

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS WITH “SOMATIC” COMPONENTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive comparative study of phraseological units with somatic components in English and Uzbek languages. Somatic phraseological units idioms containing body-part lexemes, represent one of the most productive and culturally marked layers of phraseology. The article aims to identify structural, semantic, cognitive, and linguacultural similarities and differences between English and Uzbek somatic phraseological units. The analysis reveals that both languages demonstrate universal anthropocentric tendencies in phraseological nomination, however, they differ significantly in metaphorical models, cultural symbolism, and pragmatic usage. The findings contribute to phraseology, contrastive linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and translation studies.

Keywords

phraseological units, somatic component, idiom, contrastive linguistics, linguacultural analysis, cognitive metaphor, English language, Uzbek language

Introduction

Phraseology constitutes one of the most expressive and culturally saturated layers of any language. Among phraseological units, those containing somatic components (body-part lexemes such as head, heart, eye, hand, etc.) occupy a central position due to their anthropocentric nature. Human body serves as a universal source of metaphorical conceptualization across cultures. In both English and Uzbek languages, somatic phraseological units reflect national mentality, cultural traditions, moral values, and historical experience. For example:

In English: to lose one's head (to panic); in **Uzbek:** word by word translation is “boshini yo‘qotmoq”, but its adequate translation is to panic (literal: to lose one's head; figurative: to panic or become confused).

Despite apparent similarities, deeper semantic and cultural divergences exist, making comparative research both relevant and necessary.

The anthropocentric nature of language has long been recognized in linguistic theory. As Wilhelm von Humboldt argued, language reflects the “inner form” of a people’s worldview, and bodily experience forms a fundamental part of that worldview. In modern cognitive linguistics, this idea is further developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*, where they demonstrate that abstract reasoning is structured by embodied metaphors derived from physical experience.

Somatic phraseological units such as lose one’s head, heart of stone, ko‘z yumoq, and yuragi toza are not arbitrary linguistic constructions. Rather, they are products of conceptual metaphorization, cultural evaluation, and historical semantic development. Their comparative investigation reveals both universal cognitive patterns and culturally specific semantic extensions.

The objective of this article is to provide a theoretically enriched comparative analysis of somatic phraseological units in English and Uzbek, focusing primarily on their structural organization, semantic modeling, cognitive foundations, and linguacultural specificity.



Phraseology emerged as a distinct linguistic discipline in the early twentieth century. Charles Bally emphasized the expressive and stylistic nature of fixed expressions, describing them as integral components of linguistic creativity. Subsequently, Viktor Vinogradov proposed a semantic classification of phraseological units into phraseological fusions, unities, and combinations, based on the degree of semantic motivation and structural stability.

Vinogradov noted that phraseological units are characterized by semantic integrity and reproducibility, distinguishing them from free word combinations. This principle is particularly relevant for somatic idioms, where literal and figurative meanings coexist but the figurative meaning predominates in communicative usage.

In Western linguistics, phraseology developed through idiom studies and corpus linguistics. John Sinclair argued that language is largely phraseological in nature, emphasizing the “idiom principle” according to which speakers rely on preconstructed chunks rather than generating utterances entirely from grammatical rules.

A somatic component is a lexical element denoting a part of the human body (head, heart, eye, hand, face, etc.). These lexemes serve as conceptual anchors for metaphorical projection. As Zoltán Kövecses states, bodily experience provides the most immediate and universally accessible source domain for metaphorical mapping.

For example:

HEAD → REASON / CONTROL

HEART → EMOTION

HAND → POWER / ACTION

EYE → PERCEPTION / KNOWLEDGE

FACE → SOCIAL IMAGE

These mappings are observable in both English and Uzbek, yet the degree and direction of semantic extension differ.

The cognitive approach to phraseology emphasizes embodiment. According to Lakoff and Johnson, conceptual metaphors arise from recurring bodily experiences. The metaphor HEAD IS THE SEAT OF INTELLECT explains expressions such as:

In English: use one’s head is translated into Uzbek: boshi ishlamoq.

Similarly, the metaphor HEART IS THE SEAT OF EMOTION underlies:

English: break someone’s heart is translated into Uzbek: yuragini og‘ritmoq.

However, Uzbek phraseology frequently employs the lexeme ko‘ngil, which lacks a precise English equivalent. It denotes a complex combination of heart, soul, and inner emotional state. This reflects a culturally specific conceptualization of emotional and spiritual life.

Structural Classification of Somatic Phraseological Units

Nominal Constructions

English:

a heart of stone

a pain in the neck

Uzbek:

temir yurak

ko‘zga tashlanmoq

Verbal Constructions

English:

to keep an eye on

to lose face

Uzbek:

ko‘z-quloq bo‘lmoq



yuzini yshirmoq

Comparative Structures

English:

as cold as ice (often involving somatic perception)

Uzbek:

ko'ngli muzdek or bag'ri tosh

Structural patterns show that English frequently employs analytical constructions, while Uzbek demonstrates agglutinative morphological complexity.

Semantic Classification

Intellectual Sphere - Head-related idioms often represent intellect:

English:

use one's head

have one's head in the clouds

Uzbek:

boshi ishlamoq

boshi osmunda (o'ta xursand bo'lmoq).

Both languages conceptualize HEAD as the center of reasoning.

Emotional Sphere

Heart and soul represent emotions:

English:

break someone's heart

from the bottom of one's heart

Uzbek:

yuragini og'ritmoq (ko'nlini og'ritmoq)

chin yurakdan (chin dildan)

Universal metaphor: HEART = EMOTION.

As Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen argue, idioms are "culturally marked signs of secondary nomination" that encode collective experience. Somatic idioms thus represent not only cognitive metaphors but also culturally embedded symbolic systems.

English, being predominantly analytic, forms somatic idioms through fixed syntactic patterns: Verb + Object (lose face); Adjective + Noun (cold feet); Prepositional constructions (by heart).

Uzbek, as an agglutinative language, integrates somatic components within morphologically complex verb forms:

ko'z yumoq, qo'l urmoq, yuzini yo'qotmoq (obro'sini yo'qotmoq).

The morphological richness of Uzbek allows for suffixation that intensifies semantic nuance, while English relies more heavily on syntactic fixation.

Definition of Somatic Phraseological Units

Somatic phraseological units (SPUs) are fixed expressions containing lexical items that denote parts of the human body. These units often acquire figurative meanings unrelated to their literal reference.

Examples:

Comparison of English and Uzbek Phraseological Units

No	Body Part	English	Uzbek
1.	Head	have a good head for numbers	boshiga sig'moq
2.	Heart	heart of gold	yuragi toza
3.	Hand	give a hand	qo'l bermoq
4.	Eye	turn a blind eye	ko'z yumoq



5.	Heart	By heart	yod olmoq
6.	Feet	Cold feet	qo'rqib qolmoq / jur'ati yetmay qolmoq
7.	Mouth	Have a big mouth	og'zi katta
8.	Chin	Keep one's chin up	ruhini tushirmaslik / boshini baland tutmoq
9.	Tongue	To bite one's tongue	tilini tiyib turmoq
10.	Eye	To have an eye for something	biror narsaga ko'zi o'tkir bo'lmoq / didli bo'lmoq

Degrees of Semantic Motivation

Following Vinogradov's classification:

1. **Phraseological fusions** – semantically opaque (e.g., cost an arm and a leg).
2. **Phraseological unities** – metaphorically motivated (e.g., lose one's head).
3. **Phraseological combinations** – partially motivated (e.g., shake hands).

In Uzbek, similar gradation exists, though metaphorical transparency is often more culturally contextualized.

The comparative study demonstrates three principal tendencies:

- A) **Universal Embodiment** – Both languages rely on bodily experience as a conceptual source domain.
- B) **Cultural Differentiation** – Semantic extensions reflect national worldview and value systems.
- C) **Typological Influence** – Structural patterns are shaped by grammatical typology.

Somatic phraseology thus confirms the interaction between cognition, culture, and linguistic structure.

As Kövecses noted, metaphor is simultaneously universal and culture-specific. This dual nature is clearly observable in English and Uzbek somatic idioms: while HEAD and HEART metaphors are universal, the conceptual domain of ko'ngil demonstrates cultural uniqueness.

Theoretical understanding of somatic phraseology is essential for translation studies.

Equivalence may be:

Full (lose one's head – boshini yo'qotmoq/adashmoq, gangib qolmoq)

Partial (heart of gold – yuragi toza, ko'ngli pok)

Non-equivalent (cost an arm and a leg)

Translation requires not literal substitution but conceptual alignment. As Eugene Nida emphasized, dynamic equivalence depends on reproducing communicative effect rather than formal structure.

Conclusion

Somatic phraseological units represent a cognitively motivated and culturally saturated subsystem of language. The comparative analysis of English and Uzbek demonstrates that:

Embodied metaphors form the universal foundation of somatic idioms;

Cultural values shape semantic specialization;

Structural typology influences phraseological formation;

Linguacultural competence is essential for accurate translation. Besides that, the comparative analysis shows:

High degree of universal anthropocentric metaphorization;

Significant linguacultural differentiation;

Structural differences due to typological distinctions;

Strong cognitive grounding.



Uzbek language demonstrates richer spiritual semantics related to ko'ngil, while English shows pragmatic and rational orientation in somatic metaphors.

The comparative investigation of phraseological units with somatic components in English and Uzbek has demonstrated that somatic phraseology constitutes a highly structured, cognitively motivated, and culturally embedded subsystem of language. The human body, as the most immediate and universally accessible experiential domain, serves as a fundamental source of metaphorical conceptualization in both linguistic systems. However, despite the presence of shared anthropocentric foundations, the semantic development, structural realization, and pragmatic distribution of somatic phraseological units in English and Uzbek reveal both typological and linguacultural divergences that are theoretically significant.

First and foremost, the analysis confirms the central thesis of cognitive linguistics that embodiment plays a decisive role in the formation of figurative meaning. Conceptual metaphors such as HEAD AS THE SEAT OF REASON, HEART AS THE CENTER OF EMOTION, HAND AS A SYMBOL OF ACTION AND POWER, and EYE AS A METAPHOR FOR PERCEPTION AND CONTROL are consistently reflected in both English and Uzbek phraseological systems. This cross-linguistic convergence indicates that bodily experience provides a universal cognitive matrix for the development of secondary nomination. The recurrence of parallel expressions such as lose one's head and boshini (hushini) yo'qotmoq, or break someone's heart and yuragini (ko'glini) og'ritmoq, illustrates the shared embodied basis underlying phraseological creativity.

Nevertheless, universality does not eliminate cultural specificity. The research has shown that while primary metaphorical mappings may coincide, their semantic elaboration and evaluative coloring are shaped by national worldview, historical development, and value systems. In Uzbek, for instance, the lexeme ko'ngil occupies a central conceptual position in emotional and moral discourse. Unlike English equivalents such as heart or soul, ko'ngil integrates emotional sensitivity, moral purity, hospitality, and spiritual depth within a single conceptual domain. This phenomenon reflects a culturally distinctive model of inner experience, where ethical and emotional categories are inseparable from communal values. Thus, somatic phraseology in Uzbek demonstrates a stronger integration of spiritual and moral semantics, while English phraseology often displays greater pragmatic and psychological orientation.

Structural differences between the two languages further reinforce the role of typological factors in phraseological formation. English, as an analytic language, tends to preserve fixed syntactic patterns with limited morphological variation, relying heavily on lexical stability and collocational restriction. Uzbek, by contrast, as an agglutinative language, integrates somatic components within morphologically complex verb forms, allowing affixation to contribute additional semantic nuance. These typological distinctions do not merely affect surface structure; they influence the degree of flexibility, productivity, and stylistic distribution of somatic phraseological units in each language.

Another important theoretical outcome of the study concerns the relationship between phraseology and cultural models of social identity. Expressions involving FACE (lose face, yuzini (obro'sini) yo'qotmoq) demonstrate that social reputation and honor are linguistically encoded in both languages. However, Uzbek phraseology reflects a more collectivist orientation, where personal identity is closely linked to communal evaluation and moral accountability. English idioms, while also acknowledging social image, frequently foreground individual responsibility and psychological states. Such differences confirm that phraseological systems function as repositories of collective cultural memory.

From the perspective of translation theory, the findings highlight the necessity of conceptual rather than purely lexical equivalence. Although certain somatic idioms permit direct



correspondence, many require interpretative strategies due to partial or complete non-equivalence. Effective translation demands awareness of underlying metaphorical models and cultural connotations. Consequently, comparative phraseological research is not only theoretically valuable but also practically indispensable for cross-cultural communication, lexicography, and intercultural competence.

In broader linguistic terms, the study reaffirms that phraseology cannot be treated as a peripheral or decorative element of language. On the contrary, somatic phraseological units demonstrate that figurative meaning emerges from the interaction of cognition, culture, and grammatical structure. They illustrate how linguistic systems transform bodily experience into symbolic representation, encode moral and emotional values, and transmit collective knowledge across generations.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of English and Uzbek somatic phraseological units substantiates three major theoretical insights. First, embodied cognition provides a universal foundation for phraseological metaphorization. Second, cultural models determine the direction and intensity of semantic development. Third, typological characteristics shape structural realization and stylistic deployment. These interconnected dimensions confirm that somatic phraseology represents a dynamic intersection of universality and specificity within language systems.

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