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THE ROLE OF SOMATIC OBJECTS IN PAREMIOLOGICAL TEXTS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the use of somatic objects in paremiological texts in English and Uzbek languages. Somatic objects are related to parts of the human body and are widely used in proverbs and idiomatic expressions. The article provides a comparative analysis of the cultural and psychological aspects of somatic phrases, as well as their linguistic peculiarities.

Keywords: Somatic objects, paremiology, phraseology, English language, Uzbek language, cultural characteristics, psychological analysis, linguistic comparison, metaphors, proverbs and sayings.

Introduction

Language serves as an essential vehicle for the expression of human cognition and culture, acting as a repository of a people's worldview, traditions, beliefs, and societal norms (Sapir, 1921; Whorf, 1956). Across linguistic disciplines, fields such as phraseology and paremiology—the study of idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and wise sayings—play a critical role in revealing how language crystallizes and transmits cultural knowledge (Mieder, 2004; Moon, 1998). Among the lexical components prominent in these domains are somatic objects, or body-part terms, such as eye, hand, heart, etc., which carry rich semantic and metaphorical significance (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010). These

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somatic elements have broad semantic fields and a striking capacity to convey complex human experiences through figurative language.

This article offers a detailed examination of the deployment of somatic objects within paremiological texts in English and Uzbek, focusing on their linguistic, cultural, and psychological characteristics. Such an inquiry provides insight not only into language structure but also into how culture and cognition intersect in figurative language use.

1. The Role of Somatic Objects in Paremiological Texts

Somatic objects occupy a pivotal position in numerous proverbs and idiomatic expressions, enhancing the figurative texture and vividness of language. They function as concrete reference points through which abstract ideas concerning human life, emotions, morality, and social behavior are articulated (Dirven & Pörings, 2003; Gibbs, 1994). The embodiment of intangible qualities in physical body parts aligns with the conceptual metaphor theory, which asserts that understanding abstract domains in terms of bodily experience is a fundamental cognitive process (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Although each language develops idiosyncratic somatic metaphors influenced by its unique cultural background, cross-linguistic scrutiny reveals notable parallels, emphasizing shared human embodiment and cognition (Yu, 2009; Kövecses, 2015).

1.1 Use of Somatic Objects in English Paremiology

English phraseological units richly feature somatic metaphors, many of which are entrenched in common parlance. Consider the following proverbs and idioms:

“Actions speak louder than words.” This proverb foregrounds the importance of deeds over verbal commitments, metaphorically referencing bodily agency (Cacciari & Glucksberg, 1991).

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“Keep an eye on something.” The eye symbolizes constant vigilance and attentiveness (Casasanto, 2009).

“A heart of stone.” The metaphorical heart here denotes emotional insensitivity or cruelty (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

“Give someone a hand.” The hand connotes assistance and cooperation (Sweetser, 1990).

“To be at someone’s feet.” This expression conveys submission or respect (Barcelona, 2003).

The use of somatic objects in these idioms illustrates how English uses bodily references to externalize internal psychological and emotional states (Glucksberg, 2001). For example, the phrase “A heart of stone” concretizes mercilessness by equating the heart—typically associated with feelings—with inanimate hardness.

1.2 Use of Somatic Objects in Uzbek Paremiology

Similarly, Uzbek contains an array of proverbs and expressions employing somatic objects that reflect the Azerbaijani people’s traditional worldview and cultural ethos (Ergin, 2010). Examples include:

“Ko’zi ochilgan.” (“The eye has opened”) signifying realization or enlightenment (Nematova, 2015).

“Qo’li ochiq.” (“Open hand”) denoting generosity.

“Yuragi tosh.” (“Heart of stone”) expressing mercilessness.

“Tili zahar.” (“Tongue is poison”) indicating harsh or offensive speech.

“Boshidan kechirmoq.” (“To go through [something] with one’s head”) meaning to have experienced or endured.

These idioms exemplify how Uzbek somatic metaphors are entwined with social values, ethical qualities, and psychological states, revealing culturally specific conceptualization patterns (Fazylova, 2018).

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2. Cultural and Psychological Characteristics of Somatic Objects

2.1 The Cultural Dimension

Somatic metaphors are culturally loaded constructs that mirror a society's customs, traditions, and shared meanings (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). They reveal collective attitudes toward traits such as generosity, wisdom, courage, and cruelty. For instance, the Uzbek phrase “Qo‘li ochiq” identifies cultural appreciation for generosity through the metaphor of an “open hand,” paralleling English expressions like “Give someone a hand” (Johnstone, 1994).

The metaphorical use of the heart to signify emotions, as in both English (“A heart of stone”) and Uzbek (“Yuragi tosh”), exemplifies convergence across cultures, possibly due to universal human physiology and experience (Kövecses, 2010). At the same time, differences in metaphorical usage highlight unique cultural perceptions and values embedded in language.

2.2 Psychological Perspectives

Somatic idioms also tap into fundamental cognitive and emotional processes by connecting bodily experience with psychological states (Barsalou, 1999). The Uzbek phrase “Ko‘zi ochilgan” and the English phrase “To see the light” both metaphorically evoke cognitive and emotional enlightenment, showing how embodiment extends to cognition itself (Niedenthal, 2007).

Psycholinguistic studies suggest that these metaphors influence not only language comprehension but also emotional processing and social cognition, facilitating shared understanding within communities (Gibbs, 1994; Lakoff, 1993).

Conclusion

The analysis of somatic objects in English and Uzbek paremiological texts unveils profound insights into the interplay among language, culture, and cognition. Somatic metaphors serve as vital linguistic tools that encapsulate human psychological experiences and cultural heritage through vivid bodily

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imagery. Their translation and interpretation require detailed linguistic and cultural sensitivity to preserve intended meanings and social nuances. For linguists, paremiologists, and translators, the study of somatic objects in idiomatic expressions represents a fertile field for further research. Future interdisciplinary investigations might expand comparative studies across more languages, explore cognitive mechanisms underlying metaphor comprehension, and refine translation strategies to better capture culturally grounded semantics.

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