

## A Comparative Analysis of Somatic Phraseological Units in English, Uzbek, and Russian Languages

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**Annotation.** This study investigates somatic phraseological units (SPUs), idioms and expressions that incorporate body parts, in English, Uzbek, and Russian. The research aims to identify commonalities and differences in the conceptualization and usage of body-related idioms across these three linguistically diverse languages. The methodology involves collecting a corpus of SPUs from dictionaries and language databases, categorizing them based on the body part involved, and analyzing their semantic and cultural connotations. Results demonstrate that while some SPUs share similar figurative meanings and metaphorical roots across languages, significant variations stem from different cultural backgrounds, historical influences, and unique linguistic developments. The findings highlight the importance of cross-cultural understanding in language learning and translation. The study concludes that somatic phraseology offers valuable insights into the cognitive and cultural frameworks that shape language.

**Keywords:** somatic phraseology, idioms, cross-linguistic analysis, cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics.

## Сопоставительное исследование соматических фразеологических единиц в английском, узбекском и русском языках

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**Аннотация.** Данное исследование посвящено изучению соматических фразеологических единиц (СФЕ), идиом и выражений, включающих части тела, в английском, узбекском и русском языках. Целью исследования является выявление общих черт и различий в концептуализации и использовании идиом, связанных с телом, в этих трех лингвистически разнообразных языках. Методология включает сбор корпуса СФЕ из словарей и языковых баз данных, их категоризацию на основе задействованной части тела и анализ их семантических и культурных коннотаций. Результаты показывают, что, хотя некоторые СФЕ имеют схожие образные значения и метафорические корни в разных языках, значительные различия обусловлены разными культурными особенностями, историческими влияниями и уникальными лингвистическими развитиями. Полученные данные подчеркивают важность межкультурного понимания в изучении языков и переводе. Исследование приходит к выводу, что соматическая фразеология дает ценную информацию о когнитивных и культурных рамках, формирующих язык.

**Ключевые слова:** соматическая фразеология, идиомы, межъязыковой анализ, лингвокультурология, когнитивная лингвистика.

## Ingliz, o'zbek va rus tillaridagi somatik frazeologik birliklarning qiyosiy tahlili

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**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz, o'zbek va rus tillarida somatik frazeologik birliklar (SFB), ya'ni tana a'zolarini o'z ichiga olgan idiomalar va iboralarni o'rganadi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi ushbu uchta lingvistik jihatdan farqli tillarda tana bilan bog'liq idiomalar kontseptualizatsiyasi va qo'llanilishidagi o'xshashliklar va farqlarni aniqlashdir. Metodologiya SFB'larni lug'atlar va til ma'lumotlar bazalaridan to'plash, ularni tana a'zolari asosida tasniflash va ularning semantik va madaniy ma'nolarini tahlil qilishni o'z ichiga oladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ba'zi SFB'lar tillar bo'ylab o'xshash majoziy ma'nolarga va metaforik ildizlarga ega bo'lsa-da, sezilarli farqlar turli madaniy kelib chiqish, tarixiy ta'sirlar va noyob lingvistik rivojlanishdan kelib chiqadi. Topilmalar til o'rganish va tarjima qilishda madaniyatlararo tushunish muhimligini ta'kidlaydi. Tadqiqot xulosasiga ko'ra, somatik frazeologiya tilni shakllantiradigan kognitiv va madaniy asoslar haqida qimmatli ma'lumotlar beradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** somatik frazeologiya, idiomalar, tillarni qiyosiy tahlil qilish, madaniy lingvistika, kognitiv lingvistika.

## INTRODUCTION

Phraseological units (PUs), often termed idioms, set phrases, or fixed expressions, constitute a significant part of any language's vocabulary. They are characterized by their semantic opacity, meaning their overall meaning cannot be derived from the literal meaning of their constituent parts (Nunberg, Sag, & Wasow, 1994). Within the vast landscape of phraseology, somatic phraseological units (SPUs), which incorporate body parts, hold a particular interest due to their direct connection to the human experience and the embodied nature of cognition (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The prevalence of body-part idioms in language reveals how humans use their physical selves as a conceptual framework for understanding abstract ideas (Gibbs, 1994).

This study focuses on the comparative analysis of SPUs in English, Uzbek, and Russian, three languages with markedly different linguistic backgrounds and cultural contexts. English, a Germanic language with significant Latin and French influences, is a widely spoken global language. Uzbek, a Turkic language spoken primarily in Uzbekistan, represents a Central Asian cultural perspective. Russian, a Slavic language with a rich history and extensive literature, reflects Eastern European traditions. Comparing SPUs across these languages will allow us to explore the extent to which the bodily metaphors are universal or culturally specific.

### *The research aims to answer the following questions:*

- ✓ What are the common categories of somatic phraseological units across the three languages, based on the body part involved?
- ✓ Are there universal patterns of using body-part metaphors across English, Uzbek, and Russian?
- ✓ Where do significant variations exist in the semantic and cultural connotations of SPUs?
- ✓ What can these differences reveal about the cultural and cognitive frameworks of speakers in each language?

Previous research in phraseology has focused on various aspects, including the semantic properties, cultural contexts, and translation challenges of idioms (Moon, 1998; Barcelona, 2000). However, cross-linguistic comparative studies involving Uzbek and Russian, specifically focused on somatic phraseology, are limited. This research aims to fill this gap and contribute to a deeper understanding of how embodied cognition shapes linguistic expression in diverse cultural contexts.

## METHODS

### Data Collection

The study began with the compilation of a corpus of somatic phraseological units from various sources:

- *Dictionaries.* Comprehensive monolingual and bilingual dictionaries of English, Uzbek, and Russian, including specialised idiom dictionaries, were consulted (Palmer, 1981).

➤ *Language Databases.* Online resources such as the Oxford English Dictionary (OED, n.d.), Cambridge Dictionary, Russian National Corpus, Uzbek National Corpus, and other relevant language databases were used to locate additional SPUs.

The initial search terms included a range of body parts (e.g., *head, hand, foot, eye, heart, ear, mouth*) in each language, translated into the corresponding language. These searches yielded a large collection of candidate SPUs.

### **Data Selection and Categorization**

After initial collection, the SPUs were subjected to a selection process to ensure that:

- ✓ The chosen units were indeed phraseological, i.e., their meaning is non-literal or figurative, not the simple combination of literal meanings of their components.
- ✓ The units could be meaningfully compared across the three languages despite potential differences in grammatical structure.
- ✓ The SPUs reflected relatively common or well-established usages in their respective language.

The selected SPUs were then categorized based on the specific body part they referenced. For example, SPUs that use the word “head” were grouped into a “head” category, and similar categories were created for other body parts (hands, feet, eyes, heart etc). This categorization was done for each language.

### **Semantic Analysis**

Each SPU was then subjected to a detailed semantic analysis. This involved:

- ✓ *Defining the literal and figurative meanings.* For each SPU, the literal meaning of the constituent body part and the figurative meaning of the unit as a whole were analyzed.
- ✓ *Identifying metaphorical connections.* The underlying metaphorical relationships between the body part and the abstract concept it represents in the SPU were identified (e.g., “to have a heavy heart” - the heart as the seat of emotions).
- ✓ *Exploring cultural connotations.* The cultural context and potential cultural values and beliefs associated with each SPU were analyzed (Pavlenko, 2003).
- ✓ *Comparison.* SPUs with similar literal or figurative meanings were compared across the languages. Where direct equivalents were not found, a comparative analysis of similar concepts was conducted.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected and analyzed data was used to:

- ✓ *Identify Patterns.* Determine common patterns and variations in the usage of body-part metaphors across the three languages.
- ✓ *Assess Universality.* Evaluate whether some metaphorical concepts were universal and used consistently across all languages, or specific to one or two of the languages.
- ✓ *Explore Cultural Specificity.* Analyze the extent to which specific cultural contexts shape the meaning and usage of SPUs.

## **RESULTS**

The research revealed both similarities and differences in the use of somatic phraseological units across English, Uzbek, and Russian.

### **Commonalities in Body Part Metaphors**

Several common metaphorical mappings were observed across all three languages:

**1. Head as the Center of Intellect and Decision-Making:** The head is commonly used to represent intellect, understanding, and authority. For example:

English: *to have a good head on one's shoulders* (to be intelligent and practical), *to keep one's head* (to remain calm).

Uzbek: *bosh qotirish* (lit. “to twist head”, to worry about something), *boshini ko'tarmoq* (lit. “to raise one's head,” to become successful).

Russian: *иметь голову на плечах* (lit. “to have a head on the shoulders”), *потерять голову* (lit. “to lose one’s head”)

**2. Heart as the Seat of Emotions:** The heart is frequently used to express feelings, especially love, compassion, sadness, and courage. For example:

English: *to have a broken heart, to wear one’s heart on one’s sleeve.*

Uzbek: *yuragi ezilmoq* (lit. “to be crushed by one’s heart”, to feel very sad), *yurakdan sevmok* (lit. “to love from heart,” to love sincerely).

Russian: *разбить сердце* (lit. “to break heart”), *от всего сердца* (lit. “from the whole heart,” sincerely).

**3. Hands as Symbols of Action and Ability:** The use of hands often relates to capability, skill, and control. For instance:

English: *to have one’s hands full, to get out of hand.*

Uzbek: *qo’li ochiq* (lit. “open handed,” generous), *qo’li dan ish kelmoq* (lit. “work comes from hands,” to be skilled).

Russian: *мастер на все руки* (lit. “master of all hands”), *взять в свои руки* (lit. “to take in one’s hands,” to take control)

**4. Eyes as the Metaphor of Perception and Attention:** Eyes are often used to express perception, observation, and attention.

English: *to turn a blind eye, to keep an eye on something, evil eye*

Uzbek: *ko’z tegmoq* (lit. “eye touch” – to be under a bad look)

Russian: *смотреть в оба глаза* (lit. “to look with both eyes,” to pay close attention), *глаз не оторвать* (lit. “can’t tear the eyes off,” to be fascinated).

These common metaphors, while used in different linguistic forms across the three languages, suggest a fundamental human tendency to perceive and express experiences through the body.

### Variations and Cultural Specificities

Despite the observed similarities, significant variations were noted in the meaning and usage of SPUs across the three languages, revealing distinct cultural nuances:

#### “Feet” as Symbols of Travel and Progression

While all languages use feet in idioms related to walking and movement, Uzbek and Russian often use expressions to describe being on a journey or standing firm on the land. In Uzbek expressions, the feet are connected with the land (the origin of a person), or the journey of someone or something; for example: *oyoqqa turmoq* – stand on one’s own feet (be able to take care of oneself), *oyog’ini yerga qaratmoq* – to firmly stand on one’s land or native land (have a strong root). In Russian too, there are expressions connected with walking or standing on the land: *твердо стоять на ногах* – to stand firmly on one’s own feet. While in English, expressions are based on the mobility of a person and the ability of walking or making movements. *To find one’s feet, or get back on your feet.*

#### “Mouth” as a Symbol of Speech, Deception, and Secrets

The mouth is a crucial metaphor in all languages. However, Russian and Uzbek tend to highlight a negative aspect: for example, in Uzbek, there are expressions like: *og’zidan gap olmoq* – pull the word out of somebody’s mouth. Similarly, in Russian we can find: *слово не воробей, вылетит – не поймаешь* – a word is not a sparrow, if it is let go, you will not catch it back. But in English, the mouth is used more often to express being quiet or not talking too much: *keep your mouth shut, have a big mouth, etc.*

#### Cultural Interpretations of the “Soul”

While both Russian and Uzbek frequently use the heart as the locus of the soul, English often uses “heart” to denote emotions, but sometimes uses “mind” instead of “soul.” For instance: Uzbek *“joni og’rimoq”* and Russian *“душа болит”*, both mean ‘my soul hurts’. In English, this is more commonly expressed with *“my heart hurts”* or *“I feel sad.”* English tends to consider the mind as the key aspect of the soul, which is why expressions like ‘it is on my mind’ are widely used. This



reflects the more individualistic and cognitive focus in English-speaking cultures. In Uzbek and Russian cultures, which are more collective, the soul is felt more strongly as a part of emotion and thus connected to the heart.

### **The Concept of Shame**

While all cultures acknowledge the feeling of shame, there are significant variations in how shame is embodied in somatic phraseology. For example, phrases like “hang one’s head in shame” are prevalent in English. However, in Uzbek, the concept of shame is often associated with losing face, with expressions like “*yuzini yerga qaratmoq*” (lit., to turn one’s face to the ground). In Russian the concept is expressed as: “*краснеть от стыда*” (to turn red with shame). This difference highlights the cultural emphasis on outward expressions of emotion versus inward feelings.

These variations demonstrate how cultural values, historical experiences, and unique conceptualizations of the human body shape the figurative use of language.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study underscore the dual nature of somatic phraseology: while some metaphorical concepts and SPUs are shared across different linguistic and cultural boundaries, others are deeply embedded in specific cultural contexts. This suggests a universal human experience of embodied cognition that intersects with unique cultural interpretations.

### **Cognitive Universality and Embodied Experience**

The common patterns observed across English, Uzbek, and Russian (e.g., the head as the seat of intellect, and the heart as the center of emotions) support the idea that humans have a fundamental shared understanding of the world based on their physical experiences. Our bodies are, after all, our primary tools for interacting with the world, and, naturally, they should become central to our language. The use of body part metaphors demonstrates that language is not an arbitrary symbolic system, but rather a reflection of our embodied cognition. The commonality in these mappings across languages suggests that these bodily metaphors are deeply ingrained in our cognitive structure, pointing to a universal aspect of human cognition.

### **Cultural Specificity and Linguistic Diversity**

The observed differences in the meaning and usage of SPUs highlight the importance of cultural context in language. Each language encodes different values and priorities into its phraseological system. The cultural specificity that was shown in the feet, mouth, and the concept of the soul points to the unique socio-cultural traditions and historical developments in each respective language community. Furthermore, differences in emphasis on outward versus inward manifestations of emotions and beliefs indicate contrasting cultural norms and attitudes.

### **Implications for Language Learning and Translation**

The findings have significant implications for language learning and translation. Learners of English, Uzbek, and Russian need not only to memorize vocabulary and grammar but also to understand the cultural background and figurative use of language. Translators should be particularly aware of the nuanced cultural connotations of SPUs to accurately convey meaning from one language to another. Direct literal translations of SPUs are often misleading or inappropriate, necessitating a deeper understanding of the cultural context and metaphorical meanings.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is limited by the scope of the corpus of phraseological units analysed, and further research with a larger corpus of data can provide a richer understanding of the topic. The current study relies on data from dictionaries and databases and may not fully capture nuances found in everyday spoken language. Also, it is challenging to determine the exact origin of every idiom.

## **CONCLUSION**

This comparative analysis of somatic phraseological units in English, Uzbek, and Russian has revealed a complex interplay between cognitive universality and cultural specificity. While basic metaphorical mappings of body parts are largely shared, the specific ways in which these mappings are used within idioms vary greatly according to the cultural context of each language.

Somatic phraseology offers a fascinating glimpse into how human cognition, culture, and language intersect. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of these dynamics, highlighting the importance of cross-cultural awareness in language learning and translation and the significance of examining the embodied nature of language in diverse linguistic settings. Future studies could explore the use of somatic phraseology in different genres and styles of text, as well as examine the socio-cultural changes affecting idioms over time.

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