

The use of somatic Phraseologisms in contemporary German literature and their socio-communicative functions

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Received: 14 December 2024; **Accepted:** 16 January 2025; **Published:** 18 February 2025

Abstract: This article explores the use of somatic phraseologisms in contemporary German literature, focusing on their socio-communicative functions. Somatic phraseologisms—idiomatic expressions referring to body parts—are deeply rooted in cultural and linguistic traditions. They enhance literary texts by adding expressiveness, reinforcing social connections, and contributing to humor and irony. Furthermore, these phraseologisms serve as markers of character identity, social status, and emotional states, making them a powerful tool for writers. The study also highlights emerging trends in the adaptation of traditional idioms to digital communication and modern cultural contexts. Through an analysis of their usage in literary works, this paper demonstrates how somatic phraseologisms continue to shape the stylistic and communicative landscape of German literature.

Keywords: Somatic phraseologisms, contemporary German literature, idiomatic expressions, socio-communicative functions, linguistic expressiveness, humor, irony, cultural identity, literary stylistics, phraseology trends.

Introduction: Language is not only a tool for communication but also a reflection of cultural and social realities. Among its many expressive elements, phraseologisms—fixed word combinations with figurative meanings—hold a special place in shaping discourse. Particularly, somatic phraseologisms, which include references to body parts, are widely used in German literature to convey emotions, attitudes, and interpersonal relationships [5, 59-63].

Furthermore, contemporary German literature frequently incorporates such phraseologisms to create authenticity in dialogues and narratives. These expressions not only enhance the stylistic richness of literary works but also serve important socio-communicative functions, such as reinforcing social bonds, expressing emotions, and adding humor or irony. In this article, we will examine the role of somatic phraseologisms in modern German literature, explore their various functions, and discuss emerging trends in their usage.

Somatic phraseologisms are an integral part of idiomatic expressions in many languages, including

German. They often derive from historical and cultural experiences, metaphorically representing human emotions and behaviors. For instance, the German expression "mit dem linken Fuß aufstehen" (to get up on the wrong foot) signifies starting the day in a bad mood, just as in English. Similarly, "das Herz in die Hose rutschen" (one's heart sinking into one's pants) vividly describes sudden fear or nervousness [3, 73-84].

In literature, authors use such expressions to bring characters to life by making their speech more natural and relatable. Writers such as Patrick Süskind and Daniel Kehlmann often employ idiomatic expressions, including somatic ones, to make dialogues more engaging and true to real-life conversations. As a result, these phraseologisms enhance the literary quality of texts by adding emotional depth and cultural familiarity.

Another crucial aspect of their use in literature is their ability to reinforce themes and motifs. In many novels, the recurrence of specific phraseologisms can serve as a symbolic device, emphasizing the psychological states of characters or the overarching message of the story. For instance, repeated references to "die Zähne

zusammenbeißen" (to grit one's teeth) in a novel about perseverance and hardship can reinforce the protagonist's struggles and resilience.

Somatic phraseologisms are not merely decorative elements in literature; they also fulfill essential socio-communicative functions. These include expressiveness, social bonding, humor, irony, and differentiation between various social groups.

One of the primary functions of somatic phraseologisms is their ability to enhance expressiveness. These idioms encapsulate complex emotions in a few words, making them an efficient means of communication. For example, "kalte Füße bekommen" (to get cold feet) immediately conveys fear or hesitation without the need for further explanation. Similarly, "jemandem geht das Herz auf" (someone's heart opens up) evokes a strong emotional reaction, indicating warmth, joy, or deep affection.

In literature, such expressions help readers connect with characters on an emotional level. When a character exclaims, "Ich habe die Nase voll!" (I've had enough!), the audience immediately understands their frustration. This linguistic economy allows writers to create powerful, memorable scenes with minimal exposition.

Another key function of somatic phraseologisms is their role in fostering social connections. Since these expressions are culturally embedded, their use in dialogue can indicate shared experiences and values among speakers. In literature, characters who frequently use idiomatic expressions, including somatic ones, may appear more relatable to readers.

Moreover, authors can use these expressions to define relationships between characters. For instance, informal phraseologisms such as "sich auf die Füße treten" (to step on someone's feet, meaning to irritate or provoke) are often used in casual conversations, reinforcing friendly or competitive dynamics. Conversely, more formal or rare idioms may indicate a character's social background, education, or regional identity.

Somatic phraseologisms are often employed for humorous or ironic effects in literature. Since many of these idioms are deeply rooted in metaphorical imagery, they lend themselves well to playful reinterpretations. Writers frequently exaggerate their literal meanings to create comedic effects.

For example, in satirical literature, a character who takes "den Kopf verlieren" (to lose one's head) too literally may engage in absurd behavior, adding an element of dark humor. Similarly, irony can arise when a character insists that they are not afraid, yet their

thoughts are described as "die Knie schlottern" (knees shaking), revealing their hidden anxiety.

Somatic phraseologisms can also indicate social distinctions within a literary text. Certain idioms are more common in specific dialects, regions, or social groups, allowing authors to use them as linguistic markers. For example, southern German dialects often feature expressions like "sich den Bauch vollschlagen" (to stuff one's belly), which might distinguish a character from another who uses a more standard variant like "sich satt essen" (to eat one's fill).

Additionally, the frequency and type of phraseologisms used by a character can reveal aspects of their personality and education. A well-read intellectual might use refined idioms, while a working-class character might favor more colloquial expressions. This stylistic variation enriches the text by providing depth to character interactions and social dynamics.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, somatic phraseologisms are a vital component of contemporary German literature, offering both stylistic and socio-communicative benefits. They enhance expressiveness, facilitate social bonding, contribute to humor and irony, and reflect cultural and social changes. While many classic idioms remain in use, new adaptations and reinterpretations continue to emerge, demonstrating the dynamic nature of language.

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