

SOMATISMS IN UZBEK PROVERBS: LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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Annotation: This article studies the grammatical, cultural, and moral significance of somatisms—lexical units derived from human body parts—in Uzbek proverbs. Bosh (head), ko‘z (eye), qo‘l (hand), yurak (heart), and til (tongue) are examples of somatisms that are effective figurative instruments for communicating abstract concepts, feelings, and societal values. They offer direction in oral tradition, folklore, and daily communication with defining the Uzbek worldview.

Key words: somatisms, Uzbek proverbs, culture, body parts, figurative meaning, wisdom, language, tradition, morality, symbolism.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается грамматическое, культурное и моральное значение соматизмов — лексических единиц, образованных от названий частей человеческого тела, — в узбекских пословицах. Bosh (голова), ko‘z (глаз), qo‘l (рука), yurak (сердце) и til (язык) — примеры соматизмов, которые являются эффективными образными инструментами для передачи абстрактных понятий, чувств и общественных ценностей. Они задают направление в устной традиции, фольклоре и повседневном общении, определяя узбекское мировоззрение.

Ключевые слова: соматизмы, узбекские пословицы, культура, части тела, переносное значение, мудрость, язык, традиция, мораль, символика.

Somatisms are lexical units that come from the names of human body parts, such as the heart (yurak), hand (qo‘l), eye (ko‘z), and head (bosh). Proverbs and other metaphorical and figurative phrases, as well as the formation of core vocabulary, are shaped by somatisms, which are essential to the Uzbek language.

These linguistic components provide as a solid foundation for Uzbek folklore, ordinary speech, and cultural awareness.

The wide range of idioms and proverbs that employ body parts to express abstract concepts, feelings, and societal values in Uzbek demonstrates the importance of somatisms. For instance, the physical part ko‘z (eye) is used to convey a metaphorical truth about inner feelings being seen through one’s gaze in the saying, “Ko‘z – ko‘ngil oynasi” (The eye is the mirror of the soul). Likewise, “Qo‘l qo‘lni yuvadi, ikki qo‘l yuzni” (One hand washes the other, both hands wash the face) highlights collaboration and mutual aid, with qo‘l (hand) signifying solidarity and support.

A significant part of the country’s linguistic and cultural legacy are somatic proverbs in the Uzbek language. The Uzbek people’s worldview, beliefs, and common sense are reflected in these proverbs, which are powerful metaphorical phrases made utilizing names of body parts like bosh (head), ko‘z (eye), qo‘l (hand), yurak (heart), and til (tongue).

In Uzbek culture, proverbs function as both linguistic and moral instruction, and elders commonly use them to advise or chastise the younger generation. They are frequently used in ordinary discourse, storytelling, and instruction to encourage moral behavior, warn against mistakes, and consider life’s experiences. The nation’s collective wisdom is preserved over time by these proverbs, which often have a rhythmic or well-balanced style that promotes oral transmission and retention. For example: The following are some well-known Uzbek sayings that contain somatic lexemes:

1. “Bosh bor joyda aql bor¹.”

Where there is a head, there is wisdom.

This saying teaches that the head is the place of the mind, so wherever there is a head, there must also be intelligence. It highlights the idea that a person’s strength and success come not only from physical power but from thinking and

¹ Musaqlulov, B. Sarimsaqov T. Mirzayev, A. O‘zbek xalq maqollari. — Toshkent: O‘zbekiston milliy ensiklopediyasi, 2005. — 254 b.

reasoning. The saying reminds us that wisdom and intellect guide actions better than force alone.

2. “Ko‘z – ko‘ngil oynasi².”

The eye is the mirror of the heart/soul.

The proverb emphasizes the idea that a person’s inner feelings are reflected outwardly through their eyes. Here, ko‘z (eye) symbolizes vision and expression, while ko‘ngil (heart/soul) represents inner emotions, thoughts, and sincerity. The saying teaches that the eyes reveal what is hidden in the soul, making them a mirror of one’s true self.

3. “Yurakdan chiqqan so‘z yurakka yetadi³.”

Words that come from the heart reach the heart.

The proverb expresses the idea that sincere words, born from true feelings, deeply touch others. Here, yurak (heart) symbolizes emotions, honesty, and inner truth, while so‘z (word) represents human expression. It serves as a reminder that genuine, heartfelt speech creates emotional connection, trust, and understanding between people.

4. “Til – boshning balosi⁴.”

The tongue is the head’s trouble.

Here, bosh (head) stands for the self or the seat of judgment, and til (tongue) for speaking. The proverb serves as a metaphorical warning that careless or irresponsible speech can have dire repercussions. It has a dual purpose of preventing and correcting: it encourages self-control and intelligent social communication while acting as a warning against angry remarks, slander, and gossip.

5. “Ko‘r-ko‘rona oyoq bosma⁵.”

Don’t step blindly.

² T. Mirzayev, A. Musaqulov, B. Sarimsaqov. — Toshkent: O‘zbekiston milliy ensiklopediyasi, 2005. — 256 b

³ Eller maqollari. Ziyoz.uz jamoasi. — Toshkent: Ziyonet nashriyoti, 2012. — 197 b

⁴ F. R. Nasimova. Yapon va o‘zbek xalq maqollarida tana a‘zolari orqali berilgan axloqiy saboqlar. — Toshkent: Ta’limda raqamli texnologiyalarni tadbiq etishning zamonaviy tendensiyalari va rivojlanish omillari, 2025. — 285 b.

⁵ Qarshiyeva M. Contrastive study of proverbs formed on the basis of somatisms in Uzbek and English languages. Surxondaryo, 2025. — 48 b.

The proverb warns against acting without thought or awareness. Here, ko‘r-ko‘rona (blindly) symbolizes ignorance and lack of caution, while oyoq (foot) represents action or steps in life. The saying teaches that one should not move forward carelessly but act wisely, with foresight and understanding, to avoid mistakes and harm. These illustrations make it abundantly evident how closely Uzbek somatic proverbs are linked to social conduct, cultural norms, and language innovation. They provide insight into the Uzbek way of thinking, in which the body is viewed as a symbolic environment for understanding and negotiating the human condition.

Conclusion

Uzbek somatic proverbs demonstrate the close relationship that exists between language, culture, and human experience. They convey moral teachings, values, and wisdom in a vivid and significant way by figuratively utilizing body parts. These sayings demonstrate how the Uzbek view the human body as a symbolic framework for comprehending life and serve as instruments of education, social control, and cultural preservation. They so continue to be an essential part of the country’s linguistic and cultural legacy, guaranteeing the generational transfer of shared values and expertise.

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