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LEXICAL-SEMANTIC VERBALIZATION OF THE FAMILY CONCEPT IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative analysis of the lexical-semantic verbalization of the "family" concept in English and Uzbek. The study is conducted within the framework of linguacultural and cognitive approaches. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which the family concept is expressed through various lexical units, as well as to the identification of their semantic fields and evaluative components. The results of the analysis reveal both common and culture-specific features in the conceptualization of the notion of family in the two languages, reflecting the influence of cultural, social, and historical factors.

Keywords: *family concept*, conceptual analysis, lexical-semantic verbalization, national and cultural characteristics, comparative linguistics.

INTRODUCTION

In modern linguistics, the study of the close relationship between language and culture is regarded as one of the most actual research issues. Within this framework, the notion of *concept* is considered a key unit of analysis, as it reflects a nation's worldview, national mentality, and cultural values through language. In particular, the concept of *family* is recognized as one of the fundamental cultural concepts that embodies the social structure of society, moral values, and intergenerational relations. In English and Uzbek, the *family* concept is verbalized through various lexical units and semantic layers. The linguistic realization of this concept is closely connected with the historical development, cultural values, and social relations of both nations. Therefore, a comparative study of the lexical-semantic verbalization of the *family* concept makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the interaction between language and culture.The aim of this article is to identify and comparatively analyze the lexical-semantic features of the verbalization of the *family* concept in English and Uzbek. In the course of the research, the main lexical units representing this concept, their semantic fields, and evaluative components are examined[1]. The findings of the study contribute to revealing the national and cultural specificity of the concept of *family* in both languages. The notion of a *concept* (derived from the Latin *conceptus*, meaning "understanding" or "idea") is regarded as a structural and semantic unit of human consciousness that encompasses generalized knowledge, perceptions, and representations related to a particular object of cognition. The term *concept* was introduced into academic research in the first half of the twentieth century by the Russian philosopher S. Askoldov, who described it as a communicative phenomenon that enables interaction among individuals from different cultural and national backgrounds.The concept also holds a key place in the work *"Concepts: The Subtle Film of Civilization"* by the prominent scholar S. Stepanov. In this study, Stepanov interprets the concept as a cultural phenomenon closely connected with logic, philosophy, and psychology, and draws parallels between the concept and Plato's philosophical notion of "ideas." The *family* concept, in particular, constitutes a complex and significant subject of scholarly investigation, as it incorporates ethical, ethnic, and philosophical dimensions. It accumulates unique features that are shaped by the cultural, religious, and historical development of various nations. Linguoculturology is an interdisciplinary field that explores the interrelation between language and culture, emphasizing the ways in which a nation's worldview, cognitive patterns, and cultural values are expressed through linguistic means[5].

Language serves as a fundamental medium for conceptualizing and expressing cultural values. Among the key notions that structure human experience, the concept of *family* holds a particularly prominent place, as it is deeply rooted in linguistic forms such as lexical items, idiomatic expressions,

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and proverbs. However, the ways in which this concept is linguistically realized vary across languages due to differences in cultural and historical development.

English and Uzbek belong to distinct language families—English to the Germanic group and Uzbek to the Turkic one—which results in different patterns of family concept verbalization. In English, family-related linguistic expressions often reflect an individual-centered worldview and emphasize the nuclear family model. By contrast, Uzbek linguistic practice is shaped by collectivist traditions, where extended family relations and hierarchical structures occupy a significant position. The present study aims to investigate the linguistic means used to verbalize the concept of *family* in English and Uzbek, with a particular focus on semantic, pragmatic, and cultural distinctions. The family concept incorporates kinship relations, social obligations, and emotional connections, all of which are encoded through diverse linguistic resources. In both languages, the richness of family-related lexical units reveals underlying historical experiences, cultural values, and patterns of social organization [8].

Uzbek makes a clear distinction between maternal and paternal uncles and aunts, highlighting the hierarchical and gender-oriented organization of family relationships. According to Uzbek, kinship terminology presents a highly structured system. Based on I. Ismailov's research on Turkic languages, modern Uzbek kinship expressions are classified into three main categories: 1) primary kinship terms (e.g., mother, father, grandfather), 2) post-marital kinship terms (e.g., husband, wife, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law), and 3) proximity-based terms (e.g., stepmother, stepdaughter). Uzbek kinship vocabulary is notably hierarchical, clearly distinguishing generations and sibling order, which underscores the cultural emphasis on respect for elders and defined familial roles. Uzbek kinship terminology is marked by a strongly hierarchical structure that reflects the internal organization of the family. The lexical system clearly differentiates between generations, sibling order, and gender roles, thereby emphasizing cultural norms of respect for elders and well-defined familial responsibilities. In addition, Uzbek explicitly distinguishes between maternal and paternal relatives, such as uncles and aunts, which further illustrates the gender- and hierarchy-oriented nature of family relations [7].

Uzbek kinship terminology systematically encodes hierarchical relations within the family. Lexical pairs such as *aka/uka* (older brother/younger brother) and *opa/singil* (older sister/younger sister) explicitly mark age-based distinctions among siblings, reflecting culturally defined roles and expectations, where elder siblings are responsible for guiding and caring for their younger counterparts.

Additionally, Uzbek makes a clear distinction between paternal and maternal relatives. Terms such as *amaki* and *amma* denote father's side relatives (i.e., father's brothers and sisters), whereas *tog'a* and *xola* refer to mother's side relatives (i.e., mother's brothers and sisters). This lexical differentiation highlights the varying social roles and status of relatives on each side of the family. In Uzbek culture, uncles and aunts, whether paternal or maternal, are regarded as secondary parental figures who actively contribute to children's upbringing, guidance, and socialization, underscoring the importance of the extended family. Moreover, Uzbek is rich in proverbs and set expressions that emphasize hierarchy, respect, and communal values. The concept of *oila* (family) occupies a central position in the social structure, with strong focus on intergenerational bonds and respect for elders. Particularly, the relationship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law is extensively reflected in Uzbek proverbs, a feature less prominent in English. Examples include *"Qizim senga aytdim, kelinim sen eshit"* (I tell you, my daughter; the bride should listen) and *"Qaynonaga tosh otsang, tosh olasan; qaynonaga osh bersang, osh olasan"* (What you sow, you will reap) [6].

Taken together, these linguistic features and proverbial expressions illustrate the Uzbek collectivist cultural model, emphasizing hierarchical respect, parental authority, and shared responsibility within the family.

English Culture (Individualistic): In English-speaking societies, family members are often encouraged to develop independence, and personal choice is highly valued. For example, young adults typically move out of the parental home and select their partners independently. Language reflects these cultural norms: kinship terms tend to be generalized and non-hierarchical, with words like *uncle* applying equally to both maternal and paternal relatives. Modern English also includes terms such as

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stepfamily, *half-sibling*, and *co-parenting*, which reflect evolving family structures and individualized arrangements.

Uzbek Culture (Collectivist): In contrast, Uzbek culture emphasizes the importance of extended family networks, where major life decisions—such as marriage, inheritance, and career—are often made collectively. Kinship terms are highly structured and hierarchical. For instance, *ota-ona* (parents) is considered sacred, while *aka* (older brother) and *opa* (older sister) are used not only for siblings but also as respectful forms of address for non-relatives. This reflects a deep cultural emphasis on respect, duty, and family cohesion.

English-Speaking Family Structure: Particularly in countries like the UK, the US, Canada, and Australia, the family is often conceptualized around an individualistic and nuclear model. The nuclear family—comprising parents and children—is viewed as the primary social unit, and family relationships are largely voluntary rather than obligatory. Elders frequently live separately, for example in retirement homes, rather than with extended family. Marriages and partnerships are generally based on personal preference, and family members are encouraged to prioritize self-fulfillment over collective expectations.

English kinship terminology organizes family relationships into hierarchical and functional categories. Terms such as *mother* and *father* represent primary caregivers and authority figures, encompassing not only biological roles but also nurturing, guidance, and provision. For instance, *mother* (including *mom*, *mum*, *mommy*, *mama*) conveys caregiving, emotional support, and daily responsibility for children, reflecting cultural expectations in many English-speaking societies. Similarly, *father* (with variations like *dad*, *daddy*, *papa*, *pa*) denotes protection, provision, and authority, consistent with traditional perceptions of fathers as family leaders and providers[2,3,4].

Grandparent terms, *grandmother* and *grandfather*, emphasize wisdom, experience, and family tradition. Informal variants such as *grandma*, *grandpa*, *nana*, and *papa* highlight emotional closeness and the role of grandparents in providing intergenerational support and stability.

Siblings are referred to as *brother* and *sister*, representing a spectrum of relationships from companionship to rivalry. Brothers and sisters are culturally regarded as lifelong companions who share responsibilities and memories. Informal terms like *bro* underscore intimacy and trust, often extending beyond blood relations to close friendships.

Uncles and aunts (*uncle*, *aunt*, *auntie*, *unc*) function as secondary parental figures, providing guidance, support, and sometimes playful interaction. Some expressions, like *Uncle Sam* and *Aunt Sally*, illustrate societal or metaphorical uses of kinship terms, representing national personifications or targets of criticism, respectively[1].

English also features idioms and set phrases that emphasize personal traits, familial roles, and moral lessons. Examples include *"Like father, like son"*, *"Like mother, like daughter"*, *"A son is a son till he gets a wife, but a daughter is a daughter all her life"*, and *"Tied to your mother's apron strings"*. Such expressions highlight the interplay between individual identity and family obligations, reflecting a culture that values both personal qualities and family cohesion. Moreover, English kinship terminology extends beyond biological families to include chosen families, where friends and non-biological individuals assume familial roles. Terms such as *godmother*, *godfather*, and *surrogate family* demonstrate that kinship vocabulary can encompass relationships based on emotional bonds and mutual support, not just blood ties. Overall, English kinship terms reflect cultural values, social roles, and family dynamics, offering insight into the intersection of language and culture[8].

Conclusion

Overall, English kinship terminology reflects the characteristics of a largely individualistic culture, where personal identity, emotional connections, and chosen relationships are emphasized. Terms such as *mother*, *father*, *brother*, and even *godparent* not only denote biological ties but also highlight caregiving, guidance, and the significance of voluntary emotional bonds. English idioms and expressions further underscore personal traits, moral lessons, and family dynamics, illustrating a culture that values individuality alongside familial obligations.

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In contrast, Uzbek kinship terminology exemplifies a collectivist cultural framework, characterized by a clearly defined hierarchical structure, intergenerational distinctions, and a strong emphasis on respect for elders. Terms such as *aka/uka* (older/younger brother), *opa/singil* (older/younger sister), *amaki/amma* (paternal uncle/aunt), and *tog'a/xola* (maternal uncle/aunt) encode not only family relationships but also social expectations, duties, and roles within the extended family. Uzbek proverbs and fixed expressions reinforce these values, emphasizing communal responsibility, obedience, and guidance.

Comparing these two linguistic systems highlights how language functions as a mirror of cultural norms and social organization. While English kinship terms often prioritize emotional intimacy and personal choice, Uzbek terminology preserves hierarchical relationships and collective responsibilities, reflecting deeply ingrained social structures. Understanding these nuances provides valuable insight into how language both reflects and perpetuates the cultural values, social roles, and family bonds unique to each society.

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