

Material Identity and Economic Stereotypes through Idiomatic Lens

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Abstract: The problem of materialism has always been a core component of economic theory. In this article I suggest that comparative analysis of idioms with a ‘body’ component highlight material identity in modern China, Japan and North America. In my study I analyze idioms (phraseological units) with a ‘body’ component, belonging to 4 idiomatic systems (phraseological systems): (Chinese, Japanese, British, American and Russian). With the help of on-line electronic linguistic corpuses (Chinese corpus), KOTONOHA (Japanese corpus), BNC (British National Corpus), COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) I calculate frequency indexes, which are suggestive of body culture in China, Japan, Great Britain and North America. The understanding of body culture is indispensable for the atmosphere of mutual respect, in which modern global society has a unique chance to develop. I identify tendencies common to all these lingo cultures, which comply with the main goals of modern global coexistence-building a new society of deep understanding and shared knowledge which is able to overcome false psychological stereotypes.

Key words: Material identity • Culture • Stereotype • Comparative linguistics • Idiom • Phraseology
• Corpus linguistics • China • North America • Japan

INTRODUCTION

The problem of body representation is analyzed from various dimensions. In their article British scholars L.F. Monaghan and M. Hardey, explore ‘how men might interpret and respond to a masculine bodily aesthetic in the wake of the putative obesity epidemic that reportedly affects most men in Western nations. This aesthetic, legitimated through discourses of health and risk management, is also shaped by popular representations of lean, toned and hard male bodies and their antithesis: the grotesque, ‘morbidly obese’ (sic) body’ [1-5].

Body organs transplanting has raised new issues of research. J. Carsten describes ‘the way bodily substance has been deployed in the anthropology of kinship. Analytically important in linking kinship with understandings of the body and person, substance has highlighted processes of change and transferability in kinship. Studies of organ donation and reproductive technologies in the West considered here challenge any simple dichotomy between idioms of a bounded individual body/person and immutable kinship relations in Euro-American contexts and more fluid, mutable bodies and relations elsewhere’ [6].

My discussion of body starts from the analysis of language idioms. From the point of view of psycholinguistics idioms are viewed as emotional units, analyzed by left and right hemispheres in a pattern, similar to all nations. “Emotional words trigger activation in other areas of the LH, such as the amygdala, orbitofrontal cortex and posterior cingulate gyrus, as well. These regions have been claimed to be part of the limbic system (see Fig. 1), which plays a key role in emotion processing” [7]. “The data from a large body of research based on behavioral, electrophysiological and neuroimaging methodologies appear to converge in indicating that both hemispheres are involved in the processing of words with emotional meaning, albeit in different and probably complementary, ways.” [8].

Material identity and cultural stereotypes have always constituted the fundamental base of economics. In this article I analyze material identity through idiomatic lens. I suggest that analysis of idioms with a ‘body’ component should highlight basic economic priorities of the present and the future. In my analysis I study idioms (phraseological units), belonging to 4 idiomatic systems (phraseological systems): (Chinese, Japanese, British and American). With the help of on-line electronic linguistic

The Limbic System

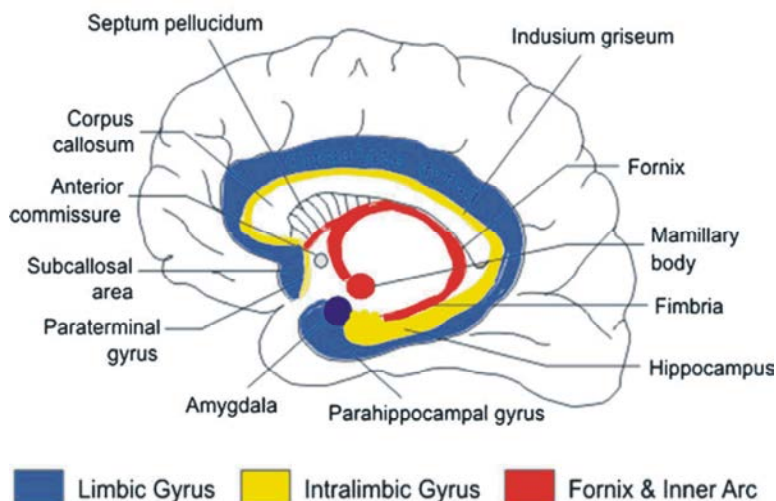


Fig. 1:

corpuses (Chinese corpus), KOTONOHA (Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese), BNC (British National Corpus), COCA (Corpus of Contemporary American English) I single out national stereotypes connected with relations and.

Japanese Idioms: Japanese idioms are described through frequency indexes, which I got using corpus data. KOTONOHA on-line Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese submits the contexts of a considerable time period between 1880 to 2008. This corpora provides the researcher with the data, concerning the number of entries, speaker's sex, dates of producing communication acts.

Mi no ada to naru-to become the enemy of the body'-to hurt somebody, to become one's enemy [1 entry. Date: 2008. Speaker's sex: male-1]. *Mi ga tatsu*-the body gets up'-to have a stable position in life, to be well-off [2 entries. Date: 1920-2000 Speaker's sex: male-2]. *Okorinimi o furuwaseru*-to shake with one's whole body'-the maximum degree of one's anger [4 entries. Date: 1840-2002. Speaker's sex: male-3, female-2].

Karada o kona ni shite (hataraku)-to make one's body a powder because of work'-to work very hard [5 entries. Date: 1830-1960. Speaker's sex: male-6].

Mi ga katamaru-the body gets firm'-1) to get a stable position in life; 2) to get married [5 entries. Date: 1890-2008. 2 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker's sex: male-3, female-0].

Mininimiru-to get into the body'-to get to the bottom of one's heart [8 entries. Date: 1910-2008. 2 entries during 1930-1950. Speaker's sex: male-5, female-4].

Mi ni au-to suit to the body'-to be pleasant [10 entries. Date: 1910-2008. 2 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker's sex: male-6, female-2].

Mi o sho suru-to make a body in a way'-to have a manner of behavior [13 entries. Date: 1860-2008. 1 entry in 1994. Speaker's sex: male-10, female-4].

Mi ga motanai-not to have even a body'-to suffer from a devastating poverty [18 entries. Date: 1920-2008. 2 entries during 2004-2008. Speaker's sex: male-9, female-2].

Me kara deta sabi-rust, coming out from the body'-bad consequences of a precarious lifestyle_@[24 entries. Date: 1890-2008. 8 entries during 1990-2008. Speaker's sex: male-17, female-1].

Mi mo futa mo nai-the body has neither a cap, nor a bottom'-honestly, straightforwardly [35 entries. Date: 1910-2008. 8 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker's sex: male-22, female-8]. *Mi o ku*-to eat one's body'-to ruin oneself [46 entries. Date: 1860-2008. 18 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker's sex: male-22, female-10]. *Mi o suteru*-to throw out one's body'-to give one's life for something [42 entries. Date: 1820-2008. 6 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker's sex: male-28, female-15].

Mi ni otosu-to get one's body down'-to lose one's position in life [44 entries. Date: 1910-2008. 5 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker's sex: male-32, female-15].

Isshin do:tai-‘to become one body and soul’-1) identity of views 2) to become a wife and a husband [53 entries. Date: 1840-2008. 11 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker’s sex: male-38, female-8]. *Mi ga iru*-‘the body gets in’-to be deeply interested in something [63 entries. Date: 1920-2008. 25 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker’s sex: male-29, female-12].

Mi o makaseru-‘to lose one’s body’-to step down in life [145 entries. Date: 1880-2008. 29 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker’s sex: male-80, female-15]. *Mi mo kokoro mo*-‘the body and the heart’-unity of body and soul [149 entries. Date: 1890-2008. 56 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker’s sex: male-70, female-40].

Hito no mi ni naru-‘to become one’s body’-1) to disguise oneself; 2) to understand one’s situation [154 entries. Date: 1820-2008. 37 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker’s sex: male-70, female-20]. *Mi ni shimiru*-‘to get into one’s body’-to cut to the quick. [54 entries. Date: 1820-2008. 17 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker’s sex: male-30, female-10].

Mi o kakusu-‘to hide one’s body’-to hide oneself [218 entries. Date: 1890-2008. 19 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker’s sex: male-160, female-20].

Mi o yoseru-‘to give a shelter to one’s body’-to find lodgings [227 entries. Date: 1880-2008. 80 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker’s sex: male-90, female-25].

Mi ni tsuku-‘to stick to one’s body’-1) to fix something; 2) to get something; 3) to learn something very well. [515 entries. Date: 1830-2008. 400 entries during 2000-2008. Speaker’s sex: male-90, female-20].

My research has demonstrated the following outcomes. The Japanese associate their bodies with hard labor. Hard labor is the main material identity, visible through idiomatic prism. This labor process unites participants and make them a unity of heart and soul.

Chinese Idioms: My analysis of the Chinese idioms includes the analysis of 4-character idioms. For analyzing Chinese idioms frequencies I used Chinese corpus at Leeds University. I provide each idiom with the frequency index, illustrating its usage frequency in the Internet and business Chinese.

Hún2 bù4 fù4 ti3-‘the body got far from the soul’-to be scared to death [the Internet-127; business-18]. *Shǎn1 jiào4*-‘to teach with one’s body’-to show one’s personal example [the Internet-142; business-139]. *Shǎn1 bài4 míng2 liè4*-‘to throw down one’s body’-to suffer a terrible downturn, misfortune [the Internet-181; business-157]. *Ān shǎn lì míng*-‘a calm body, a stable life’-to be well-off [the Internet-207; business-41].

Idioms with the Highest Frequencies: *Ti3 wú2 wán2 fū1*-‘the body all in hard bruises’-to be severely bitten [the Internet-249; business-38].

Shǎn1 qiáng2 lì4 zhuàng4-‘the body is strong and the energy is abundant’-to be full of vigor and energy [the Internet-258; business-93]. *Fēn3 shǎn1 suì4 gu3*-‘to make the body a powder after hard work’-1) to die a terrible death; 2) to work hard [the Internet-258; business-94]. *Biàn4 ti3 lín2 shāng1*-‘the whole body is in wounds, like fish’s body is in scales’-[the Internet-344; business-101]. *Shǎn1 ti3 lì4 xíng2*-‘the body moves, the energy moves’-to act with energy [the Internet-446; business-591]. *Shǎn1 shǒu3*-‘the body and the hand’-talents, skills [the Internet-574; business-509]. *Shǎn1 bù4 yóu2 jì3*-‘the body does not have any freedom’-to act against one’s will [the Internet-576; business-218]. *Ti3 huì4*-‘the body can’-to understand, to comprehend [the Internet-585; business-530]. *Shǎn1 xīn1*-‘the body, the heart’-materially and spiritually [the Internet-587; business-580] [dǎcāiāiōiúé-587; āāēiāiē-580]. *Ti3 yàn4*-‘to study one’s body’-to learn something from one’s experience [the Internet-589; business-579].

The scenario of suffering body because of hard labor and work is also evident in Chinese idioms.

British and North American Idioms: ‘The English language in Britain evolves constantly. Foreign words have long been de rigueur (pilfered most notably from the French) and today they’re absorbed from all over the place. In 2007, for example, the word wiki found its way into the Oxford English Dictionary, derived from a Hawaiian word meaning quick but now meaning quick but now applied to a certain type of Internet site. ... Metaphor and simile are equally prone to rapid evolution. The British love new, glib phrases (it’s a country where pretty much anything can go ‘pear-shaped’, particularly when it’s ‘cheap as chips’), repeated interminably for a couple of years until some intangible social code decides they’re ‘past their sell-by date’... urban Britain is particularly inventive, it’s multicultural streets generating a new tongue for the 21st century with the unstoppable rise of Jafaican. Despite the name, experts claim it’s not actually an affectation but a shift in language born of multicultural mingling in post-war Britain, most notably with the mix of Jamaican, West African and Bangladeshi cultures. Such has been Jafaican’s growth that today you’ll find youngsters from Tower Hamlets to Torquay calling each other ‘blud’ and discussing whether those ‘skets’ is butters’ [9].

In many ways English is a dividing factor even to native British residents. 'In any discussion of nationalism, identity, or current affairs, language is never 'innocent'. The choice of words reveals the underlying outlook of the speaker. So for example the word 'foreign' in English is much more hostile ...than the German *ausländer*. Latent British xenophobia is revealed in the offensive tabloid expression 'Johnny Foreigner'. ... to Welsh is to cheat or renege; to Scotch is to thwart, to squash, to prevent; an Irish lanyard is an untidy rope. In other words the names of the three 'subsidiary' nations in the British Isles have negative connotations in the language of the dominate one. Thus national prejudice is encoded in the English language' [10].

North America's image has always been a subject for deep analysis. 'Freud's theory of anal characterlogy, as modified and transformed by the unique circumstances of America's historical development and cultural context, is associated with a wide range of, often, contradictory and paradoxical American cultural values and historical associations: (1) Resistance to outside interference (Obstinacy) is culturally expressed in (a) *laissez faire* individualism; (b) self reliance; (c) resistance to governmental regulation and taxation ("the tax collector is viewed as a representative of oppression") and to all forms of concentrated power and monopoly; (d) achievement, exceptionalism and narcissism; (e) skepticism, alienation and nihilism; (f) Lockean conformity; (g) litigious paranoia and (h) a foreign policy of military intervention based, paradoxically, on "the primitive right of self determination." (2) Retention (Parsimony/ Frugality) is culturally manifested in (a) the acquisition of such subconscious copro-symbols as gold, money and land; (b) the association between anal retention, capital accumulation and the rise of industrialism; (c) the concept of progress as accumulation; and (d) the Lockean mode of perception; while the Eliminative Mode is represented in (e) philanthropy, prodigality and wastefulness; (f) the rhythms of procrastination and dogged persistence which are reflected in the success ethic, the gospel of wealth and the identification of poverty with laziness, (g) the Romantic, Conservation and Green/Recycling movements (which, at once, both idealize the anti-retentive, open-ended, prelapsarian, child-like virtues of pre-urban life-which predate, ontogenically, the imposition of the culturally imposed imperative-and express the fear of contamination and the extreme intolerance for waste and disorder) and (h) the apocalyptic tradition. (3)

Rationalization (Orderliness/ Cleanliness) is reflected in (a) Federal or Covenant theology; (b) Puritanism, precisionism, textualism, legalism and litigiousness; (c) the obsession for speed, the cult of efficiency and the movement for scientific management and (d) the metaphor of the machine, information technology and systems analysis. (4) The Maternal Matrix (i.e., the oral and genital dimensions of anal characterology) is culturally manifested in (a) permissiveness as a badge of successful independence training; (b) the paradox of scarcity in the midst of abundance; (c) the procreative nature of wealth ("money can beget money and its offspring can beget more and so on"); (d) anal sadism ("power follows property"); (e) the doctrine of stewardship; (f) private charity versus public welfare; (g) the mastery of nature ("drill, baby, drill") and (h) the sub-text of conspiracy and paranoia in American culture (which may represent a defense mechanism erected against repressed fears of passive, homosexual submission, as witnessed in Richard Nixon's "it's time to get big government off your back and out of your pocket")' [11].

In my study I decided to combine British and American variants of idioms. Idioms are analyzed by checking frequencies using BNC (British National Corpora) and COCA (Corpora of Contemporary American). This type of analysis is very important as it helps demonstrate to which variety of modern English, British or American, this or that idiom belongs.

I start from the definition of the lexeme 'body' provided by 'word and phrase' subcorpora of BNC and COCA. Body: 1) the entire physical structure of an organism (especially an animal or human being); 2) body of a dead animal or person; 3) a group of person associated by some common tie or occupation and regarded as an entity; 3) the body excluding the head and neck and limbs; 4) an individual 3-dimensional object that has mass and that is distinguishable from other objects.

Let's consider the following collocations with high frequency indexes.

A human body-2207, *dead body*--1343, *whole body*-1217, *upper body*-1070, *entire body*-733, *female body*-411, *male body*-139. The most frequent verbs to be used with the noun 'body' are: *to cover, to lie, to recover, to burn, to bury, to dump, to drag, to wrap, to absorb, to press.*

Let's analyze collocations with a 'body' component. Here we also see the genre of communication and type of printing material, where the idiom is used.

Body mind [BNC-1; COCA-5 (2010-1990)] (spok-1, fic-0, mag-2, news-0, acad-2). *To keep body and soul together* [BNC-11; COCA-32 (2012-1990)] (spok-1, fic-12, mag-5, news-3, acad-0). *Over one's dead body* [BNC-27; COCA-105 (2012-1990)] (spok-10, fic-46, mag-9, news-15, acad-1). *Body and soul* [BNC-69; COCA-368 (2012-1990)]. *Growing body of-a growing number* [BNC-48; COCA-487 (2012-1990)] (spok-17, fic-4, mag-112, news-53, acad-281). *Governing body* [BNC-632; COCA-656 (2012-1990)] (spok-52, fic-7, mag-120, news-272, acad-183) *Body blow*-a severe trauma. trouble. [BNC-29; COCA-84 (2012-1990)]. *Body building* [BNC-17; COCA-37 (2012-1990)]. *Body of opinion* [BNC-37; COCA-25 (2011-1990)]. *Body popping*- 'a street dance and one of the original funk styles that came from California, in the African American community during the 1960s-1970s. It's based on the technique of quickly contracting and relaxing muscles to cause a jerk in the dance's body...' [12]. [BNC-2; COCA-0]. *A body snatcher* [BNC-0; COCA-9 (2012-1991)]. *Body surfing*- 'Bodysurfing is the art and sport of riding a wave without the assistance of any buoyant device such as a surfboard or bodyboard' [13]. [BNC-0; COCA-19 (2009-1991)].

Idioms with the Highest Frequencies: *Body bag* [BNC-5; COCA-182 (2012-1990)]. *Body politic* [BNC-52; COCA-391 (2012-1990)].

Body of evidence [BNC-55; COCA-319 (2012-1990)]. *Body heat*-[BNC-61; COCA-395 (2012-1990)]. *Body mass index* [BNC-50; COCA-411 (2012-1990)]. *Body language* [BNC-245; COCA-1177 (2012-1990)] (spok-263, fic-236, mag-290, news-123, acad-154). *Student body* [BNC-59; COCA-1227 (2012-1990)] (spok-123, fic-74, mag-184, news-388, acad-450).

JOSH-LUCHS: *Right and they say that agents work at the behest of the union and they are supposed to be the governing body of the agent community.* (NPR_FreshAir. The ^Illegal Procedure^ Of Paying College Athletes. 2012).

I strained Worley's statement for inconsistencies, watched her body language and I thought she was being truthful. (NPR_TalkNat. Affirmative Action: Is It Still Necessary? 2012).

Because the-it was not just only an attempt to redress past ills, but to establish habits and a presence of minorities in the student body so that in the future, we could have those people grow up to have kids in a college-filled household, with college-minded priorities and sensibilities. (NPR_TalkNat. Affirmative Action: Is It Still Necessary? 2012).

The analysis demonstrates American tendency for unity to achieve a tangible economic result: *governing body, student body*. Body is used in arts, show business and sports to generate profit and attract attention.

CONCLUSION

'The basis for all stereotyping is the differential perception of groups. Without such differentiation between groups, stereotyping cannot occur' [14].

J. Wilson stresses that stereotypes '... have been shown to be remarkably resilient to change' [15].

The analysis shows us 2 distinctive features, which are important for the economic profile of Japan, China, Great Britain and the USA: 1) all lingo cultures see bodies united in their labor pursuit; 2) hard labor is very typical in Asian philosophy. Body as an element for exhibiting and thus generating profits is more typical of the USA.

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