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**CULTURAL MODELS OF KINSHIP: A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC
ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK METAPHORS**

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Abstract. This article describes how kinship and family relationships are conceptualized through metaphorical language in English and Uzbek from a cognitive linguistic perspective. The study focuses on identifying culturally grounded metaphorical patterns that shape the understanding of family roles in both languages. A qualitative comparative method is applied to analyze data derived from idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and naturally occurring language use. The results indicate that although both linguistic systems demonstrate shared conceptual tendencies, such as viewing family as a unified entity and parents as sources of emotional support, notable differences arise due to cultural contexts. Uzbek metaphors tend to emphasize social hierarchy, collective identity, and respect for elders, whereas English expressions often reflect individual-centered perspectives and flexible family structures. The findings highlight the role of metaphor in encoding cultural knowledge and cognitive patterns.

Key words: cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, kinship, family, cultural models, metaphor analysis, English language, Uzbek language, comparative study

Annotatsiya Ushbu maqolada ingliz va o‘zbek tillarida qarindoshlik hamda oila munosabatlarining metaforik til vositalari orqali qanday konseptuallashtirilishi kognitiv lingvistika nuqtayi nazaridan tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot har ikkala tilda oila rollarini





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anglashga ta'sir qiluvchi madaniy asoslangan metaforik modellarning aniqlanishiga qaratilgan. Tadqiqotda sifat jihatidan qiyosiy metod qo'llanilib, ma'lumotlar iboralar, maqollar hamda tabiiy nutq namunalaridan olingan. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, har ikki til tizimida oila yagona birlik sifatida talqin qilinishi hamda ota-onaning mehr va qo'llab-quvvatlash manbai sifatida ko'rilishi kabi umumiy konseptual tendensiyalar mavjud. Biroq, madaniy omillar ta'sirida sezilarli farqlar ham kuzatiladi. O'zbek metaforalari ijtimoiy ierarxiya, jamoaviylik va kattalarga hurmatni ko'proq aks ettirsa, ingliz tilidagi ifodalar individualizm va moslashuvchan oila tuzilmasini ifodalaydi. Natijalar metaforaning madaniy bilim va kognitiv modellarni ifodalashdagi muhim rolini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: kognitiv lingvistika, konseptual metafora, qarindoshlik, oila, madaniy modellari, metafora tahlili, ingliz tili, o'zbek tili, qiyosiy tadqiqot

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается, как родственные и семейные отношения концептуализируются посредством метафорического языка в английском и узбекском языках с точки зрения когнитивной лингвистики. Исследование направлено на выявление культурно обусловленных метафорических моделей, формирующих понимание семейных ролей в обоих языках. В работе применяется качественный сравнительный метод анализа данных, полученных из идиоматических выражений, пословиц и естественной речи. Результаты показывают, что, несмотря на наличие общих концептуальных тенденций, таких как представление семьи как единого целого и родителей как источников эмоциональной поддержки, существуют значительные различия, обусловленные культурными особенностями. Узбекские метафоры подчеркивают социальную иерархию, коллективную идентичность и уважение к старшим, тогда как английские выражения отражают индивидуалистические подходы и более гибкие семейные структуры. Полученные результаты подчеркивают роль метафоры в кодировании культурных знаний и когнитивных моделей.



Ключевые слова: когнитивная лингвистика, концептуальная метафора, родственные отношения, семья, культурные модели, анализ метафор, английский язык, узбекский язык, сравнительное исследование

INTRODUCTION. Language is not merely a means of communication but a fundamental system through which human cognition and cultural experience are structured and expressed. Within the framework of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is regarded as a central mechanism that enables individuals to conceptualize abstract domains in terms of more concrete experiences. As argued in conceptual metaphor theory, metaphorical thinking plays a crucial role in shaping how people perceive social reality, including such essential domains as family and kinship.

Family and kinship relations represent universal aspects of human life; however, the ways in which they are conceptualized and linguistically encoded vary significantly across cultures. Metaphorical expressions related to family not only describe relationships but also reflect culturally specific values, social norms, and patterns of thinking. Therefore, the study of kinship metaphors provides important insights into the interaction between language, cognition, and culture.

In the context of Uzbekistan, increasing attention is being paid to the development of linguistic research and the preservation of national identity through language. In particular, the Presidential Decree No. PF-5850 highlights the importance of advancing scientific studies of the Uzbek language, including its cognitive and cultural dimensions. This policy underscores the necessity of investigating how linguistic phenomena, such as metaphor, reflect the national worldview and system of values.

At the same time, the growing emphasis on foreign language learning and intercultural communication further enhances the relevance of comparative linguistic studies. In this regard, examining kinship metaphors in English alongside Uzbek provides an opportunity to identify both universal conceptual patterns and culture-specific features shaped by different social and historical contexts.



Despite the increasing interest in metaphor studies, comparative analyses of kinship metaphors in English and Uzbek remain relatively underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by identifying key conceptual metaphors related to family and kinship and analyzing their cultural implications within a cognitive linguistic framework. The research seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What are the dominant metaphorical models of kinship in English and Uzbek? (2) What similarities and differences can be observed between them? and (3) How do these metaphors reflect broader cultural and cognitive patterns?

LITERATURE REVIEW. In recent years, cognitive linguistics has significantly advanced the understanding of metaphor as a fundamental mechanism of human cognition. Rather than being viewed as a purely stylistic feature of language, metaphor is now considered a conceptual tool through which individuals structure abstract domains of experience. The theoretical foundation of this approach is Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which explains how abstract concepts are systematically understood via mappings from more concrete domains.

Building on this theoretical base, recent research has emphasized that metaphorical systems are both universal and culturally variable. Kövecses (2020) argues that while certain conceptual metaphors are grounded in shared human embodiment, their realization differs across cultures due to variations in social experience and value systems. This perspective is particularly relevant in the study of kinship, where family structures and roles are shaped by cultural norms.

From the standpoint of cultural linguistics, Sharifian introduces the concept of cultural schemas, which are shared conceptualizations embedded in language. According to this approach, kinship relations are among the most culturally sensitive domains, as they reflect collective identity, social hierarchy, and moral values. Metaphorical expressions related to family therefore serve as a linguistic manifestation of these cultural schemas.



Recent empirical studies further support the interaction between embodiment and culture in metaphorical cognition. Gibbs highlights that metaphors are grounded in bodily experience but are extended and shaped by cultural context. Similarly, Yu demonstrates that metaphorical representations of social relations, including kinship, are influenced by both universal cognitive mechanisms and culture-specific conceptualizations.

In the context of English, kinship metaphors tend to reflect individual-centered perspectives and nuclear family structures. Expressions such as “family unit” or “broken home” emphasize functionality and structural stability. In contrast, studies on Turkic and Central Asian languages indicate that kinship metaphors are more likely to encode collectivist values, hierarchical relationships, and strong emotional ties.

Despite the growing body of research on conceptual metaphor and cultural linguistics, comparative studies focusing specifically on English and Uzbek kinship metaphors remain limited. Existing research often addresses broader cross-linguistic patterns without providing detailed analysis of Uzbek data within a cognitive linguistic framework. This gap highlights the need for systematic investigation of how kinship metaphors function in these two languages.

Therefore, the present study builds upon contemporary developments in cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics to provide a comparative analysis of kinship metaphors in English and Uzbek. By integrating theoretical insights with empirical data, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, cognition, and culture.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY. This study adopts a qualitative descriptive-comparative research design within the framework of cognitive linguistics to investigate kinship metaphors in English and Uzbek. The research is grounded in Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which explains how abstract concepts are structured through





mappings between source and target domains, as well as in the principles of cultural linguistics, which emphasize the role of shared cultural conceptualizations in language.

The data for the study consist of metaphorical expressions related to family and kinship in both languages. These data were collected from multiple sources, including phraseological dictionaries, proverb collections, and naturally occurring language use. Only commonly used and culturally relevant expressions were selected to ensure the reliability of the dataset.

The analytical procedure involved several stages. First, kinship-related metaphorical expressions were identified in both English and Uzbek. Second, these expressions were grouped into conceptual categories based on recurring patterns, such as family structure, parental roles, and kinship relations. Third, the metaphors were analyzed in terms of their source and target domains following cognitive semantic principles. Finally, a comparative analysis was conducted to identify similarities and differences in metaphorical conceptualization across the two languages.

The study employs qualitative content analysis, focusing on the interpretation of meaning rather than quantitative measurement. The reliability of the analysis was ensured through the use of multiple data sources, while validity was supported by grounding the interpretation in established theoretical frameworks in cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS. The analysis of kinship metaphors in English and Uzbek reveals that metaphorical conceptualization operates through both universal cognitive mechanisms and culture-specific models, as predicted by Conceptual Metaphor Theory and cultural linguistics.

Based on the collected data, the identified metaphors were grouped into four major conceptual domains: family structure, fatherhood, motherhood, and kinship relations.

1. Family as a Structured Entity



In English, expressions such as “family unit” and “broken home” conceptualize the family as a functional system, where stability depends on internal organization and balance. This reflects a structural and system-oriented understanding of family.

In Uzbek, metaphors such as “oila — mustahkam qo‘rg‘on” represent the family as a protective and value-based institution, emphasizing emotional security, unity, and collective identity.

This contrast demonstrates that while both languages share the metaphor FAMILY AS STRUCTURE, English emphasizes functionality, whereas Uzbek highlights symbolic and cultural values.

2. Father as Authority

English metaphors such as “head of the family” reflect a role-based conceptualization of authority, where leadership is associated with responsibility and organization.

In Uzbek, expressions like “ota — tog‘” conceptualize the father as a symbol of strength and stability, indicating a deeper cultural emphasis on hierarchy, respect, and moral authority.

This suggests that Uzbek metaphors encode authority in more symbolic and culturally embedded terms.

3. Mother as Care and Source of Life

In English, “motherly love” represents the mother as a source of emotional care and nurturing within interpersonal relationships.

In Uzbek, “ona — quyosh” extends this conceptualization into a broader symbolic domain, where the mother is associated with warmth, life, and continuity. This reflects a more metaphorically expanded and culturally enriched model.

4. Kinship as Biological Bond

English: blood ties





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Uzbek: qon-qarindoshlik

This reflects a universal embodied conceptualization, where kinship is understood as a natural and inseparable connection based on shared origin.

Summary of Findings

Conceptual Domain	English Model	Uzbek Model	Interpretation
Family structure	Functional system	Protective institutoin	Functional vs Value-based
Father role	Role-based authority	Symbolic strenght	Organizational vs hierarchical
Mother role	Emotional care	Life-givig force	Interpersonal vs symbolic
Kinship	Biological bond	Biological bond	Uninersal pattern

The results indicate that kinship metaphors in both languages are grounded in shared cognitive principles; however, their realization is shaped by cultural context. English metaphors tend to reflect individual-centered and functional cognition, while Uzbek metaphors demonstrate a collectivist and symbolically enriched conceptual system.

These findings confirm that metaphor serves as a cognitive and cultural interface through which social relationships are conceptualized and communicated.

CONCLUSION. This study has investigated the conceptualization of kinship metaphors in English and Uzbek within the frameworks of cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics. The findings demonstrate that both languages share underlying universal metaphorical patterns grounded in embodied human experience, particularly in conceptualizing family as a structured entity and kinship as a natural bond. At the



same time, the analysis reveals significant cultural differences in the realization of these metaphors. English kinship metaphors tend to reflect a more functional and individual-oriented perspective, where family roles are understood in terms of organization and interpersonal dynamics. In contrast, Uzbek metaphors display a stronger orientation toward collectivism, social hierarchy, and symbolic representation, often enriched by culturally specific imagery.

Overall, the study confirms that metaphor functions not only as a linguistic device but also as a cognitive and cultural mechanism that reflects and shapes the way social relationships are understood. The results highlight the interaction between universal cognitive processes and culture-specific conceptual models in the domain of kinship. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed.

First, future research should expand the scope of analysis by incorporating larger datasets and corpus-based methods to achieve more comprehensive and empirically grounded results.

Second, the integration of metaphor analysis into language teaching is highly recommended, as understanding culturally embedded metaphors can significantly enhance learners' communicative and intercultural competence.

Finally, further comparative studies across different languages and cultural contexts are encouraged in order to deepen the understanding of how kinship and other social domains are conceptualized through metaphor, thereby contributing to the broader field of cognitive and cultural linguistics.

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