

SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CONCEPT OF OR IN UZBEK OGHUZ DIALECTS

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Abstract. *This study examines the concept of or in Uzbek Oghuz dialects through the analysis of its semantic field, pragmatic functions, and linguocultural foundations. The aim of the research is to identify the lexical and grammatical means by which this concept is expressed, as well as to reveal its evaluative-emotional connotations and discourse functions related to social regulation. The study employs conceptual analysis, contextual-semantic interpretation, and comparative methods in the examination of Oghuz dialect materials. The scientific novelty of the research lies in demonstrating that the concept of or is not confined solely to the meaning of “shame,” but is conceptually structured through such interconnected notions as honor, modesty, apprehension, and reputation, reflected in a system of stable linguistic expressions.*

Keywords: *concept of or, shame, honor, modesty, reputation, conceptual semantics, Uzbek Oghuz dialects.*

In Uzbek linguistics, the concept has increasingly been employed as a means of revealing the relationship between national cognition and linguistic units; in particular, concepts belonging to the sphere of moral-evaluative categories demonstrate multilayered semantic and pragmatic manifestations within dialectal environments. One such unit is the concept of *or*, which, although frequently interpreted in the literary language as being close in meaning to “shame,” appears in Uzbek Oghuz

dialects as a complex conceptual structure that extends beyond narrow synonymy and functions as a determinant of social relations and behavioral norms.

The main hypothesis of this thesis is that, in Oghuz dialects, the semantic core of *or* reflects not only an individual's self-evaluation, but also the internalized mechanism of social control embodied in the "gaze of others," that is, the collective judgment of the community. Consequently, *or* functions not merely as an emotional state, but also as a linguocultural program regulating human behavior. According to the conceptual approach, the meaning of *or* is not confined to lexical semantics alone; rather, it is continuously reproduced in discourse through stable expressions, phraseological patterns, speech stereotypes, and evaluative predication [1].

In Oghuz dialects, the semantic field of *or* generally develops along three principal dimensions. The first is associated with an affective state related to personal shame and embarrassment; the second represents a normative-evaluative layer connected with honor and dignity, expressing such meanings as "preserving one's self-respect" and "not degrading oneself"; the third consists of a social reputational layer conditioned by public opinion and communal standards. Although these three layers are also observable in the literary language, their proportional distribution changes in Oghuz dialects: while the component of shame often appears as the most immediately perceptible meaning, the components related to honor and reputation become central through stable expressions and phraseological constructions.

In dialectal discourse, *or* frequently functions as a concise yet powerful signal for evaluating a particular social situation. By invoking *or*, the speaker symbolically places the situation within the boundaries

of what is considered socially “acceptable” or “unacceptable.” From a pragmatic perspective, this gives rise to the function of a “social regulator”: within relationships among relatives, neighbors, and close community members, *or* operates not as a mere excuse or emotional reaction, but as a linguistic manifestation of social norms. Furthermore, the concept demonstrates a tendency toward deontic modality, insofar as it implicitly conveys the meaning of “one should not act in such a way” together with an emotional-evaluative coloring. As a result, *or* functions not only as a psychological state, but also as a softened form of moral injunction [2].

From a lexical-semantic perspective, the distinctive nature of *or* in Oghuz dialects is reflected in the fact that it cannot be equated directly with *uyat* (“shame”). While *uyat* may denote a situational and temporary sense of embarrassment or discomfort, the use of *or* involves stronger presuppositions related to an individual’s social status, lineage, and family upbringing. For this reason, in Oghuz dialects *or* is more closely associated with the semantic chain of “honor” and “reputation.” In expressions such as *or ketdi* (“honor/reputation is lost”), what is perceived as lost is not merely personal embarrassment, but rather a form of reputational capital that is difficult to restore.

The choice of the verb *ketmoq* (“to leave” or “to disappear”) itself reveals an underlying conceptual metaphor: *or* is conceptualized as something material or possessable — something that may “exist” or “not exist,” that may “come” or “go.” In cognitive linguistics, such modeling is associated with the interpretation of abstract values as a type of “resource” [3]. In Oghuz dialects, however, this resource is often understood as belonging not only to the individual, but also to the family or kin group. Consequently, *or* acquires a marker of collective possession:

while a particular action may be regarded merely as *uyat* (“shame”) for an individual, the “loss of *or*” is evaluated as a “stain” upon the honor and reputation of the entire household or lineage.

At the level of grammatical and syntactic expression, the concept of *or* manifests itself, on the one hand, in predicative evaluative constructions and, on the other hand, in combination with negative and prohibitive forms. In Oghuz dialectal discourse, the word *or* frequently appears at the beginning of a sentence or occupies the evaluative center of an utterance, thereby establishing a normative framework for the information that follows. Such positioning reinforces *or* as the thematic component within the theme-rheme structure, leading the listener to first accept the normative criterion and subsequently interpret the details of the event through that evaluative lens.

In addition, *or* is often intensified through exclamatory and ironic pragmatic devices. In many cases, the speaker considers detailed explanation unnecessary, as the mere invocation of *or* itself functions as sufficient evidence or justification. At this point, *or* approaches the status of a discourse marker: it activates a socially recognized “code” and effectively reduces the need for further argumentation. This feature appears more stable than the use of *uyat* (“shame”) in the literary language, since *uyat* is more frequently interpreted as a subjective emotional state, whereas *or* invokes a socially acknowledged and collectively understood norm [1].

The linguocultural motivations of the concept are also particularly evident in Oghuz dialects, where *or* is commonly associated with such behavioral scenarios as modesty, decency, respect toward elders, propriety in male-female relations, and appropriate conduct in the presence of guests. Within this framework, prototypical situations

connected with *or* are formed: excessive speaking in front of strangers, self-display, disregard for the advice of elders, or the disclosure of family matters in public are conceptualized as actions capable of triggering *or* within collective cultural memory.

From the perspective of prototype theory, the more frequently such typical scenarios are repeated around the concept of *or*, the more normative its semantic core becomes, while peripheral meanings — such as ordinary embarrassment or hesitation — gradually converge with the notion of *uyat* (“shame”) [4]. In Oghuz dialects, however, the normative force of the conceptual core remains particularly strong; consequently, even peripheral emotional meanings are interpreted through the prism of social norms. Thus, embarrassment is expressed not merely as “I am ashamed of myself,” but rather through a socially projected formulation equivalent to “it will bring dishonor before the community”.

A comparative approach is essential for demonstrating the dialect-specific character of the concept. In Oghuz-group dialects, particularly in Khorezm and adjacent regions, established speech practices contribute to the active use of *or*, while areal interaction with closely related Turkic languages also plays a certain role in shaping its usage. Comparative materials from Turkic languages indicate that, in earlier linguistic layers, *or* was predominantly associated with such notions as “honor,” “dignity,” and “moral integrity,” whereas in later stages, in some languages, it gradually converged with the semantic field of “shame” [5].

In Uzbek Oghuz dialects, however, these two semantic directions are preserved simultaneously and become activated depending on the communicative context: in everyday interaction, *or* tends to approximate the meaning of *uyat* (“shame”), while in social evaluation it aligns more closely with the notions of “honor” and “reputation.” This dual

functioning should be interpreted not merely as evidence of polysemy, but rather as an indication of the concept's multilayered structure, consisting of affective, normative, and reputational dimensions. Each layer is characterized by its own typical syntactic environment. For example, the affective layer is commonly represented through personal-experience constructions such as *or bo'lib qoldim* ("I felt ashamed"), whereas the reputational layer is more frequently expressed through collective-consequence models such as *or ketadi* ("honor is lost") or *or qolmaydi* ("no honor remains").

In summary, the concept of *or* in Uzbek Oghuz dialects may be regarded as one of the central evaluative units through which social and moral norms are regulated linguistically. Its distinctive nature lies not merely in its synonymic relation to *uyat* ("shame"), but rather in its functioning as a conceptual network that integrates such components as honor, modesty, apprehension, and reputation. Furthermore, in discourse, *or* performs important pragmatic functions, including the reinforcement of social norms and the reduction of argumentative negotiation.

The study demonstrates that, although the dialectal manifestations of *or* remain closely connected with the literary language, in Oghuz dialects the concept predominantly emerges as a value centered on collective reputation and social dignity. Future research based on inter-dialectal corpus materials, particularly through statistical-semantic mapping and the analysis of genre-based distribution, may provide a more precise understanding of the conceptual dynamics of *or*.

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