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CURRENT PERSPECTIVES AND COGNITIVE-STRUCTURAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE "FAMILY" CONCEPTOSPHERE IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LINGUOCULTUROLOGY

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ABSTRACT: This article presents a comparative-critical analysis of the research history, theoretical and methodological stages, and practical aspects of the concept of 'familiarity' in the fields of global and national linguistics. The study covers the stages of scientific evolution from anthropological approaches to structural-semantic, cognitive and linguo-cultural frame-slot models. By comparing the extent to which the "family" concept sphere has been studied in English and Uzbek linguo-cultures, the article highlights existing theoretical and methodological gaps and proposes an integrated cognitive-semantic framework to address these discrepancies.

Keywords: human-centered linguistic approach, mental representation of family, conceptual domain, kinship lexicon, cognitive framing, cultural linguistics, proverbial expressions, lexical gaps.

INTRODUCTION

In global linguistics, the anthropocentric paradigm established in the final quarter of the 20th century placed the investigation of linguistic phenomena in their intrinsic relation to human cognition, culture, and value systems at the forefront of research. Language is no longer interpreted as a self-sufficient, closed system, but rather as a multifaceted phenomenon that encapsulates a nation's mode of perceiving the world and its accumulated spiritual and practical experience over centuries. Wilhelm von Humboldt's principle, which posits language as the direct manifestation of the spirit of a nation, laid the philosophical foundation for this approach, upon which cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology gained the status of independent scientific disciplines.

The English and Uzbek peoples belong to two fundamentally different cultural realms in terms of geography, religion, and ethnicity. Therefore, revealing the historical origins of Western and Eastern linguacultures and comparatively investigating their national and cultural heritage are currently required to gain a profound understanding of the linguocognitive nature of languages and the national worldview.

The concept of "family" is a universal phenomenon from anthropological, semantic, and lexicographical perspectives. Its universality is evidenced by three factors: the naming of kinship relations across all societies; the recording of nuclear units-such as father, mother, son, and daughter-in the earliest written records; and the inclusion of these lexemes among semantic primitives. This universality pertains to the existence of the concept rather than its internal structure; it is at the level of this structure that national-cultural specificity emerges.

National-cultural distinctiveness manifests itself through three parameters: nomination-that is, how a segment of reality is segmented into distinct lexemes; the selection of imagery-based foundations; and the positioning of value-related aspects.

The English model preserves the family name intact and passes it down from generation to generation (family name, maiden name), whereas the Uzbek tradition updates the father's name

with each generation. Both systems enshrine generational continuity within the name; the difference lies in the method of doing so.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The methodological framework of the study consists of two blocks. The structural-semantic block encompasses componential analysis, the analysis of synonymic series, the core–perinuclear-periphery model, and the analysis of antonymic and hyponymic relations. The cognitive block comprises the procedure for etymological identification and frame-slot analysis.

In explaining the mechanism of national-cultural specificity, V.N.Teliya's theory of cultural connotation proves to be particularly useful: the figurative basis of a linguistic unit interacts with cultural codes, endowing it with a national-specific coloring. V.A.Maslova demonstrated that the subject matter of linguoculturology comprises precisely such units carrying cultural information-namely phraseologisms, paremias, symbols, and cultural standards (etalons)[1].

Verbalization is the process by which conceptual content shifts to an external form of expression via linguistic signs-that is, the process wherein a semantic structure existing in thought acquires a linguistic form through phonetic, graphic, lexical, and grammatical means[2]. In this process, the concept is not limited to simply becoming a "name"; it manifests at various levels through words, phrases, idioms, metaphors, proverbs, text fragments, and discursive scenarios[3]. In the Western tradition of cognitive linguistics, this phenomenon is often explained within the framework of symbolization theory. By interpreting a linguistic unit as a conventional yet stabilized symbolic pairing of conceptual content and phonological form, R. Langacker demonstrates that what lies behind a linguistic sign is not merely a sequence of sounds, but a specific model of perception, a fragment of experience, and a conceptual structure[4]. Z.D. Popova and I.A. Sternin emphasize that a concept is never fully verbalized, and that language can express only the part necessary for communication[5]. Y.S.Kubryakova, for her part, regards verbalization as the central stage of the activity of comprehending the world through language[6]. In Uzbek linguistics, this concept entered circulation through research within the cognitive framework[7]. Drawing upon these three traditions, we interpret verbalization as the process of distributing a concept across all levels of the language system. In such a society, family is primarily perceived as a person's inviolable territory-a private space protected from the external world. In her analysis of English cultural scripts, A.Wierzbicka notes that the concept of *privacy*, along with the idea of personal autonomy, constitutes one of the key elements of the Anglo-Saxon worldview[8].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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[2] Попова З.Д., Стернин И.А. Когнитивная лингвистика. 2007 – С. 38–39.

[3] Карасик В.И. Языковой круг: личность, концепты, дискурс. 2002 – С. 107–116.

[4] Langacker R.W. Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Vol. I. 1987 – P. 11–12, 76–86.

[5] Попова З.Д., Стернин И.А. Когнитивная лингвистика. 2007 – С. 38–39, 66–71.

[6] Кубрякова Е.С. Язык и знание: На пути получения знаний о языке. – М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2004. – С. 303–316.

[7] Кубрякова Е.С. Язык и знание: На пути получения знаний о языке. – М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2004. – С. 303–316.

[8] Wierzbicka, A. (2006). *English: Meaning and Culture* (pp. 51–59). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The empirical materials were extracted from lexicographical sources, national corpora (e.g., the British National Corpus and the National Corpus of the Uzbek Language), and paremiological dictionaries.

In the field of semantic universals, the contributions of A. Wierzbicka are of paramount importance. Within the framework of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage theory, she categorized the concepts of "mother" and "father" as stable universal units in the lexical systems of all languages and described the semantic structure of the lexemes *mother*, *father*, and *family* by translating them into the language of elementary primitives. Her doctrine on cultural key words provided a methodological core for comparative conceptology: a key word possesses non-equivalent facets in translation and requires specialized analysis as a dense node of the national mentality. We rely on this very principle when comparing the English and Uzbek interpretations of the "family" concept[9].

The primary basis for the universality of a concept lies outside of language-within social reality itself. By comparing material from more than two hundred and fifty societies, G.P. Murdock noted that the family is a universal social institution found in all societies known to humanity. In defining culture as a complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society, E.B. Tylor categorizes kinship institutions into the most ancient layer of this complex. Thus, the mental representation of family inevitably exists within the cognitive base of any speech community and serves as a reliable foundation for cross-linguistic comparison.

Delimiting the plane of expression of a concept is effective for analyzing it in terms of inter-level integrity. At the lexical level, the concept is realized through direct nominative means; these very units constitute its core designations, semantic variants, evaluative content, and system of paradigmatic relations[10]: words such as “oila” (family) and “ota” (father) constitute its direct naming mechanisms, whereas fixed expressions and idioms within the phraseological stratum bring out the concept's figurative, evaluative, and pragmatic facets[11]. In expressions such as “ro‘zg‘or tebratmoq” (to manage a household) and "to bring home the bacon," family life is conceptualized in connection with labor, provision, and responsibility. The paremiological corpus encompasses collective judgment, standards of value, and cultural memory embodied in proverbs and sayings[12].

It is also necessary to distinguish between methods of verbalization, as family-related vocabulary manifests several mechanisms of nominative activity within a single system. In primary nomination, a concept is directly designated through a root lexical unit; terms such as “father”, “mother”, “son”, and “daughter” represent the core subjects of kinship relations and form the nuclear designations of the conceptual field. In derivative nomination, however, meaning is structurally expanded through word-formation tools; derivatives such as “fatherhood”, “daughter-in-law status”, “motherhood”, and “brotherly” elevate the designation of a person to the status of a unit denoting a social role, state, quality, affiliation, or functional status. Thus, derivation also brings to light the internal semantic differentiation of the concept[13].

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[9] Вежбицкая А. Понимание культур через посредство ключевых слов. – М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2001. – С. 35–38.

[10] Попова З.Д., Стернин И.А. Когнитивная лингвистика. 2007. – С. 66–71.

[11] Телия В.Н. Русская фразеология. 1996 – С. 214–237.

[12] Пермяков Г.Л. Основы структурной паремиологии. 1988– С. 11–33.

[13] Кубрякова Е.С. Типы языковых значений: Семантика производного слова. – М.: Наука, 1981. – С. 5–24.

The issue of semantic condensation is also significant in the theory of verbalization. It refers not only to the quantitative scope of the system of names, synonymic series, derivatives, phraseological units, and figurative expressions formed around a specific concept but also to the degree of semantic differentiation among them. As V.I.Karasik has noted, the detailed linguistic naming of a reality-and its articulation into subtle semantic distinctions regarding relations, states, and evaluations-reflects the significance of that phenomenon within the linguacultural consciousness. From this perspective, semantic condensation is the linguistic expression of collective thought's focus on a specific concept, its historical experience, and the need for evaluation[14]. Therefore, we interpret nominative condensation as a linguo-cognitive criterion indicating the extent to which a concept has been developed within collective thought, semantically differentiated, and activated in communicative experience.

Popova and Sternin emphasize that there is no absolute correspondence between a concept and its linguistic expression: some elements of the conceptual structure are explicitly named, while others are grasped only through context, associative links, imagery, or cultural experience. Such meanings that remain unnamed-or lack a complete linguistic form-are interpreted as lacunae[15]. A meaning expressed by a distinct unit in one language may be conveyed descriptively in another, be understood indirectly, or lack a corresponding conceptual distinction[16]. Therefore, we interpret the lacuna not as a defect in the language system, but as a phenomenon reflecting the varying distribution of linguacultural focus.

F. de Saussure distinguished two main types of relationships between linguistic units: syntagmatic relationships connect units sequentially within the chain of speech, whereas associative relationships-later termed paradigmatic-unite them within the axis of memory and selection[17]. A paradigmatic relationship constitutes precisely this system of latent choice, determining which unit can be used in a specific position and which ones are retained as potential alternatives[18].

It is appropriate to begin the analysis of synonymic paradigms with series formed around dominant units. In English, the lexeme "family" serves as the central component of this paradigm; a system of units has formed around it that are close in terms of semantic scope, stylistic value, and usage, yet are not fully equivalent: "household" (a cohabiting domestic unit – formal-statistical style), "relatives" and "relations" (kin – neutral), "kin" and "kindred" (literary/archaic), "folks" (colloquial: "my folks" – my family/people), "people" ("my people" – informal generalization), "clan" (humorous extension: the whole extended family), and "flesh and blood" (figurative)[19].

Moving from series formed around dominant units, we turn to the synonymic scales of terms denoting family members. In English, terms for *"mother"* are stylistically differentiated*: mother* is

[14] Карасик В.И. Языковой круг. 2002– С. 111–113.

[15] Попова З.Д., Стернин И.А. Когнитивная лингвистика. 2007. – С. 38–39.

[16]Марковина И.Ю., Сорокин Ю.А. Культура и текст. Введение в лакунологию. 2008– С. 34–36.

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[18] Соссюр Ф. де. Курс общей лингвистики. 2004. – С. 155–158.

[19] Oxford Thesaurus of English. Third Edition / Ed. by M. Waite. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. – P. 306,

used in formal and neutral contexts; *mum* belongs to British colloquial speech; *mom* is the American variant; *mummy* and *mommy* are associated with child speech and affectionate contexts; *ma* is regional or archaic colloquial; and *mater* carries a humorous or literary tone[20].

In Uzbek, terms for "mother" and "father" expand systematically through morphological means. Alongside neutral terms like *ona, oyi, aya,* and *ena,* there is a shift toward dialectal usage, colloquial speech, and expressions of affection or emotional intensity (e.g., *onajon, oyijon, onaginam*); similarly, units such as *ota*, *dada, ada, dadajon,* and *otaxon* convey varying nuances of closeness, regional specificity, and respect. Here, the synonymic scale is formed not only through established lexemes but also through the use of affixes like *-jon, -gina,* and *-xon.* By adding shades of affection, endearment, respect, or subjective evaluation to kinship terms, these morphemes enable the creation of new variants tailored to specific communicative needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Semantically, kinship concepts also belong to the realm of universals. According to A. Wierzbicka's Natural Semantic Metalanguage theory, the concepts of "mother" and "father" remain stable across the lexical systems of all languages, closely aligning with elementary meanings that are semantically non-decomposable into further units. In reconstructing the dictionary of Indo-European social institutions, É. Benveniste demonstrated that kinship terms constitute the most stable and ancient layer of the protolanguage. Turkic language material yields the exact same conclusion: the lexemes *ota* (father), *ona* (mother), *o'g'il* (son), and *qiz* (daughter) have been continuously utilized since the earliest written monuments.

Applying this method directly to the lexeme *family/oila* reveals that its universal core comprises the following set of semes: [marital union], [consanguinity/blood relationship], [cohabitation], [shared household], [continuity of generations], and [mutual responsibility]. These listed features recur with varying order and emphasis in English and Uzbek lexicographical definitions, yet none of them is entirely absent.

Now let us address the internal form of both anchor lexemes, as etymology serves as the key to unlocking the historical memory of a concept. The English word *family* traces back to the Latin *familia*; *familia*, in turn, is derived from *famulus* (meaning servant) and originally encompassed all individuals belonging to a household, including servants and slaves. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word endured for a long time in English with the primary meaning of a group of persons residing under one roof, while its present primary sense-a unit consisting of parents and children-solidified at a later stage. Clearly, at the historical core of the family concept in English linguaculture lies the notion of *HOUSEHOLD* and *PROPERTY*, whereas the seme of consanguinity assumed priority at a secondary phase.

In Uzbek linguaculture, the concept of family developed within a fundamentally different value environment. Here, the primary factor of culture-bound specificity is a collective lifestyle, where the family is perceived not as the domain of a single individual, but as the initial link in the continuum of *household–neighborhood (mahalla)–nation*.

The Uzbek folk proverb *"Oila tinch – yurt tinch"* (If the family is peaceful, the nation is peaceful) expresses this chain in the most concise form: the tranquility of the home is elevated to a prerequisite for the stability of the entire society[21]. The weight of neighboring relations in paremiology stems from this as well: units such as *"Yaxshi qo'shni – ota-ona, yomon qo'shni –*

[20] The Oxford English Dictionary Online. 3rd ed. / Edited by M. Proffitt. – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000– Available at: Oxford English Dictionary Online (mother, mum, mummy, ma, mater articles).

[21] Mirzayev, T., Musoqulov, A., & Sarimsoqov, B. (Compilers). (2005). *Uzbek Folk Proverbs* (Sh. Turdimov, Ed., p. 342). Tashkent: Sharq. *(In Uzbek).*

boshga balo" (A good neighbor is like a parent, a bad neighbor is a curse) and *"Bir qizga yetti qo'shni – ota-ona"* (Seven neighbors act as parents to one girl) expand the boundaries of the family beyond blood kinship into the territory of neighborhood-a direction directly opposing the English principle of *privacy*.

At the lexical level, the Uzbek language is distinguished by an extraordinary density of kinship terminology. Siblings are strictly differentiated by age: *aka* (older brother) – *uka* (younger brother), *opa* (older sister) – *singil* (younger sister); paternal and maternal relatives are named separately: *amaki* (paternal uncle) – *tog'a* (maternal uncle), *amma* (paternal aunt) – *xola* (maternal aunt). Furthermore, an entire system of terms exists for relations formed through marriage: *qaynota* (father-in-law), *qaynona* (mother-in-law), *qayni* (brother-in-law), *qaynsingil* (sister-in-law), *kelin* (daughter-in-law/bride), *kuyov* (son-in-law/groom), *ovsin* (wives of brothers in relation to each other), *boja* (husbands of sisters in relation to each other), *quda* (in-laws/parents of married children), *yanga* (wife of an older brother or uncle), and *kundosh* (co-wife). In comparing the English and Uzbek languages, U.Yusupov attributes the asymmetry of these systems to the structural differences in the social organization of the two nations[22]. Indeed, the lexemes *ovsin*, *boja*, *quda*, and *kundosh* form absolute lacunae in English: in translation, they can only be conveyed through descriptive explanations. The principle that higher density in nomination signals greater cultural significance for those relations holds undeniably true in this context[23].

Synonymous sets designating a husband and wife reveal mechanisms of euphemization, stylistic choice, and the indirect expression of attitudes within family discourse. In English, *husband* serves as the neutral nominative core; *hubby* conveys a tone of endearment and humor; *spouse* implies a legal and gender-neutral status; *my other half* and *my better half* offer a figurative assessment imbued with intimacy; and *the mister* evokes an old-fashioned, colloquial tone.

A concept is a complex mental structure that integrates the knowledge, experience, values, evaluative criteria, and typical communicative situations of native speakers. From this perspective, frame-slot analysis holds particular significance as a cognitive-semantic method that enables the description of a concept's internal structure, the relationships between its constituent elements, and the characteristics of its realization across different languages. The foundational principles of frame theory were developed by Marvin Minsky as a means of representing knowledge based on stereotyped situations.

Frame No. 1: *"Family – a structure or dwelling that a person builds with their own hands."*

In this type of conceptual mapping, the family is portrayed as a construction project: it is built, erected, supported, dismantled, or destroyed. In the context of Uzbek material, this frame is instantiated through three slots.

Slot No. 1: "A family is built like a building and rests on supporting pillars."

1) A family is a porch with twin pillars (Uzbek folk proverb).

Slot No. 2: "The home is a protected fortress."

1) Everyone is a king in their own home (Uzbek folk proverb).
2) Your own home is your softest bed (Uzbek folk proverb).

Slot No. 3: "Building elements: threshold, door, roof."

1) Choose one who has known the cradle, not one who has known the door (Uzbek proverb).

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[22] Yusupov, O. Q. (2013). *Comparative Linguistics of the English and Uzbek Languages* (pp. 184–189). Tashkent: Akademnashr. *(In Uzbek).*

[23] Shuhratillaevna E. D. Word order and the communicative structure of the sentence in Uzbek //European science review. – 2020. – №. 1-2. – С. 128-132.

2) One who has known the door destroys the land; one who has known the cradle builds the land (Uzbek proverb).

CONCLUSION

The concept of "family" demonstrates anthropological, semantic, and lexicographical universality. Universality concerns the existence of the concept itself, whereas national-cultural specificity is manifested in its internal structure. Therefore, the starting point for comparative analysis is to clearly establish the boundary between these two dimensions.

The kinship paradigm is differentiated in different ways in the two languages. The Uzbek system distinguishes kinship relations according to age, the maternal or paternal side of kinship, generational distance, and marital status or role, whereas the English system tends to generalize these relations through gender-neutral hypernyms. The existence of lexical gaps in both languages does not indicate the richness or poverty of a language; rather, it reflects the different ways in which reality is conceptually and linguistically segmented.

The zonal structure of the nominative field is largely isomorphic, whereas the formal structure of the perinuclear zone differs. Compounding predominates in English, while affixation and verb-noun combinations are more characteristic of Uzbek. Since this difference is typological rather than conceptual, it should be taken into account when interpreting the results of frame-slot analysis. Conceptual naming follows a two-tiered structure: domestic and everyday family life is primarily represented by native lexical elements, whereas the institutional and legal sphere contains a significant layer of borrowed vocabulary. In English, this borrowed layer developed predominantly under French and Latin influence, whereas in Uzbek, borrowing was shaped mainly by Arabic and Persian sources.

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