

Article

National and Cultural Specificity of the Associative Fields of the Uzbek and Russian Languages

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Abstract: This article is devoted to the study of the national-cultural characteristics of fields in a broad linguocultural and psycholinguistic context. The main goal of the study is to identify similarities and differences in the associative reactions of representatives of the two languages, as well as to reveal their cultural values, mentality and national thinking expressed through language. The study used free associative experiment, semantic analysis, statistical processing and linguocultural interpretation methods based on a comparative-descriptive approach. Associative fields were formed on the basis of socially and culturally significant stimulus words and analyzed according to their semantic groups and national-cultural signs. The results showed that family, collectivism, tradition, respect and moral values occupy a leading place in associative fields in the Uzbek language. In the Russian language, associations focused on individuality, abstract concepts and socio-political phenomena prevail. Although both languages have universal associations inherent in all people, their cultural interpretation is manifested differently. In conclusion, associative fields serve as an important indicator in determining the national mentality and cultural identity, and comparative research of the Uzbek and Russian languages serves to deepen intercultural dialogue.

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1. Introduction

In the context of today's globalization processes, contacts between representatives of different nationalities and cultures are becoming increasingly active. The expansion of international cooperation, the strengthening of intercultural dialogue further increase the importance of language not only as a means of communication, but also as an important factor reflecting national culture and thinking. Therefore, in-depth study of the national-cultural characteristics of language is one of the urgent scientific problems in modern linguistics [1].

Language is a complex socio-cultural phenomenon that embodies the historical experience, traditions, values, mentality and worldview of the people. Each language has its own system of national images, symbols and concepts, which are manifested in the minds of language speakers through associative connections. From this point of view, associative fields serve as an important source in determining the inextricable link between language and thinking, language and culture [2].

Associative research conducted within the framework of psycholinguistics and cognitive linguistics makes it possible to reveal how human thinking is formed through language, and what role cultural and social factors play in the process of meaning

formation. Associative fields reflect the images, feelings, and cultural stereotypes that arise in the minds of language speakers in relation to a particular word or concept. Therefore, the associative system of each language is closely related to the social structure, lifestyle, traditions, and national values of that society [3].

A comparative study of the associative fields of the Uzbek and Russian languages makes it possible to identify commonalities and differences in the worldview, cultural thinking, and national mentality of the two peoples. The associative reactions formed in these languages occurred as a product of historical development, religious beliefs, social relations, and cultural experience, and they clearly demonstrate national identity [4].

The main purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the national-cultural characteristics of associative fields in the Uzbek and Russian languages. In the course of the study, the conditionality of associative reactions by ethnocultural factors, how cultural content is expressed through language units, is scientifically elucidated. The results are of significant theoretical and practical importance in the development of intercultural dialogue, improvement of translation processes, and teaching foreign languages based on a linguacultural approach [5].

2. Materials and Methods

The material base of this study consists of scientific and theoretical sources, regulatory and legal documents and state programs created in the field of associative linguistics, psycholinguistics and linguocultural studies in world and Uzbek linguistics. The study was based on concepts that interpret language as an important indicator of national culture, social consciousness and mentality.

Studies devoted to the study of associative fields in world linguistics, in particular, the works of J. Deese, A. A. Leontyev, Yu. N. Karaulov, N. V. Ufimtseva, V. V. Krasnikh, scientifically shed light on the inextricable link between associative systems and human thinking, language and culture. In particular, the "Russian Associative Dictionary" compiled by Yu. N. Karaulov serves as the main empirical source in the study of associative fields of the Russian language. These works prove the importance of associative experiments in determining national mentality and linguistic consciousness [6].

In Uzbek linguistics, the works of such scientists as Sh. Rahmatullayev, N. Mahmudov, A. Nurmonov, E. Begmatov, serve as an important scientific basis for elucidating the semantic system, national-cultural characteristics and linguistic thinking of the Uzbek language. These studies scientifically substantiate how the worldview, value system, moral and spiritual criteria of the Uzbek people are expressed through language units [7].

Also, the research materials included normative and legal documents determining the language, education and cultural policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In particular, the Law "On the State Language", the Law "On Education", the Presidential Decrees on the "Strategy of Actions" and the "Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan" recognize language as a key factor in understanding national identity, preserving and developing cultural heritage. These documents substantiate the need for scientific study of the language, its development in accordance with modern requirements, and strengthening national thinking in the minds of the younger generation [8].

These normative documents strengthen the methodological foundation of the study and determine the social, cultural and political significance of the comparative study of associative fields in the Uzbek and Russian languages. Therefore, the research material was enriched not only with linguistic sources, but also with state policy documents [9].

The study used a comprehensive approach, combining several scientific methods. A free associative experiment was chosen as the main empirical method. This method allows

us to determine the natural and spontaneous reactions of respondents to language units and is highly effective in revealing national-cultural perceptions formed in their linguistic consciousness.

In the experiment, respondents speaking Uzbek and Russian were offered socially and culturally significant stimulus words. Respondents were asked to name the first unit that came to mind for the given word. The resulting associative reactions were recorded and systematized on the basis of a special table [10].

The obtained materials were analyzed using the following methods:

- Semantic analysis to determine the content structure of associative units, their layers of meaning;
- Statistical analysis to determine the frequency of associative reactions, dominant units and semantic groups;
- Comparative analysis to identify commonalities and differences in the associative fields of the Uzbek and Russian languages;
- Linguistic-cultural interpretation to explain the cultural, ethnic and mental foundations of associative reactions;
- Descriptive method to consistently illuminate the internal structure of each associative field.

The combination of these methods makes it possible to systematically, reliably and scientifically reveal the national-cultural characteristics of associative fields in the Uzbek and Russian languages [11].

In particular, when conducting a free associative experiment, the age, gender, social status, and belonging to the language environment of the respondents were taken into account. This increased the objectivity of associative reactions and ensured that the results were statistically reliable. When selecting respondents, the factor of bilingualism was also taken into account, and only people who could think freely in their native language were involved.

The experimental conditions were standardized: stimulus words were presented in the same order, at the same time intervals, and a limited time was set for responding. This method made it possible to determine the natural reactions of the respondents at the subconscious level and prevented artificial changes in associative responses [12].

Elements of corpus linguistics were also used in the study. The frequency of use of stimulus words was determined based on text corpora in Uzbek and Russian and compared with the results of the experiment. This method helped to determine the place of associative units in real language practice.

Also, based on the content analysis method, associative responses were divided into thematic groups: socio-moral, emotional, religious, philosophical, socio-political and personal-psychological groups were formed. This classification served as an important methodological basis for determining national-cultural priorities.

In order to increase the reliability of the results, the triangulation method was used, that is, the results of the associative experiment were compared with theoretical sources, dictionaries and existing associative studies. This strengthened the scientific validity of the research conclusions [13].

In addition, the conceptual structure of associative fields was determined using the cognitive analysis method. The semantic cores, periphery and cultural markers formed around each stimulus word were considered separately. This method made it possible to identify cognitive models of national thinking.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study clearly confirmed that associative fields in the Uzbek and Russian languages are important indicators of national-cultural thinking. The materials collected on the basis of the free associative experiment showed that the associative reactions of representatives of both languages, along with universal concepts inherent in all people, are closely related to the historical experience, social values, and cultural traditions of a particular people [14].

It was observed that such concepts as “family”, “parents”, “homeland”, “respect”, “tradition”, “love”, “honesty” occupy a central place in the associative fields of the Uzbek language. This indicates that the values of the Uzbek people such as collectivity, the sanctity of the family, respect for elders, and adherence to moral standards are firmly entrenched in the linguistic consciousness. For example, the high frequency of units such as “love”, “child”, “parents”, “happiness” in the associations given to the stimulus “family” confirms the emotional and social orientation of the Uzbek mentality.

It was found that in the associative fields of the Russian language, abstract and philosophical concepts such as “person”, “freedom”, “fate”, “life”, “society”, “justice” prevail. This indicates a strong tendency towards individuality, inner experiences and socio-philosophical problems in the thinking of Russian speakers. For example, the Table 1. abundance of units such as “independence”, “choice”, “responsibility” among the associations given to the stimulus “svoboda” (freedom) indicates that the concept of personal freedom is considered an important cultural value.

Table 1. Multidimensional Model of Associative Reactions by Stimulus Words.

Stimulus	Language	Emotional (%)	Social (%)	Cultural (%)	Political (%)	Individual (%)
Mother	Uzbek	44	31	15	2	8
	Russian	28	18	4	5	45
Motherland	Uzbek	29	27	24	12	8
	Russian	18	15	5	42	20
Family	Uzbek	41	38	12	1	8
	Russian	25	20	3	5	47
Faith	Uzbek	32	14	46	1	7
	Russian	19	8	27	3	43
Freedom	Uzbek	24	19	15	26	16
	Russian	12	10	4	38	36

The data of the table clearly and multi-layeredly reveal the national-cultural differences of the associative fields in the Uzbek and Russian languages. First of all, if we pay attention to the results for the “Mother” stimulus, the predominance of the emotional (44%) and social (31%) components is clearly visible among Uzbek respondents. This indicates that the concept of “mother” in Uzbek culture is closely related, first of all, to affection, love, devotion and family values. The cultural component (15%) is also noticeable, confirming the perception of the mother as a sacred, respected image. The high level of manifestation of the individual-psychological component (45%) among Russian respondents indicates that the concept of “mother” is more associated with personal feelings, individual experiences and psychological relationships [15].

Significant differences are also observed for the “Motherland” stimulus. In the Uzbek language, the emotional (29%), social (27%) and cultural (24%) components are relatively evenly distributed. This indicates that the concept of “Homeland” is perceived in the Uzbek linguistic culture in harmony with history, ancestors, national values and sacredness. In the Russian language, the very high level of the political component (42%) indicates that the concept of “Homeland” is strongly associated with the state, power,

territorial integrity and political institutions. This confirms that the concept of “Rodina” in the Russian linguistic consciousness is formed more in the paradigm of statehood. The results of the “Family” stimulator once again demonstrate the extreme importance of the family as a social institution in Uzbek society. The high level of emotional (41%) and social (38%) indicators among Uzbek respondents indicates that the family is at the center of kindness, community and kinship relations. In Russian respondents, the individual component reaches 47%, indicating that the family is more associated with personal life, individual responsibility and independent decisions. This clearly reflects the contrast between collectivism and individualism between the two cultures.

The “Faith” stimulus reveals the strongest cultural differences. In Uzbek respondents, the cultural component of 46% indicates that the concept of faith is closely related to religious, moral and traditional values. The emotional component is also high (32%), reflecting the importance of faith as a personal mental state. In Russian respondents, the individual component is 43%, indicating that the concept of “faith” is perceived more as a personal worldview, inner confidence and subjective choice. This indicates that the concept of faith is interpreted as an individual mental phenomenon rather than a collective religious value.

The “Freedom” stimulus reveals ideological differences in associative consciousness in the two languages. The dominance of the political component (26%) among Uzbek respondents indicates that the concept of freedom is associated with independence, state sovereignty, and social development. At the same time, emotional (24%) and social (19%) components also play an important role. The high level of individual (36%) and political (38%) components among Russian respondents indicates that the concept of freedom is directly related to personal rights and the state-political space.

In general, the data in Table show that associative fields in the Uzbek language are mainly centered around emotional, social, and cultural values, with the categories of collective consciousness, traditionalism, and sacredness prevailing. Associative fields in the Russian language are characterized by the strength of individual-psychological and political components, which indicates the importance of the concepts of personality, independence, and statehood.

Thus, Table empirically proves the national-cultural specificity of associative fields in the Uzbek and Russian languages: in the Uzbek linguistic consciousness, the main dominants are collectivism, sacredness, and emotional closeness, while in the Russian linguistic consciousness, individualism, political consciousness, and personal responsibility occupy a leading position.

These differences once again confirm the inextricable link between language and culture.

The results of the comparative analysis showed that the associative system of the Uzbek language is more oriented towards socio-ethical and collective relations, while in the associative fields of the Russian language, individual-psychological and abstract concepts occupy a leading place. However, such universal concepts as “life”, “human”, “goodness”, “evil”, “friendship” form almost the same semantic core in both languages, which indicates the existence of common cognitive foundations of human thinking.

During the discussion, it was found that associative fields are manifested as a linguistic model of the national worldview, reflecting the cultural memory and social experience of each people. Tradition, religion, morality and kinship relations create a strong semantic background in the associative units of the Uzbek language. In the Russian language, elements of historical and social experience, personal freedom and philosophical thinking play an important role.

On this basis, it can be concluded that associative fields in Uzbek and Russian are not only a linguistic phenomenon, but also an important psycholinguistic mechanism

expressing cultural and philosophical concepts. Their comparative analysis once again confirms the need to deepen intercultural dialogue, ensure semantic compatibility in translation processes, and take into account national and cultural components in teaching foreign languages.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study confirmed that associative fields in the Uzbek and Russian languages are an important psycholinguistic indicator reflecting national-cultural thinking, linguistic consciousness and ethnocultural characteristics. Associative reactions are formed inextricably linked with the historical experience, value system, social relations and cultural traditions of each people.

During the research, it was found that associative fields in the Uzbek language are mainly characterized by collectivism, the sanctity of the family, respect for elders, adherence to moral norms and traditional values. This indicates that social solidarity and spirituality occupy a priority place in the mentality of the Uzbek people. In the associative fields in the Russian language, the predominance of individuality, personal freedom, abstract-philosophical thinking and socio-psychological concepts was observed, which confirms the importance of personal experience and inner feelings in the minds of Russian speakers.

The results of the comparative analysis showed that both languages have universal concepts inherent in all people, but their cultural interpretation and semantic centers are formed differently. This once again proves that language is not only a communicative tool, but also a representative of the national worldview and cultural memory.

In this regard, the study of associative fields is of great scientific importance in identifying national mentality, developing intercultural dialogue, improving the theory and practice of translation, and strengthening the linguocultural approach to teaching foreign languages.

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