

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Semantic Features of Kinship Terms in English And Uzbek Proverbs

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Abstract

This article examines the semantic features of kinship terms in English and Uzbek proverbs from a comparative linguistic and cultural perspective. Kinship terms are among the most important lexical units that reflect a nation's worldview, family values, social relationships, and cultural traditions. The study analyzes the use of kinship terms such as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, and sister in English and Uzbek proverbs and explores their semantic functions within paremiological expressions. The findings demonstrate that kinship terms serve not only as indicators of family relationships but also as symbols of wisdom, authority, affection, responsibility, and social solidarity. Furthermore, the article highlights both the similarities and differences in the representation of family values in English and Uzbek proverbial discourse.

KEY WORDS

kinship terms, paremiology, proverb, semantics, linguoculturology, family values, English language, Uzbek language, comparative analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Language is closely connected with culture, history, and social life. One of the most significant lexical groups in any language is the system of kinship terms, which reflects family relationships and social structures within a society. Kinship terminology not only names relatives but also conveys cultural meanings, traditions, and social expectations.

Proverbs, as a form of folk wisdom, preserve collective experience and cultural knowledge accumulated over generations. They often contain kinship terms that symbolize family values, interpersonal relationships, and moral principles. Therefore, the study of kinship terms in proverbs provides valuable insights into the cultural and semantic characteristics of different nations.

The present article aims to investigate the semantic features of kinship terms in English and Uzbek proverbs and to identify their linguistic and cultural significance.

Theoretical Background of Kinship Terms

Kinship terms refer to lexical units that denote relationships among family members and relatives. Linguists consider kinship terminology one of the oldest and most culturally significant layers of vocabulary.

In Uzbek, kinship terminology is highly developed and includes a wide variety of specific terms such as ota (father), ona (mother), aka (elder brother), uka (younger brother), opa (elder sister), singil (younger sister), tog'a (maternal uncle), amaki (paternal uncle), xola (maternal aunt), and amma (paternal aunt).

In contrast, English kinship terminology is more generalized. For example, the word uncle refers to both maternal and paternal uncles, while aunt includes both maternal and paternal aunts. These differences reflect distinct cultural approaches to family organization and social relations.

Within proverbs, kinship terms frequently acquire figurative meanings and function as carriers of moral, educational, and cultural messages.

Semantic Features of Kinship Terms in Uzbek Proverbs

Uzbek proverbs frequently employ kinship terms to emphasize respect, family unity, mutual support, and moral responsibility.

Examples include:

“Ota rozi – Xudo rozi.”

(If the father is pleased, God is pleased.)

“Onaning mehri quyoshdan issiq.”

(A mother’s love is warmer than the sun.)

“Aka-uka ahil bo’lsa, osh ko’payar.”

(When brothers are united, prosperity increases.)

In these examples, kinship terms carry meanings that go beyond biological relationships.

Father as a Symbol of Authority and Wisdom

In Uzbek proverbial discourse, the term father often symbolizes authority, experience, and guidance. Fathers are portrayed as protectors and educators whose advice is highly valued.

Mother as a Symbol of Love and Sacrifice

The concept of mother is associated with unconditional love, care, compassion, and devotion. Numerous Uzbek proverbs emphasize the sacred role of mothers in family life.

Siblings as Symbols of Unity

Terms such as aka (elder brother) and uka (younger brother) commonly represent solidarity, cooperation, and mutual assistance among family members.

Thus, kinship terms in Uzbek proverbs serve as linguistic representations of collective values and social harmony.

Semantic Features of Kinship Terms in English Proverbs

English proverbs also contain kinship terminology, although their semantic focus often differs from that of Uzbek proverbs.

Examples include:

“Like father, like son.”

“A good son makes a good father.”

“The child is father of the man.”

“Charity begins at home.”

These proverbs demonstrate that kinship terms are frequently associated with personal development, moral education, and individual responsibility.

Father as a Model of Character

The term father often symbolizes a role model whose qualities are inherited or imitated by children.

For example:

“Like father, like son.”

This proverb suggests that children often resemble their parents in behavior, attitudes, and character.

Child as a Symbol of Future Development

In English proverbs, the concept of child frequently represents growth, learning, and future potential.

Home and Family as Sources of Moral Values

The proverb “Charity begins at home” emphasizes that moral behavior and kindness should first be practiced within the family before extending to society.

Unlike Uzbek proverbs, English proverbs tend to focus more on personal achievement, self-development, and individual responsibility within family relationships.

Comparative Analysis of Kinship Terms in English and Uzbek Proverbs

A comparative examination reveals both similarities and differences between the two languages.

Similarities

Both traditions highly value family relationships.

The figures of father and mother occupy central positions.

Kinship terms function as symbols of moral and educational values.

Proverbs in both languages emphasize the importance of family upbringing.

Differences

Aspect Uzbek Proverbs English Proverbs

Cultural Orientation Collectivism Individualism

Main Focus Family unity and respect Personal responsibility

Representation of Relatives Broad kinship network
Nuclear family focus

Father Figure Authority and guidance Example and role model

Mother Figure Love and sacrifice Care and education

The comparison indicates that Uzbek proverbs reflect strong communal and extended-family traditions, while English proverbs often emphasize personal character and individual achievement.

Linguocultural Significance of Kinship Terms

Kinship terms are important cultural markers that preserve social norms and traditional values. Their use in proverbs demonstrates how language reflects a society's understanding of family life.

From a linguocultural perspective, kinship terms perform several functions:

preserving cultural heritage;

transmitting moral values;

strengthening family identity;

reflecting national mentality;

expressing social expectations and responsibilities.

Through proverbs, these cultural meanings are passed from one generation to another, ensuring the continuity of traditional knowledge and social norms.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs shows that kinship terms possess rich semantic and cultural significance. Although they primarily denote family relationships, they also function as symbols of wisdom, authority, affection, responsibility, and social cohesion.

Uzbek proverbs emphasize collective values, family solidarity, and respect for elders, whereas English proverbs focus more on individual development, personal responsibility, and moral education. Despite these differences, both traditions recognize the family as the foundation of social life and use kinship terms as important means of expressing cultural values.

Consequently, the study of kinship terms in paremiology contributes not only to linguistic research but also to a deeper understanding of national cultures and worldviews.

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