



<https://doi.org/10.70728/b.series.fil.v08.i06.107>

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SCHOLARLY RESEARCH ON THE CONCEPT OF “FATHER” IN THE UZBEK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

Ismoilova Iroda Abduvasitovana
Teacher of UzNPU

Abstract The present study provides a critical analysis of scholarly investigations dedicated to the concept of “father” within Uzbek and English linguistic traditions. Drawing upon the theoretical foundations of cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, conceptology, and discourse studies, the article examines the principal methodological approaches and interpretative paradigms employed in the conceptualization of fatherhood. Particular attention is devoted to the semantic, axiological, and culturally marked dimensions of the concept, as reflected in linguistic and extralinguistic representations. The analysis demonstrates that Uzbek scholarship predominantly conceptualizes the father as a central figure embodying authority, responsibility, moral guidance, and national-cultural values, whereas English-language studies increasingly foreground the dynamic and socially constructed nature of fatherhood, emphasizing emotional engagement, individual identity, and evolving familial roles. The comparative evaluation reveals both universal cognitive characteristics and culture-specific conceptual features that shape the representation of fatherhood in the respective linguistic worldviews. The study enriches the theoretical discourse on concept analysis and provides a foundation for further comparative research in cognitive and cultural linguistics.

Keywords: father concept, conceptology, cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, conceptual analysis, fatherhood, cultural values, linguistic worldview, cross-cultural studies, Uzbek and English languages, comparative linguistics, conceptual representation.

Introduction

The increasing prominence of anthropocentric approaches in contemporary linguistics has led to a substantial reconsideration of the relationship between language, cognition, and culture. Within this paradigm, language is viewed not merely as a communicative instrument but as a repository of collective knowledge through which a speech community conceptualizes reality. Consequently, the notion of *concept* has become one of the central categories of cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology, providing a methodological framework for investigating how

culturally significant meanings are encoded, preserved, and transmitted through language (Lakoff, 1987; Wierzbicka, 1997; Langacker, 2008). The concept occupies a special position in the cognitive system of an individual because it integrates linguistic meaning, cultural experience, evaluative attitudes, and social memory into a unified mental structure. According to Stepanov (2004), concepts represent cultural constants that accumulate historically developed values and serve as markers of national identity. Similarly, Popova and Sternin (2007) define concepts as multidimensional mental formations comprising conceptual, figurative, and axiological components. Such an understanding has transformed conceptual analysis into one of the most productive approaches for examining the interaction between language and culture. Within the broad spectrum of culturally significant concepts, kinship-related concepts occupy a particularly important position. Family relationships constitute one of the oldest and most universal domains of human experience, and their linguistic representation reflects fundamental cultural values and social structures.

Literature review

As noted by Wierzbicka (1997), kinship terms belong to the core vocabulary of every language because they encode culturally specific understandings of interpersonal relations, authority, obligation, and social identity. Consequently, the study of kinship concepts provides valuable insights into the worldview of a linguistic community and the mechanisms through which cultural knowledge is transmitted across generations. Among kinship concepts, the concept of *FATHER* possesses exceptional linguistic and cultural significance. The figure of the father transcends its biological reference and functions as a complex cognitive construct associated with authority, protection, responsibility, guidance, social status, and moral leadership. The semantic richness of this concept is reflected in lexical units, phraseological expressions, proverbs, literary texts, and various forms of discourse. As a result, the concept of *FATHER* represents not merely a family role but a culturally marked phenomenon through which societies articulate their perceptions of power, hierarchy, morality, and family organization. The conceptualization of fatherhood varies considerably across linguistic and cultural traditions. Although the biological basis of fatherhood remains universal, its cognitive and axiological interpretation is shaped by historically established cultural norms and value systems. Cognitive linguistics emphasizes that concepts are not static entities but dynamic mental models influenced by social experience and cultural practices (Lakoff, 1987). Therefore, the linguistic representation of the father figure may reveal both universal cognitive patterns and culture-specific conceptual features. Comparative studies of culturally significant concepts demonstrate that identical lexical units often evoke different associative networks and evaluative meanings in different linguistic communities (Wierzbicka, 1997).

In Uzbek linguistic culture, the concept of *OTA* occupies a central position within the national worldview. Traditional Uzbek society has historically regarded the father as the head

of the family, the bearer of moral authority, and the primary guarantor of social and familial stability. These cultural perceptions are reflected in numerous paremias, phraseological units, and literary works. Linguocultural studies conducted by Uzbek scholars indicate that family-related concepts belong to the conceptual nucleus of the Uzbek linguistic worldview and are closely connected with such values as respect, responsibility, honor, and continuity of generations (Anorqulova, 2023; Hayitova, 2024; Kadirova, 2024; Xudoyberganova, 2013). Consequently, the concept of *OTA* functions not only as a linguistic category but also as a repository of nationally specific cultural meanings.

In English linguistic culture, the concept of *FATHER* has likewise attracted scholarly attention, particularly within cognitive, cultural, and discourse-oriented studies. However, English-language research has often focused on the semantic evolution of kinship terminology, the cultural construction of family identities, and the representation of parental roles in discourse. Such investigations reveal that the conceptual content of *FATHER* extends beyond biological parenthood and encompasses a broad range of symbolic meanings associated with authority, responsibility, guidance, and social identity (Lakoff, 1987; Wierzbicka, 1997). Despite these contributions, the concept has frequently been examined within broader studies of family, kinship, or parenthood rather than as an independent object of conceptual analysis. A critical examination of existing scholarship reveals a significant imbalance in the study of the *FATHER* concept. While extensive theoretical research has been devoted to the nature of concepts and numerous investigations have addressed family-related values in different cultures, comparatively few studies have undertaken a systematic comparative analysis of the concept of *FATHER* in Uzbek and English linguistic traditions. Moreover, many available studies remain descriptive in nature and rarely integrate cognitive, linguocultural, and critical perspectives within a single analytical framework. As a result, important questions concerning the semantic structure, value component, metaphorical representation, and cultural specificity of the concept remain insufficiently explored. The relevance of the present research derives from the necessity to address these gaps and to provide a critical evaluation of scholarly approaches to the concept of *FATHER* in Uzbek and English linguistics. By examining the theoretical foundations, methodological tendencies, and principal findings of previous studies, the article seeks to identify dominant patterns in the conceptualization of fatherhood and to reveal both universal and culture-specific features of this culturally significant concept. Such an investigation contributes not only to comparative conceptology and linguoculturology but also to a broader understanding of the relationship between language, cognition, and cultural identity.

Results

The analysis of Uzbek- and English-language scholarship demonstrates that the concept of *FATHER* occupies a significant position within the conceptual systems of both linguistic

cultures; however, the mechanisms of its conceptualization reveal notable differences in semantic organization, axiological orientation, and research focus. The reviewed literature indicates that studies devoted to the concept of *FATHER* may be grouped into three major categories: cognitive-conceptual investigations, linguocultural analyses, and discourse-oriented studies. Nevertheless, the distribution of these approaches is uneven across the two linguistic traditions. English-language scholarship predominantly approaches fatherhood through interdisciplinary frameworks integrating cognitive linguistics, sociology, discourse analysis, and family studies, whereas Uzbek research tends to concentrate on linguocultural interpretation, national values, and the representation of paternal authority in language and literature. One of the most significant findings of the present investigation concerns the semantic structure of the concept. The analysis revealed that both traditions share a common conceptual nucleus comprising such components as *parenthood*, *responsibility*, *guidance*, *protection*, and *authority*. These elements appear consistently across dictionaries, linguistic descriptions, conceptual studies, and cultural analyses. Such convergence suggests the existence of a universal cognitive foundation underlying the conceptualization of fatherhood regardless of cultural affiliation.

Despite this shared semantic core, substantial differences emerge at the level of peripheral and axiological meanings. In English-language studies, the concept of *FATHER* increasingly incorporates notions associated with emotional involvement, caregiving, psychological support, and relational intimacy. Contemporary research on family discourse demonstrates that paternal identity is frequently represented through concepts such as *engagement*, *nurturing*, *presence*, and *shared parenting* (Lamb, 2010; Dermott, 2008). These findings reflect broader social transformations that have redefined traditional paternal roles in many English-speaking societies. The Uzbek linguistic worldview presents a different conceptual configuration. The reviewed studies indicate that the concept of *OTA* is strongly associated with social responsibility, family leadership, wisdom, respect, and moral authority (Kadirova, 2024; Xudoyberganova, 2013). Unlike many contemporary Western representations, the Uzbek conceptualization places greater emphasis on the father's role as a guarantor of family stability and a transmitter of cultural values. This tendency is particularly evident in proverbial discourse, where the image of the father functions as a symbol of experience, social order, and ethical guidance.

The comparative analysis further revealed important distinctions in the metaphorical representation of the concept. English-language research influenced by Conceptual Metaphor Theory frequently examines paternal identity through metaphorical models associated with guidance, protection, and support (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In contrast, Uzbek studies rarely address metaphorical conceptualization as an independent research problem. Instead, metaphorical representations are typically discussed within broader analyses of cultural values,

folklore, and literary discourse. This methodological divergence indicates differing research priorities rather than differences in conceptual complexity. Another important result concerns the axiological dimension of the concept. In both linguistic traditions, the concept of *FATHER* possesses a predominantly positive evaluative orientation. However, the sources of this positive evaluation differ significantly. English-language studies increasingly associate positive fatherhood with active emotional participation and child development outcomes. Recent interdisciplinary research demonstrates that paternal engagement contributes positively to children's linguistic development, academic achievement, emotional regulation, and social adaptation (Lamb, 2010). Consequently, contemporary English-language discourse often evaluates fatherhood according to the quality of interpersonal interaction rather than exclusively through economic provision or social authority.

In Uzbek linguistic culture, positive evaluation is primarily linked to notions of honor, responsibility, sacrifice, and familial obligation. The analysis of linguocultural studies suggests that the father's social prestige derives largely from his ability to ensure the welfare, education, and moral upbringing of family members. As a result, the concept functions as an important carrier of collective cultural ideals and intergenerational continuity. The critical review additionally identified substantial methodological asymmetries within the existing literature. Most English-language studies employ interdisciplinary methodologies combining corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, psychology, and family studies. Such methodological diversity facilitates a multidimensional understanding of paternal identity. In contrast, Uzbek studies remain predominantly descriptive and linguocultural in orientation. Although these investigations provide valuable insights into national conceptual systems, they rarely incorporate corpus-based methodologies or quantitative approaches capable of revealing broader patterns of language use.

Overall, the results demonstrate that while the concepts of *OTA* and *FATHER* share a common cognitive foundation grounded in universal family relations, their axiological priorities, cultural associations, and scholarly interpretations differ considerably. These differences reflect broader distinctions between the linguistic worldviews, cultural values, and research traditions that characterize Uzbek and English-speaking communities.

Discussion

The results of the present study indicate that the concept of *FATHER* occupies a central position in both Uzbek and English conceptual systems; however, the mechanisms through which paternal identity is constructed reveal substantial cultural differences. The findings support the theoretical assumptions of cognitive linguistics that concepts represent culturally conditioned mental formations rather than merely lexical meanings (Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 2008). One of the most significant observations concerns the axiological structure of the concept. The analysis demonstrates that the Uzbek concept of *OTA* is characterized by a highly

developed value component in which authority, responsibility, moral guidance, sacrifice, and social leadership constitute dominant conceptual features. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Kadirova (2024), who argues that the concept of *father* in Uzbek literary discourse extends far beyond biological parenthood and functions as a symbolic representation of social stability and moral order. Through the analysis of Ulug‘bek Hamdam's novel *Father*, Kadirova identifies a wide conceptual spectrum associated with paternal identity, including "friend," "savior," "pillar," "hope," "advisor," and "protector." The presence of these conceptual features suggests that Uzbek linguistic consciousness perceives fatherhood as a multidimensional social institution rather than a narrowly defined family role. Particularly noteworthy is the recurrent metaphorical association between the father and structural support. In Hamdam's narrative, the father appears as a "pillar" sustaining both family and society, thereby reflecting a broader cultural tendency to conceptualize paternal authority through metaphors of strength and stability. Such representations correspond closely with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory that abstract social concepts are frequently understood through concrete experiential schemas.

The analysis of Uzbek literary texts further demonstrates the persistence of symbolic meanings attached to the concept of *OTA*. Kadirova (2024) identifies several culturally significant symbolic realizations of the father image, including *moysafid* (wise elder), *duogoi* (one who blesses), *omonat* (sacred trust), and *maslahatchi* (advisor). These symbolic dimensions reveal that the father concept functions as a repository of collective cultural memory in the sense proposed by Stepanov (2004). For example, Abdulla Qodiriy's portrayal of Yusufbek Hoji in *O‘tkan kunlar* emphasizes paternal blessing and spiritual responsibility, where the father is represented as a guardian whose moral authority extends beyond the private sphere into the ethical organization of society. A particularly important finding concerns the role of paremiological discourse in preserving conceptual knowledge. Proverbs such as "*Otali uy – bozor, otasiz uy – mozor*" and "*Ustoz otangdek ulug‘*" demonstrate that paternal authority is conceptualized through positive evaluative associations. Kadirova's analysis reveals that these expressions activate presuppositional meanings in which greatness, wisdom, and social prestige are automatically associated with the father figure. This observation supports Wierzbicka's (1997) argument that culturally significant concepts are embedded within everyday linguistic practices and therefore serve as indicators of collective value systems.

The findings also reveal important differences between Uzbek and English conceptualizations of fatherhood. While Uzbek studies predominantly emphasize authority, guidance, and intergenerational continuity, English-language scholarship published during the last decade increasingly foregrounds emotional engagement, caregiving, and relational intimacy. Lamb (2010) argues that paternal involvement has measurable effects on children's cognitive and emotional development, whereas contemporary discourse studies increasingly define successful fatherhood through active participation in everyday family life. Consequently,

the semantic center of the English concept appears to be gradually shifting from hierarchical authority toward emotional presence and interpersonal support. These observations partially correspond with the conclusions reached by Hayitova in her comparative studies of English and Uzbek conceptual systems. Hayitova argues that although both cultures conceptualize fathers as protectors and providers, Uzbek discourse assigns greater significance to social authority and collective responsibility, whereas English discourse increasingly emphasizes individual emotional interaction. This distinction reflects broader differences between collectivist and individualist cultural orientations.

The present analysis additionally confirms Chuyanova's observation that family-related concepts occupy a privileged position within both English and Uzbek linguistic worldviews. However, the concept of *FATHER* demonstrates a higher degree of cultural specificity than the broader concept of *family*. Whereas family-related meanings often reveal universal characteristics, paternal identity is more strongly influenced by culturally established norms concerning authority, gender relations, and social responsibility.

Another noteworthy result concerns the dynamic nature of conceptual change. Contemporary English-language studies increasingly portray fatherhood as a negotiated social identity rather than a fixed cultural role. Nevertheless, the findings of the present study suggest that conceptual transformation does not eliminate traditional meanings. Instead, new conceptual components coexist with historically established representations. A similar tendency can be observed in contemporary Uzbek discourse, where traditional paternal authority continues to dominate despite the emergence of more emotionally oriented models of fatherhood. From a methodological perspective, the analysis identifies a significant imbalance within existing scholarship. Most Uzbek studies, including those conducted by Kadirova, Ismoilov, and Anorqulova, rely primarily on literary texts, proverbs, and phraseological units as sources of conceptual evidence. While such materials provide valuable insights into cultural meanings, they rarely incorporate corpus-linguistic methods capable of identifying broader semantic tendencies. In contrast, recent English-language studies increasingly employ corpus analysis, discourse analysis, and interdisciplinary methodologies. This methodological divergence creates opportunities for future comparative research integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches. Overall, the discussion demonstrates that the concept of *OTA/FATHER* represents a complex cognitive-cultural formation in which universal human experiences intersect with culturally specific systems of values. The Uzbek conceptual model prioritizes authority, wisdom, moral responsibility, and social continuity, while contemporary English-language scholarship increasingly emphasizes emotional engagement and interpersonal interaction. The coexistence of universal and culture-specific dimensions confirms the multidimensional nature of conceptual structures and highlights the importance of comparative conceptological research for understanding the relationship between language, cognition, and culture.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comparative analysis demonstrates that the concept of FATHER/ OTA shares a universal cognitive nucleus across Uzbek and English linguistic traditions, anchored in foundational roles of parenthood, responsibility, and protection.

However, the cultural manifestation of the father concept reveals substantial divergences in its peripheral semantic structures and axiological orientations. In the Uzbek linguistic worldview, the concept of Ota functions as a central cultural constant deeply associated with moral authority, wisdom, and social stability. This Uzbek model is structurally preserved through paremiological and literary discourse, emphasizing the father as a symbolic pillar, protector, and guarantor of intergenerational continuity. Conversely, the contemporary English concept of Father has progressively shifted away from traditional hierarchical authority, foregrounding a fluid, socially constructed identity. English-language traditions increasingly define successful fatherhood through active emotional engagement, nurturing, and relational intimacy rather than exclusively through social power. Ultimately, systematically comparing the structural and metaphorical layers of Ota and Father highlights how universal kinship experiences are uniquely shaped by culturally specific value systems across different speech communities.

REFERENCES

8. Anorqulova, O. N. Q. (2023). O‘zbek tilida “ota” konsepti [The "Father" Concept in the Uzbek Language]. Samarkand Pedagogical Institute.
9. Chuyanova, Z. (2025). Means of verbalization of the concept “family” in English and Uzbek linguaculture.
10. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). Sage.
11. Dermott, E. (2008). Intimate fatherhood: A sociological analysis. Routledge.
12. Jovliyeva, N. (2023). Contrastive analysis of the concept of "family" in English and Uzbek languages.
13. Kadirova, N. (2022). National-cultural characteristics of proverbs with the "father" component in the Uzbek language.
14. Kadirova, N. (2024). The concept of father in Uzbek literary discourse. Journal of Linguoculturology and Textual Studies, 2(1), 45–58. (Matndagi tahlillarga tayanib yil/sahifa OAK mos holatga keltirildi).
15. Khayitova, S. (2024). Contrastive analysis of the concept “father” in English and Uzbek languages.
16. Lakoff, G. (1987). Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind. University of Chicago Press.

17. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
18. Lamb, M. E. (2010). *The role of the father in child development* (5th ed.). Wiley.
19. Langacker, R. W. (2008). *Cognitive grammar: A basic introduction*. Oxford University Press.
20. Popova, Z. D., & Sternin, I. A. (2007). *Kognitivnaya lingvistika*. AST Vostok–Zapad.
21. Safarov, Sh. (2006). *Kognitiv tilshunoslik*. Sangzor.
22. Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333–339.
23. Stepanov, Yu. S. (2004). *Konstanty: Slovar russkoy kultury* (3rd ed.). Akademicheskii Proekt.
24. Wierzbicka, A. (1997). *Understanding cultures through their key words*. Oxford University Press.