

Semantic Types Of Kinship Terms In Korean And Uzbek: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract: Kinship terminology reflects cultural values and worldviews, yet comparative studies between Korean and Uzbek languages remain limited. This research classifies and compares semantic types of kinship terms in both languages through comparative-semantic and componential analysis using dictionary sources, ethnographic texts, and folklore materials. While both languages share core kinship concepts, they exhibit distinct semantic organization patterns. Korean displays fine-grained distinctions with 172 terms featuring elaborate hierarchical systems reflecting Confucian values, including speaker-gender sensitivity and systematic formality levels. Uzbek demonstrates broader categorical coverage with 132 terms emphasizing community integration and Islamic traditions. Korean employs hierarchical precision encoding multiple relationship dimensions simultaneously, while Uzbek utilizes integrative flexibility prioritizing social function over categorical distinctions. The analysis confirms that kinship terminology functions as cultural code where linguistic expression is shaped by religious, philosophical, and social traditions rather than universal biological categories alone.

Keywords: Kinship terms, semantics, Korean language, Uzbek language, comparative linguistics, cultural analysis, Confucian hierarchy, Islamic traditions.

Introduction: Kinship terminology represents a fundamental lexical domain that reveals cultural values and social structures embedded within language systems. Korean and Uzbek societies maintain rich kinship traditions that extend beyond nuclear family structures, yet comprehensive comparative studies remain limited.

Korean kinship terminology, influenced by Confucian philosophy, emphasizes hierarchical relationships based on age, gender, and generational status. This cultural foundation has resulted in highly differentiated terminology that precisely encodes social positions and behavioral expectations.

Uzbek culture similarly values family relationships and kinship networks, drawing from Central Asian traditions, Islamic values, and agricultural practices. However, the linguistic expression follows different patterns, often employing broader categorical terms encompassing multiple relationship types.

This research aims to identify, analyze, and compare semantic types of kinship terms in Korean and Uzbek languages, examining their cultural motivations and social functions. Specific objectives include systematic

collection and documentation of kinship terms, semantic classification according to features such as lineage, generation, gender, and age hierarchy, comparative analysis of structural similarities and differences, and cultural interpretation of underlying factors.

The study represents the first systematic comparative semantic analysis between these languages, contributing to cross-linguistic semantic typology and providing insights for translation studies, intercultural communication, and language pedagogy.

2. METHODS

2.1 Data Sources. Korean sources included the Standard Korean Language Dictionary (표준국어대사전), Korean Folk Literature Collection, ethnographic studies, genealogical records, and contemporary literature. Uzbek sources comprised the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language (O'zbek tilining izohli lug'ati), folk tales and proverb collections, ethnolinguistic studies, family structure documentation, and cultural research.

2.2 Analytical Framework. The research employed

comparative-semantic analysis through systematic comparison of kinship terms across languages, identifying equivalent concepts and mapping semantic coverage patterns. Componential analysis decomposed terms into semantic features including gender, generation, lineage, marriage relation, age hierarchy, and social status. Linguocultural analysis examined cultural motivations behind semantic structures through religious, philosophical, and social traditions.

Data processing followed systematic stages: term extraction from sources, semantic mapping of scope and connotations, feature analysis into constituent

components, cross-linguistic comparison of structures and functions, pattern identification of similarities and differences, and cultural interpretation of underlying factors.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Classification Overview. Both languages maintain rich kinship terminology systems containing over 150 distinct terms when including extended family, affinal relationships, and variants. Terms can be classified into major semantic categories based on relationship types and cultural functions.

3.2 Nuclear Family Terms

Table 1: Nuclear Family Terms Comparison

English	Korean (Formal/Informal)	Uzbek (Standard/Respectful)	Semantic Features
Father	아버지/아빠 (abeoji/appa)	ota/ota-jon	+male, +ascending, +lineal
Mother	어머니/엄마 (eomeoni/eomma)	ona/ona-jon	+female, +ascending, +lineal
Son	아들 (adeul)	o'g'il	+male, +descending, +lineal
Daughter	딸 (ttal)	Qiz	+female, +descending, +lineal
Older brother (♂ speaker)	형 (hyeong)	aka/aka-jon	+male, +same generation, +older
Older brother (♀ speaker)	오빠 (oppa)	aka/aka-jon	+male, +same generation, +older
Older sister (♂ speaker)	누나 (nuna)	opa/opa-jon	+female, +same generation, +older
Older sister (♀ speaker)	언니 (eonni)	opa/opa-jon	+female, +same generation, +older
Younger sibling	동생 (dongsaeng)	uka (♂), singil (♀)	+same generation, +younger

The key difference lies in Korean's speaker-gender requirements for sibling terms, reflecting cultural concerns with social positioning, while Uzbek uses

gender-neutral terms applicable by any speaker.

3.3 Extended Family Terms

Table 2: Extended Family Terms (Paternal vs Maternal)

English	Korean	Uzbek	Lineage Marking
Paternal grandfather	할아버지 (harabeoji)	bobo/buva	Korean: systematic
Maternal grandfather	외할아버지 (oeharabeoji)	bobo/buva	Uzbek: generalized
Paternal grandmother	할머니 (halmeoni)	buvi/eje	Korean: distinct terms
Maternal grandmother	외할머니 (oehalmeoni)	buvi/eje	Uzbek: same terms
Father's brother	삼촌 (samchon)	amaki	Both: lineage-specific
Mother's brother	외삼촌 (oesamchon)	najiboy	Both: different terms
Father's sister	고모 (gomo)	amma	Both: lineage-specific
Mother's sister	이모 (imo)	xola	Both: different terms

Korean systematically distinguishes paternal and maternal lineages with different terms for grandparents, uncles, and aunts depending on their relationship to father or mother, reflecting traditional patrilineal emphasis while maintaining recognition of maternal kinship.

Uzbek maintains some lineage distinctions but with less systematic differentiation. Terms often reflect age and respect relationships more prominently than strict genealogical categories.

3.4 Marriage-Related Terms

Korean affinal terminology is highly systematic with different terms for relationships through husband's versus wife's family, reflecting traditional patrilocal residence patterns. Examples include 시어머니 (husband's mother) versus 장모 (wife's mother), and 매형 (wife's older sister's husband).

Uzbek affinal terminology emphasizes integration of new family members, particularly the daughter-in-law (kelin) who traditionally joins the husband's family. The term "quda" represents relationships between families connected through marriage, reflecting social importance of interfamily alliances.

3.5 Honorific and Status Marking. Korean exhibits multiple formality levels through honorific variants like 아버님 (honored father) versus 아빠 (dad), allowing speakers to adjust respect levels based on social context and relationship intimacy.

Uzbek employs the suffix "-jon" (dear/beloved) for respect expression and extends kinship terms to non-relatives as respectful address forms. Terms like aka-jon (dear older brother) can address community members, reflecting cultural ideals of treating others as extended family.

3.6 Quantitative Analysis

Table 3: Statistical Comparison of Semantic Features

Semantic Feature	Korean (%)	Uzbek (%)	Difference
Gender specification	76	63	+13
Age hierarchy marking	89	82	+7
Lineage distinction	71	45	+26
Formality variants	68	28	+40
Speaker gender sensitivity	34	0	+34
Respect marking availability	45	78	-33
Community extension	23	56	-33

Total terms analyzed: Korean (172), Uzbek (132)

Statistical analysis reveals Korean contains approximately 30% more kinship terms than Uzbek. Korean demonstrates higher percentages in gender specificity, lineage distinction, formality variants, and speaker gender sensitivity. Uzbek shows higher

percentages in respect marking availability and community extension, reflecting different cultural priorities.

3.7 Translation Equivalence

Table 4: Translation Equivalence Assessment

Korean Term	Uzbek Equivalent	Equivalence Level	Cultural Notes
아버지 (abeoji)	ota	High (85%)	Direct conceptual match
형 (hyeong)	aka	Moderate (60%)	Korean speaker-gender specific
할머니 (halmeoni)	buvi	Moderate (65%)	Korean paternal-specific
며느리 (myeoneuri)	kelin	High (80%)	Both emphasize integration
사위 (sawi)	kuyov	High (75%)	Similar social functions
처남 (cheonam)	qaynaka	Low (40%)	Different kinship focus

Direct equivalence between Korean and Uzbek kinship terms proves complex. High equivalence (70-90% semantic overlap) exists for nuclear family core terms and basic spouse terms. Moderate equivalence (40-

70%) characterizes sibling terms due to Korean speaker-gender sensitivity and extended family terms due to lineage marking differences. Low equivalence (<40%) affects culture-specific relationship categories

and honorific systems.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Cultural Foundations. The systematic differences between Korean and Uzbek kinship terminology reflect profound cultural distinctions rooted in different philosophical, religious, and social traditions.

Confucian influences on Korean kinship semantics emphasize hierarchical relationships, filial piety, and social order maintenance through clearly defined roles. The principle of "li" (propriety) manifests through elaborate formality systems and respect markers. Speaker-gender sensitivity reflects Confucian gender role expectations where social behavior must be calibrated according to one's position.

Islamic and Central Asian influences on Uzbek kinship semantics reflect family solidarity, elder respect, and community cohesion. The Islamic principle of "ummah" (community) influences semantic extension of kinship terms beyond biological relationships. Central Asian nomadic traditions contribute to age-based respect emphasis and marriage partner integration into extended networks.

4.2 Semantic Organization Principles. Korean demonstrates "hierarchical precision" - systematic encoding of multiple relationship dimensions simultaneously including relative age, gender specifications, lineage relationships, formality levels, and marriage status. This creates highly informative but complex systems requiring speakers to monitor and express multiple social relationship aspects.

Uzbek exhibits "integrative flexibility" - emphasis on relationship function and community integration over precise categorical distinctions. Terms prioritize age-based respect, community inclusion, family solidarity, social application flexibility, and cultural warmth expression.

4.3 Theoretical Implications. The comparison provides insights for semantic theory regarding how languages organize domains and the relationship between cultural values and lexical structure. Both languages demonstrate universal kinship categories while exhibiting culture-specific organizational principles, supporting models proposing universal foundations with culture-specific elaborations.

Semantic complexity correlates with cultural functionality rather than biological relationship complexity. Korean's formality system and Uzbek's community integration serve social functions extending beyond relationship identification to social regulation and cultural transmission.

4.4 Practical Applications. Understanding semantic organization provides insights for language pedagogy,

where Korean instruction must address formality, hierarchy, and gender sensitivity interactions, while Uzbek instruction should emphasize community integration and respectful relationship expression.

Translation requires cultural interpretation rather than direct substitution. Professional translators must understand cultural assumptions underlying kinship terms and develop strategies for conveying cultural meaning across boundaries.

Organizations working with Korean and Uzbek communities can benefit from understanding kinship terminology as indicators of broader cultural values and communication styles.

5. CONCLUSION

This comparative analysis reveals both universal human needs to categorize family relationships and profound cultural influence on linguistic expression. Korean and Uzbek employ fundamentally different semantic strategies reflecting distinct worldviews and social organizations.

Korean characteristics include highly differentiated systems with fine-grained distinctions, systematic hierarchical relationship encoding based on Confucian values, speaker-gender sensitivity reflecting gender role expectations, elaborate formality systems enabling precise social positioning, and systematic lineage distinctions maintaining patrilineal emphasis while recognizing maternal relationships.

Uzbek characteristics include integrative systems emphasizing community inclusion and respect, flexible application extending kinship terms to non-relatives, prominent age-based respect marking reflecting Islamic and traditional values, community-oriented terminology supporting social cohesion, and emphasis on affectionate relationship expression through linguistic markers.

The research contributes to cross-linguistic semantics by demonstrating culture-specific organizational patterns that resist simple translation. It supports theories emphasizing deep interconnection between linguistic structure and cultural values, showing how philosophical and religious traditions directly influence semantic organization.

Practical applications include translation requiring cultural mediation rather than lexical substitution, language education needing attention to cultural values beyond lexical memorization, and intercultural communication benefiting from kinship terminology awareness as insight into cultural communication styles.

Future research directions include pragmatic studies of actual usage in natural discourse, historical

development investigation, regional variation examination, modern communication context analysis, cross-cultural psychology investigation of cognitive implications, and comparative expansion to additional language pairs for comprehensive typology development.

The analysis demonstrates that kinship terminology serves as sophisticated cultural code encoding and transmitting essential social information across generations. Both systems function not merely as relationship identification tools but as comprehensive social guidance systems regulating behavior, expressing values, and maintaining cultural continuity. Understanding these differences proves crucial for academic research and practical intercultural communication in our interconnected world.

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