respectively.

**Table I.** Significant semantic molecules of *hand* expressions in Chinese and Spanish.

Chinese	Spanish
people (22.75%)	Action (18.57%)
power (14.81%)	people (8.33%)
action (13.76%)	hand (7.92%)
control (13.23%)	power (5.00%)
ability (13.23%)	ability (4.17%)
hand (10.58%)	help (3.75%)
small (8.47%)	control (2.92%)
means (7.94%)	possession (2.08%)
possession (4.76%)	work (2.08%)

Table I lists popular semantic molecules. Molecules like +desire, +portable, +reason, +writing, etc. in Chinese are not significant because they are not productive. For example, *chi1ren2de1zui3ruan3*, *na2ren2de1shou3duan3* 吃人的嘴軟, 拿人的手短 ‘eat-people-mouth-soft, take-people-hand-short = (a saying) describes that if you receive benefits from someone, you will be biased toward them and favor them’ and *zhi4shou3ke3re4* 炙手可熱 ‘broil-hand-can-hot = (of intense political power) burning to the touch’ have the semantic molecule +desire. *Shou3ci4* 手刺 ‘hand-thorn = the name cards used in official circles when paying courtesy calls in ancient times’ and *shou3ji1* 手跡 ‘hand-mark = somebody’s original handwriting or painting; script; an autograph’ have the semantic molecule +writing, however, we have not found many expressions based on these molecules.

Likewise, in Spanish, other molecules such as +freedom, +attack, +attitude, +guarantee, +behavior, etc. are not significant because they are not productive. For example, *mano de hierro* ‘hand of iron = ironhanded’ and *mano fuerte* ‘hand strong = demand and severity’ have the semantic molecule +attitude. *Llegar/venir a las manos* ‘arrive/come to the hands = to fight’ and *Juego de manos, juego de villanos* ‘Game of hands, game of villains = Gentleman moves mouth does not attack’ have the semantic molecule +attack, however, we have not found many expressions based on these molecules.

If we look at semantic molecules that are not listed in Table I, we see that many molecules cover only one or two expressions in Spanish, such as +owner (*cambiar de manos* ‘change of hands = to sell what one has bought’), + principle (*bajo mano* ‘under hand = in the dark’), and + research (*meter mano (a algo)* ‘put hand to something = investigate’), etc. This is also true in Chinese, but the distribution in Chinese is not as diverse as in Spanish; there are about 30 semantic molecules in Chinese, while in Spanish there are about 70. This has to do with the holism that we will present at the end of the paper.

Some expressions may exhibit more than one semantic molecule, e.g., the examples in (1) below are now categorized under +means, but they can also be in +ability. The examples in (2) are now categorized under +power, and those in (3) are now categorized under +action, but they can also be in +people. We thus see that Table I does not fully represent the semantic molecules of *hand* in Chinese and Spanish. This is because the usage of any given expression is dependent upon various pragmatic variables with changes in meaning occurring as a result of the speaker, hearer, situation, topic, or even the tone. For example, Hsieh (2006: 2210-2212) demonstrated that *Schmeichelkatze*, ‘flattering cat = a flattering woman’, when uttered in a whispery tone means ‘flattering’, ‘soft’, ‘woman’, but when uttered with a satiric tone it implies “to play the woman” (‘cater, pamper, false...’). In addition, interpretations of *Schmeichelkatze*, such as “to act like a spoiled child” (‘spoilt, childish...’) and even “to have an ulterior motive” (‘wicked,

motive...’), can arise depending on the speaker’s personal experience, the hearer’s interpretation, and the situation in which it is used. Moreover, expressions change and develop across space and time giving rise to regional variations such as *zhao<sup>1</sup>chai<sup>2</sup>mao<sup>1</sup>* 招財貓 ‘bring in-wealth-cat’, an expression used in Taiwan that not in northern China, referring to an ornamental cat displayed for the purpose of bringing fortune. As for more recently created phrases, there is *Jin<sup>1</sup>si<sup>1</sup>mao<sup>1</sup>* 金絲貓 ‘gold-hair-cat’, which refers to a “blond girl, blond prostitutes”. Some expressions have faded from popular usage reflecting the disappearance of certain cultural technologies. For example, *qi<sup>4</sup>si<sup>3</sup>mao<sup>1</sup>* 氣死貓 ‘angry-dead-cat = wired food cabinet which frustrates cats’ refers to a hanging basket that was hung high out of the reach of cats so that it “frustrated them to death”. Now, modern refrigerators have replaced these “leftover baskets” and the expression has disappeared. Therefore, these semantic molecules of *qi<sup>4</sup>si<sup>3</sup>mao<sup>1</sup>* are not recorded in Hsieh’s (2006). Consequently, the percentages of some semantic molecules in Table I can be higher if we gave such cross analysis of semantic molecules. Now only the most salient molecules in each expression are given.

- (1) a. *jiao1ta1liang3shou3* 教他兩手 ‘teach-he-two-hand = teach him a trick or two’  
 b. *shou3fa3* 手法 ‘hand-way = technique; a trick; a gimmick’
- (2) a. *lu4si3shui2shou3* 鹿死誰手 ‘deer-die-who-hand = at whose hand will the deer die; who will win the prize’  
 b. *shou3xia4liu2qing2* 手下留情 ‘hand-down-stay-emotion = to show mercy; to be lenient; to pull one’s punches; to hold one’s hand(s)’
- (3) a. *qi1shou3ba1jiao3* 七手八腳 ‘seven-hand-eight-feet = to serve hand and foot’  
 b. *la4shou3cui1hua1* 辣手摧花 ‘ruthless-hand-destroy-flower = to be violent to women; to rape a woman’

In both Chinese and Spanish, the semantic molecules +people, +power, +action, and +hand rank high in both languages, which shows the literal “active function” of the human hands, as well as their metaphorical function as they are used in the examining languages to express BODY IS FUNCTION (Hsieh & Kolodkina, 2009). Also the mindset of taking action (+control in both languages, and +help in Spanish) is shown. This supports THE PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF AN EMOTION STAND FOR THE EMOTION as proposed by Lakoff (1987). Hsieh & Kolodkina (2009) indicated that BODY IS FUNCTION is substantially performed in Chinese, Russian and English. We will further elaborate on this issue in section 4 when we address the cognitive model.

*Hand* is a process in Chinese (+means, +ability), but it can be a result in Spanish (+work), e.g., *dar de mano* ‘give of hand = lay off’. This will be further

discussed in section 3.2 in relation to the underlying conceits.

Some expressions tend to combine more than one body-part vehicle. For the expressions in Chinese, a popular pair is *hand* and *leg* as shown in (4). *Hand* and *eye* is another pair as shown in (5). For Spanish, the popular pairs are *hand* and *mouth* or *hand* and *leg* as the examples given in (6) and (7). Though we see that there are expressions containing more than one body-part vehicle in both languages, it is more pervasive in Chinese than in Spanish. We have collected 24 such expressions in Chinese (24/189, 12.7%) but only 13 expressions in Spanish (13/240, 5.4%). A holist versus an individualist mode of thinking is demonstrated in *hand* expressions in Chinese and Spanish. This issue will be further discussed.

- (4) a. *shou3jiao3ben4zhuo2* 手腳笨拙 ‘hand-leg-stupid-clumsy = clumsy’  
 b. *shou3mang2jiao3luan4* 手忙腳亂 ‘hand-busy-feet-mess = very busy’  
 c. *qing2tong2shou3zu2* 情同手足 ‘love-same-hand-feet = (the two) are close like brothers’
- (5) a. *yan3gao1shou3di1* 眼高手低 ‘eyes-high-hand-low = high in aim but low-rate in execution, have high ambition but no real ability; fastidious and demanding but inept’  
 b. *shou3ji2yan3kuai4* 手急眼快 ‘hand-hurry-eyes-fast = dexterous, adroit’
- (6) a. *de la mano a la boca se pierde la sopa* ‘from the hand to the mouth be lost the soup = no matter how hard an intelligent person thinks, he is going to miss something’  
 b. *de manos a boca* ‘from hands to mouth = unexpected’
- (7) a. *ligero de manos y pies / ágil / rápido* ‘fast of hands and legs = agile/quick to do something; quickly’  
 b. *atar las manos y los pies* ‘tie the hands and the legs = to bind’

Furthermore, personification is observable as revealed in Table I. We see that the semantic molecule +people ranks high in both languages: No. 1 in Chinese and 2 in Spanish. As just mentioned, if we count the molecule differently, +people will be much higher. Personification is a sentence or an utterance in which an inanimate object or abstract conception is given a human quality or said to perform human-like actions. We will discuss more about personification later.

Most importantly, the corpus yielded a large proportion of instances (i.e. tokens) where *hand* occurred in static rather than dynamic expressions. This has to do with the static nature of the linguistic vehicle *hand* and what speakers have in mind when using this vehicle (see section 4 the cognitive model of *hand*).

Many topics have been disclosed after examining semantic molecules. They will be further discussed in the following sections.

### 3.2 Underlying conceits

Underlying conceits associate the real world, the role of the vehicle, and the meaning of the expressions. Table II gives the underlying conceit of the *hand* expressions in Chinese and Spanish.

Table II. Underlying conceits of *hand* expressions.

Chinese	Spanish
behavior 59.26%	behavior 42.92 %
function 16.93%	function 15.00%
appearance 10.05%	value 9.17%
possession 5.82%	position 7.50%
position 3.70%	possession 7.08%
value 3.17%	feeling 2.5%
feeling 2.12%	range 2.5%

According to the data, the underlying conceits ‘behavior’ and ‘function’ are the most frequently occurring underlying conceits for the generation of *hand* expressions in Chinese, occupying 59.26% and 16.93%, respectively. In Spanish, ‘behavior’ (42.92%) and ‘function’ (15%) are also the most frequently occurring underlying conceits for the generation of *hand* expressions. We give some examples in (8) and (9) below.

To be more precise, ‘behavior’, that human hands work and handle tasks, and ‘function’, that human hands are the important body parts that work, are the most decisive factors that designate meaning for a specific *hand* expression in both languages.

The underlying conceit ‘value’ means high virtue in quantity or quality. In Spanish for example, *a manos llenas* ‘to hands full = lavishly’, and *estar dejado de la mano de Dios* ‘be left from the hand of gods = constantly make mistakes or have bad luck’. Similarly in Chinese, there is *shou3yu4* 手諭 ‘hand-decree = instructions personally written by a superior’, where the high status of a superior indicates quality.

‘Position’ refers to a certain state, such as *a mano* ‘to hand = nearby’ and *de mano a mano* ‘from hand to hand = directly’. The former indicates a state of availability, whereas the latter indicates a situation of delivery.

There are unique underlying conceits specific to each language. ‘Range’ occurs only in Spanish and refers to the area that hands can reach: e.g., *caer en manos de uno* ‘fall in hands of one = to be captured’ and *tener a mano* ‘have to hand = restrict’. Both of these expressions refer to something that is controlled by someone. On the other hand, ‘appearance’ is not associated as an underlying conceit to generate *hand* expressions in Spanish (see examples in (10)). In Chinese, ‘Appearance’ refers to the shape of the hand or a handful: e.g., *shou3yin4* 手印 ‘hand-print = an imprint of the hand; a fingerprint’, *shou3qian2* 手鉗 ‘hand-clamp = a hand vice’. Hsieh, Lien & Meier (2005) studied flower-expressions in Chinese and German and claimed that the Chinese perceive the outer appearance of plants and compile “visualized” Chinese expressions, while the Germans focus on function by adopting the usability and edibility of plants in their expressions. Our study supports Hsieh’s research in that when a human hand functions as a linguistic vehicle, the appearance of a hand –how it looks– is taken into Chinese. But this function of hand does not occur in Spanish. When real world objects inspire or donate meaning to language, the human body is the most frequent source of metaphors (Smith, Pollio & Pitts, 1981). Moreover, the metaphors are decided by the specific culture and language to which they belong. We will further delve into culture in section 5.

(8) ‘behavior’

a. *bu4zhi1lu4si3shui2shou3* 不知鹿死誰手 ‘not-know-deer-death-who-hand = cannot tell who will be the victor’

b. *abrir la mano* ‘open the hand = be soft device’

(9) ‘function’

a. *shou3wu2fu4ji1zhi1li4* 手無縛雞之力 ‘hand-no-tie-hen-power = to lack the strength to truss up a chicken; to be feeble; to be physically very weak’

b. *atar las manos y los pies* ‘tie the hands and the legs = to bind’

(10) ‘Appearance’ in Chinese; ‘range’ in Spanish

a. *shou3liu2dan4* 手榴彈 ‘hand-pomegranate-ball = hand grenade’

b. *yi2shou3xian1xian1* 莢手纖纖 ‘weed-hand-fine-fine = girls’ hands are white and thin’

c. *caer en manos de uno* ‘fall in hands of one = to be captured’

d. *abrir/aflojar la mano* ‘open/ loosen the hand = leave go of’

An expression can also show more than one underlying conceit. For example, the Chinese expression *jiao1shou3* 交手 ‘catch-hand = to salute with the hands folded and raised in front; hold one hand with another; fight with fists’ has both ‘function’ and ‘behavior’, while *su4shou3* 素手 ‘white-hand = empty-handed’ has both ‘possession’ and ‘appearance’. In Spanish, the expression *alargar la mano* ‘extend the hand = panhandle; hold out hand’ has both ‘possession’ and ‘behavior’,

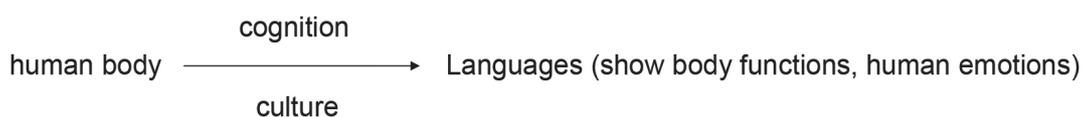
while *atarse de manos* ‘tie (oneself) from (the) hands = to bind; falling into the cocoon set by oneself’ has both ‘function’ and ‘behavior’.

In section 3.1 we mentioned that *Hand* is a PROCESS in Chinese (+means, +ability), but it can be a RESULT in Spanish (+work), which is also observable in the underlying conceits. We see that ‘possession’ and ‘position’ are usually an outcome and a result of hard working. ‘Possession’ and ‘position’ are underlying conceits for both languages, but they occupy higher percentages in Spanish (7.08% and 7.50%) than in Chinese (5.82% and 3.70%). How much one possesses or one’s position can indicate one’s value. ‘Value’ enjoys 9.17% in Spanish, but only 3.17% in Chinese. These percentages suggest that RESULT is emphasized more in Spanish than in Chinese.

#### 4. THE COGNITIVE MODEL OF *HAND*

Above (section 3.1) we mentioned that the corpus yielded a large proportion of tokens where *hand* occurs in static expressions. In this section, we will delve into Hsieh and Kolodkina’s (2009) proposal concerning the cognitive model BODY IS FUNCTION and further suggest our hypothesis BODY IS STATIC.

Hsieh and Kolodkina (2009) proposed a cognitive model of body-part expressions based on a cross-cultural study of Chinese, Russian and English. This dynamic cognitive model (see Fig. 1 below) says that BODY IS FUNCTION is the central conceptual metaphor that body-part expressions are generated from.



**Figure 1.** Dynamic cognitive model of body-part expressions in languages.

As Figure 1 shows, the human body is projected onto languages by utilizing body part vehicles in various expressions through human inherent cognition which “yet featured by assorted cultures to abstract body functions, describe human behavior and express human emotions. These differences consist in the choice of a part” (Hsieh and Kolodkina, 2009: 29) over the whole (i.e. the body) through cultural preferences with different expressions. That is, body-part expressions are generated from the central conceptual metaphor BODY IS FUNCTION.

We agree with Hsieh and Kolodkina’s inference because, as we have indicated in section 3.1 on semantic molecules, +people, +power, +action, and +hand rank high in both languages, which shows the literal ‘active function’ of human hands

in the real world as well as their linguistic, metaphorical function.

In addition to this agreement, this study also demonstrates BODY IS STATIC. ‘Static’ refers to a state of rest or non-action. At the first glimpse, BODY IS STATIC does not seem to fit with expressions of *hand*, especially when we just proved BODY IS FUNCTION. However, the parts of speech that *hand* expressions belong to directs us to the clue (see Table III). The data can be categorized into nouns, verbs, adjectives, and sentences. Nouns include NPs, verbs include VPs, and adjectives include APs. Sentences include sayings, proverbs and syntactically complete units or IPs (inflectional phrase), such as *shou3wu2fu4ji1zhi1li4* 手無縛雞之力 ‘hand-no-tie-hen-power = to lack the strength to truss up a chicken; to be feeble; to be physically very weak’. We identified the parts of speech according to their heads or XP (X=head) and contexts in the corpora.

Table III. Parts of speech of *hand* expressions.

	Chinese		Spanish	
	N	%	N	%
Nouns	100	52.91%	57	23.75%
verbs	28	14.81%	128	53.33%
adjectives	50	26.46%	47	19.58%
sentences	11	5.82%	8	3.33%

There are only 14.81% verbal usages in our Chinese data, while there are 52.91% of nominal usages. In Spanish, 23.75% of data belong to nominal usage, while 53.33% are classified as verbal usage. The percentages show an imbalance: The Chinese data show more static expressions and agree with BODY IS STATIC, yet the Spanish data do not.

Nevertheless, this imbalance does not conflict with the BODY IS STATIC hypothesis since it is the verbs or adjectives, i.e., predicates, that are responsible for the action or situation. Moreover, the vehicle *hand* still functions statically to describe the agent or patient, which is the head of the expression. For example, in *apretar las manos* ‘hug-the-hands = to shake hands’ and *irse la mano* ‘leave-the-hand = make a slip of the hand’ where the verb *apretar* ‘hug’ and *irse* ‘leave’ perform the actions, and the *mano(s)* ‘hand(s)’ is the agent or the patient of the actions.

That the usages of the *hand* expressions tend to describe static objects or entities, rather than dynamic activities, conveys a message. It is assumed that just like the human body itself, though it is biologically processing and working every minute and second, as long as one lives, a static state or calm position is what it

desires or functions for. With the aid of force dynamics (Talmy, 1988, 2000), we can depict our hypothesis of BODY IS STATIC as shown in Figure 2:

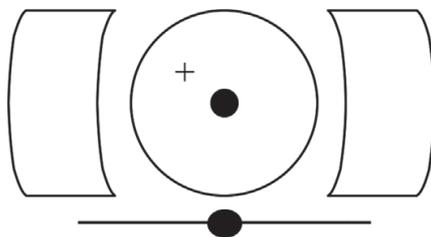


Figure 2. BODY IS STATIC in terms of force dynamics.

Figure 2 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 • below the agonist and antagonist shows. The body tends to be in a static condition. The scenario reads that though there are forces acting on as well as in and around the human body, a static position is the best state that the intrinsic force tends to function for.

The BODY IS STATIC hypothesis also implies that body-part vehicles in languages tend to be used for notion (nouns) more than for motion (verbs). The examination of *hand* expressions in Chinese and Spanish gives this result. Further research on to assure this approach is welcomed.

## 5. CULTURAL FEATURES

Cultures attach special importance to the *hands*. Many *hand* conceptions are expressed only in a certain language. In Chinese, love, desire, sexual interest, and duty are expressed in the following ways: *qing2tong2shou3zu2* 情同手足 ‘love-same-hand-feet = (the two) are close like brothers’ describes the love between siblings as hands and feet; *Guan1cai2li3shen1shou3* 棺材裡伸手 ‘coffin-timber-inside-stretch out-hand = to stretch a hand out from the coffin’ refers to someone who views money as more important than life; and *mao2shou3mao2jiao3* 毛手毛腳 ‘hair-hand-hair-leg = touch someone impolitely and move one’s hand on others’ body’ expresses desire and sexual interest. Additionally, there is *kuai4zishou3* 劊子手 ‘kill-son-hand = executioner’, which implies duty. In Spanish however, food, instruments and religion are used in particular *hand* expressions: e.g., *coger a uno con las manos en la masa* ‘to catch someone with the hands in the dough = catch somebody red-handed’; *Mano de mantequilla* ‘hands of butter = clumsy-handed’; *En buenas manos está el pandero* ‘In good hands is the tambourine = Experts take

care of specific areas'; *Mano de santo* 'hand of saint = cure-all medicine'; *Estar dejado de la mano de Dios* 'be left from the hand of gods = constantly make mistakes or have bad luck'. These expressions show Spanish culture via *hand* expressions that involve daily food items ('dough' and 'butter'), a musical instrument ('tambourine') and religious beliefs ('God' and 'saints').

Some expressions give life teachings. For example, *chi1ren2de1zui3ruan3, na2ren2de1shou3duan3* 吃人的嘴軟, 拿人的手短 'eat-people-mouth-soft, take-people-hand-short' is a saying that describes that if one gets benefits from others, then one can not deal with everything justly. *Shou3cha1yu2lan2, bi4bu4de2xing1* 手插魚籃, 避不得腥 'hand-insert-fish-basket, avoid-not-get-raw smell' is a metaphor to describe that one should not have misgivings or doubts about getting their hands dirty if they want to accomplish something. *Weng1zhong1zhuo1bie1, shou3dao4qin2lai2* 甕中捉鱉, 手到擒來 'jug-in-catch-turtle, hand-reach-catch-come = catch a turtle in a jar' means to go after an easy prey; a warning for not to be trapped. In Spanish, for example, there is *De la mano a la boca se pierde la sopa* 'from the hand to the mouth be lost the soup', which indicates that no matter how hard an intelligent person thinks, he's going to miss something. *Juego de manos, juego de villanos* 'Game of hands, game of villains' refers to a gentleman who moves his mouth, but does not attack. *Más vale pájaro en mano que ciento volando* 'More value bird in hand than hundred flying = A bird in hand is worth two in the bush'.

Chinese history or legendary stories may be the source of *hand* expressions, too. *Bu4zhi1lu4si3shui2shou3* 不知鹿死誰手 'not-know-deer-death-who-hand = cannot tell who will be the victor' is recorded in *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian, 91 BC, by Sima Qian). This expression refers to the time when the nation Qin lost its territory, the so-called *zhong1yuan2* 中原 (central plains of China), and all other nations fought for hegemony. Another *hand* expression *shun4shou3qian1yang2* 順手牽羊 'follow-hand-drag-sheep' means to 'take something lying within easy reach, profit by special situation'. It was written in *Liji* 禮記 (Record of Rites, 206 BC.-23AD., by Confucius) and is about offering tribute to empires in the ancient Chinese time. Animals like sheep, horses and dogs are involved in the story and the expression is derived. *Weng1zhong1zhuo1bie1, shou3dao4qin2lai2* 甕中捉鱉 手到擒來 'jug-in-catch-turtle, hand-reach-catch-come' is developed from a play written by Mr. Kang Qing-zhi 康進之 in the Yuan dynasty that describes the catching of a turtle in a jar and means to go after easy prey. Furthermore, *lan2hua1shou3* 蘭花手 'orchid-flower-hand' is a style of dancing involving hand gestures and can be compared with *lan2hua1zhi3* 蘭花指 'orchid-flower-finger', a fingering movement that a female actor does in Chinese opera. Finally, speaking of *shou3zhuan3tuo2luo2* 手轉陀螺 'hand-turn-teetotum', we will think of the traditional Chinese toy teetotum.

Some expressions are funny. A *san1zhi1shou3* 三隻手 ‘three-[classifier]-hand’ is a pickpocket, and *qi1shou3ba1jiao3* 七手八腳 ‘seven-hand-eight-feet’ refers to being in a bustle; however, when speaking of a ‘spicy hand’, *xin1hen3shou3la4* 心狠手辣 ‘heart-cruel-hand-spicy’ actually condemns ruthlessness. *Da4shou3da4jiao3* 大手大腳 ‘big-hand-big-feet’ means to spend extravagantly, and *cu1shou3cu1jiao3* 粗手粗腳 ‘rough-hand-rough-feet’ indicates carelessness. In Spanish, there are funny expressions such as *abrir la mano* ‘open the hand = be soft device’. *Cerrar la mano* ‘close the hand = deflate’, *comerse las manos* ‘eat oneself the hands = famish’ and *con una mano detrás y otra delante* ‘with a hand after and the other in front = empty-handed’.

Occupations are often expressed with *hand*, for the reason that we mentioned in section 3.2 regarding the underlying conceits: that is, the underlying conceits ‘behavior’ and ‘function’ are the most frequently occurring underlying conceits for the generation of *hand* expressions in Chinese. Below are some examples: *shui3shou3* 水手 ‘water-hand = sailor’, *guo2shou3* 國手 ‘national-hand = the national champion in any line of activity, especially sports and games’, *ge2shou3* 歌手 ‘song-hand = professional singer’, *qin2shou3* 琴手 ‘piano-hand = professional musician (at night clubs, etc.)’, and *gu3shou3* 鼓手 ‘drum-hand = a drummer’. There are unsavory expressions as well, such as *kuai4zishou3* 劊子手 ‘kill-son-hand = executioner’, *di2shou3* 敵手 ‘enemy-hand = rival’, and *da3shou3* 打手 ‘hit-hand = employed for committing violence’.

The *hand* expressions reveal some funny aspects of the languages, the occupation that *hand* can describe, historical stories, concepts, and life teachings of some shared, but mostly different, cultural features in Chinese and Spanish.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study focused on *hand* expressions in Chinese and Spanish. It examined the semantic molecules and underlying conceits of these expressions for which there are several findings: (1) +people, +action, and +power are the most significant semantic molecules for *hand* expressions, (2) body-part expressions tend to combine more than one vehicle in an expression, (3) the most frequently occurring underlying conceits for the generation of *hand* expressions are ‘behavior’ and ‘function’, and (4) though there are unique underlying conceits in specific languages, the association of the body-part vehicle hand and the meaning of the *hand* expressions are for the most part the same in both languages (see Table II).

The present study supports previous research concerning personification and the holist vs. individualist modes of thinking. Personification is a pervasive linguistic phenomenon that has been examined in various studies (e.g., Hsieh &

Chiu, 2004; Chang, 2008; Sun, 2009; Ahrens, 2002; Hsieh, 2009, in press) and is observed in the *hand* expressions of the present work. The semantic molecule +people ranks high in both languages: No. 1 in Chinese and 2 in Spanish. As part of a body, the vehicle *hand* gives more than that. It provides a metonymic device that indicates the person who performs whatever is referred to in the expression.

Holist ways of thinking refers to a way of thinking in which a group often represents individuals, whereas an individualist mode of thinking will take an individual to represent a group. Chinese society emphasizes holism (see e.g., Mauss, 1954; Hsieh, 2006), while German society emphasizes individualism. Some examples from Hsieh (2006) are about counting and grade giving. Numbers are counted in Germany like *ein und zwanzig* ‘one and twenty – twenty one’ with the unit in lead. The same number is counted as *er4shi2yi1* 二十一 ‘twenty one’ in Chinese. The grade ‘1’ is the best score in a German university, while ‘100’ is the best achievement of a Chinese student. Language use and social attitudes indicate these distinct ideologies. Various studies have proved such different modes of thinking, e.g., Hsieh (2001) on animal metaphors, and Hsieh & Chiu (2004) on plant metaphors. In the present study, the two vehicles in these two languages have different performances. It is more pervasive in Chinese (12.7%) than in Spanish (5.4%). A holist versus an individualist mode of thinking are shown in *hand* expressions in Chinese and Spanish too.

We support the findings of Hsieh and Kolodkina (2009) and agree that BODY IS FUNCTION is a cognitive model of body-part expressions based on the observation of *hand* expressions. Moreover, we propose BODY IS STATIC (see Fig. 2). According to Talmy (1988, 2000), force dynamics describes the way entities interact with reference to force. This system of force dynamics can be applied in a variety of domains, including the physical, psychological, social, inferential, discourse, and mental model domains of reference and conception (Talmy, 2000). We contend that force dynamics play an important role in the conceptual system of force interaction built into language structure. As observed in this study, the vehicle *hand* is the action taker, yet *hand* works as an antagonist, not an agonist. All function toward rest. Body-part expressions are cognitively modeled on the system BODY IS STATIC.

In the future, we will further apply the cognitive model of BODY IS FUNCTION and BODY IS STATIC to expressions containing other body parts such as *nose* and *mouth* in order to obtain more examples thus enabling a broader semantic generalization. We hope the conclusions deduced from this paper not only provide new insights to the related theoretical study, but also offer guidelines and references for applied areas such as language acquisition and foreign language teaching.

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