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THE SEMANTIC NETWORK OF “HEAD” IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK BASED ON LEXICAL FIELD COMPARISON

СЕМАНТИЧЕСКАЯ СЕТЬ СЛОВА “ГОЛОВА” В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ НА ОСНОВЕ СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОГО АНАЛИЗА ЛЕКСИЧЕСКИХ ПОЛЕЙ

“HEAD” (“BOSH”) LEKSEMASINING INGLIZ VA O’ZBEK TILLARIDAGI SEMANTIK TO’R STRUKTURASI: LEKSIK MAYDON TAHLILI ASOSIDA

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative lexical-semantic and discourse-pragmatic analysis of idioms with the component “head” in English and “bosh” in Uzbek. Idioms are classified into semantic fields such as cognition, emotion, and authority. Through lexical field theory, the study explores both universal and culture-specific imagery. The paper also examines the challenges of translating somatic idioms and their discourse functions. The findings contribute to bilingual lexicography, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

Аннотация

В статье представлен сопоставительный лексико-семантический и pragmatischeskiy analiz frazeologizmov s komponentom “голова” v angliyskom i “bosh” v uzbekskom yazykakh. Idioms klassifitsiuirotsya po semanticheskym poljama: myshlenie, emotsiya i vlast. Issledovaniye ostanovano na teorii lekssicheskikh polj i raskryvaet kak universalsnye, tak i kulturno-spesificheskie obrazы. Takoje rassmatrivaются problemy perevoda somaticheskikh idiom i их funktsii v diskursse. Rezul'taty polzny dlya perevodchikov i lingvistov.

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o’zbek tillaridagi “head/bosh” komponentli frazeologizmlarning leksik-semantik va diskurs-pragmatik tahlili keltiriladi. Idiomalar kognitsiya, emotsiya va hokimiyat kabi semantik maydonlarga ajratilgan. Leksik maydon nazariyasi asosida umumiyl va madaniyatga xos obrazlar yoritiladi. Maqolada somatik frazeologizmlami tarjima qilishdagi qilyinchiliklar hamda ularning diskursdagi vazifalari ham ko’rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot tarjimashunoslik va madaniyatlararo mulogot uchun ahamiyatlidir.

Key words: head, bosh, idiom, lexical field, phraseological units, semantic analysis, translation equivalence, discourse pragmatics, culture-specific expressions, somatic metaphors

Ключевые слова: голова, bosh, idiom, лексическое поле, фразеологизмы, семантический анализ, переводческая эквивалентность, pragmatika diskursa, культурно-специфические выражения, соматические метафоры

Kalit so’zlar: bosh, head, idiom, leksik maydon, frazeologik birliklar, semantik tahlil, tarjima ekvivalentligi, diskurs pragmatikasi, madaniyatga xos ifodalar, somatik metaforalar.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of “head” occupies a rich semantic space in language, linking physical, psychological, and social meanings. Semantically, “head” often denotes the human body’s top (containing brain and senses) and metaphorically extends to leadership, intelligence, and fate. Phraseological units (idioms) involving “head” are especially revealing of cultural worldview: as Larin remarked, “expressions reflect the worldview of the people, the social system, the ideology of their time”. In English and Uzbek, idioms with “head” serve as linguistic symbols of mental states, social roles, and emotional attitudes. For example, terms like “to have a good head for something” or Uzbek “boshi ishlamoq” (the head works) link **head** to intelligence and prudence, whereas “to carry one’s head high” or “boshini baland qilib yurmoq” connote pride. Such patterns reflect underlying **lexical fields**: clusters of semantically related expressions built around a central concept of “head”. We adopt a **lexical field** approach to map these networks in English and Uzbek.

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In general, we also use a **discourse-pragmatic** lens because idioms are **culturally loaded**. Idioms carry implicatures and contextual effects and are propositional utterances as well. Alghazo *et al.* (2022) emphasize that idiomatic expressions are "heavily laden with implicatures and/or contextual effects". [1, p.425] Therefore, to fully understand idioms relating to "head", we must consider how they function in communicative contexts, giving signals of politeness, solidarity, emphasis, or other pragmatic meanings. For instance, nodding or shaking one's head conveys agreement or denial beyond the words. Likewise, the choice between an English idiom and its Uzbek equivalent may shift politeness or intensity.

This study performs a **contrastive lexical-semantic analysis** of *somatic* (body-part) phraseologisms involving "**head**" in English and Uzbek. We compile 10 - 15 idioms from each language (e.g., "to lose one's head" – "boshini yo'qotib qo'ymoq"). We analyze their meanings, usages, and translations, applying discourse analysis to highlight pragmatic differences. Our goal is to reveal the *semantic network* of the head in the two languages, showing how cultural factors shape idiomatic concepts. The findings contribute to understanding translation equivalence of body-part idioms and to general models of lexical field semantics.

METHODS

We employed a **qualitative contrastive analysis** combining lexical field theory and discourse-pragmatic methods. First, we **compiled data** on idiomatic expressions containing "**head**". English examples were drawn from idiom dictionaries (e.g., Cowie *et al.*) and corpora (British National Corpus) by searching for *head* plus metaphorical verbs (e.g., "lose", "carry", "shake"). Uzbek expressions were gathered from Uzbek phraseological dictionaries and corpora of modern Uzbek (including e-literature and news). We included expressions like "boshini egmoq" (literally "to lower one's head") and "baliq boshidan sasiydi" ("a fish rots from its head").

Next, we organized the expressions into **semantic subfields** (e.g., cognition/emotion, leadership/authority, life/death) as per lexical-field theory. We noted each idiom's literal components and figurative meaning, comparing translation equivalents. For example, English "lose one's head" corresponds to Uzbek "boshini yo'qotib qo'ymoq". When direct equivalents were absent, we identified descriptive paraphrases used in translation.

For **discourse and pragmatic analysis**, we examined usage contexts. We analyzed spoken and written examples (from news, fiction, and conversation transcripts) where these idioms appear, to see pragmatic function (e.g., apology, boasting). For instance, the Uzbek phrases for "shake one's head" (bosh chayqamoq) and "hang one's head" (boshini egmoq) carry specific pragmatic meanings of disagreement or humility. We also consulted theoretical sources on idioms and metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) and on idiom translation.

In general, the method used is **contrastive**: analyzing English and Uzbek idioms side by side in terms of meaning, structure, and usage. This involves translation analysis (how an idiom in one language is rendered in the other) and pragmatic framing (how context affects interpretation). The characterized approach is descriptive and interpretive, following established procedures for bilingual lexical semantics.

RESULTS

Semantic network of "Head".

Dictionary definition: To ground the analysis, we note general senses of *head*. A lexical entry shows "*head*" as "the upper part of the human body containing the brain, mouth, and sense organs" and also "a person in charge" or "front part of something". This range underpins idioms. In both languages, **head** is cognitively associated with mind and authority. Narzullayeva (2022) confirms that in Uzbek and English, the head is seen as the "main organ of human thought," with idioms often conveying prudence or its lack. [1, p.25], [5, p.26]

Subfields: We identified several semantic subfields:

a) **Cognition/Mind:** Idioms about thinking, sanity, or composure. E.g., "to have a good head for something" (be very clever) is rendered "boshi ishlamoq" [lit. "the head works"]. Similarly, "to have a good head on one's shoulders" (be sensible) corresponds to the Uzbek expression "aql bilan ish tutmoq" or "oqilona fikrlamoq". When someone "loses his head" (panics), Uzbek uses "boshini yo'qotib qo'ymoq". To "keep one's head" (remain calm) is "boshini yo'qotmaslik". These

idioms link “**head**” to intelligence and self-control (the mind). In discourse, saying “*Men boshimni ishlataman*” (“I’ll use my head”) functions as pragmatic advice to think carefully.

b) **Emotions/Impulse:** Here, *head* idioms signal emotional states. English “*bury one’s head in the sand*” (avoid reality) is “*boshini qumga bulamoq*”. To “*carry one’s head high*” (be proud) corresponds to “*boshini baland qilib yurmoq*”. Uzbek also uses “*boshini egmoq*” (“hang one’s head”) and “*boshni quyi solmoq*” (“lower one’s head”) to express sadness or shame. Conversely, “*boshini baland tutmoq*” can mean “to act arrogantly, to be proud” (lit. “to hold one’s head up high”). In summary, **head** metaphors range from *highness* (pride, dignity) to *lowness* (shame, humility).

c) **Leadership/Authority:** In both languages, **head** refers to leaders. English “*head of state*” or “*ahead of the pack*” implies leadership; Uzbek uses “*boshliq*” for boss, literally “the head person”. Proverbs often use *head* to denote the source of problems: e.g., “*A fish rots from the head*” (bad leadership) has a direct Uzbek counterpart, “*baliq boshidan sasiydi*”. This shows shared logic: the metaphorical “*head*” (leader) is crucial. Another pattern: “*many heads, many minds*” (different opinions) vs Uzbek “*bir kalladan ikkitasi yaxshi*” (“two from one head is better”). Both use *head* “*kalla*” (head) to discuss the plurality of opinion, but with different lexical images.

d) **Life/Death:** Because the head is vital, idioms equate the head with life. English “*pay with one’s life*” mirrors Uzbek “*boshi bilan javob bermoq*” (literally “to answer with one’s head”). [5, p.28] Similarly, threats involving beheading appear: in Uzbek, “*kimningdir boshini egmoq*” or “*kimningdir boshi egilib*” can mean to subdue or punish someone (see Discussion). Narzullayeva notes idioms where “**Head**” stands for life or existence.

e) **Gestural meanings:** Actions of the head also yield idioms. Uzbek idioms for head movements were identified:

- ✓ *To shake one’s head* = *bosh chayqamoq* (indicates disagreement).
- ✓ *To hang one’s head* = *boshini egmoq/boshni quyi solmoq* (signals sadness or shame).

These match English pragmatics: shaking head = “no/disagree,” hanging head = “sadness/regret.” For example, in dialogue, if a person “shakes her head,” the listener infers denial; in Uzbek, the same gesture by “*bosh chayqamoq*” does likewise. [2, p.380]

Now let’s see the summary of the key idioms found below:

• **English & Uzbek (literal gloss):**

- “*to have a good head for something*” ↔ “*boshi ishlamoq*” (“head works”)
- “*to have a good head on one’s shoulders*” ↔ “*yelkasida boshi bo’lmoq*” (“head is on shoulder”)
- “*to lose one’s head*” ↔ “*boshini yo’qotib qo’ymoq*”
- “*to keep one’s head*” ↔ “*boshini yo’qotmaslik*”
- “*to bury one’s head in the sand*” ↔ “*boshini qumga bulamoq*”
- “*to carry one’s head high*” ↔ “*boshini baland qilib yurmoq*”
- “*to wash one’s head*” (humiliate) ↔ “*kimningdir boshini egmoq*” (humiliate someone)
- “*shake one’s head*” ↔ *bosh chayqamoq* (“shake head”)
- “*hang one’s head*” ↔ *boshini egmoq / boshni quyi solmoq*
- “*a fish rots from the head*” ↔ *baliq boshidan sasiydi*
- “*many heads, many minds*” ↔ *bir kalladan ikkitasi yaxshi*

(Brackets indicate cases where no single idiom exists.) *

These **phraseological correspondences** reveal the shared and divergent imagery. For many everyday idioms, both languages have near-equivalents (e.g., lose/keep head, bury head in sand). Others differ: English’s “*off the top of my head*” (to improvise) is usually translated by paraphrase in Uzbek rather than a fixed phrase.

Discourse and pragmatic observations:

A discourse analysis of example usages highlights pragmatic nuances. Idioms with “**head**” often convey the speaker’s attitudes or social relationships. For instance, English “*don’t lose your head!*” in a heated context functions as advice to stay calm (pragmatic politeness), whereas the Uzbek equivalent “*boshini yo’qotma!*” might carry a sterner warning. The idiom “*carry your head high*” used in a congratulatory toast implies positive pride in both languages, but Uzbek phrasing may emphasize respect (“*o’zini loyiq deb topmoq*”).

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Gestural idioms also play out in discourse. When an Uzbek speaker “*boshini egdi*” (“hung his head”), listeners infer contrition or humility. An English speaker saying “*hang my head*” after a mistake would have a similar effect. Importantly, some idioms carry **politeness implicatures**: in Uzbek cultures, lowering one’s head can signal respect when greeting elders. Saying “*boshingni eg*” can be a respectful exhortation. In English, the idiom “keep your head up” is encouragement after failure, but the Uzbek “*boshingni egma*” has the same meaning, showing cross-cultural pragmatics.

Narmetova (2022) notes that **somatic idioms** are widespread in spoken language, but “**translatability is sometimes problematic**” due to cultural factors. [4, p.201-202] Our findings confirm this: idioms are rarely word-for-word translatable. Instead, translators look for equivalents or explanatory paraphrases. For example, “*laugh one’s head off*” has no Uzbek set phrase, so translators might render it as “*became uncontrollably happy*” contextually. Meanwhile, universal metaphors like “*a fish rots from the head*” are shared between English and Uzbek.

Finally, pragmatic meaning can shift. The Uzbek idiom “*boshini egmoq*”, literally “hang one’s head”, may appear neutral, but in certain proverbs implies extreme humility or even defeat. In contrast, the English equivalent has a narrower sense of sorrow. Discourse analysis of proverbs shows that **head idioms** reflect national values: e.g., Uzbek epic texts (Alpomish) use head-phrases to denote honor, fate, and communal values. [2, p.381]

DISCUSSION

Our contrastive analysis reveals both parallels and contrasts in the **semantic network** of “head”. Both English and Uzbek treat the head as the seat of reason and emotion. Idioms about thinking (use one’s head), mental stability (lose/keep head), and honesty (heads above water) show a common metaphor: “*mind is head*”. [3, p.82] Similarly, “Head” symbolizes leadership and origin: the proverb “*fish rots from the head*” is present in both cultures. These shared patterns likely reflect universal human experience (e.g., brain in skull, leaders on top).

However, cultural nuances color many expressions. Uzbek idioms often incorporate local imagery: e.g., the Turkic concept of “*bosh kiyimi*” (headscarf) yields idioms about marital status. Uzbek phrases using “head” may emphasize collectivist values. For instance, the epic Alpomish uses “*bosh chayqamoq*” and “*bosh egmoq*” to highlight communal disapproval or sorrow. English idioms sometimes have no Uzbek equivalent, reflecting different conceptual priorities: “*laugh one’s head off*” (humorously excessive) does not occur in Uzbek, where laughter is expressed differently.

Pragmatically, **head idioms** can signal tone. An English speaker telling someone to “*lose their head*” might do so ironically or sympathetically, whereas in Uzbek, “*boshingni yo’qotmaq*” is more direct advice. The choice of idiom in conversation often carries politeness or solidarity nuances. For example, saying “*Heads will roll*” in a meeting is a dramatic idiom implying punishment; an Uzbek speaker might instead say “*boshlarni ko’rsatmoq*” (“show them their heads”) to convey a similar threat, which uses the “**head**” metaphorically but differently. We observed that in translations (e.g., news subtitles), idioms with a head are often adapted to idioms or phrases that fit local pragmatics. This confirms Alghazo *et al.*’s claim that idioms include “speaker-related meaning” on top of literal content. [1, p.426]

Our discourse-pragmatic perspective shows that “**head**” idioms often require cultural context to interpret. For instance, telling an Uzbek child “*boshingni baland ko’tar*” (hold your head high) instills self-respect, a different connotation than merely being proud. Conversely, English “*keep your head down*” (be cautious) might translate to “*ko’rinmay yur*” or “*jim yur*” (“don’t stick your neck out”) or be expressed by other Uzbek metaphors. Thus, translation analysis (contrastive analysis) is crucial. The linguistic literature notes that somatic idioms form “one of the oldest layers of vocabulary” and usually involve cultural conventions, which our results corroborate.

CONCLUSION

This study has mapped the **lexical field of “head”** in English and Uzbek through phraseological analysis. We identified over a dozen idioms in each language, grouped into conceptual subfields (mind, emotion, leadership, life), and noted more than ten corresponding expressions. Despite some direct parallels (e.g., “*lose one’s head*”, ⇔ “*boshini yo’qotmoq*”, “*fish rots from the head*”, ⇔ “*baliq boshidan sasiydi*”), many idioms are culture-specific and require

pragmatic translation. Our discourse analysis showed that *head-phrases* perform nuanced functions (e.g., indicating respect, shame, or pride) that standard semantics alone do not capture.

Lexical fields for body-part terms, the findings emphasize, must be studied in context. The head's semantic network is broad: it spans physical, cognitive, and social domains, reflecting universal human experience and particular Uzbek cultural values. For translators and educators, awareness of these differences is important. Further research could extend corpus-based analysis to frequency and collocation, or compare “**head**” idioms across more languages. Ultimately, our contrastive approach illustrates how even a common concrete term like “head” can weave divergent semantic and pragmatic patterns in different linguistic communities.

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