ISSN NO: 2769-996X
May 2026

A Comparative-Cognitive Model Of The Associative Verbalization Of The Concept “Friendship” In The Uzbek And Russian Languages

Davanov Shamsiddin Faxriddin ugli
Independent Researcher at the Denov Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy

Abstract
This article explores the associative verbalization of the concept of “friendship” in Uzbek and Russian from a contrastive-cognitive perspective. It examines the linguistic expression of the concept, the semantic structure of its associative field, and its core and peripheral components. Uzbek and Russian lexical items associated with trust, loyalty, sincerity, affection, support, and devotion are discussed as theoretical examples of the concept’s key semantic features. The article also considers the cognitive mechanisms underlying associative verbalization, the influence of cultural factors, and the shared and language-specific characteristics of friendship in the two languages.
Keywords: concept of friendship, associative verbalization, contrastive-cognitive model, associative field, core, periphery, linguocognitive analysis.

Introduction. In modern linguistics, the study of concepts is a key approach to defining the relationships between language, thought, and culture. Humans perceive reality not only through direct experience but also through concepts, values, and cultural representations shaped by language. Consequently, examining how a specific concept is expressed through linguistic units and associative reactions helps shed light on a people’s worldview and cognitive experience [1; 2]. The concept of “friendship” (do‘stlik) represents relationships between individuals based on trust, sincerity, loyalty, affection, and mutual support. Although this concept is expressed in the Uzbek and Russian languages by the lexemes “do‘stlik” and “дружба”, its content is not limited to the dictionary definitions of these words. Proverbs, set phrases, emotional evaluations, and associative reactions linked to the concept also shape its semantic-cognitive content.

Literature review. In the Uzbek language, terms such as “sirdosh” (confidant), “qadrdon” (dear/long-time friend), “mehr-oqibat” (affection and care), and “sadoqat” (loyalty) allow for the expression of various facets of friendship. Similarly, in the Russian language, terms such as “доверие” (trust), “верность” (faithfulness), “преданность” (devotion), “поддержка” (support), and “искренность” (sincerity) illuminate the ethical, emotional, and practical dimensions of this concept. A comparative study of these units serves to identify conceptual commonalities between the two languages, as well as potential differences rooted in cultural context. The objective of this article is to analyze the associative verbalization of the concept of “friendship” in the Uzbek and Russian languages, to describe its semantic-cognitive components, and to develop a comparative-cognitive model.

Research methodology. Verbalization is the expression of concepts, knowledge, or experiences within the human mind through linguistic means. Associative verbalization, in turn, refers to the manifestation - via various linguistic units - of the mental images, emotions, evaluations, and knowledge associated with a specific word or concept. For instance, the word “do‘stlik” (friendship) might activate related units such as “ishonch” (trust), “yordam” (help), or “sirdosh” (confidant). Similarly, the stimulus “дружба” (friendship) in Russian is likely to elicit responses such as “доверие” (trust), “поддержка” (support), or “верность” (loyalty). Associative verbalization provides a broader insight into the content of a concept, as it reveals not only the word’s direct lexical meaning but also the semantic connections formed through human experience. In psycholinguistic research, associative reactions are viewed as a tool for studying the mnemonic and semantic links between words [2]. In cognitive linguistics, such reactions help explain the processes by which knowledge is organized and activated within the human mind [3].

Analysis and results. The linguistic expression of a concept can manifest at several levels. At the first level is the lexeme that directly names the concept - for example, “do‘stlik” in Uzbek or “дружба” in Russian. At the subsequent level are the semantic units that reveal the conceptual content. These include concepts such

ISSN NO: 2769-996X
May 2026

as trust, loyalty, affection, support, and sincerity. On a broader level, proverbs, archetypes, typical situations, and national-cultural perceptions related to friendship take shape.

Thus, when analyzing associative verbalization, it is necessary to consider the relationships between the lexeme, the associative unit, the semantic group, and the conceptual structure. Associative verbalization of the concept of "friendship" in the Uzbek language: In Uzbek, the concept of "friendship" enters into semantic relationships with lexical units such as "do'st" (friend), "sirdosh" (confidant), "qadrdon" (dear/long-time friend), "hamroh" (companion), and "birodar" (brother/close friend). These units reflect aspects of friendship related to interpersonal relations, trust, closeness, and shared experience. "Trust" (ishonch) is a crucial semantic component that ensures the stability of a friendship. Trusting a friend involves viewing their words and actions as reliable, feeling free to express one's own thoughts, and expecting support from them when necessary. "Loyalty" (sadoqat) signifies the endurance of a friendship over time and remaining committed to the relationship even during difficult situations. Meanwhile, "mehr" (affection/kindness) and "mehr-oqibat" (affection and mutual care) manifest aspects of emotional closeness, concern, and the valuing of human connection.

The term "sirdosh" (confidant) reflects the dimension of friendship based on confidentiality and mutual trust. The word "qadrdon" (dear/long-time friend) evokes meanings of closeness, a long-standing relationship, and personal appreciation. These units represent not only the general ethical characteristics of the concept but also aspects linked to an individual's personal experience. When analyzing the cultural layer of the concept of "friendship" in the Uzbek language, one can also examine units such as "oqibat" (mutual care/loyalty), "hamjihatlik" (solidarity), "hurmat" (respect), and "qo'ni-qo'shnichilik" (neighborliness) from a contextual perspective. These serve to connect friendship to a broader system of social relations. However, the precise position and level of activity of these units within the associative field can only be determined based on actual associative experience or reliable lexicographical data.

In the Russian language, the concept of "дружба" (friendship) is semantically expanded through elements such as "друг" (friend), "доверие" (trust), "верность" (loyalty/faithfulness), "преданность" (devotion), "искренность" (sincerity), "поддержка" (support), and "взаимопомощь" (mutual aid). These terms represent the moral, emotional, and practical dimensions of friendship. "Доверие" signifies openness and confidence between friends. "Верность" implies remaining faithful to the relationship and preserving the friendship. "Преданность" emphasizes dedication to a friend and a deep attachment to the relationship. "Поддержка" and "взаимопомощь" represent the practical aspect of friendship - namely, providing assistance and supporting one another in times of need.

The Russian proverb "Друг познаётся в беде" (A friend is known in times of trouble) reflects the idea that the true essence of friendship is revealed during difficult situations. This proverb portrays friendship not merely as a positive sentiment, but as a relationship validated by loyalty and practical assistance. In this sense, it shares a conceptual connection with terms such as "верность", "помощь" (help), and "поддержка". Elements like "общение" (interaction/communication), "совместные интересы" (shared interests), and "воспоминания" (memories) may relate to the circumstances surrounding the formation and development of a friendship. They describe relationships that emerge through shared activities, conversation, and common experience. These units can be interpreted as a peripheral layer of the associative field, though their status - whether core or peripheral - is determined based on empirical data.

A semantic and cognitive analysis of the associative verbalization of the concept of "friendship" allows for the identification of its interconnected components. Theoretically, the content of this concept can be divided into several layers: ethical-spiritual, emotional, relational, practical, and cultural. The ethical-spiritual layer encompasses concepts such as trust, loyalty, honesty, and the keeping of promises. The emotional layer is associated with affection, sincerity, closeness, and joy. The relational layer is expressed through terms denoting roles or types of friends - such as a confidant, a cherished companion, or a partner. The practical layer includes assistance, support, and mutual aid. The cultural layer reflects proverbs, customs, social experiences, and values associated with friendship.

From a cognitive perspective, these layers do not exist in isolation but rather form an interconnected system. For instance, trust enables one to share secrets with a friend; loyalty ensures the continuity of the relationship; and assistance serves as a practical manifestation of friendship. Consequently, the concept of "friendship" is viewed not merely as a collection of individual words, but as a cognitive structure

ISSN NO: 2769-996X
May 2026

characterized by internal interconnections [1; 3]. The semantic connections within associative reactions can also vary. The relationship “friendship – trust” expresses a substantive attribute or a structural characteristic. The connection “friendship – help” indicates a practical manifestation of the concept. Meanwhile, the relationship “friendship – confidant” highlights the social role of a friend. Thus, associative verbalization can simultaneously reflect the characteristics and functions of a concept, as well as the personal experience associated with it.

When comparing the concept of “friendship” in the Uzbek and Russian languages, commonalities in meaning are clearly evident. Terms such as “ishonch” and “доверие” (trust), “sadoqat” and “верность” (loyalty/devotion), “yordam” and “помощь” (help), and “qo‘llab-quvvatlash” and “поддержка” (support) reflect shared aspects of this concept. In both languages, friendship is associated with reliable relationships, mutual assistance, and loyalty. At the same time, certain components of the concept may carry distinct semantic emphases depending on the cultural context. For instance, the Uzbek term “mehr-oqibat” encompasses both care and human closeness. In Russian, the term “преданность” emphasizes loyalty and a strong, enduring bond within a relationship. It is more accurate to view these distinctions not as absolute national differences, but as semantic-cognitive variations that warrant examination through comparative analysis.

When comparing the associative fields of these two languages, one should not rely solely on lexical equivalents. Words with similar meanings may not be activated with the same frequency or emotional intensity in the minds of respondents. Therefore, in a comparative-cognitive analysis, the frequency of reactions, their semantic group, evaluative content, and the degree of connection to the stimulus must be taken into account. Associative dictionaries of the Russian language can serve as an important source for the empirical investigation of associative relations [5]. For the Uzbek language, it is appropriate to collect data through relevant associative dictionaries, questionnaires, or free association experiments. Direct comparison of reactions and the drawing of reliable conclusions are possible only when the same or similar methodology is applied to both languages.

A theoretical comparative-cognitive model of the concept of “friendship” in the Uzbek and Russian languages can be represented by a central concept surrounded by various semantic-cognitive layers. At the core of the model lie the concepts of “do‘stlik” (in Uzbek) and “дружба” (in Russian). The first layer consists of moral-spiritual elements such as trust and loyalty. The second layer includes affection, sincerity, and emotional closeness. The third layer encompasses practical aspects, such as assistance, support, and mutual aid. The fourth layer represents interpersonal roles, such as friend, confidant, dear companion, and associate. A broader cultural layer incorporates proverbs, social experience, and national values.

In this model, the distinction between the core and the periphery is based on the degree of semantic connection to the concept. Elements such as trust, loyalty, and mutual aid can be considered to represent the fundamental essence of friendship. Shared memories, encounters, and notions related to one’s school or student days, meanwhile, connect to the concept primarily through specific experiences and situations. However, the precise composition of the core and peripheral elements should not be determined solely by theoretical assumptions. In empirical research, respondents' spontaneous responses are collected, grouped according to their content, and analyzed in terms of frequency. Subsequently, a model is refined based on both shared and language-specific reactions across the two languages. In this sense, the model proposed in the article is a theoretical comparative-cognitive model that requires empirical verification.

Conclusion. The associative verbalization of the concept of “friendship” (“do‘stlik” in Uzbek, “дружба” in Russian) is a multi-layered semantic-cognitive phenomenon that encompasses meanings such as trust, loyalty, affection, sincerity, and mutual aid among people. Associative units expand the lexical content of the concept, shedding light on its ethical, emotional, practical, and cultural dimensions. A comparative analysis reveals that the concepts of “friendship” (“do‘stlik” and “дружба”) in both languages share a common semantic foundation. Terms such as “ishonch/доверие” (trust), “sadoqat/ верность” (loyalty), and “yordam/ поддержка” (support/aid) demonstrate this semantic proximity. Meanwhile, units such as “mehr-oqibat” (affection/bond), “sirdosh” (confidant), and “преданность” (devotion) serve as significant material for examining the specific semantic emphases the concept acquires within particular contexts. The proposed comparative-cognitive model interprets the concept of friendship as a system of relationships between a core notion, ethical-moral attributes, emotional characteristics, practical interactions, and cultural perceptions.

ISSN NO: 2769-996X
May 2026

Conducting free association experiments with speakers of Uzbek and Russian - including determining the frequency of responses and comparing the results against associative dictionaries - will further strengthen the scientific validity of this model.

References:

1. Карасик В. И. Языковой круг: личность, концепты, дискурс. Волгоград: Перемена, 2002.
2. Залевская А. А. Введение в психолингвистику. Москва: Российский государственный гуманитарный университет, 2000.
3. Кубрякова Е. С. Язык и знание: На пути получения знаний о языке. Москва: Языки славянской культуры, 2004.
4. Маслова В. А. Лингвокультурология. Москва: Академия, 2001.
5. Караулов Ю. Н. и др. Русский ассоциативный словарь: в 2 т. Москва: Астрель, 2002.