

Linguistic Representation And Semantic Features Of Somatic Units In English And Uzbek Proverbs

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Abstract

This research provides a comparative analysis of somatic units—proverbs containing names of human body parts—in the English and Uzbek languages. Somatisms represent one of the oldest layers of the lexicon and serve as a vital mirror for a nation's cultural and psychological worldview. The study examines the lexico-semantic characteristics of these units, identifying how body parts like the "head," "heart," "eye," and "hand" are metaphorically transformed to express human emotions, social relations, and ethical values. By contrasting the linguistic representation of somatisms in two genealogically and structurally different languages, the article reveals universal cognitive patterns as well as unique ethno-cultural specifics inherent in English and Uzbek folk wisdom.

Keywords: Somatisms, Proverbs, Lexico-semantic analysis, Linguistic representation, Comparative linguistics, Metaphorical mapping, Ethno-culture, English, Uzbek, Phraseology, Body parts, Paremiology.

Proverbs are condensed expressions of a people's experience, wisdom, and world outlook. Among the various thematic groups of proverbs, those containing somatic units—terms referring to the human body—occupy a central place. This is because the human body is the primary tool through which individuals perceive and interact with the world. Consequently, somatisms are not merely anatomical labels but are deeply symbolic, carrying a wide range of metaphorical meanings.

In **English paremiology**, somatic units often reflect a pragmatic and individualistic approach to life, whereas in **Uzbek proverbs**, they frequently emphasize communal harmony, respect, and deep-seated emotional states. For example, the "head" (*bosh*) may symbolize leadership or intellect in both languages, but the "eye" (*ko'z*) or "liver" (*jigar*) may carry specific cultural connotations in Uzbek that differ from their English counterparts. This article aims to explore these semantic nuances and the linguistic structures that house them.

The study of somatic units within the paremiological fund of English and Uzbek reveals a profound connection between the human anatomy and the linguistic categorization of the world. Somatisms are not merely words denoting body parts; they are "cultural codes" that carry centuries of collective experience. In both languages, the human body serves as a primary reference point for creating metaphors that describe character, emotion, and social hierarchy.

In the linguistic picture of the world, somatic units often undergo a process of **semantic abstraction**. For example, the "head" is universally recognized as the seat of intellect and leadership. However, the linguistic representation varies: in English, the head often relates to individual responsibility and logic ("To keep one's head"), whereas in Uzbek, "bosh" frequently symbolizes the foundational pillar of the family or state structure ("Bosh bo'moq").

The "**Heart**" (Yurak/Ko'ngil) provides an even more complex semantic field. In English proverbs, the heart is often

contrasted with the head, representing the battle between emotion and reason ("*The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of*"). In Uzbek culture, however, the concept of "ko'ngil" (a more spiritual synonym for heart) is broader, encompassing not just emotion but also a person's moral "home" and spiritual purity. The linguistic representation of the heart in Uzbek proverbs often focuses on its fragility and its role as a bridge between individuals. One of the most striking differences in the lexico-semantic features of these languages is found in the somatism "**Liver**" (Jigar). In the English worldview, the liver has largely lost its metaphorical power in proverbs. In contrast, in the Uzbek language, the "jigar" is a vital somatic unit representing close kinship and deep-seated compassion. To call someone "jigarim" is to acknowledge a bond that is stronger than friendship, a semantic nuance that is entirely absent in the English somatic system.

Similarly, the "**Eye**" (Eye/Ko'z) serves as a tool for evaluating the external world. English proverbs frequently use the eye to denote vigilance or greed ("An eye for an eye" or "*The eye of the master does more work than both his hands*"). In Uzbek, while the eye also represents greed ("To'ymas ko'z"), it is more frequently linked to the concept of the "evil eye" or "nazar," adding a mystical and protective linguacultural layer that is less prominent in modern English somatic units.

From a linguistic perspective, somatic units in both languages often function as the **semantic nucleus** of the proverb. They are frequently paired with verbs of action or state to create a vivid image. In English, these proverbs often take a more elliptical or direct form, while Uzbek somatic proverbs frequently utilize the richness of the language's possessive and case suffixes, making the relationship between the body part and the action more

syntactically complex. This structural difference reflects the broader typological divergence between the Germanic and Turkic language families.

Ultimately, the somatic worldview in English and Uzbek proverbs shows that while the physical body is a universal constant, its linguistic interpretation is a cultural variable. The lexico-semantic features of these units prove that somatisms are the most resilient parts of the lexicon, surviving linguistic shifts because they are rooted in the most basic human experience. By studying these units, we gain insight not just into the language, but into the very soul of the people who speak it.

The linguistic representation of somatic units in English and Uzbek proverbs confirms that the human body is the most stable source of metaphorical creation. The lexico-semantic analysis reveals that English somatic proverbs are often characterized by functionalism and individual pragmatism. In contrast, Uzbek somatic proverbs are deeply embedded in social hierarchy, kinship, and spiritual purity. Despite these cultural differences, the use of somatisms provides a universal linguistic framework that allows different cultures to communicate complex human truths through the simple medium of the body.

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