



LINGUOCULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE KINSHIP SYSTEM (BASED ON RUSSIAN AND UZBEK PROVERBS)

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 31 st March 2026 Accepted: 30 th April, 2026	This article examines proverbs about women in the kinship system in the Russian and Uzbek languages. A semantic and linguocultural analysis is conducted to identify the specifics of female representation and differences in their mental, emotional, and behavioral characteristics.

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The study of proverbs and sayings dates back to the 19th century. Systematic scientific research into proverbs is largely associated with G. L. Permyakov. Subsequently, proverbs and sayings were the focus of attention of leading phraseologists of the 20th century, including V. P. Zhukov [6, p. 135], V. M. Mokienko [7, p. 47] and V. N. Teliya [10, p. 68], whose works served as the theoretical and methodological basis for this study. Research in the field of phraseology and paremiology would have been hampered without the large-scale work on collecting and recording proverbs and sayings, carried out in the last century by such enthusiasts and collectors of folklore as V. I. Dahl and I. I. Illustrated. A significant contribution to the development of this field is also associated with the development of the problem of defining set expressions and their typology. In particular, in the 1960s–80s, various types of set linguistic units were actively studied: proverbs, sayings, phraseological units, set word complexes and idioms. These issues are reflected in the works of A. M. Babkin [2, p. 72], V. V. Vinogradov [4, p. 170], and Yu. A. Gvozdev [5, p. 58].

The material for the study was 60 Russian and 40 Uzbek proverbs representing the image of women in the system of kinship relations. The selection of linguistic material was carried out using the continuous sampling method from the following lexicographic sources: V. I. Dal, *"Proverbs of the Russian People"* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1984); V. I. Dal, *"Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language"* in 4 volumes (Moscow: Citadel, 1998, Vol. II); T. Mirzaev, A. Musokulov, B. Sarimsokov, *"Uzbek Folk Proverbs"* (Tashkent: Sharq, 2019); M. Sodikova, *"A Brief Uzbek-Russian Dictionary of Proverbs and Sayings"* (Tashkent, 1993).

In recent decades, linguistics has witnessed a unique "paremiological boom" [7, p. 94]; [12, p. 112], driven by the dynamic social processes of modern society. These changes have fostered a stronger national consciousness, which, in turn, has led to increased interest in proverbs and sayings, as well as the specific features of their functioning in language.

Every national language contains a rich corpus of proverbs and sayings—unique carriers of folk wisdom, preserving and transmitting the cultural and linguistic traditions of the people.

Lexemes representing the image of women in the system of kinship relationships are of particular interest to this study, as they serve as components of paremias in both Uzbek and Russian. Such units reflect traditional notions of women's social roles and their place in the family structure, entrenched in the folk linguistic worldview.

For example, the Russian paremiological collection includes the following examples: *"A daughter is someone else's treasure. Feed her, teach her, protect her, and give her to others"; "Feed your son—he'll be useful to you; feed your daughter—people will need him"; "They brought the daughter-in-law—and put the chimney on the roof (the job is done)"; "Even if the daughter-in-law is a fool, so long as she blew the fire early"; "What good is a cow, so long as the wife is healthy"; "The peacock's feathers are beautiful, but the wife's character is beautiful"; "With a good wife, sorrow is half the sorrow, but joy is double".*

Similar ideas are reflected in Uzbek proverbs: *"Gul o'ssa — yerning ko'rki, qiz o'ssa — elning ko'rki"* (A flower grows — the beauty of the land, a girl grows — the beauty of the people); *"Kelinni kelganda ko'r, sepini yoyganda ko'r"* (A daughter-in-law is admired when she arrives, and her dowry — when it is laid out); *"If a cow is gluttonous, it's a gift from God, but if a wife is gluttonous, it's a punishment".*

These examples demonstrate that the image of women in proverbs in both languages is closely linked to ideas about their family role, moral qualities, and social status, making this lexical and semantic layer a significant object of comparative linguistic and cultural analysis.

During the analysis of the paremiological material, the proverbs were divided into several thematic subgroups.

1. Orphanhood. Death of Father and Mother

In both Russian and Uzbek, a significant number of proverbs and sayings emphasize the importance of a complete family, in which both parents are present, viewing it as the foundation of well-being. The plight of a family deprived of a mother is reflected, for example, in the Russian proverb: *"A widower is not a father to his children, but an orphan himself"*. At the same time, popular assessments of the loss of one parent highlight the special significance of the mother in the family structure, expressed in the proverb: *"Without a father, you're half an orphan, and without a mother, you're a complete orphan"*.

A similar notion is reflected in Uzbek proverbs: *"Onali yetim - gul yetim, otali yetim - shum yetim"* (He who remains with his mother is an orphan-flower, he who remains with his father is an orphan-grief); *"It's better to stay with a poor mother than with a rich father"*.

Such proverbs don't diminish the father's importance in the family hierarchy, but they emphasize the mother's special role as the keeper of the home. This underscores the depth of loss a family experiences when a woman—mother and wife—dies.

2. Parents. Mother

In Uzbek and Russian proverbs, the central place among blood relatives is usually given to the father and mother. However, the number of proverbs that specifically mention the father or mother is small; the general lexeme "parents" (Uzbek: *ota-ona*) is more common. Examples of Russian proverbs include: *"He who honors his parents never perishes"*; *"In the bosom of his father and mother"*; *"When your parents are alive, honor them; when they are dead, remember them!"*; *"Don't abandon your father and mother in your old age, and God will not abandon you"*. Similarly, in Uzbek proverbs: *"Ota-ona (farzandiga) taxt yaratadi-yu, baxt yaratolmaydi"* (Parents give their children a dowry and wealth, but not happiness); *"Ota-onang o'tirgan uyning tomiga chiqma"* (literally: *"Don't climb on the roof of the house where your parents are sitting"*, i.e., respect your parents and know your place).

Many more proverbs and sayings focus on comparing the qualities of father and mother. Examples from the Russian language: *"There are many fathers, but only one mother"*; *"As God is to people, so is a father to his children."* Uzbek proverbs express similar ideas as follows: *"Onalik uyning ori bor, otalik uyning"* (In the home, conscience is with the mother, and prosperity is with the father); *"Ota – aql, ona – idrok. Ota – bilak, ona – yurak"* (Father is reason, mother is common sense; father is strength, mother is heart).

Thus, proverbs in both languages differentiate parental roles: the father is more often associated with reason, prosperity, and protection, while the mother is associated with moral values, warmth, and education.

In both Russian and Uzbek, the mother is given special, if not primary, significance in the family and social structure. Russian proverbs emphasize the mother's crucial role in raising, supporting the family, and transmitting spiritual values: *"Mother is the head of every endeavor"*; *"A mother feeds her children, as the land feeds people"*; *"A dear mother is an everlasting candle"*; *"A mother's blessing neither drowns in water nor burns in fire"*; *"It's warm in the sun, but goodness comes from a mother"*; *"A bird rejoices in spring, and a baby rejoices in its mother"*; *"A wife is there for advice, a mother-in-law is there for greetings, but there is no one dearer than a mother"*; *"There is no friend like a dear mother."*

Similar ideas are reflected in Uzbek proverbs, where the maternal role is designated as priceless and sacred: *"Onaga berma baho, ona o'zi bebaho"* (Don't judge a mother—she is priceless); *"Ona—daraxt, bola—meva"* (Mother is a tree, child is a fruit); *"Jannat onalar oyog'i ostidadir"* (Paradise is beneath the feet of mothers).

Thus, the proverbs of both languages reinforce the idea of the mother as the main figure in the family, the source of care, moral support and spiritual stability, which emphasizes the universality and cultural significance of this image in the linguacultural tradition.

3. Spouses. Husband and Wife

The father and mother have another significant social role in the family—that of husband and wife. Although spouses are not blood relatives and their relationship is defined as social kinship, it is important to consider how the wife's status is reflected in Russian and Uzbek proverbs and sayings.

Analysis of the paroemiological collection of the two languages using the cited sources revealed only one proverb that recognizes the husband's primacy in the family and is verbalized identically in both Russian and Uzbek: *"The husband is the head, the wife is the neck"* // *"Er — bosh, xotin — bo'yin"*. However, according to the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language*, in the 19th century this proverb had a more expanded form: *"The husband is the head, the wife is the neck, I turn it wherever I want"*. The original version emphasized the wife's overt, rather than hidden, influence, emphasizing her confidence and independence in her relationship with her husband. Over time, this aspect of the "wife-neck" aspect was lost as the proverb was shortened, and the modern form captures only a general understanding of the relationship between the roles of husband and wife.

At the same time, a number of Russian proverbs reflect the spiritual and moral foundations of family relationships, emphasizing the harmonious interaction of spouses: *"The husband is the wife's father, the wife is the husband's crown"*; *"The husband is the head, the wife is the soul"*; *"The wife is the husband's bandage, and he is her shepherd"*. These proverbs demonstrate that in folk tradition, the relationship between husband and wife is built on a combination of authority, care, and spiritual support, while maintaining an emphasis on the importance of both spouses in the family.

If spouses are not on good terms, folk wisdom also finds expression in proverbs. In Russian, this is reflected, for example, in the proverb: *"A wife and a husband are like a snake"*. Proverbs provide insight into the origins of family conflicts and warn against certain behavior: *"He who gives his wife free rein robs himself"*; *"The wife rules, so the husband wanders among the neighbors"* [1, p. 98].

The Uzbek people have created numerous proverbs about spouses, emphasizing the complementarity of husband and wife and creating an atmosphere of harmony and warmth in the family: *"Er — quyosh yulduşi"* (The husband is the companion of the sun, and the wife is the companion of life); *"Khotin — erga oyna"* (The wife is the mirror of her husband).

The close relationship between spouses is also evident in other Uzbek proverbs: *"Er vaziri — xotin"* (The wife is the vizier, the husband's advisor); *"Er qaerda bo'lsa, xotin shu yerda"* (Wherever the husband goes, the wife follows). Particular attention is paid to the relationship between society's attitude toward women and their husbands' attitudes toward them: *"Xonim xon orqasidan — xonim"* (A wife has status thanks to her husband). The reverse relationship is also reflected: *"Erni er qilgan ham xotin, qaro yer qilgan ham xotin"* (A husband's well-being depends on his wife).

Thus, Uzbek and Russian proverbs capture both the conflictual side of family relationships and a model of harmonious interaction between spouses, emphasizing interdependence, mutual assistance, and the joint creation of domestic well-being.

Uzbek and Russian proverbs contain synonymous expressions emphasizing the importance of a wife in family and social life. For example, the idea that a man's fame and success largely depend on his wife is verbalized: *"Erning dongini yo oti chiqaradi, yo xotini"* (A man is glorified either by his horse or his wife); *"Erning otini xotin chiqarar, xotinning otini o'tin chiqarar"* (The wife praises her husband's name, and the wife's name praises firewood). The key idea of a spouse as a reflection of her husband is enshrined in the proverb: *"Xotin — urning oynasi"* (A wife is her husband's mirror).

These proverbs also confirm the important role of a husband in a woman's life. Some Uzbek proverbs emphasize that marriage is a necessary stage in a woman's life, while celibacy is indirectly condemned: *"Ersiz xotin — oshvoqsiz ot"* (An unmarried woman is like a horse without a bridle; without a husband, a wife is always an orphan).

Folk wisdom also reflects the assessment of a wife's qualities. In the Russian paroemiological collection, this is expressed as follows: *"A good wife will protect the house, but a bad one will shake it with her sleeve"*; *"A good wife is a yurt (i.e., a house)"*; *"An evil wife is angrier than evil"*; *"A good wife makes an honest husband."* A similar idea is captured in Uzbek proverbs: *"Ro'zg'or ziyinati — o'tin, uy ziyinati — xotin"* (The ornament of the household is firewood, and the home is a wife); *"Xotinli ro'zg'or guldur, xotinsiz ro'zg'or cho'ldir"* (A household with a wife is like a flower, without a wife, like a desert).

Thus, proverbs in both languages emphasize not only the social and economic importance of the wife, but also her role as the moral and spiritual center of the family, influencing the well-being of all its members.

4. Widowhood. Widower and Widow

Russian and Uzbek proverbs reflect situations where a woman is left without a husband—either due to his death or because she was never married. For example, the Russian proverbial collection includes the following examples: *"A bad husband goes to the grave, a good wife goes to the streets (the world)"*; *"A wife without a husband is worse than a widow, and a widow or an orphan is worth howling like a wolf"*; *"A wife without a husband is like a collar without a harness"*. Similar ideas are expressed in Uzbek proverbs.

The situation of losing a wife and leaving a man a widower is also reflected in proverbial material: *"Without a wife is like without a hat"*; *"A husband without a wife is like a goose without water"*. If a man has never married, his single status is assessed extremely negatively, comparable to being deprived of family.

At the same time, Russian folklore holds the notion that a man copes more easily with the loss of his wife, as society recognizes the difficult situation of a widower and strives to help him restore family well-being. This is reflected in the proverb: *"God will not offend: he will take away a woman, but give a girl"* [9, p. 27].

Thus, proverbs in both languages not only capture the social significance of marriage for women and men but also demonstrate society's cultural expectations regarding marital relations and the restoration of family status after loss.

5. Children. Daughter

Most Russian and Uzbek proverbs reflect the relationship between parents and children, emphasizing the key role of offspring in family life. Both languages share the common understanding that children are the foundation of family well-being, and a family without children loses its meaning and significance.

In Uzbek proverbs, this idea is expressed as follows: *"Davlatning boshi farzand"* (Wealth begins with a child); *"Davlatning — ota-onang, savlatning — o'gil-qizim"* (Parents are wealth, children are pride).

The absence of children in a family is considered a grave loss. In Russian, this is reflected in the proverb: *"No children—the family is barren"*. Uzbek proverbs convey a similar meaning through metaphors: *"Bolali uy — bozor, bolasiz uy — mozor"* (A house with children is like a bazaar, a house without children is like a cemetery); *"Bolali uy — xandon, bolasiz uy — zindon"* (A house with children is joy, a house without children is a dungeon).

Russian proverbs reflect different attitudes toward children depending on their gender, especially toward daughters. In folk tradition, daughters are sometimes viewed as "someone else's gain," while sons are expected to support the family in the future: *"A daughter is someone else's prey"*; *"Raising a daughter is like pouring water into a leaky barrel"*. Conversely, of a son, it is said: *"A son, though not with bread, but with slaps, will feed you everything, while a daughter will take the last morsel"*. The contrast is particularly striking in the comparison of daughter and son: *"A*

daughter is a dunghill, and a son is a gold sack", *"With a son you will build a house, but with a daughter you will live on the slack"*.

Similar notions are found in Uzbek proverbs: *"Qiz bola birovning bolasi"* (A daughter is someone else's prey); *"Qiz asraguncha tuz asra"* (It is better to have salt at home than a daughter). Daughters are often associated with their mothers: *"Choose fabric by its threads, and a bride by her mother"*. Russian proverbs convey the same theme: *"Exactly: like mother, so is daughter"*, *"Like mother, so is daughter"*.

Regardless of the child's gender, proverbs emphasize that parents can count on support and be proud of their children: Uzbek proverbs include *"O'gil yoqqan chiroqni, qiz ham yoqadi"* (Both son and daughter can light a candle); *"O'gil — uyning bulbuli, qiz — uyning guli"* (A son is a house nightingale, a daughter is a house flower); *"O'gil borning o'rni bor, qizi borning qadri bor"* (He who has a son has a place, he who has a daughter is valued). In Russian, a similar expression is: *"They show off their daughters, they live in honor with their sons"*.

Particular attention is paid to the daughter and her future marriage. Uzbek proverbs offer practical advice: *"Qizingni beshikga sol, molini teshikka sol"* (Put your daughter in the cradle and immediately begin saving for her dowry). Russian proverbs capture the difficulties and length of the marriage process: *"Giving away a daughter in marriage is not like baking a pie"*, *"Not everyone who asks for her hand in marriage will marry"*. An Uzbek proverb expresses a similar thought: *"Oshnachilik — bir yillik, kudachilik — ming yillik"* (Friendship for a year, matchmaking for a thousand years).

Interestingly, folk wisdom also highlights a strategy for influencing a second daughter's successful marriage: if the first daughter proves to be a good wife and daughter-in-law, word of her virtues will attract new matchmakers for the next daughter. This emphasizes the social significance of the eldest daughter's positive example for the younger daughter's future.

Thus, Russian and Uzbek proverbs capture the contradictory attitudes toward the daughter: on the one hand, she is viewed as a "stranger" in socioeconomic terms, while on the other, she is a source of pride and hope for the family, especially in the context of her upbringing and future marriage.

6. Mother-in-law. Daughter-in-law

Paremiology reflecting the perception of mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law in Russian and Uzbek are of interest for comparative analysis. In Russian proverbs, the assessment of the mother-in-law is often expressed indirectly, sometimes with a touch of criticism or warning: *"A God-given mother is not a dear one"*; *"A foreign land without wind dries, a mother-in-law without a noose strangles"*; *"The mother-in-law said to her daughter-in-law: 'Daughter-in-law, stop grinding, take a rest, you ceilings'"*; *"The mother-in-law beats the cat, but slanders the daughter-in-law."* These expressions demonstrate both the moral pressure exerted by the mother-in-law and the potential difficulties in intergenerational relationships.

Uzbek proverbs, on the contrary, do not record negative assessments of the mother-in-law, which may indicate the cultural specificity of the perception of this figure in Uzbek society.

As for the daughter-in-law, in Russian proverbs, her image is often revealed through the attitude of the mother-in-law and strangers toward her behavior: *"They brought the daughter-in-law, and put a chimney on the roof!"* (i.e., the daughter-in-law will tell everyone about everything that happens in her husband's house); *"Snosenka-snosenka, shift from one foot to the other"* (a nudge to be more active).

Proverbs in both languages often ridicule people's tendency to differentiate between family ties and distinguish between "us" and "them": Uzbek proverbs - *"Khotin qarindoshi - ilon boshi, er qarindoshi - savat boshi"* (The wife's relatives are the head of a snake, the husband's relatives are the head of a basket); Russian - *"The wife's relatives - open the gates, the husband's relatives - lock the gates"*.

Thus, proverbs capture the social and moral significance of mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, and highlight the dynamics of family relationships, including conflictual and comic aspects. Differences in the cultural representation of these figures in the Russian and Uzbek languages are also evident.

The following conclusions were reached as a result of the study. Russian and Uzbek contain a large number of proverbs that verbalize the characteristics of mothers, daughters, wives, daughters-in-law, mothers-in-law, mothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, and daughters-in-law in comparison with other family members and relatives. Our analysis identified six thematic groups of proverbs in the compared languages.

Proverbs in both languages emphasize the importance of both parents in a child's life; the father is not diminished in any way, but the emphasis is on the exceptional importance of the mother. Both languages contain a significant number of proverbs about parents compared to proverbs specifically dedicated to the father or mother, which contrast their qualities and roles in the family.

Proverbs from the "Spouses: Husband and Wife" subgroup vividly portray both the image of a friendly, harmonious couple, as well as negative aspects of family relationships, such as the wife's dominance, excessive freedom, or extravagance.

Proverbs in both languages reflect the plight of a husband or wife left without their other half. However, in the Russian proverbial tradition, a saying was identified that emphasizes that a man can more easily cope with the absence of a spouse and quickly find a replacement, while no equivalent proverb was found in the Uzbek tradition.

Proverbs in both Russian and Uzbek languages emphasize the image of the daughter, revealing equally contradictory attitudes toward her: difficulties in raising her, growing up, and preparing for marriage are noted. It is also

emphasized that a married daughter who grows up becomes a member of another family and is perceived as "someone else's treasure".

The study did not find a single Uzbek proverb that described a mother-in-law negatively.

Overall, the study showed that the image of women in both linguistic cultures is contradictory. On the one hand, she is portrayed as the guardian of the hearth, a kind mother without whom family happiness is impossible, and an obedient daughter-in-law; on the other hand, a woman can be a nagging wife, a wicked stepmother, or a talkative daughter-in-law unable to keep family secrets.

Thus, the proverbs demonstrate the multifaceted nature of women, reflecting both their positive and problematic roles in family and social life.

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