



## THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SOMATIC COMPONENT "HEAD" IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES

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### ABSTRACT

*The article deals with the typological analysis of the somatic component "HEAD" in English and Russian languages. The significance of this article is supported by the fact that the activities of the European Society of Phraseology (EUROPHRAS) and the European Association of Lexicography (EUROLEX), with their regular conventions and publications, attest to the widespread European interest in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural phraseology research. Names of body parts are considered one of the most frequently used words in the formation of phraseological units.*

*The current paper aims to conduct a comparative study of the somatic phraseological units of the English and Russian languages, indicating the degree of interlingual phraseological equivalence and identifying the factors that influence it.*

### INTRODUCTION

The human factor plays an important role in phraseology since the vast majority of phraseological units are associated with a person, various spheres of his activity. The addressee factor is the most important element of communication. In addition, a person seeks to endow human features with objects of the external world, including inanimate ones. More Sh. Bally stated: "The eternal imperfection of the human mind is also manifested in the fact that a person always strives to spiritualize what surrounds him. He can't imagine, that nature is dead and soulless; his imagination constantly gives life to inanimate objects,

but that's not all: man constantly attributes to all objects of the external world the traits and aspirations peculiar to his personality" The term somatic ( the Greek soma - "body") is a component of a phraseological unit denoting parts of the human and animal body. Scientific research shows that somatic components are the most represented in both Russian and English phraseology – the names of the external parts of the human body that are functionally obvious to humans.

Somatic vocabulary is one of the universal lexical groups in any language and one of the most common objects of research in comparative-historical, structural-



comparative, and lingua cultural works of linguists, who usually distinguish this vocabulary first in the lexico-thematic system of any language.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOMATIC COMPONENT "HEAD" IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH

By comparing the somatic phraseological units of two different languages, we will be able to understand the similarities and differences between the phraseological systems of the Russian and English languages and the degree of interlanguage equivalence of somatic phraseological units. The comparative classification of phraseological units in terms of equivalence is proposed to distinguish complete and incomplete structural-semantic and functional-semantic equivalents.

Complete structural semantics phraseological equivalents are such phraseological units of English and Russian languages, in which there is complete identity from the component composition with a similar syntactic organization. For example, to welcome someone/something with open arms – «встречать с распростертыми руками»; to do something behind someone's back – «за спиной у кого-либо».

Complete structural and semantic phraseological equivalents appear due to borrowing from some third source, for example, the phraseological units such as – "skin and bones" and "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth". These phraseological units were borrowed by English and Russian from third sources: mainly the Bible and the ancient mythology of Ancient

Greece and Ancient Rome. Also, the appearance of complete structural and semantic phraseological equivalents can serve as a general etymology in English and further borrowing of the phraseological unit by Russian, since these languages are closely related.

However, A.D. Reichstein notes that in all languages, similar semantic phraseological models operate in the sphere of somatic phraseological units. Therefore, the presence of complete structural and semantic equivalents in the languages we compare should be considered a coincidence.

Incomplete structural-semantic phraseological equivalents have some differences in component composition (within the studied group of phraseological units), for example, to curl the lip – «надуть губы», to take something to heart – «принимать что-либо близко к сердцу». In these phraseological units, either verbal components (within the same lexico-semantic group) or nominal components with the meaning vary "body parts." However, these differences in lexical composition do not affect either the general figurative meaning of the phraseology or its functional

features. It should be noted that, for several reasons, the series may be incomplete, that is, it may contain only two structural and semantic phraseological equivalents from any two comparable languages, for example, to lose face – «потерять лицо», in the twinkling of an eye – «в мгновение ока». Often the phraseological pairs of structural-semantic equivalents listed above have semantic phraseological equivalents. We will take a closer look at



these two groups with examples in the next paragraph.

Semantic equivalents of phraseological units are phraseological units that are identical in aggregate figurative meaning, but different in terms of expression, both in the lexical and syntactic organization. It should be noted that within the framework of this work under semantic equivalents are understood only phraseological units of the lexico-semantic field under study, that is, having somatic components in their composition, for example, shouting at the top of their lungs – «кричать во все горло», work one's fingers to the bone – «не покладая рук».

O.A. Kazankova and M.L. Rostova, however, note in their article that structural pseudo-equivalents should be distinguished from equivalent phraseological units of English and Russian languages that have somatic components in their composition, which, with the complete or almost complete coincidence of the structure, have different or opposite meanings. Usually, these are language pairs, for example, with one's nose in the air (to refuse to accept something because you feel that it is not good enough for you) – «нос по ветру» (aware of events") to a hair (exactly) – «на волосок от» (a little, almost)

Such pairs of phraseological units with divergent and sometimes opposite meanings can fail the translator in the field of phraseology. They also pose a serious practical difficulty for English and Russian language learners, misleading by the generality of lexical and syntactic organization, but by the complete difference in the semantics of the entire phrase as a whole. In other words, there is an asymmetry of the structure and content of

phraseological units. Differences in the total phraseological meaning with the structural identity of the compared English and Russian phraseological units may be the result of a multidirectional rethinking of the same verbal complexes in the compared languages. However, in most cases, if the phraseological units of the compared languages are the same in structure, then they will be the same in meaning since similar semantic phraseological models take place in English and Russian.

In addition to correlated phraseological complexes with the component "body part", there are also unrelated phraseological units containing a somatic component in their composition. They represent a group of phraseological fusions that have some kind of structural feature (for example, the composition may include archaism or the phrase has an outdated syntactic structure or word form) and have no analogs either in structural or semantic terms.

Also, the reason for the lack of an equivalent may be a special unique to a given phraseological unit, the model according to which the semantic shift (for example, phraseology owes its appearance to some folk custom characteristic of one of the two compared nations). The following somatic phraseological units can be given as an example: wise as Solomon – «семи пядей во лбу», neck or nothing – «хотеть получить всё», to old hand – «опытный человек», a heart of oak – «отважный человек», to show the white feather – «показать свою трусость».

**Comparative characteristics of somatic phraseological units with the component of "head" in Russian and English**



Phraseologically active somatics has a developed polysemy and also implements a significant part of their meanings in phraseological units, however, the somatic component "head", having 6 meanings according to the dictionary, implements only 2 of them, that is, less than half.

Let's consider the values of these somatic phraseological units according to the dictionary of T.F. Efremova :

- 1) The upper part of the human body, the upper or front part of the animal body containing the brain;
- 2) Mind, consciousness, reason (about a man of great intelligence);
- 3) The head, the boss, the head in any case;
- 4) Chairman and head of some elected bodies in pre-revolutionary Russia, as well as military or civilian rank;
- 5) The first rows, the first part (of a moving detachment, group, etc.);
- 6) A food product in the form of a ball, a cone.

In phraseological units, this word occurs, used in the first («рубить голову», «совать голову в петлю», «окупаться с головой во что-либо») and in the second («всё путается в голове», «ясная голова», «голова садовая», «пропащая голова») meanings. However, It is necessary to take into account the many shades of the meaning of this word, which are widely represented in phraseology. In this article, we will consider the connotative shades of some of the meanings.

A.S. Vezhbitskaya interprets the English word "head" as follows: «head – a part of person's body: this part is above all the other parts of the body: when a person thinks, something happens in this part». The

head controls thinking and reason. In Russian, the head is represented as the main organ of human thinking. In this regard, the main connotative meaning of the somatic phraseological unit is reasonableness and intelligence or their absence. Therefore, this lexeme is considered the most productive one when describing a person's intelligence in terms of his appearance. The lexeme "head" in some cases acts as a synonym for the lexeme "mind", hence the general symmetrical motivational models: the presence of a head – the presence of a mind, the absence of a head - the absence of a mind.

Accordingly, to a person, one can distinguish the symmetrical models "good head" – "good mind", "bad head - bad mind", as indicated by the lexemes a good head in English, «есть голова на плечах» and in Russian. At the same time, the somatic component "head" replaces the lexeme "mind" in the meaning of "the ability to think". In turn, the lexeme "headless" has the meaning "stupid, unreasonable, purposeless" and is used to a person: headless – «безмозглый, глупый».

The "material" model also applies to the head as somatic component heads are intellectual abilities." The "hardness" of the head indicates insufficient permeability and, as a consequence, the poor learning ability of the subject, which serves as a negative characteristic of his intellectual abilities: hardhead –«твердолобый» . On the other hand, the "softness or incomplete hardness" of the head can also be perceived as a sign of person's mental disorder, for example, soft in the head – «тронулся головой».

The appearance of the head (for example, its shape, size) can also characterize a person's



intelligence, as can be seen in the following example: cabbage head – (stupid) «болван», «голова садовая», head-the-ball – «сумасшедший», flat-headed – «плоскоголовый», «без царя в голове».

The head is perceived not only as an instrument of thinking but also as a kind of container of the mind. Symmetrical motivational models can be expressed through the formulas "a full head is a smart person", "an empty head is a stupid person", which can be seen in the following examples: headful – «ума палата», empty-headed (thoughtless) – «пустоголовый», «бездумный». At the same time, certain material figuratively filling the head as a container can also indicate the intellectual development of a person: a rush to the head – «моча в голову ударила», muddle-headed – «каша в голове», addle-headed – «мозги набекрень», a pumpkin-headed oaf – «олух царя небесного», have rocks in one's head – «в голове опилки», shitead – «болван», pudding head – «дурень», «олух», banana head – «дубина стоеросовая», giving a negative characteristic of human intelligence, also clear head – «ясный ум», «светлая голова», bright headed – «способный», «смышлёный», «полный бодрости», characterizing mental abilities positively in a neutral context.

Intellectual abilities can also be determined by special conditions of the human body that prevent clear thinking and adequate assessment of the current situation. These may be, for example, alcohol or drug intoxication, a state of effect. In English, there is a metaphorical transfer of alcohol or drug intoxication to a person's mental abilities, for example, wine flew to his head

– «вино в голову ударило», hophead – «пропащий человек».

Since the concepts of insanity and stupidity of a person are mixed, it is not surprising that stupidity is often transmitted the description of mental deviations of a person, for example, weak-headed – "stupid", "feeble-minded". In turn, inadequacy in behavior through spontaneous, unexpected actions indicate a stupid person, for example, exbaldaled-headed – «действовать безрассудно», «очертя голову», headlong – «сломя голову».

Finally, in several phraseological units, somatic component "head" occurs in the context of describing an injury that a stupid person received in a naive view, which can be expressed in the «здоровая голова – здоровое мышление»: hammerhead – «дурак», «стукнутый по голове», «придурак». The image of the fall can be traced, and in the colloquial expression Did you fall out of your mother and land on your head? – «Ты в детстве головой не ударялся?» (about a stupid/crazy person). Often, the "head" acquires the meaning of life, since it is a vital organ, for example, to pay for smth. with one's life – «поплатиться головой». An additional meaning is introduced by the sense of superiority, embedded in the concept, for example: to carry one's head high – «высоко держать голову», «держаться с достоинством», to wash one's head – «намылить голову кому-либо»; «отругать, тем самым, унизив, кого-либо».

It should be noted that among the analogs of Russian phraseological units about the head in English, sometimes it corresponds to the head, and sometimes brains, for example: to cudgel one's brains over something –



«ломать над чем-нибудь голову», use your brains – «подумай головой».

Somatic phraseological units are widely represented in the comparing languages, however, somatic units are not always keywords in them, sometimes their role is optional. A typical structure of phraseological units with key somatics are comparative (to keep one's head – «сохранять спокойствие», literally «сохранить голову») and gestural phraseological units that owe their origin to free phrases (to shake one's head – «качать головой» = a sign of disagreement, to hang one's head – «повесить (опустить) голову» = a sign of sadness, sadness).

Somatics is characterized by a complex system of figurative meanings and increased productivity in the field of word formation and phraseology. This process is most often subjected to somatic phraseological units, which are the names of the external parts of the human body, that is, the most active and functionally obvious to humans. They fall into two classes:

- 1) head, face, and its components: eyes, nose, mouth, ears;
- 2) limbs: arms, legs

Moreover, the somatic component "head" has direct and indirect meanings: direct meanings can intersect in derivatives with figurative ones: head – "the upper part of the human and animal body": head – «голова» and head – «глава», «руководитель». It should be noted that the basis for transferring meaning is a well-known comparison of features. For example, the word "head" is associated with two languages:

- 1) with the front part, the beginning of something, with the top. In Russian:

изголовье, заголовок, головашки (передки у саней); in English:

headspring – «источник», head-sails – «передние паруса», headboard – «передняя стенка кровати»;

- 2) with a round, thickened, or protruding part, the end of something. In Russian: боеголовка, головчатый (в виде головы); в английском языке: nail-head – «шляпка гвоздя», war-head – «боеголовка», bolt-head – «головка болта».

- 3) with the activity of the brain and the level of mental abilities. In Russian: дубинноголовый, тупоголовый ; in English: cabbage head – "stupid" (cabbage + head), pumpkin head – "oaf", "fool" (pumpkin + head).

By distinguishing between different types of comparable units, it is possible to identify the national-cultural distinctiveness of stable expressions in contrastive analysis:

- 1) by the equivalence of content and components included in their structure (to bury one's head in the sand – «зарыть голову в песок»);

- 2) similar to content and the semantic proximity of the components which are similar by content and semantic structure (to cudgel one's brains over something – «ломать голову над чем-то»); to be head over ears in – «быть по уши в долгу»).

- 3) by the lack of equivalence of components in the structure of phraseology or the absence of an equivalent in one of the compared languages requiring explanations, not a literal translation (a long head – «иметь зоркий глаз»).

Most cultures tend to perceive the head as the main and most vital part of the body. The languages we study are no exception. The fact that the idea of the brain is associated with the head, one of the main



functions of which is the function of thinking, largely determines the lexical and semantic potential of this word as a supporting component of somatic phraseological units. The lexeme "head" is part of combinations that differ in their structure and lexico-grammatical features. Phraseological units including the noun "head" are characterized by the expression of a rich range of feelings, a person's mental state and his attitude to surrounding phenomena, a positive or negative assessment of actions and actions, and are mainly associated with the concept of "mental activity". Considering phraseological units with the somatic component "head" in the studied languages, the following microspheres can be identified:

Phraseological units denoting mental abilities, with the meaning of a sound mind: In English:

to keep one's head, similar to the Russian «не терять головы», as well as to have an old head on young shoulders – «быть не по годам умным»; to keep one's head down – «сконцентрироваться и напряженно работать над чем-то»; to know smth. Off the top of one's head – «хорошо знать что-то и легко воспроизводить по памяти»; a clear head, a good head – «человек с головой», «светлая голова», «ясный ум», «здравый ум». 2) Phraseological units expressing obedience: to give smb. their head – «разрешать кому-то делать что угодно» по своему усмотрению, не останавливая их и не давая советов»; bow one's head to smb. – «склонить голову перед кем-либо».

3) Phraseological units with a caring and affectionate connotation, expressing happiness, friendly attitude: to turn smb's

head – «вскружить кому-то голову»; to do smb's head in – «сводить кого-то с ума», head over heels in love – «влюбленный по уши».

4) Phraseological units defining the symbol of regard, high respect, and trust: to blow one's head in deep respect – «склонить голову в знак глубокого уважения».

5) Phraseological units expressing a vow, promises, wishes for good: to stake one's head on smth., to give one's head for smth – «ручаться головой за что-либо, давать голову на отсечение»; by my head – «клянусь головой».

6) Phraseological units that characterize customs and traditions. In English, there is an expression wet the baby's head – «праздновать рождение ребёнка». This expression reveals the ritual of the holiday in England at the birth of a child and is a clear example of cultural traditions in the language.

The main sources of the formation of somatic phraseological units are various expressive expressions and mimics or human gestures; all kinds of phraseological feelings and reactions of the human body to psychophysical stimuli; animal manners; rituals, traditions, superstitions, and religious understandings. For example, a person's reaction to an irritant maybe fears, which is expressed in the somatic phraseological unit to feel one's heart sink – «сердце упало». Thus, the semantics of the bulk of somatic phraseological units of the Russian and English languages are associated with the description of a person's emotional and mental life. The analysis of the most productive somatic component "head" indicates a significant



similarity of phraseological units in the compared languages.

We investigated somatic phraseological units with the component head/голова in Russian and English for full and partial equivalents.

### **Conclusion**

To summarize, the overall meaning, structure, and lexical composition of the phraseological unit are the major criteria for identifying the presence of equivalents between English and Russian somatic phraseological units. The phraseological units of the lexico-semantic field of "body

parts" represent a wide range of phraseologies with distinct characteristics. The majority of body parts have a variety of connotational and metaphorical meanings derived from the basic "body part" component. The somatic phraseological units of the English and Russian languages have a high interlingual equivalence, which is explained by the fact that "body part" components are in these contrasted languages' high-frequency vocabulary, and their high phrase-forming activity raises the degree of interlingual equivalence.

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