KOKAND UNIVERSITY HERALD SCIENTIFIC E-JOURNAL
ISSN: 2181-1695
QO‘QON UNIVERSITETI XABARNOMASI
KOKAND UNIVERSITY HERALD
ВЕСТНИК КОКАНДСКОГО УНИВЕРСИТЕТА
OAK: 01-08/1819/6
www.herald.kokanduni.uz

A COMPARATIVE LINGUOCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF “FAMILY” IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK PROVERBS

Laylo Yusupova Ilhom qizi,
Assistant teacher at the Interfaculty department of English,
Faculty of Foreign Philology, NUUz
layloyusupovaa@gamil.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.54613/msk3ws67

MAQOLA HAQIDA/ О СТАТЬЕ
Qabul qilindi: 6-noyabr 2026-yil
Tasdiqlandi: 9-noyabr 2026-yil
Jurnal soni: 20-A
Maqola raqami: 12
KALIT SO‘ZLAR/ КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА
oila konsepti, paremiologiya, ingliz maqollari, o‘zbek maqollari, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, lingvomadaniy tahlil, semantik ekvivalentlik

ANNOTATSIYA/ АННОТАЦИЯ
Ushbu maqolada “Oila” konseptining ingliz va o‘zbek xalq maqollarida ifodalanishi, xususan, umuminsoniy tajribalarning har bir madaniyatga xos bo‘lgan lingvistik obrazlar orqali qanday aks etishi tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqotning asosiy maqsadi ota-ona va farzand munosabatlari, nikoh, oilaviy birlik, gender rollari hamda qarindoshlik aloqalariga oid maqollardagi semantik o‘xshashlik va farqlarni aniqlashdan iborat. Mazkur maqolada, shuningdek, til, milliy-madaniy o‘zlik va oilaviy munosabatlar haqidagi an’anaviy qarashlarning paremiologik birliklarda namoyon bo‘lish xususiyatlari ham keng yoritiladi. Xususan, xalqning ko‘p asrlik hayotiy tajribasi, ijtimoiy me’yorlari, axloqiy tamoyillari va madaniy qadriyatlarining maqollar mazmunida qay tarzda mujassamlashgani qiyosiy jihatdan tahlil qilinadi. Oilaviy munosabatlarga oid tushunchalarning turli tillarda o‘ziga xos leksik birliklar, metaforik obrazlar va baholovchi ifodalar orqali shakllanishiga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Ota-onaning oiladagi mavqei, farzand tarbiyasi, er-xotin munosabatlari, oilaviy mas’uliyat, o‘zaro hurmat va hamjihatlik kabi masalalarning ingliz hamda o‘zbek maqollaridagi ifodasi o‘rganiladi. Shuningdek, nikoh munosabatlari orqali yuzaga keladigan qarindoshlik aloqalari, ularning ijtimoiy-madaniy mazmuni va milliy dunyoqarash bilan bog‘liq jihatlari ochib beriladi. Maqollarning semantik ekvivalentlik, qisman muvofiqlik, funksional analogiya va milliy-madaniy xoslik mezonlari asosida tasniflanishi ikki til paremiologik tizimidagi mushtarak hamda farqli xususiyatlarni tizimli aniqlash imkonini beradi.

ABOUT THE PAPER
Accepted: 6 November 2026
Approved: 9 November 2026
Volume: 20-A
Paper number: 12
KEYWORDS
family concept, paremiology, English proverbs, Uzbek proverbs, comparative linguistics, linguocultural analysis, semantic equivalence

ANNOTATION
This article examines how the concept of Family is represented in English and Uzbek folk proverbs, with particular attention to the ways in which shared human experiences are expressed through culturally specific linguistic images. The study aims to identify semantic correspondences and differences in proverbs concerning parent–child relations, marriage, family unity, gender roles, and kinship. The research also explores the relationship between language, cultural identity, and traditional perceptions of family relationships as reflected in English and Uzbek paremiological expressions. Particular attention is given to the ways in which collective experience, social norms, and culturally established values are encoded in proverbial language. The comparative perspective makes it possible to examine how similar family-related ideas are conceptualized through different lexical choices, metaphorical images, and evaluative constructions. The study considers the representation of parental authority, children's upbringing, marital responsibilities, mutual understanding between spouses, and the significance of extended family relationships. It also highlights the role of national traditions in determining the semantic and pragmatic characteristics of proverbs, especially those that express culturally specific forms of kinship and social interaction. By distinguishing between semantic equivalents, partial correspondences, functional analogues, and culture-specific expressions, the research provides a more systematic understanding of the similarities and differences between the two paremiological systems.

Introduction

Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as an essential instrument for preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage, collective knowledge, and values of a particular community. Through linguistic expressions, people reflect their perceptions of the world, social relationships, traditions, and moral principles developed over generations. In this regard, proverbs occupy a significant position in the linguistic and cultural systems of different nations. As concise and figurative expressions of collective experience, they convey accumulated knowledge, traditional beliefs, and socially accepted norms of behaviour. Their semantic content frequently extends beyond literal meaning, reflecting the historical, cultural, and social background of the community in which they have developed.

The concept of family represents one of the fundamental components of human social and cultural experience. Family relationships are associated with such universal values as love, respect, responsibility, mutual support, parental care, and generational continuity. However, the linguistic representation of these values varies across cultures, depending on historical traditions, social structures, religious beliefs, and established patterns of interpersonal relationships. Consequently, family-related proverbs provide valuable linguistic material for identifying both universal human values and culturally specific features of national worldviews.

English and Uzbek proverbs offer considerable opportunities for comparative linguocultural investigation of the family concept. Despite differences in their historical development, social organization, and linguistic structures, both languages contain numerous proverbial expressions concerning parental authority, relationships between parents and children, marriage, marital harmony, family unity, and kinship. These expressions reveal how different linguistic communities conceptualize family responsibilities, evaluate interpersonal relationships, and communicate their traditional understanding of family values.

A comparative analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs makes it possible to identify similarities and differences not only in their semantic content but also in their metaphorical representation, lexical composition, structural organization, and pragmatic functions. For example, certain proverbs in both languages communicate similar ideas through different natural or social images, while others reflect culturally specific relationships that do not have direct equivalents in the other language. Such differences are particularly evident in expressions associated with marriage traditions, gender roles, and relationships between families connected through matrimonial ties.

Literature review

The study of the representation of the concept of family in English and Uzbek proverbs draws on theoretical perspectives from paremiology, linguocultural studies, and comparative semantics. In particular, A. Taylor examines the generic characteristics, formation, and role of proverbs in folk thought, highlighting their distinctive features as a form of folklore that conveys generalized meanings through concise and figurative expressions [9, pp. 3–7]. S. L. Arora investigates the characteristics of proverbiality, focusing on the ways in which proverbs are recognized, used, and interpreted within particular communicative situations [1, pp. 1–5]. These approaches make it possible to consider proverbs concerning family relationships not merely as linguistic units but also as cultural phenomena reflecting the social experience and values of a particular community.

W. Mieder regards proverbs as concise verbal expressions of folk wisdom, historical experience, and social attitudes, paying particular attention to their pragmatic functions in everyday communication [5, pp. 3–8]. N. R. Norrick analyzes the definition of the proverb, its structural features, semantic characteristics, and distinctions from other fixed expressions. He also emphasizes the close relationship between the meaning of proverbial units and the contexts in which they are used [7, pp. 7–27]. These theoretical perspectives provide a methodological foundation for the comparative examination of semantic layers associated with family, parents, children, marriage, and kinship in English and Uzbek proverbs.

The conceptual metaphor theory developed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson is also particularly relevant to this research area. The scholars demonstrate that abstract concepts in human cognition are frequently understood through concrete objects, natural phenomena, and everyday experiences [4, pp. 3–9]. This theoretical approach helps identify the semantic functions of images such as apples, trees, the moon, birds, and other metaphorical elements used in proverbs concerning family relationships. For instance, the English proverb “Like father, like son” and the Uzbek proverb “Olma tagiga olma tushadi” express the resemblance between generations through different linguistic and figurative means, while conveying a shared conceptual meaning.

The collection of Uzbek folk proverbs compiled by T. Mirzayev, A. Musoqulov, and B. Sarimsoqov represents an important source for investigating the semantic and linguocultural characteristics of Uzbek paremiological units. It contains numerous proverbs reflecting aspects of people's lifestyles, family relationships, respect for parents, child upbringing, kinship, and social solidarity [6, pp. 15–22]. This source provides valuable material for classifying Uzbek proverbs thematically, identifying their figurative characteristics, and comparing them with corresponding expressions in English. In examining the meanings and usage of English proverbs, the dictionary edited by J. Speake is also noteworthy as an important lexicographic reference [8, pp. 1–10].

Among the studies directly concerned with the representation of the family concept in English and Uzbek linguocultures, the research conducted by Z. Chuyanova deserves particular attention. The author examines the verbalization of this concept through lexical, phraseological, and paremiological means, focusing on the comparative characteristics of family-related values as reflected in the two languages [2, pp. 307–310]. Z. Xalilova, in turn, investigates the expression of family relationships in Uzbek and English linguocultures from a comparative perspective, identifying their national and cultural characteristics as well as their common features [10, pp. 36–37].

In general, the reviewed scholarly sources establish the theoretical and methodological foundations for studying the concept of family through paremiological units. They examine the semantic structure, figurative characteristics, cultural content, and communicative functions of proverbs from different perspectives. Nevertheless, the representation of parent–child relationships, marriage, family unity, gender roles, and kinship relations established through marriage in English and Uzbek proverbs requires further examination within a unified comparative classification framework. In this regard, the present article focuses on identifying the relationships between English and Uzbek family-related proverbs through the analytical categories of semantic equivalence, partial equivalence, functional analogy, and culture-specific expression.

Methodology

The study is based on qualitative comparative analysis of English and Uzbek proverbs related to the concept of family. The research employs thematic classification, semantic, structural, and linguocultural analysis to identify the meanings, metaphorical features, and cultural values reflected in the selected expressions. The proverbs are grouped into five thematic categories: parent–child relationships, marriage, family unity, gender roles, and kinship. Comparative analysis distinguishes four types of correspondence: close semantic equivalents, partial semantic equivalents, functional analogues, and culture-specific expressions. Particular attention is paid to identifying universal family values and culturally specific features reflected in the paremiological systems of both languages.

Results

The comparative analysis reveals that the concept of family occupies an important position in both English and Uzbek paremiological traditions. The selected proverbs demonstrate several common semantic features, particularly those concerning parental influence, generational continuity, marital relationships, family harmony, and mutual responsibility. Despite these shared themes, the two languages employ different linguistic and metaphorical resources to express family-related values.

The analysis identifies close semantic correspondences in proverbs concerning parent–child resemblance and marital relationships. For example, the English expression “Like father, like son” corresponds functionally to the Uzbek proverb “Olma tagiga olma tushadi”, both emphasizing the similarity between parents and their children. Similarly, certain proverbs concerning family unity express the shared idea that mutual understanding and solidarity are essential for maintaining stable family relationships.

Four complementary procedures were applied. First, thematic classification grouped the examples according to the family-related domain they represent. Second, semantic analysis identified the central proposition and

evaluative meaning of each proverb. Third, structural and metaphorical analysis examined the images, contrasts, parallel constructions, and other linguistic devices through which meaning is conveyed. Fourth, comparative linguocultural analysis assessed whether the examples share a meaning, differ in emphasis, or encode a culturally specific relationship.

For comparison, the following categories were used:

(a) close semantic equivalents, where the central proposition is substantially shared; (b) partial semantic equivalents, where the main idea overlaps but the scope or evaluation differs;

(c) functional analogues, where different images or propositions perform a similar advisory or evaluative function;

(d) culture-specific expressions, for which no concise equivalent is available in the other language. These categories are analytical tools; they do not imply that every proverb has one fixed translation.

The analysis also observes an important methodological limitation: proverbs express conventionalized or historically inherited viewpoints, not necessarily the current behaviour of every member of a speech community.

A related Uzbek expression, “Oila ahil bo‘lsa, omad o‘z oyog‘i bilan keladi”, associates family harmony with prosperity. Good fortune is personified as if it could arrive independently, making the positive consequences of unity vivid. The English proverb “A house divided against itself cannot stand” offers a functional parallel: both expressions warn that internal division weakens a household or community. Nevertheless, the English proverb foregrounds the inability of a divided group to endure, while the Uzbek examples more directly connect unity with practical success and good fortune.

The relationship between parents and children is represented in both languages through proverbs that connect a child's qualities with parental influence. The English sayings “Like father, like son” and “Like mother, like daughter” express resemblance between generations. Their Uzbek functional counterpart, “Olma tagiga olma tushadi” (“An apple falls beneath the apple tree”), uses a natural image to convey the idea that offspring may resemble their parents. The expressions share a general proposition, but their imagery differs: English names the family relationship directly, whereas Uzbek uses the image of a fruit and its tree.

A similar contrast can be observed in “Every mother thinks her own gosling a swan” and the Uzbek expression “Har kimniki o‘ziga oy ko‘rinar ko‘ziga.” Both describe subjective admiration for what belongs to oneself. The English proverb uses an intentionally disproportionate comparison between a gosling and a swan; the Uzbek expression invokes the moon as an image of exceptional beauty. These are functional analogues rather than literal equivalents. Their shared meaning concerns the tendency to overvalue one's own child or possession, while their metaphorical vehicles are culturally and linguistically distinct.

The English proverb “Choose a wife rather by your ear than by your eye” recommends judging a potential spouse by what is heard about the person's character rather than by appearance alone. The Uzbek expression “Onasi maqtagan qizni olma, el maqtagan qizni ol” also invokes reputation and social evaluation, advising the listener not to rely solely on praise from the girl's mother but to consider the wider community's opinion.

Discussion

The Uzbek proverb “Yaxshi xotin erning baxti, yomon xotin erning qatli” intensifies this evaluation through antithesis: a good wife is associated with a husband's happiness, while a bad wife is associated with his ruin. The English expression “Happy wife, happy life” is a contemporary, concise saying that similarly links a wife's happiness with domestic harmony. However, the two expressions differ in tone and scope. The Uzbek proverb makes a strong moral contrast between good and bad wives, whereas the English saying is commonly used humorously or conversationally to promote accommodation in marriage. It should therefore be treated as a functional parallel, not as a historically identical proverb. The English proverb “Do not put your hand between the bark and the tree” advises people not to interfere in a close or established relationship. In the research material, it is compared with the Uzbek expression “Er-xotin urushi – doka ro‘mol qurishi.” The Uzbek proverb conveys the idea that a quarrel between spouses is temporary and that outsiders should not become unnecessarily involved.

The Uzbek expressions “quda-anda”, “qudali bo‘lmoq”, and “qudachilik” refer to relationships established between families through marriage. The expression “Qudachilik – ming yilchilik” presents this relationship as potentially long-lasting. English has terms such as “in-laws” and “parents-in-law”, but these do not fully reproduce the social and relational scope of the Uzbek term “qudachilik”. The Uzbek expression can refer not simply to an individual's legal relatives by marriage but also to the relationship and continuing interaction between the two families.

The main differences concern the choice of metaphor, the degree of explicitness, and the social roles foregrounded. Some Uzbek examples explicitly refer to parental worth, family solidarity, community reputation, and relationships between families connected through marriage. The English examples examined here more often use compact generalizations, natural imagery, or conversational formulations. These observations are limited to the selected material and should not be generalized to all English- or Uzbek-speaking communities.

Table 1

For clarity, the principal correspondences can be summarized as follows:

Theme	English example	Uzbek example	Type of correspondence
Parent–child resemblance	Like father, like son; Like mother, like daughter	Olma tagiga olma tushadi	Close functional equivalent
Parental value	One father is more than a hundred schoolmasters	Oltin-kumushning eskisi bo‘lmas, ota-onaning bahosi bo‘lmas	Culture-specific Uzbek example
Marriage and haste	Marry in haste and repent at leisure	Shoshgan qiz erga yolchimas	Partial semantic equivalent
Choosing a spouse	Choose a wife rather by your ear than by your eye	Onasi maqtagan qizni olma, el maqtagan qizni ol	Partial / functional equivalent
Marital harmony	A good wife makes a good husband	Xotin yaxshi, er yaxshi	Close semantic equivalent
Family solidarity	A house divided against itself cannot stand	Oila ahil bo‘lsa, tog‘dagini oldirar, Oila baxil bo‘lsa qo‘ldagini oldirar	Functional equivalent
Non-interference	Do not put your hand between the bark and the tree	Er-xotin urushi - doka ro‘mol qurishi	Functional analogue
Kinship through marriage	A good marriage makes a good family	Qudachilik - ming yilchilik	Culture-specific expression

Conclusion

The study has examined the representation of the concept of family in selected English and Uzbek proverbs through semantic, structural, and linguocultural comparison. The analysis confirms that proverbs in both languages preserve shared observations about parenthood, children's behaviour, marriage, and the importance of harmonious family relationships. These common themes demonstrate that family is a significant conceptual domain in both paremiological traditions. The article's principal contribution is its distinction between close semantic equivalents, partial equivalents, functional analogues, and culture-specific expressions. It also offers a practical basis for translating family-related proverbs and explaining them in intercultural communication.

The findings are qualitative and based on selected examples; they do not establish the frequency or current social prevalence of the values represented. Further research could develop a larger, systematically documented bilingual corpus, include contextual examples from contemporary usage, and combine qualitative interpretation with quantitative analysis. Such work would make it possible to test more precisely how the family concept is distributed across the wider paremiological resources of English and Uzbek.

References

1. Arora, S. L. (1984). The perception of proverbiality. Proverbium, 1, 1–38.
2. Chuyanova, Z. (2025). Means of verbalization of the concept “family” in English and Uzbek linguaculture. Journal of Applied Science and Social Science, 15(3), 307–310. https://doi.org/10.71337/inlibrary.uz.jasss.76240
3. Gotthardt, H. H., & Varga, M. A. (Eds.). (2015). Introduction to paremiology: A comprehensive guide to proverb studies. De Gruyter Open. https://doi.org/10.2478/9783110410167
4. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. University of Chicago Press.
5. Mieder, W. (2004). Proverbs: A handbook. Greenwood Press.
6. Mirzayev, T., Musoqulov, A., & Sarimsoqov, B. (2005). O‘zbek xalq maqollari. Sharq.
7. Norrick, N. R. (2015). Subject area, terminology, proverb definitions, proverb features. In H. H. Gotthardt & M. A. Varga (Eds.), Introduction to paremiology: A comprehensive guide to proverb studies (pp. 7–27). De Gruyter Open. https://doi.org/10.2478/9783110410167
8. Speake, J. (Ed.). (2015). The Oxford dictionary of proverbs (6th ed.). Oxford University Press.
9. Taylor, A. (1931). The proverb. Harvard University Press.
10. Xalilova, Z. (2024). Comparative analysis of family relations in Uzbek and English linguocultures. The Lingua Spectrum, 2(1), 36–37. https://lingvospektr.uz/index.php/lngsp/article/view/96