

**SOMATIC PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A
REFLECTION OF HUMAN SOCIAL ROLES AND FAMILY RELATIONS**

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Abstract: This paper explores the somatic phraseological units in English and Uzbek languages, focusing on how they reflect human social roles and familial relationships. Somatic phraseologisms idiomatic expressions involving parts of the human body—offer deep insights into cultural perceptions and societal values. By conducting a comparative analysis, the study reveals that many body-related idioms in both languages serve as metaphors for human behavior, emotions, and relational dynamics within both societal and domestic contexts. English idioms such as “backbone of the company” or “cold shoulder” convey individual responsibility or emotional detachment, while Uzbek expressions like “tizzasiga o‘tqazmoq” or “ko‘z qulog‘i bo‘lmoq” emphasize intimacy, respect, and collectivist family structures. The study uses a qualitative method, drawing data from phraseological dictionaries and corpora, and analyzes how somatic metaphors mirror cultural frameworks. The findings highlight the significant role phraseology plays in shaping and expressing social and familial worldviews. The article presents theoretical ideas in this regard and proves them with examples.

Keywords: Somatic phraseologisms, body idioms, social roles, family relations, cultural linguistics, inner world, idioms, cultural linguistics, comparative analysis. body idioms, social roles, family relations, cultural linguistics

Language is not only a means of communication but also a mirror of cultural and social realities. Among the most culturally loaded linguistic units are phraseological expressions, especially those that involve parts of the human body—referred to as **somatic phraseologisms**. These idioms do more than simply enrich vocabulary; they often encode culturally significant views on human behavior, emotions, and interpersonal relationships.

In both English and Uzbek languages, somatic idioms are abundant and widely used in everyday speech. These expressions reflect how speakers of each language conceptualize the human body and its metaphorical extension into the social and familial domains. For instance, idioms like “cold shoulder” in English or “ko‘nglini ovlamog‘” in Uzbek not only include somatic references but also reveal attitudes toward social distance, emotional connection, or family dynamics.

The exploration of somatic phraseological units provides insight into how different cultures understand concepts like respect, hierarchy, intimacy, and individualism. English, often associated with Western individualism, tends to



produce idioms that emphasize personal autonomy and emotional boundaries. In contrast, Uzbek, rooted in Eastern collectivist values, frequently uses idioms to emphasize closeness, respect for elders, and the importance of extended family ties.

This paper aims to explore how somatic phraseological units in English and Uzbek reflect human roles within society and family structures. It seeks to identify both the commonalities and differences in how these two languages use the human body metaphorically to articulate social and familial relationships.

The research addresses the following questions:

How are body-related idioms used to express human roles in society and family in English and Uzbek?

What cultural values and worldviews are reflected through somatic phraseology in both languages?

To what extent do these idioms overlap or diverge in meaning and usage?

To answer these questions, the study will undertake a qualitative, comparative analysis of somatic idioms drawn from reliable lexicographic sources and will interpret them through the lens of cultural linguistics and metaphor theory.

The study of phraseological units, particularly those involving body parts—somatic phraseologisms—requires a multidisciplinary approach, drawing upon fields such as phraseology, cognitive linguistics, cultural linguistics, and metaphor theory. In this section, the key theoretical underpinnings are outlined, followed by a review of relevant literature.

Somatic phraseologisms are idiomatic expressions that contain names of human body parts (e.g., head, heart, eye, hand) and convey figurative meanings beyond the literal sense. For example, the English idiom “to have a big mouth” refers to someone who talks too much or reveals secrets, while the Uzbek idiom “og‘zini poylamoq” implies being cautious about what someone says or does.

Scholars such as Kunin (1996) and Gläser (1988) have defined phraseologisms as stable word combinations whose meaning is not deducible from the meanings of their individual components. Somatic idioms, specifically, serve as metaphorical mappings of physical experience onto abstract concepts like emotion, morality, power, and social relationships.

A significant theoretical foundation for the interpretation of somatic phraseologisms comes from Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), as developed by **George Lakoff and Mark Johnson** in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980). According to CMT, human cognition is largely metaphorical, and bodily experiences serve as primary sources for abstract thinking. For instance, idioms like “carry the weight of the world on one’s shoulders” or “open-hearted” are grounded in physical sensations but express emotional or psychological states.

Lakoff and Johnson’s theory supports the idea that many somatic idioms are not random but are based on systematic conceptual metaphors such as:





THE BODY IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTION (e.g., heart full of love, ko'ngli to'q)

SEEING IS KNOWING (e.g., turn a blind eye, ko'zini ochmoq)

CLOSENESS IS INTIMACY (e.g., be hand in hand, tizzasiga o'tqazmoq)

While metaphor theory explains the cognitive mechanisms behind idioms, **Cultural Linguistics** (Sharifian, 2017) helps in understanding how cultural values and social norms shape and are shaped by language. According to this framework, idiomatic expressions are “cultural conceptualizations” reflecting shared beliefs and practices.

In English, idioms often reflect values such as individualism, personal space, and independence. Phrases like “stand on one's own feet” or “keep at arm's length” emphasize personal agency and boundaries. Uzbek idioms, on the other hand, reflect collectivist values, deference to elders, and interconnectedness—“ko'nglidan joy olmoq” or “ko'z qulog'i bo'lmoq” indicate emotional proximity and loyalty.

Comparative studies on phraseology across languages have highlighted both universal patterns and culturally specific elements. For example:

Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2006) emphasized cross-cultural idiomatic meanings and metaphorical universality.

Teliya (1996) discussed phraseologisms as a key to national worldviews.

In Uzbek linguistics, scholars such as **Sayfiyev (2007)** and **Abdurahmonova (2015)** have examined the semantic and cultural aspects of body-related idioms in Uzbek.

In English-language research, idiomatic usage has been widely documented in dictionaries (e.g., Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms) and corpora (e.g., BNC, COCA).

Despite numerous studies in both languages, direct comparisons of somatic phraseologisms with a focus on **social and family roles** remain relatively underexplored. This study aims to contribute to filling that gap.

This study adopts a **qualitative and comparative** approach to analyze somatic phraseological units in English and Uzbek. The methodology involves selecting relevant idioms containing body part references from both languages and analyzing their figurative meanings in the context of **social roles** and **family relations**.

The primary data for this study were collected from the following sources:

• **English sources:**

Oxford Dictionary of English Idioms

Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms

Corpus data from the **British National Corpus (BNC)** and **Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)**

• **Uzbek sources:**

O'zbek tilining frazeologik lug'ati (Uzbek Phraseological Dictionary)

Works by Uzbek linguists (e.g., Sayfiyev, Abdurahmonova)



Uzbek language corpora and authentic usage examples from media and literature

A total of approximately **60 idioms** were selected—30 from each language. The selection criteria were as follows:

Contain at least one **body part** (e.g., head, eye, hand, heart, back, foot)

Convey a **figurative meaning** related to human **social roles** (e.g., leadership, marginalization) or **family relationships** (e.g., closeness, respect, conflict)

Actively used in **modern spoken or written language**

The selected idioms were examined using two main frameworks:

1. Conceptual Metaphor Analysis

Idioms were grouped under conceptual metaphors (e.g., CLOSENESS IS INTIMACY, THE BODY REPRESENTS STATUS) based on Lakoff & Johnson’s theory. This helped reveal how bodily experience is metaphorically mapped onto social/familial behavior.

2. Cultural Semantic Comparison

Each idiom was analyzed in its **cultural context**, considering:

Literal translation

Figurative meaning

Cultural implications

Possible equivalents or contrasts in the other language

A comparative table was created to juxtapose English and Uzbek idioms that either **share a similar metaphor** or **demonstrate cultural divergence**.

Through this method, the study seeks to answer:

What body-part idioms in English and Uzbek reflect common social and family experiences?

Which idioms reveal **universal metaphorical patterns**?

Which idioms reflect **culture-specific values**, such as collectivism vs. individualism?

In this section, selected somatic idioms from English and Uzbek are analyzed to reveal how body-part metaphors reflect human social roles and family relationships. The discussion is organized into two thematic categories: **social roles** and **familial relations**.

English Examples:

“Backbone of the company”

Literal: Refers to the spine

Figurative meaning: A crucial or most important person in a group or organization

Cultural note: Highlights the value placed on **individual responsibility** and **personal strength** in Western, particularly American, society.

“To elbow someone out”

Literal: To push someone using your elbow

Figurative meaning: To force someone out of a position or opportunity

Cultural note: Reflects the **competitive and individualistic** nature of some English-speaking societies.

“Cold shoulder”

Literal: Turning the shoulder away from someone

Figurative meaning: To ignore or show indifference

Cultural note: Indicates **emotional distance** and personal boundaries.

Uzbek Examples:

“Tizzasiga o‘tqazmoq”

Literal: To seat someone on one's lap

Figurative meaning: To show deep care or treat with high affection/respect

Cultural note: Reflects **closeness, mentorship, or hierarchy**, often seen in teacher-student or elder-child relations.

“Ko‘zga ko‘rinmas”

Literal: Not visible to the eye

Figurative meaning: A person who is passive, marginalized, or unnoticeable

Cultural note: Suggests the **loss of social value** or **disconnection** from the community.

“Og‘zini poylamoq”

Literal: To watch someone’s mouth

Figurative meaning: To be extremely cautious about what someone says (or to listen attentively with respect)

Cultural note: Indicates **respect toward authority** or elders, showing the importance of speech in social interaction.

English Examples:

“Blood is thicker than water”

Literal: Blood has more density than water

Figurative meaning: Family ties are stronger than other relationships

Cultural note: Emphasizes the **enduring loyalty within family**, even in individualistic cultures.

“Wear your heart on your sleeve”

Literal: Display the heart visibly

Figurative meaning: To openly show emotions

Cultural note: Reflects emotional honesty in relationships, including familial.

This study has explored the role of somatic phraseological units in reflecting human social roles and familial relationships in English and Uzbek. The comparative analysis reveals both universal tendencies and culturally specific features that shape how body-related idioms are constructed and interpreted in each language.

One of the key findings is that both English and Uzbek extensively utilize body metaphors—particularly those involving the heart, eyes, hands, and





back—to express abstract concepts such as authority, respect, emotional closeness, marginalization, and care. This supports the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which argues that bodily experience serves as a basis for structuring abstract thought.

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