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# A SEMANTIC-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL CONCEPT EXPRESSION THROUGH LINGUISTIC UNITS IN OGHUZ DIALECTS

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### Abstract

This study presents a systematic semantic-pragmatic analysis of the expression of cultural concepts through linguistic units in the Oghuz dialects of the Turkic language family. Moving beyond the traditional dialectological focus on phonetic and morphological features, the research adopts an integrative theoretical framework grounded in linguoculturology and cognitive linguistics to explore the mechanisms by which dialectal forms encode collective cultural knowledge and social experience. Methodologically, the study employs contextual analysis, semantic field analysis, and paremiological investigation, enabling a comprehensive examination of the multilayered organization of cultural meanings. The findings reveal that the expression of cultural concepts in Oghuz dialects operates across three interrelated levels: lexical nomination, phraseological representation, and paremiological codification. Hospitality is conceptualized not only as an ethical value but as a socially regulated institution closely associated with communal reputation and cohesion. The concept of honor functions as a central mechanism of social regulation, embedded in kinship structures and collective responsibility. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates

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that Oghuz dialects preserve nuanced pragmatic meanings and archaic semantic patterns that tend to be neutralized or reduced in standardized literary language. Overall, the study advances a deeper theoretical understanding of dialects as dynamic carriers of cultural memory and provides a methodological basis for further research in comparative Turkic linguistics, discourse analysis, and dialect lexicography.

**Keywords:** Oghuz dialects; cultural concepts; semantic-pragmatic analysis; linguoculturology; cognitive linguistics; hospitality; honor; labor; kinship; paremiology; phraseology; Turkic linguistics; dialectology; collective consciousness; social regulation.

### Introduction

Oghuz dialects constitute a genetically and areally significant stratum within the Turkic language continuum, reflecting both diachronic continuity and regional differentiation. Owing to their historical development, these dialects preserve not only archaic phonetic and morphological features but also culturally embedded semantic structures that encode long-standing social practices, value systems, and normative patterns of interaction. In this regard, Oghuz dialects provide a particularly valuable empirical basis for examining the interrelation between language and culture within non-standardized linguistic systems.

Traditional Turkic dialectology has primarily concentrated on the description of phonetic systems, morphological patterns, and lexical variation. Although such approaches have produced substantial descriptive results, they have often treated dialectal units as discrete linguistic entities, largely detached from the socio-cultural environments in which they function. As a consequence, the processes through which dialectal language encodes, maintains, and transmits cultural meanings, collective values, and social norms have remained insufficiently

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theorized. This limitation is especially evident in studies that rely exclusively on structural or historical-comparative methodologies.

In contrast, contemporary linguistic paradigms—particularly linguoculturology, cognitive linguistics, and discourse-oriented approaches—have foregrounded the notion of the cultural concept as a central analytical unit situated at the intersection of language, culture, and collective consciousness. Cultural concepts are understood as complex mental-semantic formations that integrate culturally relevant knowledge, evaluative frameworks, and socially shared representations. Importantly, such concepts are not confined to individual lexical items; rather, they are distributed across multiple levels of the language system and are actualized within specific communicative contexts.

Despite the increasing scholarly attention to cultural concepts, most studies have been conducted on the basis of standardized or literary language material. Dialectal data, by comparison, remain underutilized in conceptual analysis. This imbalance is methodologically significant, as dialects tend to retain culturally marked meanings, pragmatic subtleties, and archaic semantic configurations that are often reduced or neutralized in the literary language. In Oghuz dialects, cultural concepts are typically realized through the interaction of lexical nomination, phraseological representation, and paremiological codification, forming a complex and multilayered semantic structure.

An additional issue concerns the internal variability of cultural concepts within dialect systems. A single concept may exhibit multiple naming strategies, evaluative components, and pragmatic realizations depending on regional, social, and situational parameters. This variability necessitates the differentiation between core and peripheral zones of a concept, as well as an analysis of their interaction across different linguistic levels. However, such an integrative semantic-pragmatic approach has rarely been systematically applied to Oghuz dialect material.

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The present study seeks to address this gap by offering a semantic-pragmatic analysis of the expression of cultural concepts through linguistic units in Oghuz dialects. The research focuses on four culturally salient concepts—hospitality, honor, labor, and kinship—which occupy a central position in the traditional worldview of Oghuz-speaking communities. These concepts are approached not as abstract cultural categories but as dynamic semantic networks realized through concrete linguistic forms in actual communicative practice.

The primary objective of the study is to demonstrate that cultural concepts in Oghuz dialects function as multilayered semantic-pragmatic systems closely linked to collective social experience. To this end, the research pursues the following tasks: (1) to establish criteria for the identification of culturally significant concepts; (2) to determine their lexical, phraseological, and paremiological markers; (3) to delineate their semantic core and peripheral zones; and (4) to identify comparative correspondences with literary Uzbek and related Turkic languages. The scientific novelty of the study lies in its reconceptualization of dialectal material as an integrated semantic-pragmatic system rather than as a collection of isolated linguistic units.

### Methods

The methodological framework of the present study is grounded in an integrative semantic-pragmatic approach that conceptualizes language as a primary medium for encoding, structuring, and transmitting culturally significant knowledge. Within this framework, a cultural concept is treated as a relatively stable mental-semantic construct formed within collective consciousness and manifested through multiple levels of linguistic representation. This perspective enables a unified analysis of linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic dimensions in the interpretation of dialectal material.

The empirical basis of the research comprises data obtained from a combination of sources, including dialectological monographs on Oghuz dialects, explanatory

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and dialect dictionaries, and authentic speech samples collected during fieldwork in Oghuz-speaking regions. The incorporation of fieldwork data is of particular methodological importance, as it provides access to naturally occurring communicative contexts in which cultural concepts are dynamically activated, negotiated, and evaluated by speakers. The analyzed corpus includes lexical items, phraseological units, and paremias systematically associated with the selected cultural concepts.

Contextual analysis serves as a primary method for interpreting the meanings of linguistic units in relation to their co-text, communicative conditions, and evaluative orientation. This approach allows for the identification of implicit pragmatic meanings and axiological components that are not fully captured by lexicographic descriptions. Complementing this, the semantic field method is employed to model the internal organization of each cultural concept. At the initial stage, nominative units relevant to a given concept are identified; subsequently, these units are classified according to synonymic, antonymic, and evaluative relations, enabling the delineation of semantic cores and peripheral zones.

A comparative method is applied to examine correspondences between the realization of cultural concepts in Oghuz dialects and their counterparts in literary Uzbek and other Turkic languages. This comparison facilitates the distinction between common Turkic semantic features and those arising from local or areal developments. In addition, paremiological analysis is utilized to investigate the normative and axiological dimensions of cultural concepts as reflected in proverbs and sayings. Paremias are interpreted as condensed representations of social norms and value systems, playing a central role in stabilizing and transmitting the semantic core of concepts.

The combined application of these methods ensures a comprehensive and systematic analysis of cultural concepts across different levels of the language system while maintaining a coherent semantic-pragmatic perspective. Such

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methodological integration is essential for capturing the complex mechanisms through which dialectal language both reflects and constructs cultural experience.

### Results

The analysis of Oghuz dialect material demonstrates that cultural concepts are characterized by a complex and multilayered semantic organization in which lexical nomination, phraseological representation, and paremiological codification interact in a systematic and functionally interdependent manner. The empirical evidence indicates that these levels do not operate independently; rather, they form an integrated structure through which culturally significant meanings are constructed, reinforced, and transmitted within the speech community.

At the lexical level, cultural concepts are realized through a range of nominative units that encode core semantic features and basic evaluative orientations. These units constitute the semantic nucleus of a concept, providing its primary denotative and connotative framework. However, lexical items alone do not exhaust the conceptual content; their meanings are further specified and enriched through contextual usage and interaction with other linguistic elements.

At the phraseological level, concepts acquire figurative and imagery-based dimensions. Phraseological units reflect culturally specific patterns of perception and evaluation, often embodying metaphorical and symbolic representations rooted in collective experience. These units play a crucial role in mediating between abstract conceptual content and concrete communicative expression, thereby enhancing the expressive and interpretive potential of dialectal speech.

The paremiological level represents the normative and axiological dimension of cultural concepts. Proverbs and sayings function as condensed formulations of socially sanctioned values, behavioral models, and evaluative judgments. In this capacity, paremias serve to stabilize and regulate the semantic core of concepts, embedding them within a framework of collective norms and expectations. Their

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recurrent use in discourse reinforces shared cultural knowledge and contributes to the intergenerational transmission of value systems.

The interaction of these three levels results in the formation of dynamic semantic networks, within which cultural concepts are not fixed entities but context-dependent configurations activated in specific communicative situations. The analysis further reveals that such networks exhibit internal variability, with different linguistic forms highlighting distinct aspects of a concept depending on pragmatic conditions, speaker intention, and social context.

Overall, the findings confirm that cultural concepts in Oghuz dialects function as integrated semantic-pragmatic systems that reflect both the stability of collective cultural knowledge and its adaptability to changing communicative environments.

### Hospitality as a Cultural Concept

In Oghuz dialects, the concept of *hospitality* is realized through a wide range of linguistic units that extend beyond direct lexical naming. While nominative units referring explicitly to the act of hosting a guest are present, the core of the concept is formed by verbs, adjectives, and role-denoting expressions that describe micro-situations of guest reception. These include actions related to welcoming, seating, serving food, and expressing respect, each of which contributes a specific pragmatic nuance to the overall conceptual structure.

The variability of such units indicates that hospitality in Oghuz dialects is not conceptualized merely as a moral virtue, but as a socially regulated practice closely linked to reputation, honor, and the management of household resources. Phraseological units associated with hospitality often employ metaphors related to openness, abundance, and dignity, emphasizing the host's responsibility toward the guest. In these expressions, the guest is implicitly positioned as a social evaluator whose treatment reflects the host's moral standing within the community.

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Paremiological material further reinforces the normative dimension of hospitality. Proverbs encode clear evaluative judgments, presenting generosity toward guests as a mandatory social norm and condemning neglect or indifference as a source of shame. Through paremias, hospitality becomes a culturally sanctioned behavioral model, stabilized through collective linguistic memory.

### Honor (*Or-nomus*) and Social Control

The concept of *honor* (*or-nomus*) occupies a central place in the axiological system of Oghuz dialects. Linguistically, it is realized through a combination of abstract nouns, evaluative adjectives, and dynamic verbal constructions that denote preservation, loss, or restoration of moral integrity. The frequent co-occurrence of honor-related lexemes with verbs of action highlights the processual nature of the concept: honor is not a static quality, but something that must be actively maintained.

Phraseological expressions reveal a strong metaphorical association between honor and visibility, particularly through references to the face, eyes, and public gaze. These metaphors indicate that honor is inseparable from social perception and communal judgment. In this sense, honor functions as a mechanism of social control, regulating individual behavior through anticipated evaluation by others. A distinctive feature of Oghuz dialects is the collective dimension of honor. Linguistic data show that individual conduct is often evaluated not in isolation, but in relation to the reputation of the kin group. Paremiological units explicitly articulate this principle, transforming personal behavior into a matter of collective responsibility. Thus, the concept of honor extends beyond individual ethics and becomes embedded in the structure of kinship and social solidarity.

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### Labor as an Ethical-Pragmatic Concept

The concept of *labor* in Oghuz dialects is deeply rooted in agrarian and craft-based experience. Lexical material demonstrates a rich inventory of verbs and nouns denoting specific types of work, tools, and processes. However, evaluative emphasis is placed less on the final result of labor and more on its organization, regularity, and moral quality.

Phraseological expressions frequently highlight physical effort, endurance, and perseverance, framing labor as a formative process that shapes personal character. In this regard, labor is conceptualized not merely as an economic activity, but as a moral practice through which diligence, honesty, and responsibility are cultivated.

Paremiological data establish a direct causal link between labor and outcome, presenting this relationship as an unquestionable norm. Proverbs contrast diligence with laziness, thereby constructing ideal and non-ideal social types. Through such oppositions, the concept of labor acquires a pedagogical function, transmitting ethical standards across generations.

### Kinship (*Urug'-aymoq*) and Social Organization

The concept of *kinship* (*urug'-aymoq*) is expressed in Oghuz dialects through an extensive system of kinship terminology that encodes not only genealogical relations but also social obligations and hierarchies. Lexical distinctions between relatives often signal degrees of closeness, authority, and expected support.

In discourse, kinship terms function as pragmatic indicators that regulate patterns of address, permissible topics of conversation, and expected modes of behavior. Phraseological units frequently employ metaphors related to blood, bone, and household space, reflecting both biological and social dimensions of kinship.

Paremiological material presents kinship as a dual-force concept. On the one hand, it is praised as a source of mutual support and cohesion; on the other hand, proverbs warn against excessive interference and internal conflict. This

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ambivalence highlights the regulatory role of paremiological discourse in maintaining social balance within kin-based communities.

### Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that cultural concepts in Oghuz dialects cannot be adequately described through lexical analysis alone. Instead, they function as multilayered semantic-pragmatic structures distributed across different linguistic levels. This observation supports conceptual models that emphasize the interaction between language, culture, and social practice.

Compared with analyses based on literary language, dialect material reveals a higher degree of situational variability and pragmatic sensitivity. In Oghuz dialects, concepts are activated through concrete communicative scenarios, which results in a fragmented yet interconnected semantic structure. This fragmentation should not be interpreted as semantic instability; rather, it reflects the adaptive capacity of concepts to diverse social contexts.

The three-level model proposed in this study—lexical nomination, phraseological imagery, and paremiological norm-setting—provides a systematic framework for capturing this complexity. Lexical units establish the nominative core of a concept, phraseological expressions expand its evaluative and figurative periphery, and paremias stabilize its normative dimension. Together, these levels form a coherent semantic-pragmatic network.

From a broader theoretical perspective, the results contribute to ongoing discussions in linguoculturology and cognitive linguistics regarding the nature of cultural concepts. The data demonstrate that dialects preserve culturally salient meanings that may be attenuated in standardized language. Consequently, dialectological research plays a crucial role in reconstructing culturally embedded conceptual systems.

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### Conclusion

The present study has demonstrated that the expression of cultural concepts in Oghuz dialects is characterized by a systematic and multilayered organization, in which lexical nomination, phraseological representation, and paremiological codification function as interdependent levels of semantic-pragmatic realization. The analysis of the concepts of hospitality, honor, labor, and kinship has shown that these culturally salient units are not isolated semantic entities but integrated conceptual structures manifested through diverse linguistic forms.

The interaction of these levels enables the identification of conceptual cores and peripheral zones, thereby revealing the underlying semantic-pragmatic mechanisms through which culturally significant knowledge is structured, evaluated, and transmitted in dialectal discourse. In this regard, Oghuz dialects emerge as productive linguistic systems that preserve and actualize collective cultural experience through stable yet context-sensitive semantic configurations. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the reconceptualization of cultural concepts as dynamic semantic networks embedded in communicative practice rather than as static lexical units. This approach highlights the importance of incorporating dialectal data into conceptual analysis and underscores the role of non-standardized linguistic systems in maintaining culturally marked meanings and pragmatic nuances.

From an applied standpoint, the findings have significant implications for dialect lexicography, linguocultural studies, and comparative Turkic linguistics. In particular, they suggest that conceptual fields should be treated as integral components of dialect description, requiring systematic representation across multiple levels of the language system.

Future research may further develop this framework by employing corpus-based methods for the analysis of Oghuz dialects and by investigating the realization of cultural concepts in specific communicative domains, including ritual discourse, gendered communication, and intergenerational interaction. Such directions

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would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of dialects as dynamic repositories of cultural memory and mechanisms of social regulation.

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