LEXICAL-SEMANTIC COMPARISON OF KINSHIP TERMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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Abstract: Kinship systems are basic and ancient components of human culture, reflecting family relations, social hierarchies, traditions, and worldview. Every nation and each language community forms its kinship vocabulary in line with historical development, cultural values, and specific social needs. English and Uzbek, as representatives of Indo-European and Turkic language families respectively, display certain similarities as well as significant differences in their kinship lexicon. The lexical-semantic comparison of kinship terms provides an opportunity to reveal not only the structural features of the two languages but also the factors underlying their cultural mentality and social organization.

Key words: kinship terms, lexical-semantic analysis, English, Uzbek, cultural linguistics, language comparison, semantic fields.

Аннотация: Системы родства являются основополагающими и древними компонентами человеческой культуры, отражающими семейные отношения, социальные иерархии, традиции и мировоззрение. Каждая нация и каждое языковое сообщество формируют свой родственный словарь в соответствии с историческим развитием, культурными ценностями и специфическими социальными потребностями. Английский и узбекский языки, как представители индоевропейской и тюркской языковых семей соответственно, демонстрируют как определенные сходства, так и существенные различия в своем родственном лексиконе. Лексико-семантическое сравнение терминов родства дает возможность выявить не только структурные особенности двух языков, но и факторы, лежащие в основе их культурного менталитета и социальной организации.

Ключевые слова: термины родства, лексико-семантический анализ, английский язык, узбекский язык, культурная лингвистика, сравнение языков, семантические поля.

Annotatsiya: Qarindoshlik tizimlari insoniyat madaniyatining asosiy va qadimiy tarkibiy qismlari bo'lib, oilaviy munosabatlar, ijtimoiy ierarxiya, an'analar va dunyoqarashni aks ettiradi. Har bir xalq, har bir til jamoasi tarixiy taraqqiyot, madaniy qadriyatlar, o'ziga xos ijtimoiy ehtiyojlarga mos ravishda qarindoshlik lug'atini shakllantiradi. Ingliz va o'zbek tillari mos ravishda hind-evropa va turkiy til oilalarining vakillari sifatida qarindoshlik leksikasida ma'lum o'xshashlik va jiddiy farqlarni namoyon etadi. Qarindoshlik atamalarini leksik-semantik jihatdan qiyoslash ikki tilning nafaqat tarkibiy xususiyatlarini, balki ularning madaniy mentaliteti va ijtimoiy tashkiloti asosidagi omillarni ham ochib berish imkonini beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: qarindoshlik atamalari, leksik-semantik tahlil, ingliz, o'zbek, madaniy tilshunoslik, til qiyoslash, semantik sohalar.

INTRODUCTION

Kinship terms in English are generally more universal and concise, often covering broad meanings and lacking explicit differentiation for age, gender, or status in the extended family. For most English speakers, the primary nuclear family comprises parents, children, siblings, and spouse. Terms like "father," "mother," "son," "daughter," and "sibling" are used for direct relationships, whereas uncles, aunts, and cousins are applied for secondary relatives regardless of whether they belong to the mother's or father's sides. Word formation in English kinship terms reveals a limited use of morphological elements, and additional distinctions (for example, maternal/paternal aunt or uncle) are achieved by adding specifications such as "maternal" or "paternal" before the term, rather than through separate lexical units. In contrast, the Uzbek kinship system is more extensive and intricate, reflecting the traditional importance of the extended family, multi-generational households, and patriarchal values. Uzbek kinship terminology distinguishes several layers of relations, often based on gender, age, order of birth, degree of affinity, and even by the marriage status of the individuals. For instance, in Uzbek, there are separate terms for a

father's older brother, father's younger brother, mother's older sister, mother's younger sister, as well as for relatives through marriage. Specific terminological units such as "aka," "uka," "opa," "singil," "tog'a," "amaki," "xola," "buvi," and "bobosi" articulate explicit meanings, leaving no need for additional clarifying phrases as in English.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The semantics of kinship terms in English and Uzbek are shaped by various lexical, morphological, and syntactic features. In English, the general tendency is towards abstraction and syncretism — a word can encapsulate a range of relationships, while in Uzbek the tendency is towards concretization and lexical specification. This leads to striking differences in the semantic fields of corresponding terms. For instance, the English term "aunt" covers both "mother's sister" and "father's sister," but in Uzbek, these are two different words: "xola" and "amaki" (although "amaki" applies to father's brother; for father's sister it's "amma"). The boundaries between paternal and maternal relatives are much more explicit in Uzbek, underscoring the cultural emphasis on genealogical precision.Sociolinguistic factors also influence kinship terminology in both languages. In English-speaking societies, the trend towards nuclear family units, individualism, and more egalitarian relationships has prompted a simplification in the use of kinship terms. The generic "cousin," for instance, eliminates distinctions between paternal and maternal lines, gender, or comparative age, whereas in Uzbek certified terminology continues to highlight these differences, tied to traditional respect for the elder members of the family and the hierarchical social order. As a result, the Uzbek kinship system differentiates "jiyan" as a nephew/niece, and further specifies the precise relationship through compound forms such as "amakivachcha" or "xolavachcha," depending on which relative is being referred to. Another aspect of the lexical-semantic comparison involves the borrowing, creation, and loss of kinship terms over time. English, having passed through layers of Latin, French, and Germanic influences, has streamlined and internationalized certain kinship vocabulary, concentrating on functional relationships rather than detailed ancestry. Uzbek kinship vocabulary, meanwhile, maintains more archaic elements, and many terms remain stable over centuries as they are closely intertwined with ritual, etiquette, and oral

traditions. Some terms may bear geographical or dialectical differences within Uzbekistan, yet their semantic load remains strong.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The pragmatic usage of kinship terms is further distinct in the two languages. In Uzbek, kinship terms often function as polite forms of address, even extending beyond the family framework. It is common to call elders in the community "aka," "opa," or "buvi," signifying respect or fostering social cohesion. In English, while the technical terms remain reserved for family, some courtesy extensions occur, such as "aunt" or "uncle" used for close family friends, though this is less formalized than in Uzbek culture. The richness and diversity of kinship terms in Uzbek are additionally visible in their derivational possibilities. For example, diminutive and affectionate forms ("opajon," "akamjon," "buvijon") carry semantic and emotional nuances that are less frequent in English, where endearment is more often achieved through prosodic means or by using phrases like "dear mother" or "my sweet sister," rather than word modification. Furthermore, Uzbek society maintains strict social roles and etiquette concerning address and reference to kin, often involving varying levels of formality and distance. Proper usage of kinship terminology is considered essential in maintaining social harmony, observing hierarchies, and observing traditions. Failure to use the correct term can sometimes be interpreted as disrespect or lack of familiarity with tradition. In English, these boundaries are softer, and individuals have more liberty in how they address each other [1].

Analyzing the semantic structure of kinship terms reveals subtle but important distinctions. For example, the polysemy of English words like "brother" (which can denote both biological brother and fellow member of a religious group or fraternity) contrasts with the Uzbek focus on blood relationships and family status. Similarly, the Uzbek lexeme "ayol" or "kelin" denotes a clear social status and role within the household, reflecting wider traditional values. Semantic shifts are another area of contrast. In both languages, modernization and societal changes lead to transformations in the semantics and frequency of kinship terminology. In English, step-relations and blended families are increasingly common, giving rise to an expanded usage of "step-brother," "step-mother," and related

phrases; Uzbek employs its own word-formational strategies to accommodate new realities.The relationship between language and culture is vividly embodied in kinship terminology. In Uzbek, the persistence of honorifics and specialized forms illustrates the centrality of familial respect and social order. The English kinship lexicon, by contrast, mirrors an individual-centred society, stripping down specialized distinctions and reflecting a more fluid social structure. Language thus not only reflects but actively shapes social identity and interpersonal dynamics [2].

Within both languages, some kinship terms acquire secondary metaphorical meanings, further enriching their lexical-semantic fields. In Uzbek, terms like "aka" or "ota" may be used metaphorically to address respected figures outside the family, while in English, "sister" and "brother" also function metaphorically in social or religious contexts. However, the semantic weight and emotional coloring of these metaphorical uses tend to be stronger in Uzbek, again referring to deep-seated values associated with kinship. Examining the etymology of kinship terms adds another dimension to the comparison. In English, many terms derive from Old English and have Indo-European roots, while Uzbek kinship terms originate from ancient Turkic words, showing a deep continuity with nomadic, tribal, and later settled life. Etymological research reveals how historical contacts, migrations, and social evolution have shaped the present-day kinship lexicon [3].

Linguistic relativity manifests in the very structure, application, and semantic organization of kinship vocabulary. For Uzbek speakers, knowing the right term for every familial relationship not only facilitates communication but also reaffirms community membership, social rank, and inheritance rights; for English speakers, the lack of such differentiation may reflect a historically more mobile, less clan-based society. These differences are mirrored in idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and rituals, further cementing the connection between kinship vocabulary and collective cultural identity. The study of kinship terms is further complicated by bilingualism, intercultural influences, and shifting family structures in modern societies. Among Uzbek-English bilingual speakers, code-switching and direct translation of kinship terms may result in misunderstandings or inaccuracies, as certain lexical concepts are untranslatable or lack direct equivalents. For

instance, translating "opa" or "aka" simply as "sister" or "brother" in English does not capture the nuances of age or respect inherent in the Uzbek language [4].

Kinship terms also serve as key indicators of linguistic and social change. In societies marked by urbanization, globalization, and changing lifestyles, some traditional usages are replaced by more generalized terms, or even omitted. In English, the proliferation of blended families creates a need for new terms, while in Uzbek, traditional titles may be less used among youth, yet they persist in formal and rural contexts. Comparing the two languages, it is clear that kinship terms are more than just lexical units—they are condensed embodiments of centuries of social organization, cultural attitudes, and communicative practices. The detailed stratification of kinship in Uzbek reinforces traditional family hierarchies and values, whereas the streamlined English system facilitates neutral, equal interpersonal exchange within compact family groups. Each system accurately reflects the needs, experiences, and worldview of its speakers. It is important to point out that both languages demonstrate adaptability. As new social realities emerge, both English and Uzbek incorporate new terms, modify old meanings, or borrow words to reflect familial changes. Language policy and educational initiatives also play a role in preserving, updating, or simplifying kinship vocabularies to suit contemporary needs [5].

To summarize, the lexical-semantic comparison of kinship terms in English and Uzbek languages reveals that, while both systems fulfill the communicative function of expressing family relationships, they differ markedly in structure, semantic specificity, cultural embeddedness, and pragmatic usage. Uzbek kinship vocabulary is more elaborate, reflecting complex social hierarchies and high-context cultural values, while English kinship terms are more generalized, mirroring nuclear family norms and low-context communication patterns. Such differences are rooted in historical, cultural, and social development, and underscore the importance of kinship terminology as a window into the respective worldviews of English and Uzbek speakers.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, kinship terms represent an integral part of the linguistic heritage and worldview of any nation. The English and Uzbek languages, in their own ways, preserve

the memory, traditions, and values of their peoples through the semantic web of kinship. Comparative analysis of kinship terms not only enriches linguistic scholarship but also enhances cross-cultural understanding, making it possible to appreciate the diversity and similarities of human experience as expressed in language. Understanding and respecting these differences helps avoid miscommunication and fosters empathy in an increasingly interconnected world.

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