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### **AN EXPERIENCE OF USING AN ASSOCIATIVE EXPERIMENT IN THE STUDY OF THE CONCEPTS OF „НЕКЕ« AND „ОТБАСЫ«**

The article discusses the concepts of marriage and family represented in the Kazakh language by the lexemes «неке» and «отбасы». The article reveals the universal and national-specific features of these concepts. It uses fragments of psychological description of the socially significant, complex organizational structure of the target concepts, including psycholinguistic, cultural, social and experimental aspects. There are attempts in the article to formulate the content of the concepts of marriage and family according to the results of the direct and on-line survey conducted among the informants. The linguistic and cultural study of concepts is an actual direction in modern linguistics, since in this aspect one can consider the word in the context of cultural values. To achieve the objectives, the authors use the method of free associative experiment based on verbal associations of the subjects participating in the research, which with the identification of words-reactions to the words неке/marriage and отбасы/family may contribute to revealing the peculiarities of the national linguistic awareness of Kazakh people.

**Key words:** concept, value, language, stimulus, reaction, structure, association, on-line survey, verbal associations.

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#### **«Неке» және «отбасы» концептілерін зерделеу және ассоциативті эксперимент қолдану тәжірибесі**

Мақалада неке мен отбасы концептілері қарастырылады. Неке мен отбасы институтының мәдениеттің неғұрлым ажырамас элементтерінің бірі болып табылады және оның негізін қалаушы қоғамдық рөлі лингвомәдени қоғамдастықта мәдени, әлеуметтік және психологиялық бейімделу жағдайларында индивидтің қалыптасуына ықпал етеді. Осы жағынан «Неке» мен «Отбасы» концептілері тіл мен ойлаудың өзара байланысын сипаттайтын сана-сезімнің этникалық және түсінікті-тілдік тұтастығын білдіреді, бұл көрсетілген мәдениеттер тасымалдаушылары әлемінің тілдік көрінісінің ұлттық және этноспецификалық аспектілеріне жүгінуге мүмкіндік береді.

Зерттеу барысында осы концептілерінің әмбебап және ұлттық-спецификалық ерекшеліктері анықталды. Сұрау нәтижелеріне сәйкес неке мен отбасы түсініктерінің құрылымын және мазмұнын модельдеуге талпыныс жасалды. Ассоциативті экспериментінің әдісі қолданылды, ол неке / неке және отбасы / отбасы реакция-сөздері қазақ халқының ұлттық лингвистикалық сана-сезімінің ерекшеліктерін анықтауға көмектесті.

**Түйін сөздер:** концепт, құндылық, тіл, реакция, жауап, құрылым, онлайн сауалнама.

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### Опыт использования ассоциативного эксперимента в исследовании концептов «неке» и «отбасы»

В статье рассматриваются концепты брака и семьи, представленные в казахском языке лексемами «неке» и «отбасы». В статье раскрыты универсальные и национальные особенности данных концептов. В статье применены фрагменты психологического описания социально значимой, сложной организационной структуры целевых концептов, в том числе предприняты попытки сформулировать содержание концептов брака и семьи в соответствии с результатами прямого и онлайн-опроса среди участников. Лингвистическое и культурное изучение данных концептов является актуальным направлением в современной лингвистике, поскольку в этом аспекте можно рассматривать их в контексте культурных ценностей. Для достижения целей авторы используют метод свободного ассоциативного эксперимента, основанный на вербальных ассоциациях субъектов, участвующих в исследовании, где реакции на слова неке / брак и отбасы / семья могут способствовать выявлению особенностей национального языкового сознания казахского народа.

**Ключевые слова:** понятие, ценность, язык, стимул, реакция, структура, ассоциация, онлайн-опрос, вербальные ассоциации.

#### Introduction

The concept as a linguistic and cultural category draws attention of scholars irrespective of the branch of linguistics they represent, all of them express the opinion that the richer and more relevant in its importance in society the concept is, the deeper it unveils the specific national peculiarities, ethnic and cultural information from within, from the inside.

Taking into consideration the theory of the relationship between language and culture, it is necessary to distinguish the following factors:

1. The cultural concept is the point of intersection between the world of culture and the world of individual senses, it is «a cluster of culture in the mind of man and the way in which a person enters culture», from other positions the concept is the content of the notion and the compressed history of this notion.

2. Cultural concepts are original cultural genes that are part of the genotype of culture.

3. Cultural concepts are essentially anthropocentric, and, as a result, they are saturated with cultural connotations. [Stepanov, 1997: 40, 42].

Abisheva K.M. believes that the structure of the concept can be divided into 5 components:

- 1) conceptual component;
- 2) significance component;
- 3) figurative component;
- 4) cultural-mental component ;
- 5) language component [Abisheva, 2008: 131].

Ayazbaeva B.K. puts the concept on a higher level. She states that the concept is an energy entity that manifests itself in different spheres of application of thought depending on which of them this idea is aimed at. The concept can be defined as the information on the very fragment of knowledge, the notion as the information both on the fragment of knowledge and on the field of its application. [Zhumagulova, 2005: 9].

The lack of knowledge about the conceptual system of the Kazakh language leads to the fact that some phenomena of the life of the Kazakh people are perceived as redundant remnants of the past, they receive a negative evaluation.

The deep, philosophical sense of many phenomena of the traditional and modern national culture of the Kazakh people which should be considered as part of the universal, world culture, remains unidentified for the younger generation. [Akhmetzhanova, 2009: 175].

There are different ways of analyzing concepts, scholars usually mention such research methods as interpretation of lexicographic definitions of linguistic means verbalizing concepts, etymological analysis of key words representing concepts, distributional analysis, componential analysis, description of the semantic content of particular concepts, contextual analysis, textual analysis. The method of associative experiment based on verbal associations of subjects participating in the investigation is traditionally considered to be effective since it reveals the peculiarities of the

national linguistic awareness of people – connections of words in their consciousness, their semantic and hierarchical subordination, the brightness of certain components of the meaning of the stimulus word, their axiological value in the society. The process of association involves the individual's identification of cognitive features of the concept. Associative experiment allows scholars to specify some homogeneous complex of words-associates, on the basis of which it is possible to judge the knowledge associated with the object (which is denoted by the stimulus word). These data can be interpreted as a reflection of the relationship between concepts verbalized by a stimulus and reactions since the stimulus and the reaction objectify relations between concepts in the conceptual sphere and also verbalize certain cognitive features of the concept standing behind the stimulus word. [Balashova, 2004: 66]. It should be noted that associative experiment is regarded to be the most developed technique of psycholinguistic semantics analysis.

In this paper in order to study the national specifics of concepts, to describe their content which can be further applied for subsequent concept modeling we also use the technique of associative experiment, to be more exact one of its basic varieties – the technique of free associative experiment. As a research material, marriage and family concepts were involved as components of linguistic consciousness of Kazakh speakers. The Kazakh words «отбасы / family» and «неке / marriage» act as incentives or stimulus. Since Kazakh informants participated in the experiment, the questions were written in the Kazakh language.

### Experiment

The survey involved 55 Kazakh speakers. Basically, respondents were mostly teachers and students of primary courses between the ages of 18-65 of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. It is obvious that people of different generations genders and specialties participated in the experiment. It should be noted that we also distributed similar questionnaires between 45 English speakers, the stimulus words were «family» and «marriage». The participants were asked to write the word-reactions associated with the stimulus word «family» and «marriage». They were asked to write down 5-7 words that came to their mind as reactions to the word-stimulus. During the processing, all associates, including individual ones, were taken into account and studied. The experiment was conducted directly (orally and in written form) and on-line.

To conduct the online experiment, a questionnaire containing associate words were sent to participants via e-mail. Participants in the experiment filled out the questionnaires and gave brief information about themselves, and then sent the completed forms by e-mail back. During the survey we also used the online tool SurveyMonkey, which allowed creating a poll for the mass sending of questionnaires to e-mail addresses, in addition, social networks were also used.

### Results and discussion

In the conducted associative experiment, the answers of the Kazakh language speakers were subjected to descriptive and comparative analysis which grounded the necessity to involve English speakers as well. The obtained results helped to identify and expand the content of «отбасы / family» and «неке / marriage» concepts in the Kazakh language.

The respondents were not limited to one grammatical class of words, however, Kazakh language speakers had a tendency to react to stimulus words mostly with the help of nouns or adjectives.

The results of interviewing Kazakh respondents are presented as follows. The associates given by the participants are classified according to the nature of relations in Kazakh language as paradigmatic associations, syntagmatic associations and atypical associations. It is necessary to explain that paradigmatic association is understood as any reaction associated with the word-stimulus by some semantic connection; syntagmatic association is any one in which a reaction is a word that can syntactically follow a stimulus in a sentence or phrase [The explanatory dictionary on psychology // [https://psychology\\_dictionary.academic.ru/952/Association](https://psychology_dictionary.academic.ru/952/Association)].

*Paradigmatic associations given by the Kazakh subjects can be summarized in the following way:* жауапкершілік 22, аманат 13, шанырақ 22, сәби 30, бөпе 32, бақыт 33, отау 34, неке 35, жас қыз 13, ер бала 10, келісім 11, қадам 13, өмір 12, өз тегі 12, отан 18, бала 28, кішігірім мемлекет 11, босаға 13, жар 14, әке 25, ана 30, ел 22, жанұя 21, жылулық 23, ана алақаны 12, әке мейірімі 16, ата-ана тәрбиесі 15, баланың бал тілі 13, әулет 11, дін 13, заң 15, тұрақтылық 12, алла разылығы 4, жүрек 6, бірлік 18, тірек 15, жан 7, құдай 8, күйеу 19, неке сақинасы 13, жол 17, сапар 6, шешім 9, ант 21, бойжеткен 12, түсінушілік 18, үйдің жылуы 22, әлем 19, туысқандар 17, ана махаббаты 18, білім 14, мешіт 23, дүниетаным 3, бала-шаға

10, жарық 11, қуаныш 14, тағдыр 6, ұя 5, құс 4, мәңгілік 12, неке сарайы 16, көйлек 9, сәукеле 9, той 11, мейрам 14, ағаш 6, әке 19, лимузин 19, ақ көгершіндер 13, дастархан 12, қоғам 9, кереге 11, жас жұбайлар 12, достық 13, намаз 9, қарым-қатынас 10, күлкі 13, қуаныш, уәде 12, баспана 11, квартира 13, бесік 23, папа 32, ене 24, шеше 22, апа 23, туыстар 25, туысқандар 17, ЗАГС 23, лимузин 12, сурет 13, фото 20, тамада 18, басқа үй 6, жұмыс 1, ошақ 24, топ 9, екінші әйел 23, достық 13, ене 12, жас жұбайлар 11, отағасы 14, тоқал 13, бәйбіше 9.

*Syntagmatic associations include such reactions as:* дәстүрлі 5, ұнату 12, сүйу 11, таңдау 11, құру 12, рәсімдеу 11, қосылу 13, туу 11, үйлену 12, бірге тұру 13, қосу 15, қабылдау 18, кездесу 10, рахаттану 12, сүю 22, сырға тағу 24, құрастыру 13, қыдыру 12, бірлесу 11, құран оқу 17, үйді жинау 16, киім жуу 23, қонақ шақыру 20, мақсатқа жету 22, тамақ жасау 21, жалғыздықтан арылу 12, сәндеу 11, маңызды 23, балалы-шағалы 22, жақсы 21, кішкентай 2, неке кию 33, ресми 31, бесік салу 11.

The reaction «бутик» given by one of the respondents should be identified as an atypical association.

Associates can also be specified according to its content of relations. There are less numerous reactions with an emotional-evaluative connotation given by the participants of the experiment: маңызды 12, махаббат 23, қуаныш 22, қамқорлық 12, сенім 14, ұрақтылық 31, сүйіспеншілік 14, қорғаныш 15. The following examples reflect the sphere of functioning of the target concepts: өмір бақи 16, ресми 23.

The obtained data are predominantly connected with such thematic groupings as kinship relations, emotions, feelings and other abstract notions, nature, house and home, etc. For example: сәби 30, бөпе 32, жас қыз 13, ер бала 10, өз тегі 12, бала 28, әке 25, ана 30, ене 24, шеше 22, апа 23, туыстар 25, туысқандар 17, екінші әйел 23, жас жұбайлар 11, тоқал 13, бәйбіше 9, күйеу 19, бала-шаға 10, etc.

– жылулық 23, ана алақаны 12, әке мейірімі 16, ата-ана тәрбиесі 15, тұрақтылық 12, жүрек 6, бірлік 18, тірек 15, жан 7, шешім 9, ант 21, түсінушілік 18, үйдің жылуы 22, ана махаббаты 18, білім 14, дүниетаным 3, қуаныш 14, тағдыр 6, мәңгілік 12, достық 13, қарым-қатынас 10, күлкі 13, қуаныш, уәде 12, достық 13, etc.

– жайляу 1, күн 1, аспан 1

– шанырақ 22, босаға 13, әулет 11, үйдің жылуы 22, ағаш 6, дастархан 12, кереге 11,

баспана 11, квартира 13, бесік 23, басқа үй 6, жұмыс 1, ошақ 24, etc.

The data of the associative experiment explicate the following semantic components of the conceptual image of marriage and family:

1 – The idea of marriage: келісім, қадам, қосылу, шанырақ көтеру.

2 – Types of marriage: ЗАГС, мешіт, неке кию, сырға тағу.

3 – Family members: апа, ене, әке, бала-шаға.

4 – Social relatedness: әйел, күйеу.

5 – Interpersonal relationships in a marriage-family relationship: сенім, қамқорлық, қорғаныш, сүйіспеншілік.

6 – The duration of the marriage: мәңгілік.

7 – Emotional-evaluation characteristics of marriage: махаббат, жауапкершілік.

8 – The space of marriage and family relations: үй, кереге, отау.

We fragmentarily compared the relations to the concepts of «otbasy / family» and «neke / marriage» in the Kazakh linguoculture and their understanding by English speakers. To the number of correlated constitutions of concepts «marriage» and «family» in the target linguocultures we attribute the following: *қарым қатынас/relationship, еркек/man, әйел/woman, күйеу/husband, әйел/wife, неке /wedlock, үй/home, бала/child.*

In the slot «Family members», for example, the most frequent reaction is «mother(mommy, mum / ана (апа)».

The most frequent Kazakh responses are association words such as: жауапкершілік, аманат, махаббат, бала, жар, жүрек, жарық, саукеле, жас жұбайлар, тірек, жан, әйел, некесақинасы, жол, мешіт, үй, бойжеткен, әлем, туысқандар, әке, ағаш, шанырақ, шеше, апа, баспана, бесік, ана, әлем.

The establishment of family-marriage relations leads to the emergence of terms of *ене, келін, күйеубала*, presumably this indicates that close kinship was of great importance in the Kazakh culture.

The semantic space of «marriage» and «family» concepts is determined by such groups as: 1) family members 2) characteristics of family-marriage relations 3) a group of words and expressions that evoke a negative emotional reaction of the person 4) a group of words that objectify the concepts of marriage and family. In the course of the comparative analysis, the universal and national-specific features of these concepts in the languages studied were identified.

In the consciousness of the speakers of the Kazakh language, the notions of family and marriage

relations are somewhat idealized, but at the same time preserve more realistic attitude to the concepts of marriage and family.

A special place in the Kazakh language takes the lexeme *отағасы* (the head of the family, the owner). The spouse addresses her husband not by name, but uses the *отағасы* vocative, showing respect for the spouse. It is known that the terms of kinship are widely used in the Kazakh language, and it is not customary for a woman to

call one of the family members by his name, this fact is explained by the taboo that has existed in the culture for centuries. The results of the experiment are evidences, for example, the word *туысқан* / relative is mentioned very frequently in the Kazakh language. In the Kazakh language word-reactions about family life, common goals and aspirations are dominating. Most likely, this is explained by the value orientations adopted in the Kazakh culture.

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