



## COGNITIVE PECULIARITIES OF SOMATIC UNITS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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### ABSTRACT

*This article examines the cognitive peculiarities of somatic units in the English language and their role in linguistic representation and conceptualization. Somatic units, which are lexical and phraseological expressions related to parts of the human body, occupy an important place in cognitive linguistics because they reflect human perception, emotions, cultural values, and conceptual thinking.*

**Introduction.** Language is closely connected with human cognition and cultural experience. One of the most significant manifestations of this connection can be observed in somatic units, which are lexical and phraseological expressions associated with the human body and its organs. In modern linguistics, somatic vocabulary has become an important object of cognitive and semantic analysis because it reflects how people perceive and conceptualize the world around them.

The anthropocentric approach in linguistics emphasizes that human beings perceive reality through their physical and mental experiences. As a result, body-related expressions become a universal linguistic phenomenon across different languages and cultures.

**Literature Review.** The study of somatic units has attracted the attention of many linguists and cognitive scientists. In cognitive linguistics, the works of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson significantly contributed to the understanding of conceptual metaphors and embodied cognition. In their famous work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), the authors argued that human thinking is metaphorical in nature and largely based on bodily experience.

According to Lakoff and Johnson, conceptual metaphors such as "EMOTIONS ARE PHYSICAL FORCES" or "THE MIND IS A BODY" explain the semantic structure of many somatic expressions. For example, the English expression "heartbroken" conceptualizes emotional pain through bodily experience. Leonard Talmy, Ronald Langacker, and other representatives of cognitive linguistics also emphasized the role of embodied experience in language formation. Their theories demonstrated that human cognition is inseparable from sensory and bodily perception.

Phraseological studies have also explored somatic units extensively. Scholars such as A.V. Kunin investigated the semantic and structural peculiarities of phraseological units containing body-part lexemes. Kunin noted that somatic phraseological expressions possess high emotionality, expressiveness, and figurative meaning.

**Discussion and Results.** The term “somatic” originates from the Greek word *soma*, meaning “body.” In linguistics, somatic units refer to lexical items, idioms, phraseological units, and metaphors that contain names of body parts or bodily functions. Somatic units can be classified into several categories:

1. Lexical somatic units: *head, hand, eye, heart, face*
2. Phraseological somatic units: *keep an eye on, lose one's head, lend a hand, break someone's heart*
3. Metaphorical somatic expressions: *cold-hearted, open-minded, sharp-eyed*

*Cognitive Nature of Somatic Units.* One of the main cognitive peculiarities of somatic units is their embodiment. Human beings understand abstract concepts through bodily experience. Cognitive linguistics explains this phenomenon through conceptual metaphors.

*“Heart” is associated with emotions and feelings.*

*“Head” symbolizes intellect and reasoning.*

*“Hands” represent action, assistance, and control.*

*“Eyes” indicate perception and attention.*

The expression “to lose one’s head” does not literally refer to physical loss of the head. Instead, it conceptualizes emotional instability or panic through the metaphorical association between the head and rational thinking. Similarly, the idiom “cold feet” expresses fear or hesitation. In this case, bodily sensation is metaphorically linked with psychological state.

Somatic units possess rich semantic potential. Their meanings may include: *emotional evaluation; social characteristics; intellectual abilities; moral judgments; psychological states.* For example, the adjective “open-hearted” conveys positive emotional evaluation, while “two-faced” carries negative connotations related to dishonesty. Polysemy is another important feature of somatic lexemes. The word “head” may denote: *a body part; a leader (“head of department”); intelligence (“use your head”); top position (“head of the table”).*

Somatic units reflect the anthropocentric nature of language because they place the human body at the center of conceptualization. Human beings interpret the external world through their own physical experiences. In English culture, body-part metaphors frequently express individualism, emotional restraint, and rationality. For example, expressions involving “head” often emphasize logic and intellectual control.

Somatic expressions play an important role in communication. They increase emotionality, expressiveness, and imagery in speech. Their communicative functions include: *expressing emotions; intensifying meaning; creating stylistic effect; simplifying abstract ideas; facilitating interpersonal interaction.*

**Conclusion.** Somatic units occupy a special place in the English linguistic system because they reflect the interaction between language, cognition, and culture. Their cognitive peculiarities are based on embodied human experience, which allows speakers to conceptualize abstract notions through body-related metaphors. Furthermore, somatic units reflect the anthropocentric character of language and demonstrate the universality of bodily experience in human cognition. At the same time, cultural factors influence the semantic interpretation of somatic expressions.

In conclusion, the study of somatic units contributes to a deeper understanding of cognitive linguistics, phraseology, and intercultural communication. Future research may focus on comparative analysis of somatic expressions in different languages and their translation peculiarities.

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