

CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SOMATIC IDIOMS

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Abstract: This study explores how idioms involving body parts in English offer a window into cultural understandings of behavior, emotions, and relationships, both in society and at home. The researchers found that many of these "somatic phraseologism" use body-related terms metaphorically. Using a qualitative approach, the analysis of dictionaries and text collections reveals how these somatic metaphors reflect cultural frameworks, emphasizing phraseology's importance in shaping and expressing social and familial perspectives. The article supports these theoretical points with concrete examples.

Keywords: phraseologism, somatism, somatic phraseology, body parts, context, linguistic culture, metaphor.

Аннотация: В настоящем исследовании анализируется, каким образом идиомы с компонентами, обозначающими части тела, в английском языке позволяют глубже понять культурные представления о поведении, эмоциональных состояниях и межличностных отношениях — как в обществе, так и в семейной сфере. Авторы установили, что многие из этих «соматических фразеологизмов» используют лексемы, связанные с телом, в метафорическом значении. Применяя качественный метод, исследование словарных источников и текстовых корпусов выявляет, как данные соматические метафоры отражают культурные модели, подчёркивая значимость фразеологии в формировании и выражении социальных и семейных взглядов. Теоретические положения статьи подкреплены конкретными примерами.

Ключевые слова: фразеологизм, соматизм, соматическая фразеология, части тела, контекст, лингвокультура, метафора.

Introduction: Phraseology in linguistics focuses on fixed or semi-fixed expressions—like idioms, phrasal verbs, and other multi-word combinations—where the overall meaning can't be easily guessed from the meanings of the individual words. These expressions, often called phrasemes, behave as units whose meanings are more specific or unique than the sum of their parts. Somatic phraseology is a significant linguistic area that examines fixed expressions containing names of human body parts, forming one of the most ancient and figurative layers of language. These expressions function not merely as lexical units but also as linguistic reflections of a people's worldview, psychological states, emotional experiences, and social relations. Through somatic phraseologisms, speakers metaphorically express moods, character traits, emotional reactions, and social behaviors, which makes such expressions rich in layered meanings, strong emotional coloring, and deep associative implications. Body-part expressions often serve as conceptual tools for communicating abstract ideas. For example, the English expression "to have a heart of stone" and the Uzbek "ko'ngli qora" both describe moral or emotional qualities through symbolic representation rather than literal description. Such expressions typically resist direct translation because their meanings are shaped by cultural beliefs, historical traditions, and

collective experiences. Consequently, somatic phraseologisms require thorough semantic analysis, as they involve metaphorical extensions and culturally grounded associations. In actual communication, somatic phraseological units fulfill various pragmatic roles. They convey the speaker's attitude, evaluation, emotional state, or illocutionary intent indirectly yet expressively. While the English expression "to keep an eye on someone" signals supervision or caution, the Uzbek "ko'zi uchmoq" conveys affection or emotional interest. These meanings depend heavily on context, the relationship between interlocutors, and the communicative situation. Pragmatic factors such as formality, emotional tone, and conversational goals significantly influence how such expressions are interpreted in discourse. The cultural connotations of somatic phraseology are also essential. Different cultures attribute different symbolic meanings to body parts. In English-speaking cultures, the "heart" is widely conceptualized as the center of emotions, whereas in Uzbek culture, "ko'ngil" represents a broader moral, spiritual, and emotional domain. Thus, English and Uzbek somatic expressions vary not only in meaning but also in emotional depth and communicative usage. These differences highlight the cultural specificity of bodily metaphors. Comparative analysis of English and Uzbek somatic expressions demonstrates that, although both languages rely heavily on bodily metaphors to conceptualize experience, they do so in distinct ways. For example, the English idiom "cold feet" expresses hesitation or fear, while Uzbek employs different metaphorical tools to describe the same emotional state. Each language constructs somatic metaphors based on its unique historical background, social practices, value system, and cultural imagination. Therefore, studying somatic phraseology provides valuable insight into a society's mentality, patterns of emotional expression, communicative strategies, and conceptualization of human experience.

Main body:

Body-related idioms appear constantly in everyday English, and people use them almost automatically to describe how they feel, behave, or interact with others. These expressions often sound simple, but each one carries a small cultural story behind it. Below, the idioms are grouped by the kinds of experiences they describe, with short explanations showing how they work in real communication.

"To give a hand" (help) : "Seeing her struggling with the heavy boxes, he readily offered, 'Don't worry, I'll give you a hand.'

This idiom reflects the idea that help is something physical and practical—something you literally "give." Many languages share this metaphor; for example, in Uzbek 'yordam qo'lini cho'zmoq' means the same thing.

"To keep someone at arm's length" (avoid closeness) : "After their argument, she decided to keep him at arm's length, no longer wanting to share her deepest thoughts."

Using "arm" to measure distance makes the emotional meaning easy to picture. In English-speaking cultures, this phrase is often used when someone wants to protect their personal boundaries.

"To get something out of one's head" (stop thinking about it) : "He tried to get the image of the accident out of his head, but it kept replaying in his mind."

Here the "head" becomes a container for thoughts, which is a common way English speakers imagine the mind.

"To keep one's head" (stay calm) : "Even as the ship began to sink, the captain managed to keep his head, issuing calm orders to the crew."

This idiom suggests that losing your calm is like “losing” your head, and staying rational is keeping it in place. Frequently used in crisis situations or leadership contexts.

"To make someone's mouth water" (*to make someone crave something*) : "The aroma of freshly baked bread wafted through the air, making everyone's mouth water."

This idiom directly links physical reaction to desire. Uzbek has almost the same expression: 'og'zining suvi oqmoq'.

"To have a big mouth" (*to be talkative*) : "She couldn't help but have a big mouth when it came to gossip, always the first to share a juicy rumor."

The “mouth” stands for speech, and this idiom usually carries a humorous or disapproving tone.

"To have a heart of gold" (*to be kind*): "Despite his gruff exterior, he truly had a heart of gold, always willing to help those in need."

Gold symbolizes purity, value, and goodness in many cultures. The idiom is centuries old and common in literature.

"To have one's heart in one's mouth" (*to be very scared*): "As the roller coaster plunged down the steepest hill, she felt her heart in her mouth."

The image is exaggerated, but that's why it works: it vividly describes fear taking over the body. Uzbek expresses this differently, for example *yuragi orqaga tortmoq*, showing that cultures imagine fear in different ways.

"To have eyes bigger than one's stomach" (*to be greedy*): "He ordered a feast fit for a king, but by the end, he admitted he'd had eyes bigger than his stomach."

The idiom humorously points out a mismatch between desire and ability.

"To be the apple of one's eye" (*someone cherished*): "His youngest daughter, Lily, was clearly the apple of his eye, receiving all his attention and affection."

Comes from Old English and Biblical usage where the “apple” of the eye was the pupil—considered precious and protected. Often used for children or romantic partners.

"To get one's foot in the door" (*get a start in a career*): "After years of volunteering, she finally got her foot in the door at the local museum."

The “foot” symbolizes the first step. This expression is especially common when talking about careers and new opportunities.

"To put one's foot down" (*to take a firm stand*): "When his son refused to do his chores, his father put his foot down, insisting it was time for responsibility."

Here the foot represents firmness and authority. Uzbek express the meaning with phrase like 'oyog'ini tirab turib olmoq'.

Conclusion

Somatic phraseologisms are one of the most expressive and culturologically saturated strata of the English language. Drawing on body parts—including hands, hearts, mouths, eyes and feet—such expressions also let speakers convey feelings, actions, relations and social experiences with a graphic vibrancy that's hard to forget. The instances studied in this sample of discourse show that English employs bodily metaphors to express simple conceptions (such as helping give a hand and setting boundaries keep at arm's length) and more complex emotions (like fear heart in one's mouth or kindness, heart of gold). The findings also indicate that these idiomatic differences are firmly embedded in cultural models. English conceives of the heart as the seat of emotion, the head as a repository of rational thought, and foot-stepping-on as emblematic of action

or authority. These are the cultural constructions that ground avenues for idiomatic structure and real communication. Contrast between Uzbek and English equivalents shows how each language filters a description of the body's experience through its cultural purview. For example, bodily metaphors express kindness or desire in both languages, but differ for fear, emotional closeness and moral judgment. Somatic phraseologisms function not only as linguistic units but also as cultural tools, through which speakers realize attitudes, emotions, evaluations, and social meanings. Their study is very instrumental in unveiling how people conceptualize the body, cultural values that impose themselves on metaphorical thinking, and finally how languages vividly and imaginatively encode human experience. This is the reason somatic idioms have always been the best choice to stay at the center of attention in research fields among linguistics, cognitive science, translation studies, and cross-cultural communication.

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