SOMATIC METONYMY AS A COGNITIVE MECHANISM FOR REGULATING EMOTIONAL INTENSITY IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK PHRASEOLOGY

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Abstract: *This study explores how somatic metonymy operates as a cognitive mechanism for encoding and grading emotional intensity within English and Karakalpak phraseological units (PUs). Moving beyond simple cross-linguistic categorization, this paper investigates the differential reliance on internal visceral somatisms (visceroptics) versus external physical markers (corporality) when expressing varying degrees of affective disruption (anger, fear, sadness, shame). Through an analysis of 21st-century English and Karakalpak literary prose, the research demonstrates how body-part selection directly correlates with the cognitive conceptualization of emotional magnitude and behavioral control.*

Keywords: *Somatic metonymy, emotional intensity, phraseology, somatisms, body-part projection, cognitive linguistics, English, Karakalpak.*

1. INTRODUCTION

While earlier cognitive phraseological studies established that emotional metaphors rely on physiological experience, few have focused on the specific cognitive mechanism of somatic metonymy (EFFECT OF EMOTION FOR EMOTION) as a metric for emotional intensity. Body-part somatisms do not function uniformly: different bodily locations signify distinct threshold levels of psychological impact. Comparing English and Karakalpak phraseology through this lens reveals how each culture structures the gradation of affective states—from mild agitation to complete loss of emotional equilibrium.

2. Cognitive Mechanics of Somatic Metonymy

Somatic metonymy operates by highlighting a specific physical reaction as an indicator of an underlying emotional process. In phraseological units, emotional intensity is regulated through three main structural parameters:

2.1. Visceral Depth vs. Surface Manifestation

- Internal Visceral Somatisms (High Intensity): In Karakalpak phraseology, maximum emotional distress is mapped onto deep internal organs (liver, heart, stomach). Expressions such as «bawırı eziliw» (crushing of the liver) and «ishi qan jılaw» (the abdomen weeping blood) represent the highest tier of sadness and internal destruction.

- Surface/Motor Somatisms (Moderate to High Intensity): English phraseology frequently structures high-intensity emotional reactions through external motor disruptions and localized vascular shifts («blood run cold», «jaw drop», «knees knock together»), emphasizing observable behavioral manifestations rather than deep organ destruction.

2.2. Verticality and Spatial Displacement in Intensity Mapping

- Ascending Thermal Dynamics (Anger): Both languages use vertical fluid ascent to mark increasing rage. The transition from localized thermal activity («make one's blood run hot» / «qanı qızıw») to full internal eruption («boiling up inside» / «ishi ǵıj-ǵıj qaynaw») reflects a cognitive scale of rising pressure within the bodily container.

- Descending Gravitational Pull (Sadness and Shame): Decreasing emotional vitality is mapped through negative verticality. Mild shame initiates facial thermal activation («beti qızarıw» / «burn with shame»), whereas intense shame leads to spatial collapse and desire for total disappearance («jerge kirip kete jazlaw» / «sink into the ground»).

3. Ethnolinguistic Divergence in Somatic Selection

The comparative analysis reveals a fundamental shift in how body parts are selected to reflect emotional overload:

1. Centripetal Projection (Karakalpak): Emotional shock is drawn inward toward the somatic core (ish, júrek, bawır), coding intensity as internalized suffering and endurance («ishinen dert jutıw»).

2. Centrifugal Projection (English): Emotional shock is projected outward onto bodily boundaries and peripheral reactions (skin, hair, throat, limbs), coding intensity through physical impediment and loss of personal autonomy («skin crawling», «tongue-tied», «choked up»).

4. Conclusion

Analyzing somatic metonymy provides a nuanced framework for understanding how language encodes the scalar nature of human feeling. English and Karakalpak utilize shared biological reference points, yet they diverge systematically in how they map emotional magnitude: Karakalpak relies on deep visceral somatisms to reflect ultimate emotional intensity, whereas English favors peripheral and motor-reflexive disruptions.

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