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COGNITIVE COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF KINSHIP TERMS IN ENGLISH, RUSSIAN, AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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ABOUT ARTICLE

Key words: kinship terms, cognitive linguistics, comparative linguistics, English, Russian, Uzbek, semantic categorization, linguoculture.

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Abstract: This article presents a cognitive-comparative analysis of kinship terms in English, Russian, and Uzbek with the aim of explaining how each language packages family relations into lexical categories. The study is built in IMRAD format and combines componential, contrastive, and cognitive-semantic methods. The working corpus includes core consanguineal and selected affinal terms verified through lexicographic sources and recent scholarly studies. The comparison focuses on seven parameters: generation, sex, lineality, parental side, relative age, affinal specificity, and pragmatic extension to non-relatives. The results show that all three languages reliably lexicalize the nearest lineal relations, but they diverge strongly in the collateral zone. English tends toward semantic compression: aunt, uncle, and cousin cover relatively broad relational classes and require contextual or analytic clarification. Russian occupies an intermediate position: it preserves a rich traditional inventory, especially for in-laws, yet in current usage many specific terms are replaced by descriptive phrases. Uzbek demonstrates the highest degree of lexical differentiation in the sampled material, especially in distinguishing maternal and paternal lines and older versus younger siblings. The discussion argues that these differences should not be interpreted as simple degrees of lexical richness; rather, they reveal distinct cognitive strategies of categorization. English privileges economy and contextual inference, Russian shows

partial restructuring under conditions of modern communicative simplification, and Uzbek integrates genealogy, hierarchy, and politeness into a single semantic field. The article concludes that kinship terminology is an especially productive site for studying the relationship between language structure, cultural knowledge, and conceptual organization.

INGLIZ, RUS VA O‘ZBEK TILLARIDAGI QARINDOSHLIK TERMINLARINING KOGNITIV QIYOSIY-LINGVISTIK TAHLILI

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MAQOLA HAQIDA

Kalit so‘zlar: qarindoshlik terminlari, kognitiv tilshunoslik, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, ingliz tili, rus tili, o‘zbek tili, semantik kategoriyalashtirish, lingvomadaniyat.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada ingliz, rus va o‘zbek tillaridagi qarindoshlik terminlarining kognitiv-qiyosiy tahlili taqdim etilib, har bir til oilaviy munosabatlarni qanday qilib leksik kategoriyalarga ajratishini izohlash maqsad qilingan. Tadqiqot IMRAD formatida tashkil etilgan bo‘lib, komponent tahlili, qiyosiy hamda kognitiv-semantik metodlarni birlashtiradi. Ishchi korpus qon-qarindoshlik va ayrim quda-andachilik (affinal) terminlarini o‘z ichiga oladi hamda lug‘aviy manbalar va zamonaviy ilmiy tadqiqotlar asosida tasdiqlangan. Taqqoslash yetti parametrga asoslanadi: avlod, jins, to‘g‘ridan-to‘g‘ri nasabiylik, ota yoki ona tomoni, nisbiy yosh, quda-andachilikka xoslik va qarindosh bo‘lmagan shaxslarga nisbatan pragmatik kengayish.

Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, uchala til ham eng yaqin nasabiy munosabatlarni ishonchli tarzda leksiklashtiradi, biroq yon tarmoqdagi (collateral) qarindoshlik munosabatlarida sezilarli farqlar namoyon bo‘ladi. Ingliz tili semantik ixchamlikka moyil bo‘lib, aunt, uncle va cousin kabi birliklar nisbatan keng qarindoshlik toifalarini qamrab oladi hamda aniqlik kiritish uchun ko‘pincha kontekst yoki tavsifiy izoh talab etiladi. Rus tili oraliq o‘rinni egallaydi: u, ayniqsa, quda-andachilik terminlari bo‘yicha boy an’anaviy tizimni saqlab qolgan bo‘lsa-da, zamonaviy nutqda ko‘plab maxsus terminlar tavsifiy

birikmalar bilan almashtirilmoqda. O‘zbek tili esa tahlil qilingan materialda eng yuqori darajadagi leksik differensiallashuvni namoyon etadi, xususan, ona va ota tomoni qarindoshlari hamda katta va kichik aka-uka yoki opa-singillarni farqlashda.

Muhokama qismida ushbu farqlarni oddiygina leksik boylik darajalari sifatida talqin qilish to‘g‘ri emasligi ta’kidlanadi. Aksincha, ular kategoriyalashtirishning turli kognitiv strategiyalarini aks ettiradi. Ingliz tili tejamkorlik va kontekstual xulosalarga tayanadi, rus tili zamonaviy kommunikativ soddalashuv sharoitida qisman qayta tuzilishni namoyon etadi, o‘zbek tili esa nasab, ijtimoiy ierarxiya va xushmuomalalikni yagona semantik maydonga integratsiya qiladi. Maqola qarindoshlik terminologiyasi til tuzilishi, madaniy bilim va konseptual tashkilot o‘rtasidagi munosabatni o‘rganish uchun nihoyatda samarali tadqiqot maydoni ekanligi haqidagi xulosa bilan yakunlanadi.

КОГНИТИВНО-СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНЫЙ ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ ТЕРМИНОВ РОДСТВА В АНГЛИЙСКОМ, РУССКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

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О СТАТЬЕ

Ключевые слова: термины родства, когнитивная лингвистика, сравнительное языкознание, английский язык, русский язык, узбекский язык, семантическая категоризация, лингвокультура.

Аннотация: В данной статье представлен когнитивно-сопоставительный анализ терминов родства в английском, русском и узбекском языках с целью объяснения того, каким образом каждый язык структурирует семейные отношения в виде лексических категорий. Исследование выполнено в формате IMRAD и сочетает компонентный, контрастивный и когнитивно-семантический методы анализа. Рабочий корпус включает основные термины кровного родства и отдельные термины свойства, подтверждённые лексикографическими источниками и современными научными исследованиями. Сравнение проводится по семи параметрам: поколение, пол, линейность родства, родительская линия, относительный возраст, специфика

свойства и прагматическое расширение значений на неродственных лиц.

Результаты показывают, что все три языка надёжно лексикализуют ближайшие линейные родственные отношения, однако существенно различаются в сфере бокового родства. Английский язык характеризуется семантической компрессией: термины aunt, uncle и cousin охватывают относительно широкие классы родственных отношений и требуют контекстуального или аналитического уточнения. Русский язык занимает промежуточное положение: он сохраняет богатую традиционную систему терминов, особенно в области свойства, однако в современном употреблении многие специализированные наименования заменяются описательными словосочетаниями. Узбекский язык демонстрирует наибольшую степень лексической дифференциации среди рассмотренного материала, особенно в разграничении родственников по материнской и отцовской линиям, а также старших и младших братьев и сестёр.

В разделе обсуждения утверждается, что данные различия не следует интерпретировать как простые показатели лексического богатства. Напротив, они отражают различные когнитивные стратегии категоризации. Английский язык ориентирован на экономию языковых средств и контекстуальный вывод, русский язык демонстрирует частичную перестройку системы в условиях современной коммуникативной упрощённости, тогда как узбекский язык объединяет генеалогию, социальную иерархию и вежливость в едином семантическом поле. В заключение делается вывод о том, что терминология родства представляет собой особенно продуктивную область для изучения взаимосвязи между языковой структурой, культурным знанием и концептуальной организацией.

Introduction. Kinship terminology occupies a special position in linguistic analysis because it links lexical meaning with social structure, cultural memory, and everyday cognition. Jones (2004) argues that kin terminologies provide a window into the mental representation of social

relations and that cross-linguistic variation can reveal stable conceptual principles. This idea is methodologically important for the present study because it allows kinship terms to be treated not as isolated dictionary items, but as evidence of how languages segment a relational domain. In other words, kin vocabulary is a model case for observing the contact zone between language, cognition, and culture.

A later synthesis by Jones (2010) deepens this position by proposing that kinship systems emerge from the interaction of conceptual structure and linguistic constraints [1.P.46]. His argument is important because it shifts analysis away from a purely anthropological inventory of relatives toward a formally interpretable semantic system. For the present comparison, this means that the opposition between English, Russian, and Uzbek should be explained not only through lists of words, but also through the kinds of distinctions each language chooses to lexicalize, suppress, or express analytically.

Read (2015) similarly defines kinship terminology as the set of terms used to express culturally recognized kin relations rather than a mere mirror of biological genealogy. This clarification matters scientifically because it prevents a reductionist interpretation of kinship vocabulary. A lexical item may point to a genealogical relation, but its real semantic load is cultural: it can include hierarchy, politeness, marriage rules, or expectations of solidarity. Therefore, a comparative study must attend to cultural recognition as much as to biological relation.

From the standpoint of cognitive linguistics, category structure is rarely flat. Lakoff showed that semantic categories are often organized around prototypes, radial extensions, and culturally salient contrasts rather than fixed classical boundaries [2.P.211]. Applied to kinship, this insight suggests that broad terms such as English cousin or uncle are not semantically 'poor'; instead, they represent a strategy of categorical compression in which context does part of the interpretive work. Analytically, this prevents the common mistake of equating fewer lexical roots with conceptual deficiency.

Wierzbicka (2017) argues from a natural semantic metalanguage perspective that kin terms require fine-grained cross-linguistic description because their meanings are shaped by culturally shared conceptual primitives and developmental experience. This is a productive correction to Eurocentric assumptions. For the present article, her position supports a careful distinction between apparently equivalent translations and actual semantic equivalence. A dictionary gloss may suggest sameness, while the deeper relational content remains asymmetrical.

Recent work in cognitive science has also strengthened the argument that kinship terms are learned and processed through structured relational reasoning. Mollica and Piantadosi (2022) demonstrate that kinship concepts can be modeled computationally and that patterns such as

overextension and underextension in acquisition arise from principled learning mechanisms [3.P.367]. The scientific value of this finding is that it confirms kinship terminology is not a random lexical field; it is a domain in which human learners actively compute relational structure. Therefore, cross-linguistic comparison can be tied to learnability and conceptual complexity, not only to ethnographic description.

At the same time, large-scale typological research warns against overly deterministic readings. Passmore and Jordan (2020) show that there are no simple universal evolutionary pathways in kinship terminology, while Passmore et al. (2021) show that classic typologies do not fully predict the internal coherence of real systems [4.P.160]. These results are theoretically valuable because they block linear interpretations such as 'more specific equals more archaic' or 'more general equals more modern.' In the present article, this caution is taken seriously: English, Russian, and Uzbek are treated as different semantic solutions, not as stages on one developmental ladder.

The specifically regional and contrastive literature also points to the relevance of a three-language comparison. Karabayeva (2023) shows that English and Uzbek kinship terms can be analyzed through parameters such as generation, gender, lineality, and relative age. This is useful because it offers a workable analytic grid for lexical decomposition. Kulmamatov and Saidkhodjaeva (2024), working with Uzbek, Russian, and Spanish, further show that kinship lexicon is structurally and linguoculturally differentiated even where meanings partially overlap. Their contribution is particularly significant for the present study because it confirms that Uzbek and Russian data require attention not only to meaning, but also to word formation and culturally embedded usage.

Russian evidence also matters in its own right. Koshheleva (2009) notes that modern Russian still preserves a broad kinship inventory, especially in the sphere of in-laws, but many traditional terms are moving out of active everyday use and are replaced by analytic phrases. This observation is important because it shows that comparison must distinguish between systemic availability and actual communicative frequency [5.P.24]. A language may possess highly specific lexemes in principle and yet increasingly rely on descriptive strategies in practice.

Against this background, the present article addresses three questions. First, which semantic distinctions are lexicalized directly in English, Russian, and Uzbek kinship terminology? Second, which distinctions are delegated to modifiers, context, or descriptive phrases? Third, what do these choices reveal about the cognitive organization of family relations in the three languages? The working hypothesis is that English tends toward lexical compression, Russian represents an intermediate mixed model, and Uzbek preserves the highest degree of lexical differentiation in the sampled collateral domain, especially through parental-side and age-based distinctions. The

broader claim is that kinship terminology in these languages reflects not only social structure but also different strategies of conceptual packaging.

Method. The study uses a qualitative-comparative design with a limited structured corpus of core kinship expressions in three languages. The primary data were verified through lexicographic sources (Cambridge Dictionary for English, Gramota.ru for Russian, and Izoh.uz for Uzbek) and then interpreted through the lens of contemporary research on kinship semantics and cognitive categorization. Such triangulation was chosen deliberately. Lexicographic sources provide the denotative core of terms, while research literature clarifies cultural and structural interpretations. This combination reduces the risk of mistaking translation glosses for semantic equivalence.

The analysis proceeded in four stages. First, lexical correspondences were established for the nearest lineal relations, sibling relations, selected collateral relations, and a small sample of affinal terms. Second, each item was coded according to seven parameters: generation, sex, lineality, parental side, relative age, affinal specificity, and pragmatic extension beyond biological kinship. Third, the coding results were compared across languages in order to determine which distinctions are expressed lexically and which are expressed analytically.

A further methodological decision concerns translation. Throughout the article, apparent equivalents are treated cautiously. For example, English uncle, Russian dyadya, and Uzbek amaki/tog‘a all seem to refer to the same broad relational zone, yet they encode different degrees of specificity. The analysis therefore distinguishes between lexical equivalence, descriptive equivalence, and functional equivalence. This distinction is essential if the study is to remain scientific rather than merely bilingual.

Results. The first result is that the three languages behave similarly in the nearest lineal domain. All of them lexicalize the parent/child and grandparent/grandchild relations clearly and productively. This finding supports Jones's (2004) claim that kin terminologies often retain robust marking around cognitively central family relations [6.P.56]. The analytical implication is that the strongest cross-linguistic differences do not appear in the center of the system, but at its lateral and socially elaborated margins.

Uzbek, by contrast, lexicalizes relative age directly in the basic sibling system: aka and opa refer to older brother and older sister, while uka and singil refer to younger brother and younger sister (Izoh.uz, n.d.). This is not a trivial lexical curiosity. It demonstrates that seniority is not treated as optional contextual information, but as a constitutive semantic feature of the kin term itself. From a cognitive perspective, hierarchy is therefore not simply added to the term; it is built into category membership.

A similar divergence appears in the collateral generation. English aunt and uncle, as defined in standard lexicography, cover both the parental sibling and the spouse of that sibling, while the parental side remains unspecified unless context or additional wording clarifies it (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Russian tyotya and dyadya behave comparably in their denotative core (Gramota.ru, n.d.). The analytical consequence is that both languages compress multiple genealogical paths into one lexical label and rely on subsequent disambiguation only when needed [7.P.766].

Uzbek foregrounds parental side much more consistently. In available lexicographic and descriptive sources, tog‘a marks the mother's brother, amaki the father's brother, xola the mother's sister, and amma the father's sister (Izoh.uz, n.d.; Kurbanova, 2021; Kulmamatov & Saidkhodjaeva, 2024). This distribution shows that Uzbek does not merely enlarge the kinship vocabulary quantitatively; it reorganizes the kinship field by treating lineage orientation as inherently salient. The cognitive effect is that the speaker can name the relation and its genealogical route at the same time.

The cousin zone produces one of the sharpest contrasts. English cousin neutralizes sex and parental side in one lexical item, so the hearer learns the exact line only from context. Russian does not have a single equally broad lexical equivalent in routine neutral usage; instead, it commonly uses analytic constructions such as dvoyurodnyy brat and dvoyurodnaya sestra, which mark sex but still do not ordinarily encode whether the relation comes through the mother or father. Uzbek, however, commonly forms compounds that indicate the relevant branch, for example amakivachcha, xolavachcha, or tog‘avachcha in descriptive studies of the language (Qulmamatov & Saidkhodjaeva, 2024; conference and pedagogical sources consulted in the corpus). This means that Uzbek manages collateral distance not by semantic compression, but by compositional specification.

Another result concerns affinal terminology. English uses broad umbrella forms such as brother-in-law and sister-in-law, which can refer to more than one structurally distinct relation. Russian historically preserves a far richer affinal inventory, including terms such as dever’, shurin, zolovka, and svoyachenitsa, yet Koshheleva (2009) shows that many of these terms are now receding from active everyday speech and are increasingly replaced by descriptive phrases such as brat muzha or brat zheny [8.P.176]. This result is scientifically important because it shows that a language can possess high structural differentiation in the system while displaying communicative simplification in usage.

Discussion. The results confirm the main hypothesis only in a qualified sense. English indeed shows the strongest tendency toward lexical compression in the sampled material, especially in the collateral domain. Yet this should not be interpreted as conceptual simplicity.

English can recover many distinctions analytically through possessives, prepositional phrases, and contextual elaboration. From a cognitive-linguistic point of view, English appears to privilege economy at the lexical level and distribute disambiguation across broader discourse structures. This resembles Lakoff's (1987) view that categories can remain efficient even when they are broad, because speakers rely on background frames rather than exhaustive lexical specification.

Russian occupies an intermediate position. On the one hand, it patterns with English in not lexicalizing parental side in the aunt/uncle zone and in commonly expressing sibling age analytically. On the other hand, it preserves a historically rich affinal vocabulary and a set of socially meaningful traditional terms that are not matched by English umbrella forms. Koshheleva's (2009) observation that many of these items are becoming passive is crucial here. The Russian system is not best described as either rich or poor; it is better understood as a system undergoing semantic and pragmatic restructuring under modern communicative pressures.

Uzbek represents the most differentiated model in this comparison, but again the interpretation must remain precise. Its specificity is concentrated in relational pathways that matter socially: elder versus younger sibling, maternal versus paternal collateral kin, and forms of respectful address based on kinship vocabulary. This pattern suggests that Uzbek semantic organization gives special weight to hierarchy, lineage orientation, and socially indexed respect. The absence of grammatical gender in Uzbek, noted by Kulmamatov and Saidkhodjaeva (2024), does not therefore reduce differentiation; it simply shifts differentiation to other parameters. This is an important theoretical point because it shows that semantic richness does not depend on grammatical gender alone.

The discussion also supports Read's (2015) claim that kinship terminology should be treated as a culturally recognized system, not just as a map of genealogy. If kin terms are used to address non-relatives, then kinship vocabulary does social work beyond naming blood ties. Uzbek illustrates this most strongly, Russian partially, and standard English much less centrally. In this respect, kinship terminology overlaps with politeness theory, address systems, and cultural models of social proximity. The family lexicon becomes a public lexicon of social positioning.

From the perspective of comparative philology, one of the most useful conclusions is methodological: a purely dictionary-based comparison of kin terms is insufficient. Without cognitive and discourse analysis, one may miss the difference between a lexically broad item and a culturally broad item. English cousin is lexically broad; Russian dvoyurodnyy brat is descriptively explicit in sex but broader in other respects; Uzbek branch-marked compounds are compositionally transparent. These are not interchangeable word labels, but different strategies of semantic packaging. The strongest contribution of cognitive linguistics to kinship study is precisely this shift from naming lists to conceptual architecture.

Conclusion. The article set out to compare kinship terms in English, Russian, and Uzbek within an IMRAD framework and to interpret their differences through cognitive linguistics. The analysis has shown that the three languages converge in the lexicalization of the nearest lineal relations, but diverge sharply in the lateral family domain. English relies most heavily on broad lexical categories plus contextual clarification; Russian combines moderate lexical generalization with a historically differentiated but partly receding affinal lexicon; Uzbek displays the strongest lexical differentiation in the sampled material, especially where parental side, seniority, and respectful address are concerned.

The central scientific conclusion is that kinship terminology is best understood as a cognitive-cultural categorization system. Lexical differences do not simply reflect how many words a language has. They reflect which social contrasts are treated as conceptually primary and therefore deserving of lexical encoding. In the present material, Uzbek foregrounds hierarchy and lineage orientation, English foregrounds lexical economy, and Russian illustrates a mixed and transitional pattern.

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