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

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Abstract: *The study of kinship terms provides significant insights into the worldview of a speech community, reflecting both linguistic structure and cultural norms encoded in a language. In both English and Uzbek languages, kinship terminology holds an important place, influencing not only interpersonal relationships but also the structure of extended families, formal greetings, and even social expectations. Through a lexical-semantic comparison of kinship terms in English and Uzbek, much can be revealed about similarities and differences in the conceptualization of family, hierarchy, tradition, and gender roles within the two cultures.*

Keywords: *kinship terms, lexical-semantic comparison, English, Uzbek, semantics, cultural linguistics, vocabulary, lexical fields, linguistic worldview, familial structure.*

Kinship terminology in any language serves as a lexicon for identifying and organizing relationships among family members. In English, kinship terms such as “father,” “mother,” “brother,” “sister,” “uncle,” and “aunt” are widely recognized and comparatively generic, with fewer morphological variations indicating distinctions based on age or paternal/maternal lineage. The system is relatively symmetrical in terms of direct relations, reflecting basic nuclear and extended family connections. On the other hand, Uzbek kinship terms are

more nuanced, reflecting the culture's strong orientation towards family hierarchy and extended family systems. The Uzbek language encompasses a more extensive network of specific terms that denote not only direct relationships but also distinctions based on age, gender, as well as paternal and maternal lineage. These terms are deeply embedded in the social fabric and are used in both formal and informal contexts, often conveying respect, hierarchy, and tradition [1].

Semantically, kinship terms in both languages represent more than just vocabulary items; they offer a window into cultural perception and value systems. The lexical fields of kinship in English tend to cluster around the nuclear family structure, emphasizing personal autonomy and individual relationships. While the English language does distinguish between immediate family and extended relatives, the set of terms remains relatively compact, and the same word is often used for both maternal and paternal sides without differentiation. Conversely, Uzbek kinship lexicon displays a highly developed differentiation; for instance, specific terms exist for older and younger siblings, as well as separate terms for the siblings of one's mother and father. This distinction is indicative of a society where familial roles and statuses are carefully observed and where a person's position within the family network is an essential part of daily communication and social interaction. Lexical-semantic comparison of kinship terms also sheds light on the manifestation of social hierarchy and gender roles. In English-speaking societies, the terms do not explicitly encode information about relative social status or obligation. For example, the generic terms "cousin" or "aunt" do not provide further detail about the age or the specific parental lineage of the individual, nor do they imply a particular role within the family hierarchy. In contrast, Uzbek kinship

terms are replete with semantic markers that indicate age, seniority, and gender. Contextual usage of these terms is not merely a matter of familial reference but is also a matter of social etiquette and respect. Accurate use of kinship terminology is considered an important social skill in Uzbek society, and misuse can result in social faux pas or offenses.Further, the pragmatic implications of kinship term usage in real-life situations constitute an important dimension of the comparison. In English-speaking societies, choosing to use an individual's name rather than a kinship term can be interpreted as a sign of intimacy or informality. In Uzbek culture, addressing someone solely by name—especially an elder or an in-law—without including a kinship title could be perceived as disrespectful or overly informal, thus disrupting the expected social harmony [2].

The cultural weight of kinship terms manifests most clearly during life-cycle events such as weddings, funerals, and familial gatherings, where language is a crucial tool for maintaining ritualized respect and fulfilling social obligations. In English, such occasions often call for a general acknowledgment of family ties, rarely prescribed by language beyond the use of existing kinship vocabulary. In Uzbekistan, these events are linguistically choreographed with an array of specific kinship terms, each attached to explicit cultural meanings and roles. One of the key semantic dimensions in the comparison concerns the use of diminutives and augmentatives in kinship terms. While the English language uses modifiers such as "little," "big," or "old," they are not typically lexicalized as formal categories of kinship. In Uzbek, augmentative and diminutive forms are fully lexicalized within the kinship lexicon, embodying not just size or age, but also endearment, respect, or informality. Lexical-semantic variation is also observed in the acceptability and frequency of

kinship term use in non-familial contexts. In some English-speaking areas, it has become somewhat common in recent years for people to refer to community elders as “aunt” or “uncle,” but this remains marginal. In Uzbek social life, such uses are widespread and are expected as part of the collective social protocol, which promotes hierarchy and solidarity [3].

In sum, the lexical-semantic comparison of kinship terms in English and Uzbek demonstrates that these words function far beyond their dictionary definitions, serving as carriers of cultural knowledge, social values, and group identity. The English kinship lexicon, while rich in tradition, is characterized by its semantic economy and relatively limited differentiation, reflecting the individualistic orientation of English-speaking societies. In contrast, the Uzbek kinship lexicon exhibits high differentiation, hierarchical sensitivity, and a strong predisposition towards collectivism and respect for elders, reflecting the traditional values embedded within its culture and society [4].

Conclusion:

The examination of kinship terminology in English and Uzbek reveals profound linguistic and cultural distinctions. English kinship terms are characterized by neutral, concise semantic features which primarily support a nuclear family structure and emphasize individual relations while downplaying social hierarchy or age-based distinctions. Uzbek kinship terminology, with its wider variety of terms, incorporates precise distinctions based on age, gender, lineage, and marital status, thus reinforcing social roles, hierarchy, and respect. The differences found in the kinship vocabularies of the two languages reveal not only divergence in linguistic structure but also in the societies that produced them. Kinship terms in both languages serve as bridges between personal

experience and collective memory, but the cultural context within which they are used determines their significance and potential nuances.

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