

LINGUOCULTURAL FEATURES OF KINSHIP TERMS IN THE ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the relationship between language and culture from the perspective of kinship terminology in English and Uzbek. Using a comparative analysis, the study demonstrates how kinship terms reflect cultural values, social structures, and familial roles that are unique to each language.

Keywords: *Linguoculturology, linguocultural features, kinship terms, comparative analysis, concept.*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье рассматривается взаимосвязь между языком и культурой с точки зрения терминологии родства в английском и узбекском языках. Используя сравнительный анализ, исследование демонстрирует, как термины родства отражают культурные ценности, социальные структуры и семейные роли, которые являются уникальными для каждого языка.

Ключевые слова: *лингвокультурология, лингвокультурные особенности, термины родства, сравнительный анализ, концепция.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a primary means by which culture is passed down from one generation to the next. Language allows people to express their values, beliefs, customs, and traditions. Language development is also influenced by culture. Words and phrases often reflect certain nation's cultural priorities and experiences. Accordingly, D.U. Ashurova and M.R. Galieva state that language serves not only as a medium of communication and the primary tool for conveying people's thinking, but also as a repository of cultural information. Language is a sophisticated system of signals that is used to deliver, store, use, and transmit culture from generation to generation.¹ The article focuses on indentifying the influence of cultural factors on kinship terms in the English and Uzbek languages, using specific examples from both languages to illustrate key points.

¹ Ashurova D. U., Galieva M. R. Cultural Linguistics. - Tashkent: VneshInvestProm, 2019. P. 8.

LITERARY REVIEW

Many scholars consider Wilhelm von Humboldt to be the pioneer of the concept of linguistic culture. His ideas regarding the profound relationship between language and culture continue to influence present linguistic research. Humboldt investigated the dynamic relationship between language, thought, and culture, stressing how these impact one another. Building on his legacy, numerous researchers have contributed significantly to the field of linguoculturology, including A. Wierzbicka, R. M. Keesing, R. Langacker, V. Maslova, V. Karasik, S. Vorkashev, V. Telia, V. Shaklein, F. Vorobev, J. Stepanov, E. Levchenko, V. Kononenko, and V. Zhayvoronok.

In Uzbekistan, linguoculturology has also become a focus of academic research. “Cultural Linguistics” by D. U. Ashurova and M. R. Galiyeva, “Language and Culture: A Comparative Aspect of the Study” by A. S. Mamontov, “Linguoculturological Direction in the Uzbek Language” by A. Nurmonov, and “In Search of Perfect Research Methods in Language” by N. Mahmudov are examples of notable works in the field. These studies help to advance our understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to explore the deep connection between language and culture by examining kinship terminology. Using a comparative approach, it combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze how the concept "family" and its specific categories (hyponyms) are expressed and interpreted in English and Uzbek. The goal is to uncover the cultural nuances that shape these linguistic differences.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Kinship terms in English encompass a range of words that describe family relationships, each carrying specific cultural and social meanings. These hyponyms not only identify biological ties, but they additionally express cultural norms, roles, and expectations within family structures.

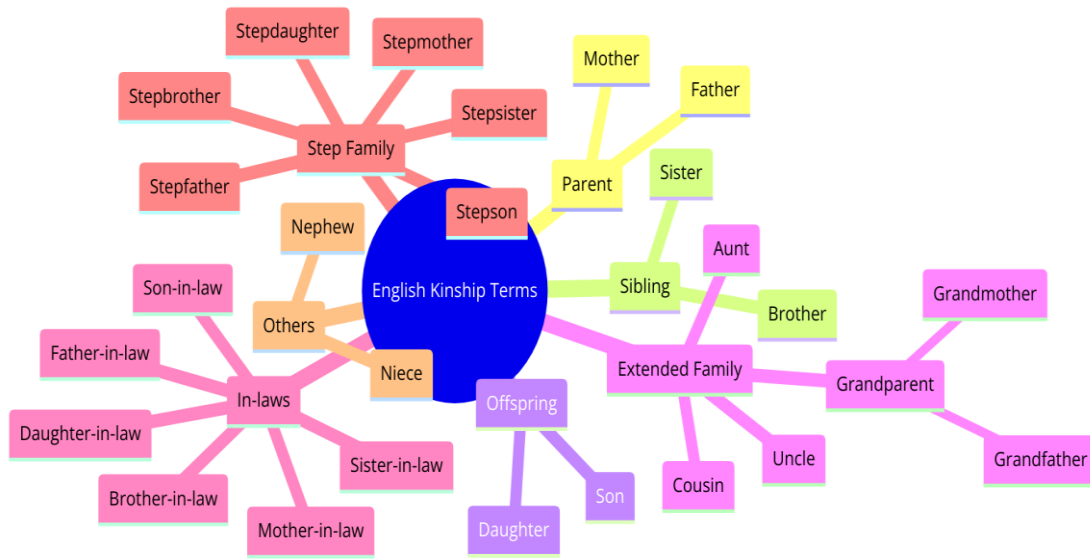


Figure 1. The taxonomic configuration of English kinship terms.

These terms are classified into taxonomic groups depending on their level of specificity and relationship type. “*Mother*” and “*father*” are possibly the most commonly used kinship terms, representing the primary caregivers and authority figures in a family. These hyponyms have cultural significance since they symbolize not just biological parents, but also nurturers and providers who affect their children's lives. For example, the term “*mother*” (including variations like “*mom*”, “*mum*”, “*mommy*”, and “*mama*”) in English not only refers to a female parent, but it also implies nurturing, caregiving, and emotional support. This reflects the cultural expectation in many English-speaking nations that mothers bear primary responsibility for their children's emotional and day-to-day upbringing. Similarly, the term “*father*” (with variations like “*dad*”, “*daddy*”, “*papa*”, and “*pa*”) connotes power, protection, and provision, which corresponds to traditional ideas of fathers as the principal breadwinners and defenders of the family.

The hyponyms “*grandmother*” and “*grandfather*” refer to one's parents and convey notions of wisdom, experience, and traditions. Grandparents are frequently seen as keepers of family history and values. Informal words like “*grandma*”, “*grandpa*”, “*nana*”, and “*papa*” represent the emotional and special relationship that many individuals have with their grandparents, stressing their role in providing love and stability throughout generations.

Moreover, the names “*brother*” and “*sister*” refer to the relationships between siblings. These hyponyms include a wide spectrum of connections, from companionship and support to rivalry and competition. Brothers and sisters are culturally regarded as lifetime companions who share childhood memories and family obligations. The term “*bro*” is frequently used to denote close friendships

among men, extending the idea of brotherhood beyond family ties.² Similarly, “*sis*” is a term of endearment that highlights the affectionate and intimate relationship between sisters, often used to emphasize trust and loyalty.³ Additionally, the hyponyms “*uncle*” and “*aunt*” (including “*auntie*” and “*unc*”) refer to relationships that combine elements of mentorship, support, and sometimes playful camaraderie. They often serve as secondary parental figures. Here it is important to mention that terms like “*Uncle Sam*” symbolize broader societal roles, while “*Aunt Sally*” can refer to a scapegoat or target of criticism. “*Uncle Sam*” is a popular national personification for the United States government or the country as a whole. The character is often shown as a tall, elderly man with white hair and a goatee, wearing a top hat and tailcoat decorated with the stars and stripes of the American flag.⁴ At the same time “*Aunt Sally*” is a British term that refers to a person or thing who is set up to be the subject of criticism or blame. The word is derived from a classic British fairground game in which players throw sticks or balls at a model of an elderly woman's head known as “*Aunt Sally*”. Over time, the term came to refer to someone or something who was used as a scapegoat or the target of unfair criticism.⁵ Besides this, English utilizes simple kinship terminology, idioms, and set phrases that frequently stress individual characteristics, shared traits and familial roles. For example: “*Like father, like son*” or “*like mother, like daughter*”, “*a son is a son till he gets a wife, but a daughter is a daughter all her life*”, “*tied to your mother's/wife's apron strings*” (It means that man is strongly influenced and controlled by mother or wife), “*mum's the word*” (It is said when you tell someone to keep something a secret), “*a sugar daddy*” (a rich man who is generous with younger women in exchange for sexual favors), “*a father figure*” (someone you can ask for advice and support), “*A family of wolves*” (A family that is extremely protective of one another), “*Big Brother*” (a government or person in charge that tries to control people's behavior and thoughts), “*baby boomer*” (a person born during the baby boom in the United States between 1947 and 1961)⁶ and others. These expressions emphasize personal features and moral lessons within the family context, reflecting a culture that appreciates individuality within the family unit.

² Newman J. Brothers and Brotherhood in 21st Century Culture. *Sociology of Culture*, 2009. P. 12.

³ Ellis C. *Sisterly Bonds. Family Dynamics in Literature and Life*, 1992. P. 4.

⁴ Uncle Sam, n. meanings, etymology and more | Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). https://www.oed.com/dictionary/uncle-sam_n?tab=factsheet#158600502

⁵ Aunt Sally, n. meanings, etymology and more | Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). https://www.oed.com/dictionary/aunt-sally_n?tl=true

⁶ Cambridge Free English Dictionary and Thesaurus. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/>

Furthermore, the in-law terms in English such as “*mother-in-law*”, “*father-in-law*”, “*son-in-law*”, and “*daughter-in-law*” also have significant cultural implications. These hyponyms represent legal relationships formed through marriage rather than blood, highlighting the extension and integration of family networks. The cultural significance of these terms reflects societal values regarding marriage, family dynamics, and the roles of individuals within these expanded familial structures.

In modern times, kinship terms have also adapted to reflect changing family dynamics and structures. Terms like “*stepmother*”, “*stepfather*”, “*half-brother*”, and “*half-sister*” recognize the complexities of blended families in English-speaking cultures. These terms recognize the evolving nature of family relationships in contemporary society, where divorce, remarriage, and various forms of family arrangements are increasingly common. They highlight the adaptability of language in capturing the diverse ways people form familial bonds.

In addition, English kinship hyponyms extend to chosen families, where friends and non-biological relations assume familial roles. Terms such as “*godmother*”, “*godfather*”, and even “*surrogate family*” illustrate how kinship vocabulary can transcend biological connections to encompass relationships based on emotional bonds and mutual support. Overall, English kinship terms demonstrate how language reflects cultural values, social roles, and family dynamics, providing a rich field for understanding the intersection of linguistics and culture.

The next semantic group we will look at in this article is Uzbek kinship terms. According to I. Ismailov's research on Turkic languages, kinship phrases in modern Uzbek are classified into three categories based on their origin and meaning:

- 1) Kinship terms (mother, father, grandfather);
- 2) Post-marriage kinship terms (husband, wife, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law);
- 3) Proximity names (stepmother, stepdaughter)⁷

Uzbek kinship terms are highly hierarchical, reflecting the social structure within families. The terms clearly distinguish between different generations and sibling order, emphasizing respect for elders and the roles within the family.

⁷ Ismoilov I.A. Turkiy tillarda qavm-qarindoshlik terminlari. Toshkent: Fan, 1966. B. 10-11.

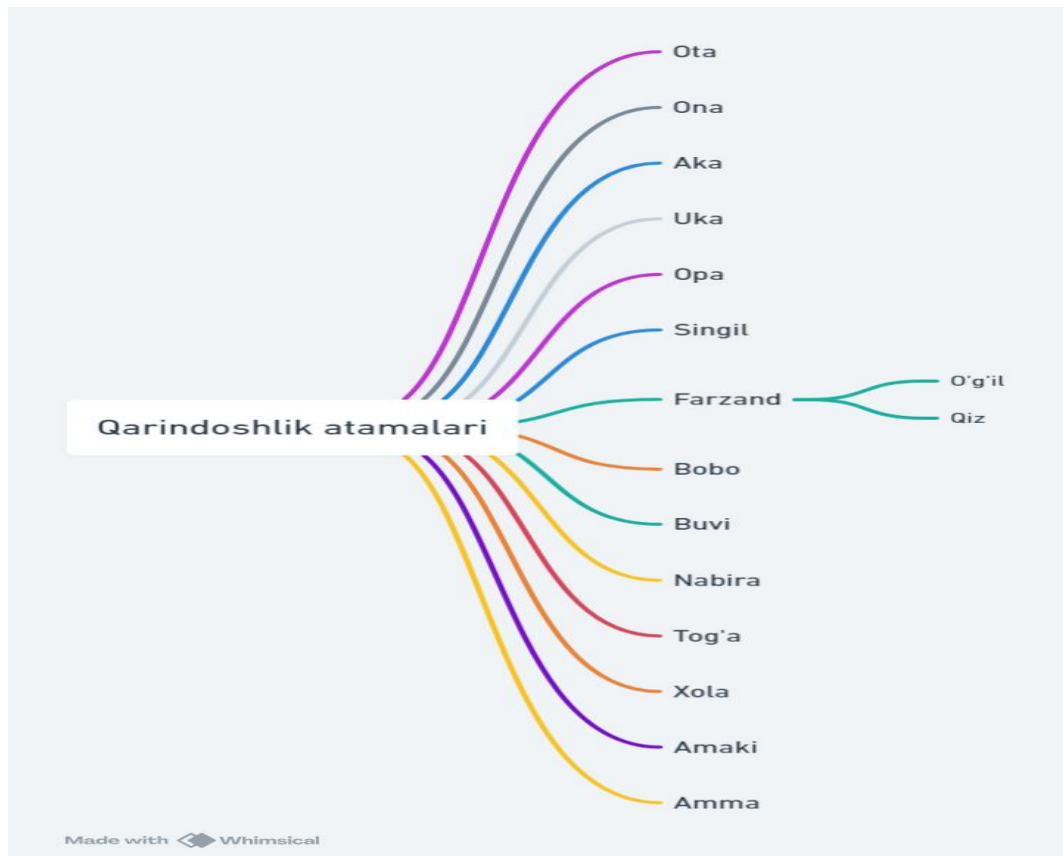


Figure 2. The taxonomic configuration of kinship terms in the Uzbek language

We will start our analysis from parental terms. The hypomymns “*ota*” (father) and “*ona*” (mother) denote the primary parental figures and carry a high degree of respect and authority. They are universally understood and used across different regions of Uzbekistan while more informal and intimate terms like “*dada*” (daddy) and “*oyi*” (mommy) are used in everyday interactions within the family, demonstrating linguistic consistency. These terms have affectionate forms that express warmth and closeness. Words like “*otajon*” (dear father) and “*onajon*” (dear mother) are used to convey deep affection and respect. In Uzbek culture, the father is traditionally seen as the head of the family, responsible for providing and protecting the household. Respect for the father is essential, and his role is critical to ensuring family stability and honor. The phrase “*Ota rozi - Xudo rozi*” (Father is pleased - God is pleased) is a vivid example of honour for parental authority and wisdom in Uzbek. At the same time, the mother is frequently seen as the family's heart, with a critical role in nurturing and caring for the children. Her role in establishing cultural values and ensuring domestic harmony is greatly admired. The statement “*Jannat onalar oyog'i ostida*” (heaven is under mothers' feet) is often used to convey mother's magnificence, as well as respect and affection for her.

Moreover, co-hyponyms like “*aka*” (older brother) and “*uka*” (younger brother), as well as “*opa*” (older sister) and “*singil*” (younger sister), explicitly show

the age order among siblings. The distinction between older and younger siblings is linguistically encoded in Uzbek, indicating different roles and expectations. This hierarchy highlights the responsibility of older siblings to care for and guide the younger ones. In addition, the Uzbek language has distinct names for paternal and maternal relations, such as “*amaki*” (paternal uncle) and “*tog‘a*” (maternal uncle), or “*amma*” (paternal aunt) and “*xola*” (maternal aunt). This contrast emphasizes the differences in roles and statuses between relatives on the father’s and mother’s sides of the family. In Uzbek culture, uncles and aunts are considered secondary parental figures, providing additional support, direction, and care. These hyponyms emphasize the extended family’s role in upbringing and socialization.

Additionally, the Uzbek language is rich in descriptive kinship phrases that emphasize hierarchy, respect, and communal values. In Uzbek, “*oila*” (family) is an important pillar of social structure, with a significant focus on extended family bonds and elder respect. Here are some sample expressions and phrases: “*Oila muqaddas dargoh*” (The family is a sacred place), “*oila tinch - yurt tinch*” (the family is peaceful - the country is peaceful), “*onasini ko‘rib, qizini ol*” (like mother, like daughter), “*otasining o‘g‘li*” (father’s son), “*ota uyi*” (father’s home), “*onasi o‘pmagan qiz / yigit*” (girl / boy whose mother hasn't kissed), “*er-xotinning urishi, doka ro‘mol qurishi*” (it means that fight between spouses are as short as the drying of a gauze scarf) and others. Furthermore, the images of “*mother-in-law*” and “*daughter-in-law*” are distinctive to Uzbek proverbs. Unlike English proverbs, this subject is more extensively addressed in Uzbek proverbs. For example, “*Qizim senga aytdim, kelinim sen eshit*” (I tell you daughter, bride should listen), “*qaynonaga tosh otsang tosh olasan, qaynonaga osh bersang osh olasan*”⁸ (what you sow, you'll reap) and others. This can be explained by the fact that Uzbek people take these relationships much more seriously. Overall, these expressions emphasize the importance of hierarchical respect, parents’ nurturing roles, and communal responsibility within the family, representing a collectivist culture.

CONCLUSION

In general, English kinship terminology reflects a more individualistic society, emphasizing emotional bonds and personal identity, while Uzbek kinship terms illustrate a collectivist culture with a strong hierarchical structure and deep respect for elders. Understanding the nuances of these terms helps us comprehend the complex ways in which language captures and reinforces cultural norms and familial bonds.

⁸ Yuldasheva Z.K., Jumanazarova S. Z. The comparison of the lingua-cultural idioms that are commonly used in English, uzbek and russian languages. // Молодой ученый. 2016. № 13 (117). С. 730-732.

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