Cultural scripting of body parts for emotions
On ‘jealousy’ and related emotions in Ewe*

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Different languages present a variety of ways of talking about emotional experience. Very commonly, feelings are described through the use of ‘body image constructions’ in which they are associated with processes in, or states of, specific body parts. The emotions and the body parts that are thought to be their locus and the kind of activity associated with these body parts vary cross-culturally. This study focuses on the meaning of three ‘body image constructions’ used to describe feelings similar to, but also different from, English ‘jealousy’, ‘envy’, and ‘covetousness’ in the West African language Ewe. It is demonstrated that a ‘moving body’, a psychologised eye, and red eyes are scripted for these feelings. It is argued that the expressions are not figurative and that their semantics provide good clues to understanding the cultural construction of both in terms of the parts of the body that are scripted and of what they mean.

1. Variation in emotion talk

The growing literature on the language of emotions shows that different languages have a variety of ways of talking about emotional experience. As Heelas (1996:171) puts it:

Members of different societies talk about their emotions in a wide variety of ways, many of which strike us as distinctly imaginative. The Javanese of Ponorogo, for example, employ liver talk: “it is the liver ‘ill that appears in idiomatic expressions indicating emotion”; and “the role of the liver is not altogether just a metaphor” (Weiss 1983:72).

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This variety of expression is not only found across languages but also within the same language. Thus in English, as Heelas (1996:179) illustrates, one can make “direct reference to the emotions as inner experiences” as in expressions like I feel angry, I hide my fear or one can use body parts including organs as in I vented my spleen to talk about emotions. Physiological phenomena are also used as in I tingled with fear and so on. Languages vary in terms of the range of the vehicles employed and in terms of how elaborate a particular vehicle is.

In this paper, I am concerned with lexical and grammatical constructions that are used to express emotions roughly similar to “jealousy” and/or “envy” in Ewe, a Kwa (Niger-Congo) language of West Africa. The aim is to investigate the meaning of the expressions and to explore the following questions: Which components of the body are culturally scripted for “jealousy” and its relatives? What kinds of activities or states are associated with the body parts when they are used to talk about these emotions? It will be shown that the Ewe “jealousy”-related expressions present these emotions in terms of behavioural manifestations either of the person experiencing the emotion or in terms of events associated with a body part of the experiencer which is viewed as the locus of the emotion. The Ewe expressions to be discussed are:

1. a. V Nbody part
   va ŋa/ ŋa
   move EYE/ body
   ‘to be jealous or envious of someone’

2. biá ŋa/ ŋká
   redden EYE/ eye
   ‘to be envious of or covetous about an entity (persons or things)’

3. sub1[NP poss] Nbody part| V
   é-fé ŋká biá
   3sg-poss eye red
   ‘He is covetous; he is down-cast, sorrowful; he is revengeful’ (Westermann 1928).

As the glosses suggest, these expressions are collocations of verbs and body part nouns which can function in different constructions. The free translations also indicate that the expressions do not have the same significance as the English words. The semantic analysis of each of the expressions in Section 5 will show that there is overlap between them and that the expressions in (1b) and (1c) are only partially related to jealousy. The closest equivalent to jealousy is the expression in (1a) which, as we shall see, seems to be more related to a ‘mad with jealousy’ complex than just plain jealousy as one reviewer put it.

The use of expressions based on bodily symptoms and bodily images for expressing emotions is rather widespread crosslinguistically (see e.g., Jordan-askskaia 1986 for Russian; Bugenhagen 1990 for Mangal-Mbula — an Austronesian language of Papua New Guinea — and Reh 1998 for Dho-Luo (Nilotic). In fact, Wierzbicka (1999:294) suggests that “in all languages one can talk about ‘emotions’ by referring to externally observable bodily events and processes understood as symptoms of inner feelings.” She proposes, in addition, that “all languages also appear to have conventional bodily images, that is, expressions referring to imaginary events and processes taking place inside the body, used as a basis for describing the subjective experience of feelings assumed to be based on thoughts (such as my heart sank in English)” (Wierzbicka 1999:305).

Wierzbicka would be the first to acknowledge, I am sure, that even if the bodily symptoms and images are universal phenomena, the individual expressions in various languages, however similar they might be, would have culture-specific meanings. In this paper, I will demonstrate this and other differences as well between languages with respect to the expression of “jealousy”-related feelings and the parts of the body where they are thought to be located and the kind of activity or state associated with the body part(s). For instance, “jealousy” and “envy” tend to be linked with the eyes in many cultures. However, the states and the activities associated with them vary. Thus in Maasai, a Nilotic language, one’s eyes are black when one is envious (see Dimmedaal, this volume, and references therein), but in Ewe, as the expressions above illustrate, one’s eyes are “macro-red” when one is envious. Moreover, there is a difference between languages in terms of the markedness of the bodily expressions in relation to other expressions for the same emotion. In some languages the bodily expressions are the unmarked or basic expression for an emotion while in other languages the basic term for a particular emotion may not be a ‘bodily’ expression; rather, the bodily expressions are subordinate to a non-bodily basic one. In general, English tends to use bodily expressions as subordinate to other basic level terms for specific emotions. In Ewe, by contrast, bodily expressions tend to be basic level expressions. For instance, in the domain of ‘jealousy’ the Ewe expressions listed above are the unmarked non-metaphorical ways of describing such feelings in the language whereas English does not seem to have similar unmarked bodily expressions in this domain.

The paper is organised as follows: First, I will discuss the issues concerned with the scripting of body parts for emotions (Section 2) and examine the lexicogrammatical evidence for the Ewe scripting of the body and the eye for “jealousy” and related feelings (Sections 3 and 4). The meaning of the three
provide a good source of evidence for the “cultural scripting of components of the body with emotions” (Hupka et al. 1996:245). In addition, such expressions point to the cultural differences in the number and type of body-related components that are associated with particular emotions. In this paper I concentrate on the linguistic aspects of the habitual ways of talking about jealousy and related emotions involving body parts. By virtue of the fact that such expressions have become entrenched they give good clues to cultural scripting. However, the results from the linguistic investigation have not yet been tested in a psychological experiment of the kind reported by Hupka et al. (1996), for example. It is hoped that the results from such experiments will corroborate the linguistic findings.

3. Body parts scripted for “jealousy” and related emotions in Ewe

The expressions listed in (1) above repeated below as (2) involve a verb and a body part.

(2) a. na ngía / nía
   move EYE/ body
   ‘to be jealous or envious of someone’

b. biá / ndá / nkú
   redden EYE eye
   ‘to be envious of or covetous about an entity (persons or things)’

c. e-ře / nkú biá
   3sg-posse eye red
   ‘He is covetous; he is down-cast, sorrowful; he is revengeful’
   (Westermann 1928).

As the glosses suggest, there is no doubt that the body part involved in the expressions in (2b) and (2c) is the eye. The alternate forms of the word for ‘eye’ in the two expressions correspond to the difference between ‘eye’ as a physical organ, i.e., nkú, and ‘eye’ as a “psychologised” organ, so to speak, i.e., ŋu. The latter is glossed with upper case EYE to distinguish it from the physical eye. The historical basis for this distinction bears on the interpretation of the body part involved in the expression in (2a). There are two competing etymologies for the expression in (2a), based on the nominal component, which derives from the different tone values that can be assigned to it in different dialects. If it has a high tone, then the expression is rendered literally as ‘move body’. If the noun
has a low tone, the expression is literally 'move EYE'. Both interpretations are plausible physical manifestations of 'jealousy'. Before exploring that issue let us first consider the relation between the physical and psychologised 'eye' in Ewe.

Regular historical phonological processes account for the fact that there are two or three forms for 'eye' in Ewe. The full form of the word that is still heard in some dialects is ṣulú 'eye'. This could be thought of as a compound of the form ṣu 'eye' and kú 'seed, kernel, grain' (cf. Pazzì 1980:152). The compound form undergoes vowel elision in the first syllable leading to a form with a syllabic nasal in the first syllable ṣulu. Thus ṣu is the older form and ṣulu is the newer form. In many contexts, especially in Verb–Noun collocations, both forms are intersubstitutable without any change in the semantic interpretation of the expression. Consider these examples:

(3) a. ðò ṣu/ ṣulu NP
   set EYE/ eye
   'remember NP'

   b. ðò ṣu/ ṣulu
   wander EYE/ eye
   'to cast one's eyes somewhere'

   c. ðò ṣu/ ṣulu PPL(ALLITIVE)
   redden EYE/ eye
   'to be envious of a person or covetous about an entity'

It appears that contexts of the kind exemplified in (3) served as the bridging context for the semantic specialisation for each term where ṣu now refers to a psychological eye and ṣulu to a physical eye. This leads to contexts in which the two terms are not substitutable for one another any more as exemplified in (4).

(4) a. Miá ṣulu/ ṣu
   close eye/ EYE
   'Close your eye(s)'.

   b. Me-ga-tró ṣulu/ ṣu ðò-m o
   2SG.NEG-REP-SPIN EYE/ EYE ALL-1SG NEG
   'Do not eye me'.

In the examples in (4), the term for the physical eye is acceptable but not the psychological eye. In other contexts the reverse happens: the psychological eye is acceptable but not the physical eye. For example:

(5) a. kpe ṣu/ ṣulu
   weigh EYE/ eye
   'to be shy, ashamed'

b. ðò ṣulu/ ṣulu
   spend-time EYE/ eye
   'to keep wake'

c. ṣu/ ṣulu ke
   EYE/ eye open
   'It is day break'.

Ewe is perhaps not unique in having two terms for 'eye' one of which has a more 'cognitive' dimension. For example, Timberlake (1993:881) mentions that in nineteenth century Russian the words glaza and oko were still both in use (the former has now displaced the latter except in poetry and songs), but with different meanings: glaza refers to eyes as 'instruments of physical perception, with which one merely reads or looks', whereas with one's oči, one "gazes actively or reflects a sad thought" (see also Timberlake 1999:52–57 for a survey of the development).

The Ewe terms for the two eyes — physical and psychological — also show different grammatical behaviour. First, the physical eye term can occur in a possessive phrase as in (2c) or (6), for instance. In such a context it is linked to its possessor by the possessive connective ãs as is normal for body parts in Ewe grammar (Ameka 1996). The psychological eye term ṣu does not occur in a possessive phrase, let alone being linked to the possessor by the connective. It always occurs as an independent nominal and the possessor is always external to the constituent in which it occurs. Secondly, the physical eye term, as should be expected, can be pluralised while ṣu, the psychological eye term cannot be pluralised. For example:

(6) [Context: He was numb and he fell down]
   ësì wò-ñò ë ë-fè ṣulu-wò bìà
   When 3SG-arise TR 3SG-pass eye-PT red
   ṣu me-tè-µò fo ñu o
   and 3SG.NEG-can strike mouth NEG
   'When he got up, his eyes were red and he could not speak'.
   (Ayeke 1998:82)

From these pieces of evidence, one can conclude that in Ewe talk the organ associated with 'jealousy, envy, covetousness' and similar emotions is the eye. Moreover, two forms of the eye are recognised — a physical one ṣulu, which can be linked to physical as well as emotional states, and a psychological one ṣu, which is linked more to emotional states. That both eyes are scripted as loci of envy and related emotions is not surprising from crosslinguistic or cross-
cultural perspectives. For instance, Swartz (1998) comments on how the Mombasa Swahili speak about envy as follows:

Envy ... is always at least potentially harmful to its objects and those closely associated with them. The harm that envy does is through the agency of the eyes of the envious (Swartz 1999:30).

He further reports an ethnotheory of the generation of this emotion in the eyes thus:

A shared understanding ... among Old Town Mombasa Swahili community members is that envy begins in the eyes that see what is desirable, is experienced and influenced in the heart where the desire to have what the other has is produced and may find expression through the tongue thus spreading and increasing the envy (Swartz 1998:31).

For the Mombasa Swahili then envy begins in the eyes but other body parts such as the heart and the tongue are involved in the spread and manifestation of the feeling. As we shall see below, for the Ewe the kind of emotion that centres around envy and covetousness or longing for is linked with a sensation that makes one’s eyes red. The same bodily symptom is felt when one is in danger or anxious or in panic and it causes one to strive to achieve a goal.

The question that remains to be addressed is which body part is scripted for ‘jealousy’ in the expression va ṹu/ṹu ‘move EYE/body’. Is it the eye or the body or both? As noted earlier, there are two folk understandings depending on the tone assigned to the nominal ṹu. Nyomi (1980) commented in his radio discussion on the subject that there are two explanations for the word ṹuva ‘jealousy’ — the nominalised form of the Verb-Noun collocation va ṹu/ṹu ‘move EYE/body’ thus:

(7a) a. Le go ṹuva me ṹuva gome-é nyé at side first inside TP EYE-RED-move meaning-apoc cop ṹu aló ṹuva ca-ca le ame ṹuva me dé ame bubu EYE or eye EYE-RED-move at person self inside all person other yome le é-fé dei-dse-me-kp-kp àlo ní bubu adé trails at 3sg-poss heart-land-inside-RED-see or thing other indef si ka dé é-ṹu lát tar ame-ṹuva-me-ṹuva-ca-ca rel hang all 3sg-side TP because person-self-inside-eye-RED-move dé ame-há-ví fè 22-22-mé yome, all person-group-member poss RED-walk-inside trails’

In one instance, the meaning of the word ṹuva is moving one’s eyes in oneself towards another person because of his/her successfulness or on account of something else which pertains to him/her: The movement of one’s eyes within oneself with respect to a neighbour’s progress.

b. Le go eve-há me lát, ṹuva gome-é nyé at side two-ord inside TP body-RED-move meaning-apoc cop ṹu aló ṹuva lát va va le ame ṹuva me dé body or body-flesh RED-move at person self inside all ame-há-ví fè 22-22-mé ṹu le é-fé person-group-member poss RED-walk-inside side at 3sg-poss dzogbenyi aló ní-nó-ná-me bubu adé tu, fortune or thing-good-for-person other indent because ‘In the second case, the term ṹuva means the movement of one’s body or flesh in oneself towards the progress of a neighbour because of his fortunes or because of some other good or pleasant things that may have happened to him/her’ (Nyomi 1980:7).

As Nyomi explains, those speakers (and dialects) whose thinking follows the lines of the first explanation in (7a) of moving eyes produce the word ṹuva with a low tone on the first syllable. However, those speakers whose thinking goes along the lines of moving skin or body or flesh produce the word with a high tone on the first syllable. Lexical evidence suggests that Ewe makes a distinction between an “outer body”, i.e., skin, and an “inner body”, i.e., flesh. This opposition between ṹu ‘body’, ṹu ‘skin’ and ṹu ‘whole body’ on the one hand, and ṹu ‘ whole body’ or flesh’, on the other, is exploited by Nyomi in (7b) above. The historical processes invoked above to explain the relation between ṹu ‘EYE’ and ṹu ‘eye’ can be used to account for the words for “outer body, skin”, namely, ṹu ‘body’, ṹu ‘skin’, and ṹu ‘whole body’. The phonologically heavier term ṹu ‘whole body’ looks like a compound derived from ṹu ‘body’ and the form ṹu which is probably related to a form meaning ‘accompanying, together with’. The form ṹu also forms a compound with ame ‘person’ as in ame-ṹu ‘outer person, whole person’. The form ṹu ‘whole body’ got simplified by the loss of the medial consonant yielding the form ṹu ‘skin’. Both ṹu ‘whole body’ and ṹu ‘skin’ are used interchangeably for “skin, outer body” in expressions like the following:

(7c) c. ṹu ṹu ṹu nyé wipe skin body well ‘Scrub your skin/body well’
The form nù 'body' behaves like a generic term for 'body' and functions as a direct argument of various verbs in some collocations such as sè nù 'be strong body', i.e., 'be strong, tough', ò nù 'press_down body', i.e., 'be able to, can' and nês nù 'spurt body', i.e., to be disgusting, loathsome. It should be noted that both nù and nùtù, but not nùtì, have grammaticalised into postpositions used to designate an outer surface and region of an entity. For instance, one can say ze-a nù/nùtì kù (pot-def outer_surface be_clean) to mean 'the outer surface of the pot (as opposed to its inner side) is clean'. In this example, nù/nùtì function as postpositions and are not used as body parts. As postpositions, they are bound to the nominal (pot) and cannot occur without such dependent items (see Duthie 1996 and Ameka 1995 on postpositions).

The upshot of this discussion is that even though there are three terms in the domain of "body" in Ewe, the one that is involved in the expression na nù/nù 'move EYE/body' is the one for the whole body. It also seems that nù 'EYE' is related to nùtì 'eye' in abstractness in the same way that nù 'body' is related to nùtì 'skin' and nùtì 'whole body'. It is fair to say that both the eye and the body are scripted in Ewe for jealousy. It is instructive that in Gungbe, a sister dialect of Ewe in the Gbe language cluster spoken in Benin, there is no variation of the kind found in Ewe. The expression for jealousy is hwàn awù 'move body' (Enoch Aboh p.c.). Were one to assume that the Ewe form could also have historically been just 'move body' and then through tonal change creating a folk etymology with respect to the psychological eye, it would be plausible to explain it as a product of metonymy: a part of the body being used to represent the whole. The common denominator of all this, however, is that whether it is the body or the eye, 'jealousy' in Ewe is more behavioural and action-directed than just a mental state. In fact as Nyomi explains, it is not just the part that is lexically scripted, as it were, for the emotion which is moved when people are experiencing jealousy. He observes that when women are jealous because of their husbands or lovers they move all parts of the body.

4. The construal of the experiences and experiencers

As we have seen earlier, the grammatical constructions and processes in which the jealousy-related expressions participate provide clues to our understanding of the cultural scripting of the components of the body for these emotions. In this section, other clues that can be derived from the grammatical behaviour of the expressions are explored, especially with respect to the way the experiences and the experiencers are construed. Recall that two of the three forms being discussed are verb-noun collocations na nù/nù 'move EYE/body' and bi à nù/ñkù 'redden EYE/eye' whereas the third one is a (Possessive) N(P)-verb collocation: (X fè) ñkù bìì (X's) eye red. Because of their different internal structures, they participate in different argument structure constructions (cf. Essegbey 1999). The verb-noun collocation structures can function in two-place (transitive) constructions, with the body part term functioning as a direct argument of the verb, while the Possessive N-verb collocation is primarily a one-place construction, as will become clear from the examples below.

Another difference between the two sets of structures is that the expressions
of the verb-noun collocation type are construed as "active" or "processual" experiences, while the Possessive N-verb collocation type is viewed as "stative". A piece of evidence in support of this comes from the nominalisation of the structures. The verb-noun structures are nominalised by permutation and reduplication, whereas the noun-verb type is nominalised by simple compounding. The nominalised forms of the expressions are shown in (9).

(9) **Predicate**

- a. *va nyu/ nyú* → *nyu/ nyú-va-na* (process, active) move EYE/ body EYE/ body-red-move 'jealousy, envy'
- b. *biá nyu/ nykú* → *nykú-bíá- biá* (process, active) redden EYE/ eye eye-red/red/eye-red-red 'redness of the eye'
- c. *nyú biá* → *nykú-biá* (non-process, stative) eye red 'anxiety, envy, covetousness, desperation'

The interpretation of the output of the nominalisation strategies used with the different structures is consistent with the general patterns found in the language: the permutation and reduplication of verb strategy yields processual nominals, whereas the compound of N and V yields stative nominals (cf. Dutrieu 1996; Ofotu 2002). Consider the uses of the nominalised forms of the expressions in the following examples.

(10) ...*nyu-va-na* sia dsi fu-lé-lé... eye/body-red-move DEM give-birth enmity-red-hold 'this jealousy gave rise to enmity' (Ayeke 1998:53)

(11) gaké nyúbiá biá dé ga nyú tré é-fé gbá but EYE body-red-red ALL money surface change 3SG-poss love 'Ezuagba loved Nyuemedi very much, but envy because of money changed his love' (Ayeke 1973:24)

(12) É-srú nú le afíma kpló nykúbiá 3SG-learn thing that there with red-eye 'He studied there with complete attention' [and after just two years, he passed his exams with flying colours] (Ayeke 1973:45).

Another piece of evidence in support of the 'active' vs. 'stative' character of the experiences is that the active ones are construed as controllable or under the control of the experiencer, hence they can occur in the prohibitive. The "stative" experience expression cannot occur in the prohibitive because it is not viewed as being controllable by the experiencer. Thus *biá nyú/nykú* 'envy, covet, etc.' is used in the translation of the Ten Commandments that have to do with covetousness as shown in (13).

(13) Me-ga-biá nyú dé ha-wó-vi sé afé dsi o 2SGNNEG-REP-redden eye ALL neighbour poss house upper-surface NGB Me-ga-biá nyú dé ha-wó-vi srs, é-fé dór-nyássu 2SGNNEG-REP-redden eye ALL neighbour spouse 3SG-poss servant-man aló é-fé dór-nyánu, é-fé nyí aló é-fé tédì or 3SG-poss servant-woman 3SG-poss cow or 3SG-poss donkey aló nú-áa-ní si nyé ha-wó-vi tó lá fè ìléké or everything REL COP neighbour POSSPRO TP poss any dsi o upper-surface NGB (Mose II 20:17 Ece Biblia) "You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey or anything that is his" (Exodus 20:17. The Jerusalem Bible (Popular edition))

Similarly, one can use *va nyú/nyu* 'move body/EYE' in the prohibitive. In fact, such expressions underlie Ghanaian English expressions like: "Don't jealous me".

(14) Me-ga-va nyú/ nyú-m o 2SGNNEG-REP-move EYE/ body-1SG NGB 'Don't be jealous/covetous of me.'

The "active" nature of the experiences encoded in *va nyú/nyu* 'move EYE/body' and *biá nyú/nykú* 'redden EYE/eve' is also reflected in the grammatical function that the experiencer argument can have. The experiencer of both expressions functions as subject as shown in the following expressions.

(15) a. ná é tó o ná dévi dáká lb, mamló-a-wó à-va yó-i if 3SG-take-3SG give child one TP REST-DEF-PL POT-move EYE-3SG 'If he gives it to one of the children, the others would be jealous of him/her' (Ayeke 1998:31).

b. [Several people liked him because of his many qualities] Nenémá kó-é futú-wó há biá nyu dé é-fé same very-APOC enemy-PL also redden EYE ALL 3SG-poss
ηγρ-πιεη ηα
progress side
‘In the same way, his enemies also envied his progress’

These experiences can also be packaged as a one-place nyå modal construction in which the body part nominal functions as the only direct argument of the verb and the experiencer is presented as a dative experiencer. The nyå construction has the function of indicating the judgement and disposition of the entity coded as the dative prepositional argument (in this case the experiencer). The possibility of using the nyå construction to talk about these experiences is further indication of their active nature because it is only such states of affairs that can be packaged in nyå constructions (cf. Ameka 1990; 1991; Ességbé 1999). Compare:

(16) ηυ nyå va-na ná ðɛvi mà
EYE MOD move-hab DAT child DEM
‘That child is wont to be jealous’.

(17) ηυ nyå biå-na dë ga ηυ ná nyínu mà
EYE MOD reddén-hab ALL money skin DAT woman DEM
‘That woman covets money’.

However, there are some differences between the two active experience expressions. The stimulus of biå nyå ‘reddén EYE’ can be expressed as a direct argument. In this case the experiencer functions as the dative prepositional object (see example 25 below). The stimulus can also function as the complement of the allative preposition dë, in which case the experiencer retains the grammatical function of subject (see examples 13 and 15b above). By contrast, the stimulus of va nyå/nyå ‘move EYE’ can be expressed either as the second object, as in example (14) above, or as the complement of the allative preposition dë. In both cases, crucially, the experiencer always has the function of subject.

The “stative” expression X fë ykå biå ‘X’s eyes is red’, as noted earlier, is different from the active ones. First, it occurs only in a one-place construction. Second, the experiencer possessor can be left unexpressed. Moreover, the experiencer possessor can be expressed externally. In this case it is coded as the object of the dative preposition. For example,

(18) ykå biå ná sìku-vië-å-wø
eye red DAT school-child-DEF-PL
‘The students are focussed completely’.

In sum, the suggestion that some of the experiences are active and the others are stative has adequate support in their grammatical behaviour. In the next section we turn to the semantics of each of the expressions.

5. The semantics of the “jealousy”-related expressions

5.1 “Person X va nyå / ηυ person Y (dë entity Z nyå)”

Consider first the characterisation of this expression in some dictionaries:

va nyå: to be jealous, envious (Westermann 1928)
dë-ba nyå-mî îl a laissez en émoi son corps versus moi, c. à d. il a jaloux de moi
(Pazze 1980:146)
‘He moved his body towards me, i.e., he is jealous of me’
(my translation PKA).

Typically, the target of the experience is a person represented by the NP that functions as a second object in the construction. In some cases the reason for the emotional situation can be represented in a prepositional phrase such as the allative prepositional phrase. It is something about someone else that triggers the feeling in the experiencer. As indicated in example (7) above, it is a thought about good things like good fortune or success that happen to other people that makes the experiencer move the body or parts thereof to show she is having an experience. For this reason, I propose that a component of the meaning of the expression is: something good happened to person Y. Presented in this way, va nyå sounds very much like English envy and it is no wonder that it is sometimes glossed as such, as in the entry from Westermann above. As the example below shows, one can experience this on account of the fact that someone else has children and the experiencer doesn’t. That is to say, natural endowments can be the source of this emotion in people that do not have the privilege of such endowments.

(19) Né nyå bè ame aðê fe vîmaadêmësi-ë dî-e dî bè
if be that person indef poss barrenness-AFOC send-3SG forth SAY
wø-a-toa nyå naål-dë si âзи vi...
3SG=SBY-move EYE friend-DEF REL bear child...
‘If it be that someone’s barrenness makes her jealous of the friend who has children’ [then this jealousy is an empty one because jealousy will not make her get a child if she is not destined to have one.] (Nyñi 1980:19)
While some situations that are described by *va nyu/nyu* 'move EYE/body' relate clearly to envy, other situations pertain more to 'jealousy'. Thus it is used to talk about different kinds of jealousies — economic, social or romantic — including jealousy between lovers, partners, husband and wife, colleagues, siblings, etc. In all these cases, the experiencer feels something on account of the good things that have happened to someone else. In her discussion of jealousy in English, Wierzbicka (1999:99) suggests that "jealousy involves (prototypically) three parties rather than two and that it has to do with other people's good feelings". The focus of the Ewe expression *va nyu/nyu* 'move EYE/body' is on two people even if a third party is involved, in the case of lovers: it is not so much about the third party as about the way the experiencer feels about the target of the feeling. In fact, one can *va nyu/nyu* 'move EYE/body' his or her own position or success as the context of the following example shows.

(20) [A successful woman wants to give up her position, her marriage, her respected role in the village as the Women's leader and the husband admonishes her with these words:]

`nē ma-va nyu dē wo dōfē sia-wō nū i o dē...`

if 2SG:LOC-MOVE EYE ALL 2SG STATUS DEM-PL SIDE NEG TP

'[My dear...] if you would not be jealous/envious of your own position...' (would you not have pity on me and your children and change your mind from what you want to do) (Hlomatsi 1994:104)

One feature in which *va nyu/nyu* 'move EYE/body' is close to "jealousy" is in its active nature. In fact, *va nyu/nyu* 'move EYE/body' has to be manifested behaviourally. The things that can be done include verbal actions, physical actions and general conduct in relation to the target of the feeling. Nyami (1980:16) describes some actions women engage in when they experience *nywawga* on account of their husbands' infidelity.

(21) *eye wō-fo-a nu ñzu-ne, dū-a tsi*

and 3PL hit-HAB mouth insult-HAB:3SG bite-HAB smack

`alō si-a ahamā dē é-nū alō-fo-a fi dē-ne`

or CUT-HAB insinuation ALL 3SG-IDEH hit-HAB curse pull-HAB:3SG

'and they insult her (the husband's lover), show contempt towards her or cast insinuations at her or curse her'.

(22) *nē é-vā dē do-fē ade-th-wô lā*

if 3SG-COME reach reach-place INDEF-PL TP

wō-tes-ā ası gblē-ā nū-i.

3PL-take-HAB hand spoil-HAB thing-INV

'When it gets to a certain point they use their hands to destroy things'.

Example (21) talks of some of the verbal actions that women engage in which include casting insinuations, and swearing at the third party as well as their husband. These verbal actions can be thought of as things done with a part of the body, namely, the mouth, and are thus covered by component (24h) below. The Ewe term for 'talking' or 'speaking' is *nufofo*, a nominalisation of the phrase *fo nu* 'strike mouth'. Example (22) further makes it clear that physical harm and destruction can be the manifestation of jealous behaviour.

A song, sung by girls, recorded by Egblewogbe (1975), in the Kpando dialect of Ewe, draws attention to acts that emanate from a husband's jealousy. Egblewogbe (1975:48) comments that: "The song suggests that a man was so jealous that he locks the door and goes to bed at an unusually early hour". The lyrics of the song say it all:

(23) *ye, ye*

*ye, ye*

*Gale anukli wo dē nye ta*

Anukliwa aye

*Zamedomodò d'atì ho me*

'Oh ho

He's still jealous about me

O, jealous one

It's scarcely dark

And he has barred the door' (Egblewogbe 1975:85)

It is behaviour of this kind that ensues from the feeling of *nywawga*. It is significant that in the song, the Kpando Ewe use the verb *wo 'do' together with a nominal *anukli* 'jittery' to express the feeling of jealousy. Once the behaviour is manifested, people can evaluate it and on the basis of that think something good or bad about the experiencer. If one is jealous of the success of someone else and then strives to be successful through working hard — one's manifested behaviour as a result of jealousy — then people will think something good about this person. On the other hand, if a jealous husband locks the door and goes to bed early, people will think something bad about him. Again, as Egblewogbe (1975:48) notes: "Jealousy is a necessary element in human behaviour. But excess of it, especially when misplaced, is bound to disrupt social order. It is therefore looked upon as mean and it is ridiculed".
On the basis of all these considerations and as a kind of summary, I propose the following Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM)\textsuperscript{4} explication for Person X \textit{na yu/nyu} person Y:

\begin{enumerate}
\item X thinks something like this:
\item something good happened to person Y
\item the same kind of thing did not happen to me
\item I feel something bad towards person Y because of that
\item I want the same kind of thing to happen to me
\item I have to do something because of that
\item X felt something because X thought something like this
\item X does something with (part of) the body because of this
\item people can think something (good/bad) about X because of it
\end{enumerate}

The explication suggests that the concept encapsulated in \textit{na yu/nyu} ‘move EYE/body’ is a complex of physical states, mental processes and dispositions which are thought to happen in the body. This is a general pattern for emotion concepts in the language. As argued in Ameka (1994:65–66) the verb se which could be an exponent of the semantic primitive FEEL has various readings including ‘perceive’, ‘hear’, ‘smell’, ‘taste’ and ‘feel’ depending on the elements it collocates with. To get the reading of ‘feel’, it takes a locative prepositional phrase complement as follows:

\textit{se le lâ-me}

\textit{V at flesh-containing_region_of}

‘to feel’

The nominalised form of this phrase \textit{se-se-le-lâ-me} can be used to translate ‘emotion, sensing’. The anthropologist Kathryn Geurts in her ethnographic investigation of the senses among the Anlo Ewe comments, referring to the term seselelame:

Seselelame is an ideal illustration of a culturally elaborated way in which many Anlo [Ewe] speaking people attend to and read their own bodies while simultaneously orienting themselves to objects, to the environment, and to the bodies of those around them. . . . it is difficult to make a direct translation into English of the term seselelame for it refers to various kinds of sensory embodiment which do not fit neatly into Anglo-American categories or words (Geurts 2001:5).

Contrasting the term \textit{seselelame} with Western views about the senses she writes:

Whereas we make fairly clear distinctions between external senses (hearing, touch, taste, smell, sight) and internal senses (balance, kinesthesia, proprioception) and then emotions . . . they seem to have a traditional category or domain of immediate bodily experience (referred to by many Anlo Ewe speakers as \textit{seselelame} . . . ) that encompasses and links states of perception, affect, and disposition that we treat as independent variables that can be separated or distinguished from experiences in the other domains . . . as a cultural category, a model for organising experience, and a theory of knowing, \textit{seselelame} is based on a fundamental principle of integration whereas the five senses model is premised on separation and distinction (Geurts 2001:9–10).

She concludes that

\ldots \textit{seselelame} represents a cultural meaning system in which bodily feeling is attended to as a source of vital information. Instead of concentrating on distinctions between sensations and emotions, and between intuition and cognition, these experiences (or processes) are . . . subsumed in one category called \textit{seselelame} (Geurts 2001:16).

I suggest that the lower level terms for various experiences in Ewe, like the superordinate label \textit{seselelame}, do not distinguish between emotion, sensation, perception, cognition, etc. Instead, there are components that link to a bundle of these things at one and the same time. I have tried to capture these components for \textit{na yu/nyu} ‘move EYE/body’ in (24) above. Thus there are components that go to thought processes (e.g., component (a)) and the content of the thought includes feelings and desires (components (d) and (e)), to feelings (component (g) and to bodily behaviour (component (h)) as well as a moral judgment (component (i)). Similar components are proposed for the other two expressions in the following subsections.

5.2. \textit{biâ yu/hkú}

As noted earlier, there are two syntactic frames in which this expression occurs, viz.

\begin{align*}
X & \quad \text{\textit{biâ yu/hkú}} & (\text{\textit{d}entity Z yu}) \\
\text{Experiencer} & & \text{Stimulus} \\
Y & \quad \text{\textit{biâ yu/hkú }ná} & X \\
\text{Stimulus} & & \text{Experiencer}
\end{align*}
This feeling, like that of ṣawaba 'jealousy/envy', is also triggered by something good that someone else has or does. It is also the case that the experiencer feels s/he does not have such a property. Thus there are similarities in meaning between va GNU/ GNU ‘move EYE/body’ and biya GNU/ GNU ‘redden EYE/eye’. One feature in which the two experiences are different is that biya GNU/ GNU ‘redden EYE/eye’ has an element of the experiencer intensely wanting to have the good thing that someone else has and doing something to make this come about. This is the aspect, I believe, that the Ewe lexicographers have tried to capture. Consider the following two entries:

ébiá GNU il a fài roodig són oell, cà d. il s’est apaquil de toute sa force; il a convoité (Pazzi 1980:151) ‘he has caused his eye to be red, i.e., he has applied all his force’

biiá GNU: to redding one’s eye, to covet, to long for (Westermann 1928).

The focus of the biya GNU/ GNU ‘redden EYE/eye’ experience is on the quality of someone else and not so much on the person per se, as is the case with va GNU/ GNU ‘move EYE/body’. In example (25) below, it is the attributes of someone else which trigger the experience, leading the experiencer to do something bad to the possessor of those qualities. Consider the following example:

(25) [A criminal confesses and explains why he set fire to the exam papers of a class mate]

Nye-á fi Muyiemedí fó dodoč-pó-ghaló-wo hé-tó sá wó 1sg-aroc steal N. poss exam.-paper-pl MOD-set fire 3pl

élahé é-fó zazaá, mànyá... biya GNU ná-m nutoró because 3sg-poss activeness knowledge reddening eye to-1sg much

‘I stole Muyiemedi’s exam papers and set fire to them because I envied his activeness and wisdom …’ (Ayeke 1973:14).

In this expression both the term for the physical eye GNU and the one for the psychological eye GNU can be substituted for one another. However, there is some evidence to suggest that in this context the physical symptom is psychologised. Part of the evidence comes from the fact that the term GNU ‘eye’ cannot be modified, not even for the plural. Thus even though the physical term can be used, it is used generically. Because of this, in the explication below it is suggested that people can detect that the experiencer has the feeling through what they can see about the eyes of the experiencer and the meaning component does not refer specifically to the physical colour of the eyes as the expression literally signifies.

3.3 Person X fé GNU biá

As is obvious from the forms, there is a close relationship between this expression and the biya GNU/ GNU ‘redden EYE/eye’ expression just described. There are at least three differences between them. First the biya GNU/ GNU ‘redden EYE/eye’ expression is a verb-noun collocation — a transitive expression, while the X fé GNU biá ‘X’s eye is red’ is a one-place construction involving a possessive phrase. Second, and following from the first, typically the experiencer of the latter is coded as a possessor, while the experiencer of the former is an independent NP functioning as Subject or as the Object of a preposition. Third, the X fé GNU biá ‘X’s eye is red’ has a very literal and physical meaning, while biya GNU/ GNU ‘redden EYE/eye’ involves a psychologised eye. Nevertheless there is an overlap between them, as Westermann’s glosses in (27) below suggest.

(27) é-fó GNU biá

his-eye is red,

‘he is covetous; he is down-cast, sorrowful; he is revengeful’ (Westermann 1928).

One may well wonder what all the situations captured in the glosses have to do with one another. The answer is that when people are in these conditions, from an Ewe point of view, the physical state indicative of it is that their eyes are red. In some cases the links are clear. Thus people who are bereaved and who can be thought of as sorrowful could have red eyes because of wailing and crying a lot — a cultural imperative in Ewe society. Situations that in English would be linked with envy and covetousness can be described using this expression, as in the following example where the experience is triggered when the experiencer perceives a good thing that someone else has and desires very much to have it.
(28) ësì Eznagba kpó ga-a ko ló ó-ëfè ñkú biá náávé
when E. see money-DIR just TP 3SG-poss eye red seriously
'As soon as Eznagba saw the money he became very envious' [and he began to behave as if he no longer knew who his friend was] (Ayeke 1973:22).

The expression is also used to describe situations where the experiencer is fixated on something, that is, where s/he directs complete attention to someone or something. Thus when a prisoner escapes from prison and in the process wounds a guard, after the guard is taken to hospital, the police now turn all their attention to looking for the culprit. This is the situation characterised in the next example.

(29) [Nyuiemedi escapes from prison after beating and wounding a guard. The guard was taken to the hospital and]

nykü biá àzô dê Nyuiemedi dídì ñúúú
eye red now all N. RED- seek side

'now, Nyuiemedi was being desperately looked for' (Ayeke 1973:30).

Similarly, a student who studies with complete concentration and seriousness because he will be facing a final external examination in the year is described as follows.

(30) [The time for him to go to the final year was approaching]

eyata ë-ëfè ñkü biá dê nù-ó-sí-rró ñúúí
therefore 3SG-poss eye become red all thing-red-learn side

'therefore he focussed all his attention on studying' (Hlomatsi 1994:54).

All the contexts described so far can lead to one's eyes literally becoming red. The eye term in the expression can be pluralised and the psychologised form, as we mentioned above, cannot be substituted for the physical organ term. On the basis of all these considerations, I propose the following explication.

(31) Person X fé ñkü biá
a. person X thinks:
  b. something can happen
  c. I want this thing to happen
  d. I don’t want anything else
  e. I cannot not think about this
  f. because of this I want very much to do something
  g. X feels something because X thought something like this
  h. something happens in a person's eyes when a person feels like this: people can see that the eyes are red

i. because of this if people can see the eyes of person X they can know that person X feels like this

One difference between this explication and the ones before is that there is no judgmental component. Furthermore there is an element of preoccupation and not being able to do anything about it, as in the component “I cannot not think about this”. Recall that the experiencer of this experience is an undergoer who does not have control over the situation.

6. Conclusion: Moving bodies and red eyes in cross-cultural perspective

In the foregoing I have demonstrated through a lexical and grammatical analysis that the terms used to denote “jealousy” and related notions (like “envy”, covetousness, etc.) in Ewe are different in meaning from one another and from equivalent expressions in other languages such as English. In addition, I have shown that different parts of the body are scripted as the seats of these feelings and also as places in the body for the display of the experiences not only in Ewe but also across languages. In spite of the differences, the three Ewe expressions described in this paper also have similarities. One thing that emerged is that the terms are not in a hierarchical relationship to one another, but rather overlap in their range of applications. Thus na nü/ñú 'move EYE/body' more or less covers jealousy and envy while biá nü/nþó 'reden EYE/eye' more or less covers envy, covetousness and longing for, and X fé ñkü biá 'X's eye is red' covers covetousness, fixed attention, etc. It was noted that these are basic level expressions for the various feelings.

In fact, languages seem to differ in the structuring of this “jealousy/envy”-related domain. To give an example of the distinctions made by the Angbandi of the Central African Republic and the body parts that are associated with the feelings, I quote from Bibeau (1982:73). He writes:

I note that jealousy, with a connotation of anger is called mó when the Angbandi refer to the general feeling, sobere when it is produced by conjugal infidelity, kómbé when it translates husband's jealousy caused by his wife's infidelity and mbánda when it refers to the wife's jealousy in front of the husband's jealousy, … sobere is a feeling located in the be, mó is located in the yu, that is the belly, and kómbé and mbánda are located in the tere [‘body’ FBK], because they are said to effect the whole personality. These four words translating the one sentiment of jealousy-anger reveal native psychology.
What I want to point out with this quote is not just that there are several words covering this domain but more importantly that they seem to be hierarchically structured with *mo* at the top and the others on a different level since they are specific types, so to speak, of *mo*. What is also significant is that they are linked to different parts of the body.

Another dimension of variation comes from the use of equivalent expressions involving the same body parts and the same processes for different feelings. That is, the same images in different languages are scripted for different feelings. Take the Dutch expression *vinders in je buik*, whose equivalent in English is *butterflies in your stomach*. The Dutch expression is used to describe the feeling one has when one falls in love. The English expression is used to describe the feeling one has when one is about to take part in a competition, for example. The image in both languages probably relates to anxiety. Incidentally, the Ewe expression *X fé ýkú biá* 'X’s eye is red’ can also be used in the situations just described for the Dutch and the English expressions.

A further difference between languages and cultures is that even though the same body part may be scripted for similar feelings, the processes associated with the parts differ. It has been demonstrated in this paper that the body is scripted for jealousy and envy in Ewe. However, it is the movement of the body which is crucial for linking it with these feelings. In Akan, an areal and genetic relative of Ewe, the body is also scripted for jealousy and envy; however, in Akan it is the pain in the body that is relevant for these feelings. The Akan term is *ahóeyaa* literally, ‘body/skin pain’.

Similarly, although in many languages and cultures the eyes have been scripted for emotions in the jealousy-envy domain, different functions and states are ascribed to them. We have already pointed out the function of the eyes with respect to the generation of envy among the Mombasa Swahili (see Section 3.0). A particularly relevant area in which differences manifest themselves with respect to eyes and the jealousy-envy domain is in the colour that is attributed to the eyes. In English one is green with envy, but we have seen that in Ewe the colour attributed to the eyes with respect to these feelings is the colour red. Dimmendaal (this volume) has drawn attention to the “colour-full” expressions for different emotions with respect to body parts in African languages. As he notes, the colour red has various uses and interpretations in several African languages. It is interesting that in Bari, an eastern Nilotic language, a clause that literally means ‘your eyes are red’ is interpreted as ‘you are a ferocious fellow’ (see Dimmendaal, this volume). Here we have the same image as the Ewe expression ‘X’s eyes are red’ but the interpretations in the different languages are different even though it is conceivable that the interpretations might be related at some abstract level. There is the need for further research in this domain. Let me point out again that the colour verb *biá* is used for macro-red including focal red such as the colour of blood as well as the colour of a ripe mango or orange (cf. Vorseub 1994).

The connection between red eyes and envy and related emotions is not only an Ewe phenomenon but seems to be an areal feature in Ghana and West Africa. Thus in Akan we get an expression similar to the Ewe form as shown in:

(32) *Máni a-be*  
Isg-eye perf-become_red (FKA)  
lit: My eyes are red  
'I am jealous/covetous' (Gyekye 1995: 166).

Like the Ewe expression, there is a nominalised form in Akan as well, derived by the compounding of *ání* ‘eye’ and *bere* ‘red’. Gyekye (1993: 167) gives the following glosses for the nominalised form which are very instructive and, *mutatis mutandis*, apply to the Ewe form as well:

*áníbere* ‘ambition, determination, anxiety, jealousy, envy, covetousness, desperation’.

In fact, this semantic pattern of red eyes being linked to these feelings has been transferred into Ghanaian English. A graffiti on a rock in the National Botanic Gardens of Ghana at Aburi (near the capital Accra) looks like this:

DEV'T  
MEANS  
EYE-RED

The graffiti can be interpreted as “Development requires focussed attention”. The form *eye-red* is a calque based on the indigenous language patterns: *n abundant* (Ewe) and *áníbere* (Akan). This shows that culturally scripted parts and the associated properties and processes are enduring patterns which can influence and diffuse across language boundaries.

It seems to me that what has emerged from the discussion of the Ewe scripting of body parts for emotions with particular reference to jealousy and related feelings is that for us to understand how emotions are expressed using bodily language we must pay attention not only to the body parts that are viewed as the seat of the emotions but also to the processes and states associated with those parts linked to the specific feelings. Furthermore, it is not at all clear...
that the use of bodily image expressions for talking about feelings involves any mappings as such. Languages may differ with respect to whether they use these terms as basic level expressions or not. Ewe and many other Ghanaian languages use them as basic terms for describing experiences without any suggestion of figurative language.

Notes

* The subject matter of this paper was first presented at the 21st LAUD symposium on ‘The language of emotions’ held at the University of Duisburg, April 10–11, 1995. I am grateful to the participants in the symposium for their helpful suggestions. Several years later, the more grammatical aspects of the expressions discussed here were presented at a workshop on the Typology of Ghanaian Languages at the University of Ghana, Legon, March 1999. The final write up of the research reported on here was done with the support of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, and Leiden University. I am grateful to Eva Schultze-Berndt who read the final version of the paper and spotted some deficiencies. I am also indebted to the editors for their encouragement and patience and their very helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. In the traditional orthography of Ewe, only few tones are marked. In this paper, all high tones are marked throughout with an acute accent ‘’. Low tones, marked with a grave accent ‘’, are only indicated when demanded by the orthography or to make explicit the tone of the item being discussed. Rising and falling tones are marked by a breve ‘’ and a circumflex ‘’ respectively, where necessary. ‘f’ and ‘v’ are the orthographic forms for IPA /p/ and /b/ respectively. ‘y’ and ‘j’ contrast phonologically. However in italic script the distinction is neutralised. The following abbreviations are used in the interlinear glosses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALL</th>
<th>COP</th>
<th>DAT</th>
<th>DEF</th>
<th>DEM</th>
<th>SFDC</th>
<th>HAB</th>
<th>INDEF</th>
<th>INV</th>
<th>LOG</th>
<th>MOD</th>
<th>NPRES</th>
<th>ORD</th>
<th>PERF</th>
<th>PL</th>
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<tr>
<td>allative preposition</td>
<td>copula</td>
<td>dative</td>
<td>definiteness marker</td>
<td>demonstrative</td>
<td>argument focus marker</td>
<td>habitual</td>
<td>indefinite</td>
<td>invariable pronoun</td>
<td>logophoric pronoun</td>
<td>modal</td>
<td>non-present</td>
<td>ordinal marker</td>
<td>perfect</td>
<td>plural marker</td>
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<td>POSS</td>
<td>POSPRO</td>
<td>POT</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>possessive linker</td>
<td>possessed pronominal</td>
<td>potential</td>
<td>present</td>
<td>progressive</td>
<td>reduplicative formative</td>
<td>relative clause introducer</td>
<td>repetitive</td>
<td>nominal phrase</td>
<td>singular</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>terminal particle</td>
<td>first person</td>
<td>second person</td>
<td>third person</td>
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</table>

2. Ewe has a basic three colour system. There are three adjectives which designate the three focal colours: ‘y’ ‘white’, ‘jiboo’ ‘black’ and ‘dat’ ‘red’. There are three verbs which cover a bigger range than the focal colours: one for ‘macro-white’ ‘fun’ another for ‘macro-black’ ‘y3’. The third verb is ‘biia’ ‘become_macro-red’. It is used to cover not only focal red but also orange and yellow. Thus the colour of blood as well as of the sun and of a ripe mango or banana can be described using this verb.

3. Westermann (1928) gives the following nominals as equivalents of ‘yùbiábiá: ‘covetousness, desire, lust, avarice’.

4. For the representation of the meanings of linguistic expressions I adopt the principles of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach as espoused and practiced by Anna Wierzbicka and colleagues. For an application of the method to the explication of emotion terms in different languages see Goddard (1998) and Wierzbicka (1999), among others.

5. It is interesting to observe that the German expression Blutunterlaufene Augen meaning literally ‘blood in the eyes’ is interpreted as ‘ferocious, angry’ (Eva Schultze-Berndt p.c.).

References


Dimmendaal, G.J. 2002 (this volume) “Colourful PSI’s sleep furiously: Depicting emotional states in some African languages”.


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**Cultural script of body parts for emotions**


**Ewe texts**


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