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THE ISSUE OF STUDYING THE FAMILY CONCEPT IN UZBEK DIALECTS OF THE KHOREZM REGION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ASSOCIATIVE FIELD

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the meaning and essence of the term association*, its introduction into scientific discourse, the associative structure of concepts, and theoretical views on the associative study of the* family *concept in Uzbek dialects of the Khorezm region.*

KEY WORDS: *Anthropocentric Linguistics, Association, Cognitive Linguistics, Associative Linguistics, Concept, Associative Process, Component.*

In modern cognitive linguistics, the study of the relationship between language and thought is considered one of the most pressing issues. Language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of human thinking. In this sense, *concepts*—units that encapsulate human understanding, experience, and culture—serve as essential objects of analysis. The *family* concept, in particular, is deeply rooted in every society and is closely intertwined with linguistic, cultural, and moral values. Studying this concept, especially in its dialectal variants—as observed in the Uzbek dialects of the Khorezm region—requires special attention within the framework of anthropocentric linguistics.

In contemporary linguistics, the study of how the world is perceived and reflected in language, the associative relationships between words, their role in text formation, and the development of associative dictionaries are pressing issues. It is well known that in the minds of language users, associative links formed on the basis of linguistic and non-linguistic factors are also manifested in language. Investigating these associative connections, which emerge as a result of cognitive-associative processes, through the example of the *family* concept in the Uzbek dialects of the Khorezm region, undoubtedly provides valuable theoretical insights for anthropocentric linguistics.

Today, fundamental reforms in the field of science in our country—especially those aimed at strengthening the status of the Uzbek language as the state language, enhancing its prestige, and ensuring its widespread use in all spheres of society—have necessitated a new stage in the scientific study of the Uzbek language. The requirement that "Uzbekistan must become globally competitive in the field of science and intellectual potential" has defined many tasks for Uzbek linguists to address [1]. One of such unresolved issues is the associative analysis of the *family* concept in the Uzbek dialects of the Khorezm region.

Since the 20th century, particular attention has been paid in global linguistics to the study of associative relations among linguistic units. The issue of associative links in language was first introduced by the German scholar W. von Humboldt. He noted that mutual understanding arises in the human mind due to the emergence of corresponding but not identical ideas [2]. F. de Saussure also expressed views on the associative and syntagmatic relationships between linguistic units, explaining their differences [3]. In Western linguistics, ideas about associative relations were later developed by scholars such as G. Kent, A. Rozanov, J. Deese, J. Miller, and C. Kofer [14].

Among Russian linguists, N.V. Krushevsky was the first to describe the associative connection of words based on similarity and contiguity [4]. The issue of associative relations between linguistic units was also recognized and further developed in the works of A.A. Potebnya, I.A. Baudouin de Courtenay, M.M. Pokrovsky, Y.N. Karaulov, and others [5].

In Uzbek linguistics, the problem of associative links between linguistic units and the formation of verbal associations in language was initially addressed in some studies. For instance, A. Nurmonov's scholarly articles and D. Khudoyberganova's doctoral dissertation titled *Anthropocentric Interpretation of Literary Texts in the Uzbek Language* discuss associative units used in literary texts.

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In recent years, special studies focused on associative links in language have emerged in our linguistics. Notably, D. Lutfullayeva (on the Uzbek language) and N. Khoshimova (on English and Uzbek material) have studied the problem of associative relations observed in the interaction of linguistic units [6]. B. Tojiboyev published a dissertation titled *Associative Analysis of National-Cultural Units in the Uzbek Language* [7].

Although some work has been done in this direction, the issue of the associative structure of the *family* concept in the Uzbek dialects of the Khorezm region has not been the subject of specialized study in our linguistics.

Associative linguistics is one of the independent branches of anthropocentric linguistics that studies language in relation to the personality using it. In associative linguistics, language is viewed not only as a system formed by the interaction of its units but also as a verbal network interconnected through associations.

One of the key objects of study in associative linguistics is *associations*—the products of associative thinking—and its theoretical foundation is the theory of associative relations. Associative relation is one of the central concepts of associative linguistics. In this framework, language units interact with one another based on an individual's psychological perceptions and personal viewpoints.

By the 21st century, as noted by Professor A. Nurmonov, the introduction of the concept of "linguistic personality" into the scientific paradigm of linguistics led to the incorporation of concepts such as *person*, *consciousness*, *thought*, *activity*, *behavior*, and *situation*—which had previously been widely used in disciplines related to linguistics but remained outside its scope. As a result, the concept of the "speaking individual" has now become a unifying element across various linguistic approaches, including psycholinguistics, ethnolinguistics, linguoculturology, sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, pragmalinguistics, and ontolinguistics [8]. This anthropocentric approach to the study of language has also opened the door for the development of associative linguistics alongside the aforementioned branches.

One of the main concepts in associative linguistics is the notion of associative relations. Associative relations are based on the psychological perceptions of the speaker and reflect the mechanism of "mental evocation"—where one linguistic unit recalls another. It is recorded that the term *association* (from Latin *associatio* – joining, connecting, grouping) was first introduced into scholarly usage in 1690 by the English philosopher, educator, and representative of empiricism and liberalism, John Locke [9].

The first scholar to comment on associations in language was the German linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt. While analyzing the dialectics of objectivity and subjectivity, Humboldt observed that mutual understanding arises when individuals "press the same key of their inner mental instrument," leading to the emergence of corresponding but not identical thoughts in each person's mind. According to Y.I. Goroshko, although Humboldt did not directly speak of associations, he essentially described how the individual's perception of sound and object associations coincides among different people due to their shared experience of the same objects and phenomena. In this context, the basis for sound-related associations is objective—since they belong to the real world—while the associations themselves are subjective, as they pertain to the psychological realm [6].

In our view, events or phenomena cannot spontaneously arise in the linguistic consciousness of a language user. In order to retrieve them from memory, one must trigger other "mental keys," leading to a chain reaction where one memory stimulates another. Which words are encoded in these mental steps or "keys" depends on the individual's imaginative capacity and cognitive framework. This mental retrieval process of lexical units is what we refer to as the *associative process*.

Associations are embedded in the semantic structure of linguistic units and reflect the national consciousness and culture [11]. Indeed, words related to the family, as used in the dialects of Khorezm—such as *apa* (older sister), *äkä* (older brother), *toy* (wedding), *gälïn-gıyov* (bride and groom), *qäyınnä* (mother-in-law)—each evoke different associations.

The concept of *family* exists in nearly all cultures and plays a vital role in the socialization of individuals, the internalization of moral norms, and the transmission of cultural values. As noted by linguist Yu.M. Stepanov, every concept is formed in human consciousness as a set of specific associations, and these associations are enriched through knowledge, values, and social experiences unique to the culture [12]. From this perspective, the Uzbek-language concept of *family* is represented in the mind through such associative elements as *father*, *mother*, *child*, *affection*, *respect*, *responsibility*, *home*, and *household*.

V.A. Maslova, in discussing the concept and associative field, states: “The associative field occupies a central role in the linguistic modeling of a concept. It includes both dominant (core) and peripheral (secondary) elements” [13].

Based on this approach, the dominant components of the *family* concept in the Khorezm dialects include *father*, *mother*, and *child*, while its peripheral components consist of *father-in-law*, *bride*, *customs*, *weddings*, and *hospitality*.

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IN CONCLUSION

the analysis of the *family* concept within Uzbek dialects of the Khorezm region from the perspective of associative fields reveals its semantic scope as well as its cultural and psychological layers. This, in turn, contributes to the anthropocentric study of conceptual units in the Uzbek language.

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