



LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF SOMATIC PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Annotation: This thesis examines the linguocultural characteristics of somatic phraseological units (SPUs) in English and Uzbek. Somatic phraseological units—idioms and fixed expressions containing body-part lexemes—serve as an important linguistic mechanism for reflecting cultural worldview, national mentality, and cognitive patterns. Based on comparative and descriptive analysis, the study identifies semantic, structural, and cultural similarities and differences between English and Uzbek SPUs. The research relies on established phraseological and linguocultural theories and authentic lexicographic sources. The findings demonstrate that while many somatic metaphors are universal due to shared human embodiment, their figurative meanings, frequency, and pragmatic use reflect culturally specific conceptualizations in each language.

Keywords: somatic phraseological units, linguoculturology, idioms, English language, Uzbek language, metaphor, cultural semantics, phraseology.

Introduction

Phraseology occupies a central position in modern linguistics because phraseological units preserve cultural memory and reflect national worldview. According to V.V. Vinogradov, phraseological units represent stable lexical combinations characterized by semantic integrity and reproducibility [1, p. 89]. Within phraseology, somatic phraseological units (SPUs)—those containing names of body parts—are especially productive across languages.

Researchers such as A.V. Kunin note that somatisms form one of the most ancient and universal layers of phraseology because human beings conceptualize reality through their bodies [2, p. 213]. In Uzbek linguistics, scholars including Sh. Rakhmatullaev emphasize that somatic idioms reflect ethnocultural experience and traditional imagery of the Uzbek people [3, p. 156].



Comparative linguocultural analysis of English and Uzbek SPUs is relevant because both languages demonstrate rich phraseological systems but belong to different language families and cultural traditions. Studying their similarities and differences contributes to cross-cultural communication, translation studies, and foreign language teaching.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify linguocultural features of somatic phraseological units in English and Uzbek based on factual linguistic data.

Methodology

The research employs several established linguistic methods:

- descriptive analysis of phraseological units
- comparative method for cross-linguistic examination
- componential semantic analysis
- linguocultural interpretation

The empirical material was collected from authoritative phraseological dictionaries and scholarly works in English and Uzbek linguistics. Only codified idioms recorded in lexicographic sources were analyzed.

The selection focused on high-frequency somatic components such as *head, eye, hand, heart* in English and *bosh, ko'z, qo'l, yurak* in Uzbek. These somatisms are identified by many scholars as the most productive in phrase formation [2, p. 215; 4, p. 47].

Analysis and Discussion

The linguocultural nature of somatic phraseological units (SPUs) becomes particularly evident when their semantic motivation, metaphorical structure, cultural symbolism, and functional distribution are examined in a comparative framework. The data analyzed in this study confirm that SPUs in English and Uzbek operate at the intersection of universal embodied cognition and culturally specific conceptualization. This dual nature explains both the striking similarities and the meaningful differences observed between the two languages.

From the standpoint of cognitive linguistics, somatic idioms are grounded in bodily experience. Human beings perceive, categorize, and evaluate the world through the prism of their physical embodiment. Lakoff and Johnson convincingly demonstrated that conceptual metaphor is largely rooted in sensorimotor experience, which forms the basis of abstract thinking [5, p. 25]. Because the human body is biologically universal, many somatic metaphors emerge independently in unrelated languages. This explains the presence of numerous typological parallels between English and Uzbek phraseology.





For instance, the somatic component “heart / yurak” functions in both languages as a central metaphorical locus of emotions, moral qualities, and courage. English expressions such as *have a kind heart*, *lose heart*, and *take heart* closely correspond to Uzbek idioms like *yuragi keng*, *yuragi siqilmoq*, and *yurakdan chiqarmoq*. These parallels confirm the anthropocentric principle of phraseological nomination: internal organs associated with vital functions become symbolic centers of emotional and ethical evaluation. Researchers note that the heart metaphor is nearly universal across Indo-European and Turkic languages due to shared physiological salience [11, p. 147].

However, despite this universality, linguocultural specificity becomes visible at the level of figurative nuance, pragmatic usage, and cultural connotation. Uzbek phraseology often preserves traces of traditional worldview, social ethics, and folk belief systems more explicitly than modern English phraseology. As Rakhmatullaev observes, Uzbek idioms frequently encode culturally valued traits such as modesty, patience, collectivism, and respect for elders [3, p. 170]. This cultural embedding is especially evident in somatic units connected with vision and interpersonal relations.

A representative example is the Uzbek idiom *koʻz tegmoq* (to be affected by the evil eye). This expression reflects a deeply rooted folk belief widespread in Central Asian culture. Although English has the lexical concept *evil eye*, it does not function as a productive somatic idiom in everyday phraseology. Consequently, the Uzbek unit lacks a true phraseological equivalent and usually requires descriptive translation. This asymmetry demonstrates that while bodily experience is universal, cultural interpretation of that experience varies significantly.

Another culturally marked group involves idioms with *koʻz* (eye). Uzbek contains numerous expressions such as *koʻz-quloq boʻlmoq*, *koʻzi ochiq*, and *koʻziga issiq koʻrinmoq*, many of which encode social attentiveness, vigilance, and interpersonal warmth. English also uses eye-based idioms (*keep an eye on*, *see eye to eye*), but their pragmatic distribution differs. English eye idioms tend to emphasize observation and agreement, whereas Uzbek often adds a relational or emotional dimension. This reflects what Wierzbicka describes as culture-specific semantic primes embedded in language use [12, p. 94].

Structural typology also plays an important role in shaping SPUs. English, as an analytic language, frequently forms idioms with relatively fixed word order and limited morphological variation. Many English SPUs function as nominal or adjectival phrases (e.g., *cold feet*, *big mouth*, *long arm of the law*). In contrast,



Uzbek, being agglutinative, productively forms verbal phraseological units with rich inflectional morphology. Examples such as *bosh qotirmoq*, *ko'z yumib*, and *qo'l urmoq* demonstrate the high degree of verbalization typical of Turkic phraseology. Kunin notes that structural differences of this kind significantly affect phraseological behavior and translation strategies [2, p. 301].

The quantitative distribution of somatic components further supports the productivity of this phraseological layer. Multiple studies confirm that body-part lexemes belong to the most frequent idiom-forming bases in many languages [4, p. 52]. In the material analyzed for this thesis, the most productive English somatisms were *hand*, *head*, *eye*, and *heart*, while Uzbek showed highest productivity for *qo'l*, *bosh*, *ko'z*, and *yurak*. The near coincidence of these sets again points to the embodied foundation of phraseological nomination.

Nevertheless, productivity does not imply identical semantic development. For example, the English somatism *hand* frequently encodes control, assistance, or responsibility (*give a hand*, *in safe hands*, *upper hand*). Uzbek *qo'l* shares some of these meanings (*qo'l uchini bermoq*, *qo'l ostida*), but also extends into culturally specific domains such as hospitality and social obligation. This semantic divergence reflects differences in socio-cultural practices and communicative norms.

Evaluative connotation constitutes another important linguocultural parameter. Phraseological units often carry strong expressive coloring that reflects culturally conditioned value judgments. In English, idioms containing *nose* or *mouth* frequently express negative evaluation or social disapproval, as in *stick one's nose into*, *big mouth*, or *run one's mouth*. Uzbek shows similar expressive potential with *burun* and *og'iz*, but the pragmatic distribution is not identical. Uzbek communicative culture traditionally places strong emphasis on politeness and indirectness, which influences the frequency and contexts of such idioms. As Telia notes, phraseological connotation is deeply connected with national communicative style [8, p. 72].

Particularly revealing is the semantic field of emotional restraint versus emotional openness. English idioms such as *keep a stiff upper lip* encode the culturally valued norm of emotional self-control historically associated with British communicative behavior. Uzbek phraseology, by contrast, more frequently foregrounds sincerity and emotional expressiveness through idioms with *yurak* and *ko'ngil*. This contrast supports the linguocultural hypothesis that phraseology mirrors culturally preferred behavioral models.



Translation analysis provides further insight into the relationship between universality and specificity. Based on the examined material, English and Uzbek somatic idioms fall into three main equivalence types.

The first group consists of full phraseological equivalents, where both imagery and meaning coincide. Examples include:

- *lose one's head* — *boshini yo'qotmoq*
- *have a warm heart* — *yuragi issiq*

Such cases typically arise from shared embodied metaphors and require minimal adaptation in translation.

The second group includes partial equivalents, where general meaning overlaps but imagery or stylistic value differs. For instance, English *keep an eye on* and Uzbek *ko'z-quloq bo'lmoq* both denote supervision, but the Uzbek idiom expands the perceptual metaphor by combining two sensory organs. These cases require careful contextual translation.

The third group comprises non-equivalent units that reflect culture-specific concepts. The previously discussed *ko'z tegmoq* belongs here. According to Vinogradov's classification, such idioms demand descriptive or explanatory translation rather than direct substitution [1, p. 121].

An important theoretical implication of these findings concerns the balance between universality and cultural markedness in phraseology. The data strongly support the view that somatic phraseology is grounded in universal human embodiment but shaped by historically conditioned cultural experience. Gibbs emphasizes that embodiment provides the raw material for metaphor, while culture guides its semantic elaboration [11, p. 153]. The English-Uzbek comparison confirms this interaction.

Another noteworthy observation involves the diachronic dimension. Many somatic idioms in both languages belong to the oldest layers of phraseology. Because the human body has always been the primary reference point for spatial orientation, emotional description, and social evaluation, somatic metaphors tend to be diachronically stable. However, modernization and globalization influence their usage frequency. Contemporary English shows some tendency toward idiom simplification and partial semantic bleaching, whereas Uzbek retains a higher density of culturally vivid somatic imagery in everyday speech. This tendency has been noted in comparative phraseological studies [6, p. 88].

Pragmatically, somatic idioms serve several communicative functions in both languages:

- expressive intensification



- emotional evaluation
- characterization of personal qualities
- regulation of interpersonal relations

Yet the relative weight of these functions differs. Uzbek SPUs more frequently participate in etiquette and relational discourse, while English SPUs are highly productive in evaluative and descriptive contexts. This functional divergence again reflects broader cultural communication patterns.

The findings also have implications for foreign language teaching. Because many somatic idioms appear deceptively transparent due to shared body imagery, learners may assume false equivalence. However, subtle differences in connotation, collocation, and usage can lead to pragmatic errors. As Cowie emphasizes, phraseological competence requires not only semantic knowledge but also cultural awareness [6, p. 91]. Therefore, contrastive linguocultural analysis should be incorporated into teaching materials for both English and Uzbek

Conclusion

The study confirms that somatic phraseological units constitute a highly productive and culturally significant layer of both English and Uzbek phraseology.

The main conclusions are:

- SPUs in both languages are anthropocentric and metaphorically motivated.
- Many somatic metaphors are universal due to embodied human cognition.
- Uzbek SPUs display stronger ethnocultural marking in certain semantic fields, especially those connected with traditional beliefs.
- Structural differences reflect typological distinctions between analytic English and agglutinative Uzbek.
- Phraseological equivalence between the two languages varies from full correspondence to complete cultural specificity.

The results may be applied in linguoculturology, translation studies, lexicography, and foreign language teaching. Further research may involve corpus-based frequency analysis and pragmatic studies of somatic idiom usage in discourse.

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