

KONFERENSIYA

“JIZZAX VILOYATI IJTIMOIY-IQTISODIY
RIVOJLANISHINING ASOSIY
YO’NALISHLARI: MUAMMO VA YECHIMLAR”



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MUAMMO VA YECHIMLAR**

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SOMATISMS IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE: LINGUOCULTURAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES

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Abstract: This article explores the semantic, cultural, and cognitive features of somatisms in the Spanish language, emphasizing their central role in expressing emotions, social relationships, and culturally embedded values. Somatic lexemes such as *cabeza*, *cara*, *ojo*, *mano*, and *corazón* function not only as designations of body parts but also as carriers of symbolic meanings that reflect the Spanish worldview. The study demonstrates that Spanish somatisms form a highly productive idiomatic system shaped by conceptual metaphors, emotional expressiveness, and historical-cultural traditions, including the influence of Catholic symbolism. Through an analysis of somatic idioms, the article highlights core cultural codes such as honor, sincerity, emotional openness, and social cohesion. The findings show that somatisms play an essential role in structuring Spanish linguistic identity and represent a key element for understanding the cultural and communicative practices of the Spanish-speaking world.

Keywords: somatisms, Spanish language, linguoculture, conceptual metaphor, phraseology, embodiment, cultural codes, idioms, emotional expressiveness, cognitive linguistics

Somatisms represent one of the most expressive and culturally significant lexical groups in the Spanish language, reflecting the anthropocentric nature of human cognition and communication. In Spanish linguoculture, the human body is conceptualized not merely as a biological category but as a symbolic system through which emotions, moral values, social roles, and cognitive processes are encoded.

According to J. Casares, the idiomatic structure of the Spanish language is deeply rooted in bodily experience, which explains the remarkably high productivity of somatic lexemes in idioms and fixed expressions¹. These lexical units, such as *cabeza*, *mano*, *ojo*, *cara*, *corazón*, and *lengua*, function not only as denotative markers of body parts but as carriers of culturally embedded meanings that reflect Spanish worldviews and communicative norms.

Researchers emphasize that somatisms are closely linked to conceptual metaphors, which structure human perception and categorize abstract phenomena through bodily experience. M. Kovshova highlights that somatic vocabulary forms a universal cognitive mechanism, enabling speakers to translate physical sensations into symbolic and linguistic categories². In Spanish, this mechanism becomes especially vibrant due to the emotional expressiveness and cultural symbolism characteristic of Iberian cultures. Thus, somatisms are essential components of Spanish phraseology, forming approximately one-third of its idiomatic system, as noted by M. Salvador³. This indicates that bodily concepts play a central role in constructing semantic and figurative patterns within the Spanish linguistic worldview.



One of the most culturally significant somatisms in Spanish is *cara* (“face”), which conveys notions of honor, social reputation, and interpersonal relations. Expressions such as *dar la cara* (“to take responsibility”), *poner buena/mala cara* (“to show a certain attitude”), and *tener mucha cara* (“to be shameless”) illustrate how the face is metaphorically associated with moral responsibility and social evaluation. The category of honor, historically rooted in Spanish society since the medieval and early modern periods, has profoundly influenced linguistic expressions. J. Morales argues that honor functions as a dominant cultural code, shaping behavioral norms and communicative patterns in Spanish-speaking societies⁴. Consequently, idioms involving the face reflect deeply embedded cultural expectations related to dignity, courage, and accountability.

Another highly productive somatism is *ojos* (“eye”), which participates in expressions connected to perception, intuition, suspicion, and emotional communication. Idioms such as *tener buen ojo* (“to have a good eye”), *echar un ojo* (“to keep an eye on”), and *hacer ojitos* (“to flirt”) demonstrate the symbolic role of sight in Spanish cultural cognition. Visual attention and expressiveness are essential elements of Spanish communication, where non-verbal cues such as gaze and facial expressions play a crucial role in signaling emotions and intentions. The symbolic significance of the eyes in Spanish idioms reveals an underlying cognitive model in which perception is equated with knowledge, intuition, and interpersonal connection.

Somatisms linked to the tongue and speech, such as *no tener pelos en la lengua* (“to speak bluntly”), *morderse la lengua* (“to hold one’s tongue”), and *soltar la lengua* (“to begin talking freely”), reflect cultural values related to sincerity, expressiveness, and emotional openness. According to P. Salazar, directness and openness in speech are culturally marked traits in Spanish interaction, contrasting with cultures where communicative restraint is more socially acceptable⁵. The prevalence of such expressions indicates a linguistic preference for candor, spontaneity, and honesty, shaping the norms of verbal behavior in the Spanish-speaking world.

Somatic vocabulary related to hands (*mano*, *dedo*, *brazo*) forms another fundamental cluster of idioms, symbolizing agency, influence, and social interaction. Phrases such as *tener mano* (“to have influence”), *echar una mano* (“to help”), *mano dura* (“strictness”), and *meter mano* (“to take control or interfere”) encode culturally relevant concepts connected with power, assistance, or authority. These somatisms highlight the perception of hands as tools of action and social engagement, illustrating how physical actions are conceptualized as extensions of social relationships and personal agency.

Internal organs, especially *corazón* (“heart”), *alma* (“soul”), and *sangre* (“blood”), carry profound emotional, moral, and symbolic meanings in Spanish culture. The heart functions as a major cultural symbol of sincerity, passion, emotional suffering, and moral integrity. Expressions such as *hablar de corazón* (“to speak from the heart”), *tener buen corazón* (“to have a good heart”), and *romper el corazón* (“to break someone’s heart”) reveal the emotional depth and expressivity inherent in Spanish communication. M. Salvador’s research shows that the heart

consistently appears in Spanish literature, folklore, and everyday discourse as a symbol of authenticity and emotional truth⁶.

Blood (*sangre*) has strong cultural connotations associated with lineage, identity, and temperament. Expressions like *tener sangre fría* (“to remain calm”), *mala sangre* (“bad temper”), or *sangre de mi sangre* (“my flesh and blood”) reflect a culturally embedded view of blood as both a physiological and symbolic substance. These idioms reveal socio-cultural notions of ancestry, emotional character, and family bonds, which hold significant importance in Spanish society.

Spanish somatisms also demonstrate a close connection to religious symbolism, particularly due to the historical influence of Catholicism. The idiom *lavarse las manos* (“to wash one’s hands”), for instance, carries biblical connotations linked to Pontius Pilate’s gesture of moral disengagement. This reveals how idioms preserve cultural and religious memory, functioning as linguistic markers of shared historical consciousness.

Conceptual metaphor theory, developed by Lakoff and Johnson, provides a framework for understanding how somatisms map bodily experience onto abstract concepts⁷. In Spanish, these mappings are particularly vivid and culturally specific. Common cognitive models include:

- *reason* = *head*, as seen in *perder la cabeza* (“to lose one’s head”);
- *honor* = *face*, expressed through *dar la cara*;
- *emotion* = *heart*, as in *sentir en el corazón*;
- *control* = *hands*, as in *tener el asunto en las manos*.

These metaphorical patterns show how Spanish speakers conceptualize the world through embodied experience, transforming physical sensations into linguistic expressions that reflect cultural norms.

Spanish somatisms also display heightened emotional expressiveness, which distinguishes them from idioms in some Northern European languages, where a more reserved communication style is dominant. The frequency of expressions related to bodily sensations, facial expressions, and emotional states demonstrates the importance of embodiment in Spanish life. Social relationships in Spanish-speaking cultures often involve close physical proximity, direct eye contact, and affective expressiveness, which naturally permeate linguistic structures.

Moreover, somatisms contribute to the formation of the Spanish linguistic identity, functioning as markers of cultural distinctiveness. They reveal core values associated with Spanish culture: honor, openness, emotional intensity, social cohesion, and respect for tradition. Through their symbolic meanings, somatisms create connections between individual experiences and collective cultural memory.

The richness of Spanish somatisms provides essential insights into the national worldview, illustrating how language encodes cultural meanings and norms. Their semantic diversity, metaphorical productivity, and expressive potential make them indispensable elements of Spanish phraseology. Thus, somatisms serve multiple linguistic functions: cognitive, communicative, emotional, and cultural. They structure human perception, express nuanced emotional states, transmit cultural values, and reinforce social identities within the Spanish-speaking world. Understanding these linguistic units allows scholars to explore the complex interplay

between body, culture, and cognition in one of the world’s most expressive and culturally layered languages.

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IMPACT OF COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION ON STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING BEHAVIORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: Competency-Based Education (CBE) has emerged as a transformative pedagogical approach that prioritizes mastery of skills and learning outcomes over traditional time-bound instructional models. This study investigates the impact of CBE on student academic performance and self-directed learning behaviors in higher education. Using a descriptive-methods research design, the study examines how competency-focused curricula, assessment, and instructional strategies influence students’ achievement levels and their capacity to take ownership of their learning. Findings reveal that CBE contributes to improved academic performance by enabling learners to progress at their own pace,