THE SEMANTIC FIELD OF THE WORD "EYE"

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Abstract: Semantics (Ancient Greek: sēmantikós = significant) is a branch of linguistics that deals with the meaning of words and other linguistic units, as well as their changes and evolution over time. When we talk about a semantic field, we refer to an organized system of semantic relations between various lexemes related in meaning. Linguists are very interested in the study of body parts for a number of reasons. According to the OED, the term eye is one of the 500 most common words in modern written English. There are 63 meanings listed in OED's entry for the noun eye. Its earliest known use is in the Old English period (pre–1150) and is inherited from Germanic.

Keywords: eye, meaning, connotation, polysemantic, expressions.

According to Pustejovsky's Generative Lexicon theory, the word can acquire multiple connotations based on the agreement of the meanings contained in the internal structure of the elements with which it is combined. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the figurative meaning is also obtained and decoded through general principles and mechanisms that operate in the interpretation of literal meaning.

Each language structures its own semantic fields in a peculiar and distinctive way. In English, there are numerous expressions with the word *eye*. This paper, relying on data collected from various English dictionaries, focuses on the semantic field of the term *eye,* by trying to render its different meanings and connotations.

Compounds and derived words

Compound words are words that are made up of two or more words grouped together. There are three different types of compound words: open compound words (*black eye*), closed compound words (*eyesight*), and hyphenated compound words. A hyphen is used to combine two or more words together, in order to avoid doubling a vowel or tripling a consonant: *thimble-eye.* As a rule, the hyphen is omitted when words appear in regular order, as in *eye opener*.

- **eyed** = as the second element in parasynthetic compounds: having eyes of the specified kind or quantity, resembling the specified object.
- **eyebath** = treatment of the eye by the application of a liquid to its surface; an instance of this; a small vessel having a rim designed to fit the eye.
- **eyebright** = bright to the eye; clear.
- **eye-brine** = tears, especially of sorrow.
- **eyebrow** = the (usually arched) line of short fine hair along the upper edge of each of a person's eye sockets; frequently in plural.
- **eye catching** = of a person or thing: that draws or attracts the eye; striking; prominent.
- **eyecraft** = the branch of science concerned with sight; optics (obsolete); skilful use of the eyes; an occupation requiring this.

- **eye doctor** = a doctor specializing in treatment of the eyes; an ophthalmologist.
- **dolp** = eye socket.
- **eye-drop** = a tear ; (in plural) a soothing or medicinal solution applied to the eye in drops.
- **eye-filling** = visually impressive; extremely colourful, attractive, etc.
- **eyeful** = attractive or striking to the eye; visually impressive or pleasing; rare.
- **eyeglass** = each of a pair of lenses for correcting or assisting defective eyesight, together with a frame or mounting which enables them to be kept in place in.
- **eye lamp** = the eye, conceived of as a lamp or light.
- **eyeless** = having no eyes. Sometimes spec.: (of certain animals) lacking eyes; having rudimentary or vestigial eyes.
- **eyelid** = each of the protective lids or covers of the eye, distinguished as upper and lower; each of the movable folds of skin with which many animals cover.
- **eyeline** = a line from an observer's eye to the object viewed; a line of sight; Perspective the horizon line, on which the vanishing point is located.
- **eyemark** = something to be seen or noted visually; an object to look at; something which may serve as a mark to guide the eye. In later use also: a visually.
- **eye-opener** = to open a person's eyes at open, an invigorating or enlivening shock; (later more usually).
- **eye patch** = a decorative patch worn near the eye (obsolete rare); a pad or piece of material worn to conceal or protect an injured.
- **eye-pearl** = a cataract or other opacity in the eye;
- **eye-pit** = the pit or socket of the eye. Also (occasionally): the furrow between the upper eyelid and the brow ridge.
- **eye-point** = the point where the eye should be placed when using an optical instrument or a camera; = exit pupil.
- **eye probe** = a surgical probe having a hole or loop at the end; a surgical probe used in operations on the eye.
- **eye ring** = a distinctively coloured ring surrounding the eye of an animal, especially a bird.
- **eye-rolling** = characterized by rolling of the eyes, especially in mania or frenzy or (now) disapproval, disbelief, or exasperation.
- **eye salve** = medicinal ointment for the eyes.
- **eye-service** = service performed merely for outward show or when under observation. Also: an instance of this.
- **eye-serving** = that is hard-working or obedient only when under observation; characterized by such behaviour.
- **eye slit** = a slit or narrow opening to look through, especially in a mask or other covering for the face.
- **eye-sick** = affected by things one sees.
- **eyesight** = the power or faculty of seeing; sight.
- **eye-siren** = someone who allures not by sound but by sight.
- **eye shade** = something worn or used to shield the eyes from bright light.
- **eyesore** = something that is highly unpleasant to look at; an ugly thing or feature; a blight, a monstrosity. In later use: a building or structure.

- **eyesplice** = a splice made by turning back the end of a rope and interlacing the strands so as to form a loop.
- **eye-string** = a nerve, blood vessel, tendon, or muscle in the eye; usually in plural.
- **eye-sweet** = attractive to the eye; pleasant to look at.
- **eye-taking** = that attracts attention; alluring; breathtaking, eye-catching.
- **eyethirl** = a window. Also figurative, esp. with reference to the eyes (as the windows of the soul).
- **eyetooth** = a canine tooth, esp. of the upper jaw.
- **eye trap** = something to catch or deceive the eye, a specious appearance; also as a mass noun.
- **eye trick** = a covert or seductive glance; something which deceives the eye; an optical illusion.
- **eye-wages** = a mere outward show of reward or remuneration given in return for eye-service.
- **eye-waiter** = a servant who awaits a confirmatory look from the master or mistress before acting; = eye-servant.
- **eyewards** = towards the eye; in the direction of the eyes.
- **eyewink** = the brief space of time which it takes to blink or wink: an instant, a moment. Chiefly in in an eyewink.
- **eye worm** = a fantasy or whim which establishes itself through visual impression (obsolete rare); any of various parasitic worms.
- **eyewitness** = a person who has seen or observed something (now esp. an incident such as a crime or accident) and is able to describe or testify to it; a person who.
- **eye-wright** = a person who cures eyes.
- **artificial eye** = a man-made object made to imitate the appearance of an eye; (in later use also) one made to perform some of the functions of.
- **bad eye** = (colloquial) a gaze or stare superstitiously believed to cause harm; the magical ability to cause harm in this way.
- **black eye** = an eye around which the skin is bruised, often by a blow.
- **Christ's-eye** = any of several herbaceous plants; esp. Inula oculus-christi (family Asteraceae), which has golden-yellow flowers, and wild clary, Salvia verbenaca.
- **cockeye** = an eye which has a permanent deviation in the direction of its gaze, resulting in defective alignment with the other; (in plural) defectively aligned.
- **horse-eye** = horse-eye bean.
- **ineye** = to put an eye or bud into (the bark of a tree); to inoculate, to propagate by inoculation.
- **Jew's eye** = (used proverbially for) something valued highly; especially in *worth a Jew's eye*: worth a great deal; very valuable.
- **mole eye** = an eye with very limited vision; an eye closed up (against bright light, etc.) so as to resemble that of a mole; mole-eyed.
- **naked eye** = an eye unassisted by a microscope, telescope, or other means of optical magnification; normal human vision, unaided by magnifying.
- **mental eye** = one's imagination; frequently in plural and in figurative context.

- **multiplying eye** = an eye which sees double or confusedly, especially because of intoxication.
- **needle eye** = the eye of a needle; frequently in allusions to the biblical use.
- **ox-eye** = any of several North American plants of the family Asteraceae (Compositae), especially of the genus Heliopsis, with conspicuous radiate flowers.
- **potato eye** = a bud of a potato tuber.
- **partridge eyes** = a type of pink champagne or rosé wine. Also: the colour of this wine.
- **pigsney** = a specially cherished or beloved girl or woman, a sweetheart. Frequently as a term of endearment. In later use also as a term of contempt.
- **screw eye** = a screw with a loop or eye as its head; (theatre) a long screw with a loop or handle, used to secure pieces of scenery on a stage.
- **seeing eye** = an eye (with reference to its ability to see); a functioning eye, esp. as opposed to one that is blind or has impaired vision.
- **seven-eyes** = a lamprey, especially a (young) river lamprey, Lampetra fluviatilis (so called because of its seven gill-openings).
- **squirrel eyes** = sharp eyes like those of a squirrel.
- **swivel eye** = an eye which points in a different direction from the other, a squinting eye; an eye that is swivelling in its socket.
- **watery eye** = excessive watering of the eye.

Slang expressions

- **eyeball** = to look or stare (at).
- **eyeball to eyeball** = face to face.
- **eye-candy** = something visually arresting but intellectually undemanding; someone who is very attractive to look at but may have little else to recommend him or her.
- **eyeful** = 1. a long steady look, especially at something or someone remarkable, beautiful, etc.
    - 2. a visually striking person or thing.
- **eye-opener** = 1. a real surprise;
    - 2. a wake-up drink of liquor; a strong drink any time.
- **eye-popper** = 1. Something astonishing;
    - 2. a very good-looking woman or girl.
- **Eyetie** = also **Eyety**, **Eyetye**, **Eytie**. Offensive (an) Italian. The Yugoslavians, the two **Eyetyes**, some West Germans. (From *Eyetalian*, representing a non-standard or jocular pronunciation of *Italian*).
- **eyewash** = Pretentious or insincere talk; nonsense. Hence **eyewasher**, a person who talks eyewash.

Idioms

As stated by McCarthy and O'Dell (2002): "Idioms can be defined as expressions which have a meaning that is not obvious from the individual words". There are thousands of idioms in English. The best way to understand idioms is to see them in context.

- **eye** = (**to eye**) to consider as a possibility.

- **all eyes are on somebody** = used in order to say that people are giving someone or something a lot of attention.
- **all my eye** = simply not true.
- **an eye for an eye (and a tooth for a tooth)** = used to say that you should punish somebody by doing to them what they have done to you or to somebody else.
- **the apple of (someone's) eye** = a person or thing which is greatly loved (by someone)
- (Originally a term for the pupil of the eye).
- **as far as the eye can/could see** = to the horizon (where the sky meets the land or sea).
- **bat your eyes/eyelashes** = to open and close your eyes quickly, in a way that is supposed to be attractive.
- **be all eyes** = to be watching somebody/something carefully and with a lot of interest.
- **before/ in front of somebody's (very) eyes** = in somebody's presence; in front of somebody.
- **be up to your eyes in something** = to have a lot of something to deal with.
- **a bird's eye view (of something)** = a view of something from a high position looking down.
- **catch someone's eye** = to make someone notice one.
- **clap/lay/set eyes on (someone or something)** = to see (someone or something), especially for the first time.
- **cock an ear/eye at something/somebody** = to look at or listen to something/somebody carefully and with a lot of attention.
- **cry one's eyes out** = to weep bitterly.
- **do something with your eyes shut/closed** = to be able to do something very easily and well because you have done it very often.
- **drop/lower your eyes** = to move your eyes so that you are looking at a point lower than where you were looking before, especially because you are shy.
- **easy on the eye** = pleasant to look at.
- **eyes popping out of your head/eyes out on stalks** = used when you are very surprised or shocked by something you see.
- **feast your eyes (on somebody/something)** = to look at somebody/something and get great pleasure.
- **for somebody's eyes only** = to be seen only by a particular person.
- **get your eye in** = to practice so that you are able to make good judgements about a task or activity that you are doing.
- **get stars in one's eyes =.** to be very hopeful and excited about something and think that it will be much better or more enjoyable than it actually is.
- **give someone the glad eye** = to look at someone in a way that shows you find them sexually attractive.
- **have an eye for something** = to be able to judge if things look attractive, valuable, etc.
- **have your eye on somebody** = 1. to be watching somebody carefully, especially to check that they do not do anything wrong.

- 2. to be thinking about asking somebody out, offering somebody a job, etc. because you think they are attractive, good at their job, etc.

- **have your eye on something** = to be thinking about buying something.
- **have eyes in the back of your head** = to be aware of everything that is happening around, even things that seems difficult or impossible to see.
- **have (got) eyes like a hawk** = to be able to notice or see everything
- **have one eye/ half an eye on something** = to look at or watch something while doing something else, especially in a secret way so that other people do not notice.
- **having a roving eye** = to always be looking for the chance to have a new sexual relationship.
- **hit somebody (straight/right) in the eye** = to be very obvious to somebody.
- **the evil eye** = the supposed power of causing harm by a look.
- **an eyesore** = something (especially a building) that is ugly to look at.
- **in a twinkling of an eye** = in a moment, immediately (a Biblical image from I Corinthians).
- **in one's mind eye** = in one's imagination.
- **in the blink of an eye** = very quickly; in a short time.
- **in somebody's eyes** = in somebody's opinion or according to the way that they see the situation.
- **in the eyes of the law, world, etc.** = according to the law, most people in the world, etc.
- **in the public eye** = well known to many people through television, newspapers, the internet, etc.
- **keep an eye on (someone or something)** = 1.to watch (someone or something) closely.
- 2. to look after (someone or something).
- **keep a close eye/watch on somebody/ something** = to watch somebody/something carefully.
- **keep a weather eye open** = to remain alert or watchful. (A nautical term - one's weather eye open for signs of difficulties ahead).
- **keep one's eye skinned/ peeled** = to watch carefully (for something).
- **keep your ears open/eyes open (for somebody/something)** = to listen or look out for somebody/something that you might hear or see.
- **keep your eye on the ball** = to continue to give your attention to what is most important.
- **look somebody in the eye(s)/face** = (usually used in negative sentences and questions) to look straight at somebody without feeling embarrassed or ashamed.
- **make eyes at (someone)** = to look at someone with sexual interest or admiration.
- **make sheep's eyes** = to look at someone in an admiring way because you are in love with them.
- **meet somebody's eye(s)/ meet somebody's gaze, look, etc./ people's eyes meet** = if you meet somebody's eye(s), you look directly at them as they look at you; if two people's eyes meet, they look directly at each other.

- **meets your eyes (meet somebody's eye(s) your eyes)** = if a sight meets your eyes, you see it.
- **my eye**! = used to show that you do not believe somebody or something.
- **your mind's eye** = your imagination.
- **the naked eye** = the eye unassisted by spectacles, a telescope, a microscope etc.
- **not to bat an eyelid** = to appear to feel no surprise, distress etc.
- **not to be able to take one eyes off** (someone or something) = not to able to stop watching (something).
- **not believe your ears/eyes** = to be very surprised at something you hear/see.
- **not a dry eye in the house** = used to say that everyone was very emotional about something.
- **not see eye to eye with somebody (on something)** = to not share the same views as somebody about something.
- **one in the eye (for)** = a direct rejection or refusal (for).
- **only have eyes for somebody** = to only be interested in or only love one person.
- **open someone's eyes to something** = to make someone see or understand (something of which they were not previously aware).
- **please the eye** = to be very attractive to look at.
- **a private eye** = a private detective (from the trademark of the Pinkerton Detective Agency).
- **pull the wool over someone's eyes** = to deceive (someone).
- **see with half an eye** = to see without difficulty.
- **see/look at, etc. something through somebody's eyes** = to think about or see something the way that another person sees it.
- **see something out of the corner of your eye** = to see something by accident or not very clearly because you see it from the side of your eye and not looking straight at it.
- **shut/close your eyes to something** = to pretend that you have not noticed something so that you do not have to deal with it.
- **a sight for sore eyes** = a most welcome sight.
- **a smack in the eye** = an insult or rebuff.
- **square eyes** = used about someone who has watched too much television.
- **somebody's eyes are bigger than his/her stomach** = used in order to say that someone has taken more food than they can eat.
- **there's more to (something) than meets the eye** = (something) is more complicated, or better, than it appears.
- **turn a blind eye (to something)** = to pretend not to see or notice (something).
- **under the (watchful) eye of somebody** = being watched carefully by somebody.
- **what the eye doesn't see (the heart doesn't grieve over)** = if a person does not know about something that they would normally think was bad, then it cannot hurt them.
- **with an eye to (something)** = with (something) as an aim.

- **with an eye to the main chance** = thinking about one's own chances of getting profit (out of something).
- **with one's eyes open** = with full awareness of what one is doing.
- **with your eyes shut/closed** = very easily, without thinking about it.

Proverbs

Mieder, defined proverbs as: "a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable (memorable) form and which is handed down from generation to generation." (Mieder, 2004, p.3)

- **beauty is in the eye of the beholder** = beauty is not judged objectively, but according to the beholder's estimation.
- **the buyer has need of a hundred eyes, the seller of but one** =
- **fields have eyes, and woods have ears** = people may be observed or overheard when they least expect it. The urban equivalent is *walls have ears*.
- **four eyes see more than two** = scrutiny by two people is better than by one alone. In business and financial circles this has evolved into the Four-Eyes Principle, meaning that every important document is scanned by at least two executives as a precaution against corruption or negligence. *Two heads are better than one* expresses a similar idea.
- **the eye of a master does more work than both his hands** = good supervision makes workers more productive.
- **the eyes are the window of the soul** = the eyes (or face) of a person are a clue to that person's character. Occurs in a number of forms: *the face is the index of the mind* is among these.

Phrasal verbs with *eye*

- **eye up** (eye somebody up) = to look at somebody in a way that shows you have a special interest in them, especially a sexual interest.
- **eye up (eye something up)** = to look at something for a long time or very carefully because you want it or are interested in it.

It can be concluded that the intent of this study was to analyze the semantic fields of some phraseological units with the component eye. Idioms, proverbs, collocations and formulaic expressions are very common in formal and informal, spoken or written English. This paper's aim was to present the expansion of the meaning of the lexeme *eye*, dealing with the processes involved in the extension of meaning of this word in phraseological units. Idiomatic language should awaken our interest for the language, and not be a source of mystery. Nonetheless, it is to be hoped that this paper provides enough commonly used expressions, proverbs and collocations based on the word *eye*, for a fuller understanding of this lexeme.

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