

Family Values in Various Cultures: Linguoculturological and Conceptual Analysis

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Abstract

This article examines the concept of family values from a linguocultural perspective, focusing on its semantic, cultural, and conceptual dimensions across different languages and cultures. The study is based on the theoretical foundations of linguoculturology, as developed by E. M. Vereshchagin, V. G. Kostomarov, and further expanded by Yuri Karaulov and Anna Wierzbicka. Special attention is given to the concept of “family” as a culturally marked unit reflecting national mentality, social norms, and value systems. The article analyzes the structure of the concept, including its lexical, associative, and etymological layers, and highlights cross-cultural differences between Eastern and Western interpretations of family values. The findings demonstrate that language serves as a key medium for encoding and transmitting culturally specific models of family relations, moral obligations, and social expectations. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of the interrelation between language, culture and cognition.

Keywords: Linguoculturology, family values, concept, conceptsphere, culture, language, national mentality, cross-cultural analysis, semantic structure, cultural linguistics.

Introduction

In modern linguistics, the study of the interrelationship between language and culture is considered one of the most relevant scientific directions. In particular, within the framework of linguoculturology, identifying and analyzing the cultural content embodied in language units holds significant importance. This approach makes it possible to interpret language not only as a means of communication, but also as a form of reflection of national thinking, a system of values, and social experience. The theoretical foundations of linguoculturology were developed by E. M. Vereshchagin and V. G. Kostomarov and were later advanced by scholars such as Yuri Karaulov and Y. D. Apresyan. In particular, the theories of concept and conceptsphere provided a deeper substantiation of the organic connection between language and culture. [1. P=34-35]

This article analyzes the concept of “family values” based on a linguoculturological approach. The family is one of the most important social institutions of human society, distinguished in every culture by its own unique system of values. Therefore, the concept of “family” in different languages embodies not only lexical meaning, but also deep cultural, historical, and spiritual layers. The aim of the study is to identify the linguoculturological features of the “family” concept in various languages and cultures, to analyze its semantic structure, and to highlight the national-cultural specificities from a comparative perspective. To achieve this goal, concept analysis, comparative-linguistics and descriptive methods were used.

At the intersection of language and culture, within the framework of linguocultural studies, the concept of *family values* is interpreted as a phenomenon possessing

distinct national and cultural specificity. Linguoculturology, as an interdisciplinary field, explores how cultural meanings are embedded in language units and how they reflect the worldview of a particular linguistic community.

The founders of linguoculturology, E. M. Vereshchagin and V. G. Kostomarov, focused on identifying cultural information encoded in linguistic structures. Their work was further developed by scholars such as Y. D. Apresyan and V. V. Vorobyov, who emphasized that language serves as a reflection of national mentality and worldview. In this context, Yuri Karaulov introduced the theory of the *national conceptosphere*, arguing that each language contains a system of culturally significant concepts that manifest themselves in the linguistic personality of its speakers.

Within linguoculturology, the notion of *concept* extends beyond mere lexical meaning; it represents a complex mental unit that integrates cultural, historical, and value-based dimensions of a people's experience. A concept thus embodies collective memory and cultural identity.

For instance, the concept of *family* demonstrates significant variation across cultures. In Western cultures, the term *family* typically denotes a nuclear unit consisting of parents and children. In contrast, in many Eastern cultures, including Uzbek society, the notion of family encompasses a broader network, including extended relatives and ancestral lineage.

The internal structure of concepts was further elaborated by V. V. Stepanov, who identified three layers:

1. The core lexical meaning (current,aktual meaning);
2. The associative-cultural layer (emotional, symbolic, and evaluative connotations);
3. The internal or etymological layer (historical origin of the word) [2. P=1-3]

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Applying this model to the concept of *family*, one may observe that in Uzbek, the word *oila* derives from the Arabic *a'ila*, meaning “household” or “family unit.” Its primary meaning refers to individuals living together in kinship relations, while its associative layer includes notions such as sacred space, moral foundation, and a center of upbringing.

Similarly, the Russian term *semya* is believed to be etymologically connected to the number “seven,” reflecting an idealized traditional family structure. In contemporary usage, it denotes family or kinship, while culturally it evokes associations such as “*semeyny ochag*” (family hearth), symbolizing warmth, unity, and emotional support.

In English, the word *family* originates from the Latin *familia*, which historically included not only relatives but also household servants. In modern Western discourse, the term *family values* are commonly associated with moral principles such as marital fidelity, child-rearing responsibilities, and religious commitment.

Thus, the concept of *family values* acquires a distinct national-cultural coloring in each linguistic community. Through this concept, societal attitudes toward family, moral ideals, and educational principles are expressed.

The Australian linguist Anna Wierzbicka, in her theory of cultural key words, demonstrated that certain lexical units are deeply culture-specific and cannot be fully translated without contextual interpretation. For example, the Russian concept “*dusha*” (soul) reflects emotional openness and interpersonal closeness characteristic of Russian culture. In contrast, the English concept of “*privacy*” highlights the importance of personal space and individual autonomy, even within family relations. [3. P=317]

Likewise, in Uzbek and Russian cultures, the notion of filial duty—respect and care for

parents—is considered a fundamental moral obligation. This is reflected in expressions such as “respect your parents” or “seek their blessing.” Conversely, in Western cultures, greater emphasis is often placed on individual independence, as illustrated by expressions like “follow your dream.”

Although such generalizations should be approached with caution, comparative analysis of linguistic units provides valuable insights into the linguocultural characteristics of family values. It reveals how language encodes culturally specific norms, beliefs, and social expectations, thereby serving as a key to understanding the deeper structures of human thought and cultural identity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the linguocultural analysis of the concept of family values demonstrates that language serves as a powerful medium for reflecting and transmitting culturally specific norms, beliefs, and social structures. The concept of “family” is not limited to its lexical meaning but encompasses a complex system of cultural, historical, and emotional associations that vary across different linguistic communities. The study has shown that in Eastern cultures, particularly in Uzbek society, family values are strongly associated with collectivism, respect for elders, and extended family ties, whereas in Western cultures, individualism, personal autonomy, and nuclear family structures are more prominent. These differences are clearly manifested in language, including lexical choices, phraseological units, and culturally marked expressions.

The application of conceptual analysis, particularly the model proposed by V. V. Stepanov, has allowed for a deeper understanding of the internal structure of the concept, including its core meaning, associative layer, and etymological background. Furthermore, the theories of

Yuri Karaulov and Anna Wierzbicka have highlighted the role of language in shaping national worldview and cultural identity.

Overall, the findings confirm that the concept of family values is culturally conditioned and linguistically encoded, making it an essential object of study in linguoculturology. Future research may focus on broader comparative studies involving additional languages and cultural contexts, as well as empirical analysis of discourse and real-life language use.

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