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Paradigmatic Relations and Verbalization of The Concept "Family" In the Semantic Systems of English And Uzbek Languages

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the verbalization of the concept "FAMILY" and its paradigmatic connections within the semantic systems of the English and Uzbek languages. Drawing on cognitive-discursive and comparative approaches, the study analyzes lexico-semantic groups as well as synonymic, antonymic, and hyponymic series that express this concept in languages with distinct structural characteristics. Particular attention is paid to identifying the national-cultural specificities and the shared linguo-cognitive foundations underlying the conceptualization of family relationships. The study identifies the key conceptual layers as well as the central and peripheral units of the "FAMILY" conceptual sphere, and establishes cross-linguistic semantic correspondences and gaps. The findings can be utilized in lecture courses on comparative typology, cognitive linguistics, and linguoculturology.

Keywords: Concept, "FAMILY" concept, verbalization, semantic system, paradigmatic relations, conceptual field, English language, Uzbek language, cognitive linguistics, synonymy, hyponymy.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of "family" represents a universal phenomenon from anthropological, semantic, and lexicographical perspectives. This is evidenced by three factors: the existence of terms denoting kinship relations in all societies, the documentation of basic kinship terms (such as father, mother, son, and daughter) in the earliest written records, and the inclusion of these lexemes among semantic primitives. This universality concerns the very existence of the concept rather than its internal structure. It is precisely at the structural level that national and cultural specificities become apparent [1].

Distinguishing the plane of expression of a concept provides an effective approach to analyzing it in terms of its integrity across different linguistic levels. At the lexical level, the concept is realized through direct means of nomination. These lexical units constitute its core designations, semantic variants, evaluative content, and system of paradigmatic relations.

Verbalization is the process through which conceptual content is transformed into an external form of expression by means of linguistic signs. In other words, it is the process whereby a semantic structure existing in human cognition acquires a linguistic form through phonetic, graphic, lexical, and grammatical means.

It is also necessary to distinguish between different modes of verbalization, since kinship-related vocabulary demonstrates several mechanisms of nomination within a single linguistic system [2]. In primary nomination, a concept is designated directly by means of a root lexical unit. Terms such as “father” (ota), “mother” (ona), “son” (o‘g‘il), and “daughter” (qiz) represent key participants in kinship relations and constitute the core designations of this conceptual field.

In derivative nomination, however, meaning undergoes structural expansion through word-formation mechanisms. Derivatives such as “Paternity” (otalik), “Daughter-in-law status” (kelinlik), and “brotherly” (Fraternal) transform personal nouns or related lexical bases into units denoting social roles, states, qualities, affiliation, or functional status. Thus, word formation also reveals the internal semantic stratification of the concept. [3]

Paradigmatic relations constitute a system of implicit choices that determines which linguistic unit can be used in a particular position and which units remain as potential alternatives. For example, when expressing the concept of “mother,” a speaker may choose among the Uzbek forms “oyi,” “aya,” and “onajon.” The set of available alternatives forms a paradigmatic field.

J. Lyons and D. A. Cruse systematized the principal types of lexical paradigmatic relations: synonymy, the relationship between units with similar meanings; antonymy, the relationship between opposing meanings; hyponymy, the hierarchical relationship of “type-superordinate category”; meronymy, the part-whole relationship; and converseness, the representation of the same relationship from different perspectives.

It should also be noted that paradigmatic analysis is inseparable from syntagmatic analysis. The value of a paradigmatic unit becomes apparent through its combinatorial potential, that is, its collocational behavior. In Uzbek, the expression “oila qurmoq” means “to establish a family,” whereas “oila yasamoq” is not a conventional expression. In English, “to start a family” is the standard collocation, whereas “to begin a family” sounds less natural. This demonstrates that each lexical unit on the axis of selection has its own specific set of compatible “neighbors.”. Differences in collocational behavior serve as a reliable criterion for distinguishing synonyms. The Uzbek word “turmush” (life/marriage) collocates with the verbs “qurmoq” (to build/establish) and “kechirmoq” (to lead/experience), whereas “ro‘zg‘or” (household/domestic life) collocates with “tebratmoq” (to manage/run) and “yuritmoq” (to conduct/organize). In other words, the sets of words that collocate with these two synonyms do not overlap.

Another important aspect is the distinction between referential and vocative paradigms, the latter comprising forms used to address an interlocutor directly. The same person may be referred to as “onam” (“my mother”) within an utterance, whereas “oyi!” (“Mum!”) is used when addressing that person directly. These two functions require two distinct systems of linguistic forms.

English likewise exhibits a clear distinction between forms such as “my mother” (reference) and “Mum!” (direct address). An expression such as “My mother, could you...?” sounds unnatural when intended as a direct form of address. The vocative paradigm follows its own internal logic: affectionate forms predominate, formal variants are generally excluded, and ellipsis frequently occurs.

Since kinship terms are particularly prominent in everyday communication in their vocative function, this study pays special attention to forms of address as the most dynamic and frequently used elements of this paradigm [4].

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a comparative linguocultural approach grounded in the principles of contemporary cognitive linguistics. The theoretical framework of the research is based on C. Fillmore’s theory of frame semantics, A. Wierzbicka’s method of analyzing cultural scripts, and V. N. Telia’s theory of cultural connotation.

A set of research methods was employed to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis of the conceptual sphere of “family” in English and Uzbek:

1. Comparative-contrastive method, used to identify structural and semantic similarities and differences between the two unrelated languages.

2. Frame-and-slot modelling, applied to decompose the concept of "family" into its cognitive components, such as "parenthood," "kinship," and "household."

3. Componential and etymological analysis, used to trace the evolution of the core semantic content of the concept of "family."

The empirical data were selected from lexicographical sources, national language corpora, particularly the British National Corpus and the National Corpus of the Uzbek Language, as well as paremiological dictionaries [5].

The analysis of synonymic paradigms should begin with sets organized around dominant lexical units. In English, the lexeme "family" serves as the central component of this paradigm. It is surrounded by a system of semantically related units that differ in semantic scope, stylistic register, and usage patterns, although they are not fully synonymous. These include "household" (a group of people living together and maintaining a common domestic economy, typically used in formal and statistical contexts), "relatives" and "relations" (kinship terms used in a neutral register), "kin" and "kindred" (literary or archaic expressions), "folks" (colloquial, as in "my folks," meaning my family or close relatives), "people" (an informal, generalizing expression, as in "my people"), "clan" (a humorous extension of meaning referring to the entire family or extended kin group), and "flesh and blood" (a figurative expression denoting family ties or close kinship) .

The stylistic distribution of the elements in this synonymic set is characterized by two contrasting poles. In formal administrative and statistical discourse, the term "household" denotes a census unit, an economic unit, or a group of people living together. By contrast, the word "folks," used in informal communication, conveys warmth, intimacy, and a conversational tone through meanings such as "one's own people," "family," and "loved ones."Although the units in this synonymic set belong to the same conceptual domain, they differ considerably in stylistic connotation and communicative function. Notably, the elements of this set are largely non-interchangeable. Using "my household" instead of "my folks" constitutes a stylistic error in contexts where the latter expresses personal closeness. In this case, synonym selection is determined not by unrestricted choice but by the requirements of stylistic appropriateness [6].

The dominant synonymic set in Uzbek is organized according to a different semantic principle: "oila" (the neutral, dominant term); "xonadon" (with connotations of spatiality and prestige, as in "ziyoli xonadon," meaning "an intellectual family"); "ro'zg'or" (with connotations of household management and domestic labour, as in "ro'zg'or tashvishi," meaning "household concerns"); "uy" (a polysemous word, as in "uyli bo'lmoq," meaning "to acquire a home" or "to start a family"); "turmush" (with connotations of lifestyle or life circumstances, as in "turmush qurmoq," meaning "to get married"); "bola-chaqa" (a collective designation for family members, particularly children and dependants); "ahli xonadon" (members of a household); and "oila-ro'zg'or" (a paired expression that broadens the meaning to encompass both family and household affairs) .

The observations indicate that the elements of Uzbek synonymic sets are distributed according to semantic specialization rather than stylistic considerations. Each lexeme denotes a specific aspect of the concept of "family," such as living space, household management, marital status, or membership in a particular social group [7]. In English, by contrast, a single conceptual meaning is expressed through various stylistic and pragmatic nuances. Consequently, English synonymy relies more heavily on stylistic variation, whereas Uzbek synonymy is based on semantic differentiation within the concept itself. This distinction is reflected not only in the composition of synonymic sets but also in the underlying logic of nomination.In the analysis of synonymy, several levels can be distinguished. D. A. Cruse identifies absolute synonymy, which involves interchangeability in all contexts; propositional synonymy, characterized by denotative equivalence despite differences in connotation; and near-synonymy (quasi-synonymy).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Uzbek, synonymic sets are formed not only through existing lexemes but also through affixes such as "-jon," "-gina," and "-xon." By adding nuances of affection, tenderness, respect, or subjective evaluation to kinship terms, these morphemes enable the formation of new variants that meet specific communicative needs.

While synonymic sets in English rely largely on lexical variants established through historical development and linguistic convention, the synonymic field in Uzbek is more open to derivational expansion. The productive

formation of variants such as “onaginam,” “onajonim,” and “oyijonim” demonstrates how morphological means can gradually intensify emotional expressiveness. Thus, whereas affixation in Uzbek expands the expressive and evaluative potential of kinship terms, this function in English is largely fulfilled by independent lexical variants and analytical constructions [8].

The avoidance of addressing a spouse by name occurs in both linguocultures, although the reasons for this difference are not identical. In Uzbek texts, a form of address may be replaced by the child’s name: “Indeed, among Uzbeks, every man addresses his wife-his lawful” the spouse is referred to by the name of their daughter or son. Addressing one’s wife by her own name is considered improper (Chulpan, Night and Day). The same pattern is applied when referring to a husband: “Let his father come by after the morning prayer” (ibid.). In English-language texts, a formal form of address replaces the personal name: “‘My dear Mr. Bennet,’ said his wife to him one day” (Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice, Chapter I). Thus, in the former case, the form of address is based on a family role, whereas in the latter, it serves as a marker of social status.

The system of terms denoting a child extends beyond simple stylistic variation. It also makes it possible to distinguish linguistically between legal status, biological descent, developmental stage, and emotional attitude. In English, the word “child” serves as a neutral designation, whereas “kid” belongs to informal communication and conveys a sense of everyday familiarity. The term “offspring” emphasizes biological origin and generational continuity, particularly in scientific or formal contexts, while “issue” designates descendants in legal discourse as subjects of inheritance and testamentary relationships [9].

The Uzbek terminological system reflects various semantic dimensions. While “bola” serves as a neutral, everyday designation, “farzand” conveys deep respect, an awareness of the child’s value, and a sense of parental responsibility. The term “zurriyod” carries literary and religious connotations, representing a person not merely as a family member but as a link in an unbroken chain of generations. Words such as “chaqaloq,” “go‘dak,” and “norasida” distinguish subtle nuances of age and developmental stage, while forms such as “bolaginam” and “qizalog‘im” express tenderness, affection, and subjective attitudes through word-formation devices.

Meronymic relations in family-related vocabulary manifest themselves in both terminological and figurative forms. While expressions such as “family member” explicitly indicate the whole-part relationship, terms and expressions such as “jigargo‘sha,” “jigar-bag‘ir,” and “bir bo‘lak et” conceptualize a child as an inseparable part of the parents themselves and “flesh of one’s flesh” (“flesh and blood”) , conceptualize the child as a part separated from the parents’ own bodies .

The intersection of synonymy with taboo and euphemism creates a distinct pragmatic domain within this paradigm. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the designation of a woman who has lost her spouse [10]. In English, the word “widow” is a neutral term equally appropriate in official documents, formal statements, and everyday speech. In Uzbek, the word “beva” is perceived as relatively softer, whereas the word “tul”-owing to its historical and cultural associations with hardship, loneliness, and social vulnerability-is often avoided in direct usage. Instead, descriptive expressions such as “a woman whose husband has passed away” or “a woman left alone” are used [11]. This substitution is not due to a lack of lexical means of naming the concept, but rather to a desire to show sensitivity to the interlocutor’s emotional state and mitigate potentially negative connotations.

Similar pragmatic considerations underlie a number of terms related to divorce. The English word “divorced” often serves as a neutral a term denoting a person’s legal and marital status. In certain communicative contexts, however, the Uzbek term “ajrashgan” retains an evaluative connotation. Its use therefore requires careful consideration of the tone of the utterance, the context, and the characteristics of the audience.

This domain of the paradigm is defined not merely by lexical substitution but also by the simultaneous interaction of nomination, moral evaluation, and communicative tact. The emergence of a need for euphemism reveals the extent to which society perceives a particular situation as delicate, distressing, or socially sensitive [12, 13].

CONCLUSION

The English system of kinship terms demonstrates a higher degree of structural regularity in the designation of marital relationships than the Uzbek system. In particular, the component “in-law” recurs in terms such as “mother-in-law,” “father-in-law,” “son-in-law,” “daughter-in-law,” “brother-in-law,” and “sister-in-law.” These terms follow

a unified word-formation pattern and consistently indicate kinship established through marriage across different positions within the paradigm.

In Uzbek, however, such relationships do not follow a single, unified pattern. Instead, the system combines forms containing the component “qayin” (e.g., “qaynona” and “qayni”), independent lexical items (e.g., “kelin,” “kuyov,” “quda,” “ovsin,” “boja,” and “yanga”), and descriptive constructions. Thus, Uzbek terms denoting relative age (e.g., “aka-uka” and “opa-singil”), distinguishing kinship through the paternal or maternal line (e.g., “amaki-tog‘a” and “amma-xola”), referring to symmetrical or reciprocal relationships (e.g., “quda,” “ovsin,” and “boja”), as well as lexemes denoting more distant links in the chain of generations (e.g., “chevara” and “evara”), have no independent nominative equivalents in English. A lacuna is defined as the absence, in another language, of a regular equivalent for a unit or pattern in the source language. According to lacunology, three types of lacunae are distinguished: lexical lacunae (at the word level), phraseological lacunae (at the level of idioms and proverbs), and conceptual lacunae (at the level of models or scenarios) .

It can be argued that although lacunae exist in both languages, their paradigmatic distribution is not identical. The Uzbek kinship system differentiates relationships in detail according to such criteria as age, line of descent, generational distance, and marital roles. By contrast, the English system features a more extensive set of gender-neutral, generalized, and institutional terms. While the semantic richness of the Uzbek paradigm is primarily manifested in specific categories of kinship, the English paradigm expands through hypernymic units representing broader levels of classification. This difference reflects the distinct ways in which the two linguocultures structure the domain of kinship: the Uzbek system prioritizes the precise configuration of relationships and the social dynamics between individuals, whereas the English system emphasizes categorical generalization and institutional neutrality.

To identify the central, dominant element of the conceptual domain of “FAMILY” in Uzbek, we analyze lexical stability, word-formation productivity, and frequency of use. We note that in the five-volume explanatory dictionary, this unit is presented as an independent headword denoting, in the narrow sense, the union of a husband, wife, parents, and children and, in the broader sense, kinship and shared ancestry. The lexical stability of this unit is also confirmed by evidence from etymological and phraseological dictionaries. The formation of nearly two dozen derived forms and analytical combinations based on this root demonstrates its derivational potential. Moreover, the lexeme “oila” (family) not only occurs regularly in all the literary works analyzed in this study but is also recorded as an independent nominative unit in collections of proverbs and phraseological expressions.

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