

THE ASSOCIATIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPT OF "FAMILY" IN UZBEK AND FRENCH LANGUAGES

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Abstract

This article explores the associative field of the Famille-Oila concept through a comparative linguistic and cultural study of French and Uzbek linguistic cultures. Drawing on the framework of anthropocentric linguistics, the research investigates how the family concept is cognitively and culturally perceived in these distinct contexts. The study employs free associative experiments conducted among students in France and Uzbekistan, analyzing responses to stimuli related to the roles of "family," "father," and "mother." The findings reveal both universal and culture-specific associations, highlighting the influence of cultural, social, and psychological factors on linguistic cognition. Despite differences, the study underscores the universal significance of the family as a fundamental societal value across cultures.

Keywords: Associative field, famille-oila concept, comparative linguistics, anthropocentric linguistics, french linguistic culture, uzbek linguistic culture, cultural perceptions, family roles, cognitive linguistics.

Introduction

In recent years, global linguistics has increasingly focused on studying language in relation to the speaker's communicative activity, psychology, social status, age, gender, and other factors. Special attention has also been given to exploring the functional capabilities of language observed during the process of human speech activity. As a result, by the end of the last century, various branches of anthropocentric linguistics emerged, grounded in methodologies that examine language in connection with individual human factors and characterized by unique analytical approaches.

Materials and Methods

One of these directions is the study of language from the perspective of associativity. According to sources, the term "association" (from Latin associatio – addition, connection [5]) was introduced into scientific discourse by the English philosopher John Locke in 1660. He built upon the ideas of association proposed by great thinkers of ancient philosophy, such as Plato and Aristotle, and introduced the term "association" in his works to describe the connection between psychological elements. John Locke believed that during the process of idea formation in humans, associations lead to the random and free linkage of other ideas [2, 450-459].



The first to address linguistic associations was the German scholar Wilhelm von Humboldt. He viewed associations as "the act of individuals touching the same key of their spiritual harmony, resulting in the emergence of thoughts in each person's mind that correspond to one another but are not identical."

Ferdinand de Saussure also addressed the concept of association in his time. He distinguished between syntagmatic and associative relations among linguistic units. Saussure emphasized that, regardless of how linguistic units are expressed, all of them should be connected to the theory of syntagms and associations [4, 155].

In Russian linguistics, the study of associative relations in language gained momentum in the late 19th century. N.V. Krushevsky was among the first to propose ideas about the structuring of words into associative series based on the laws of association. According to him, "words are directly connected to each other through association based on 1) similarity and 2) contiguity. From this, clusters, systems, and series of words emerge."

A.A. Potebnya, when discussing associative connections, concluded that the inner form of a word could be characterized as the association of a specific object with another based on a shared primary feature. It is evident that A.A. Potebnya regarded association as a significant attribute of a word.

The external world is reflected in human consciousness through interconnected objects, events, and phenomena, which accompany one another and thus trigger associative recall. Not only external objects but also various experiences that individuals undergo simultaneously or together evoke mutual recollections based on the principle of connectivity. For instance, the word winter brings to mind lexemes such as snow and cold in human memory. This type of relationship, where linguistic units interact in connection with human psychological perceptions, is referred to as associative relations.

Associative relations reflect the associative linkage of one or more levels of linguistic units in human cognition, influenced by various factors. The association formed by a speaker of one language in response to a particular linguistic sign differs from the association that arises in a speaker of another language.

An associative field is the aggregate of linguistic units that are associatively connected (evoking one another in memory). It consists of relations among units from the same or different levels of language. The associative field includes not only semantically related units but also those that are not semantically connected. These unrelated units are recalled in memory due to the speakers' psychology, worldview, interests, and knowledge about the world.

Analysis and Results

In this article, our focus on associative field relations stems from the aim of uncovering the various meanings and characteristics of the Famille-Oila concept.

The significance of studying the concept of Famille within the context of French culture lies in identifying the unique features of the family image in the rapidly evolving French society. It also addresses the analysis of both traditional and contemporary perspectives on the family among young people, set against the backdrop of the modern socio-cultural environment.



Exploring the Famille concept in a cultural context, particularly through direct communication with native speakers, contributes to the development of its associative field. Studying the Famille concept is particularly relevant within the realm of cultural research. It is closely linked to several socio-political changes experienced by the French population. For example, since 2013, laws in France have permitted same-sex marriages and the adoption of children by same-sex partners. This raises the question of whether these socio-cultural changes are reflected in modern French perceptions of the family.

During the research process, we conducted a free associative experiment to explore the associative field of the Famille concept in French linguistic culture and identify its cognitive features. This experiment was carried out in a written survey format among students at the Sorbonne University in Paris. The participants included 20 native French speakers aged 20 to 35, residing in France. The average age of the participants was 25 years.

The second version of our survey, aimed at studying the associative field of the Oila (Family) concept, was conducted in Uzbekistan among 20 graduate students from the master's program at Fergana State University. The participants were found to be between the ages of 21 and 25, with an average age of 22.5 years.

The key lexical item in the nominative field of the Oila concept is expressed by the lexeme Famille-Oila. Therefore, the stimulus La Famille c'est... ("Family is...") was formulated for the experiment. The second question in the experiment was selected as Père, qui est-ce pour vous? ("Father, who is he for you?"), while the third question was designated as Mère, qui est-ce pour vous? ("Mother, who is she for you?").

Analyzing the survey results, we observed that despite living in geographically distant regions and under the influence of different cultures and religions, the associations evoked by the concept of "family" (Oila) are remarkably similar. For instance, 5 French respondents and 7 Uzbek respondents associated the stimulus "Family is..." with "love." Similarly, 5 French respondents and 6 Uzbek respondents related it to "happiness." These responses accounted for 25% to 35% of the total participants. However, notable differences in associations were also observed. For example, only 5% of French respondents associated family with children, while 55% of Uzbek respondents did. Additionally, none of the French respondents (0%) associated family with their spouse, whereas 45% of Uzbek respondents envisioned their spouse under the concept of family.

The analysis of the survey question Père, qui est-ce pour vous? revealed notable trends in the associative responses from representatives of French and Uzbek linguistic cultures.

Results from French Respondents:

Soutien, aide (supporter, helper) was selected by 7 respondents (35%).

Exemple, modèle (example, role model) was chosen by 6 respondents (30%).

Sagesse, intelligence (wisdom, intelligence) was associated by 4 respondents (20%).

Guide, maître (guide, mentor) was noted by 3 respondents (15%).

Protecteur (protector) was selected by 2 respondents (10%).

One respondent (5%) described their father using the association montagne (mountain).



Results from Uzbek Respondents:

Suyanchiq, tayanch (support, reliance) was noted by 4 respondents (20%).

Oila boshi, oila ustuni (head of the family, pillar of the family) was chosen by 3 respondents (15%).

Do'st (friend) was associated by 3 respondents (15%).

Qahramon (hero) was selected by 2 respondents (10%).

The associative field analysis of the word father revealed cultural differences in dominant perceptions. Among French respondents, soutien (support) emerged as the leading association, reflecting the perception of the father as a source of help and guidance. In contrast, among Uzbek respondents, the dominant association was oila boshi, oila ustuni (head of the family, pillar of the family), highlighting the father's role as the authoritative figure and leader within the family.

These findings indicate that, in Uzbek culture, the father's primary quality is his status as the head and central figure of the family, while in French culture, the focus is more on the supportive and guiding role of the father.

The analysis of the associative field for the word Mère (mother) based on the question Mère, qui est-ce pour vous? yielded the following results from French and Uzbek respondents:

Results from French Respondents:

Soins, amour (care, love) was the dominant association, selected by 12 respondents (60%).

Fondation de la famille (foundation of the family) was identified by 3 respondents (15%), highlighting the mother as the most significant figure or cornerstone of the family.

The remaining respondents associated confiance (trust) as the primary characteristic of the mother.

Results from Uzbek Respondents:

Four respondents (20%) described the mother as someone who would sacrifice everything or is ready to do anything for her children.

Another four respondents (20%) referred to the mother as their friend.

Two respondents (10%) associated the mother with qualities of kindness and compassion (mehribon, kuyunchak).

One respondent (5%) identified the mother as the pillar of the family.

Another respondent used the association tarozi (scales) to describe the mother, indicating a sense of balance or fairness.

Among French respondents, the dominant association was soins, amour (care, love), underscoring the mother's nurturing and affectionate role in the family. The perception of the mother as the family's foundation (fondation de la famille) also reflects her central and stabilizing role in French culture.

In contrast, Uzbek respondents exhibited a broader range of associations, including self-sacrifice and friendship, alongside traditional qualities such as kindness and compassion. The unique association of tarozi suggests cultural nuances where the mother embodies balance and fairness.



These differences highlight cultural variations in how the role and attributes of the mother are perceived, shaped by societal values and familial structures in French and Uzbek linguistic cultures.

What surprised us during the survey aimed at identifying the associative field of the mother concept was the prevalence of identical responses among both groups of respondents. Examples include:

1. Elle nous fait passer avant elle (She puts us before herself) / O‘zini emas, farzandlarini o‘ylaydigan shaxs (A person who prioritizes her children over herself).
2. Une personne qui m’aime plus que quiconque (A person who loves me more than anyone else) / Meni o‘zimdan ko‘proq yaxshi ko‘radigan inson (A person who loves me more than I love myself).
3. Foundation de la maison (The foundation of the home) / Oilaning ustuni (The pillar of the family).
4. Une personne qui a un amour inconditionnel (A person with unconditional love) / Hech qanday manfaatlarsiz yonimda turuvchi inson (A person who stands by me without any self-interest).

These findings suggest that, regardless of the cultural or linguistic context in which the mother concept is studied, the attributes associated with it remain largely universal and unchanged across conceptual fields.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that any language embodies a system of national and unique characteristics that define the worldview of its speakers and shape their perception of the world. Similarly, the concept of "family" (oila) is an integral part of culture and holds a significant place within the value system of society. Regardless of the cultural or ethnic context in which it is studied, the family concept retains its importance as one of the most fundamental notions of any society.

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