

The Lexical-Semantic Field of Wedding Ritual Folklore in Uzbek and Russian: A Comparative-Typological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a comparative-typological analysis of the lexical-semantic field associated with wedding ritual folklore in the Uzbek and Russian languages. Drawing on the theory of the lexical-semantic field as developed in general and comparative linguistics, the study classifies wedding-related vocabulary in both languages into structured lexico-semantic subgroups designations of ritual stages, designations of ritual participants, designations of ritual objects and attire, and designations of ritual actions and verbal genres. The material is drawn both from lexicographic and folkloristic sources and from original field recordings gathered by the author among Uzbek- and Russian-speaking informants in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan. The analysis identifies zones of lexical equivalence, partial equivalence, and lexical lacunae between the two languages, and discusses the strategies calque, transliteration, and descriptive translation employed in rendering culturally specific wedding terminology across languages. The findings contribute to the comparative lexicology of ritual terminology and to the theory and practice of ethnocultural translation.

Keywords: Lexical-semantic field, wedding ritual terminology, comparative lexicology, Uzbek language, Russian language, ethnocultural lexicon, lexical lacuna, translation equivalence, ritual folklore, field linguistics.

The vocabulary connected with wedding ritual occupies a distinctive place within the lexical system of any language, since it names not merely objects and actions but an entire culturally codified sequence of behavior accumulated over centuries. Wedding terminology forms what may be described, in the terms of structural and comparative lexicology, as a lexical-semantic field a set of lexical units united by a common conceptual domain (the wedding ceremony) and bound together by systematic paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. The study of such fields allows the researcher to move beyond the description of isolated ethnographic facts and toward an understanding of how a given language segments, names, and structures a shared area of cultural experience. Because wedding ritual is at once one of the most conservative and one of the most culturally elaborated spheres of traditional life, its lexicon preserves archaic strata of vocabulary, region-specific dialectal forms, and lexical units with no direct equivalent in other languages.

The present study undertakes a comparative-typological description of the lexical-semantic field of wedding ritual in Uzbek and Russian. The choice of these two languages is motivated by several factors: first, their long history of contact within a shared multiethnic social space in Central Asia, which has produced numerous instances of mutual lexical borrowing and calquing in everyday speech, even as the core wedding-ritual vocabulary of each language has remained largely autonomous and rooted in distinct cultural traditions Turkic-Islamic in the Uzbek case, and Slavic-Orthodox (with a substantial substratum of pre-Christian belief) in the Russian case; second, the practical relevance of such a comparison for translation practice, given that texts describing Uzbek wedding customs are regularly rendered into Russian and other languages, and vice versa, often without a settled terminological standard.

The aim of the article is threefold: 1) to establish a working classification of the lexical-semantic field of wedding ritual in Uzbek and in Russian, structured into coherent subgroups; 2) to identify, within each subgroup, points of semantic and structural correspondence and points of divergence between the two languages; and 3) to characterize the principal strategies by

which culturally specific wedding terminology is, or might be, rendered from one language into the other, with particular attention to lexical lacunae items in one language's field that lack a ready lexical equivalent in the other. A fourth, subsidiary aim, pursued in Section 5, is to examine whether the semantic asymmetries identified between the two fields are paralleled by corresponding asymmetries in the word-formation patterns by which the relevant terms are derived, since a purely semantic classification, however systematic, cannot by itself explain why one language's ritual vocabulary should prove, on the whole, more internally transparent to its own speakers than the other's.

The relevance of this undertaking extends beyond the immediate Uzbek-Russian case. Wedding ritual lexicons, precisely because they combine a universal social function (the regulation and celebration of marriage) with highly particular cultural elaboration, offer an unusually clear testing ground for general claims in the comparative lexicology of ethnocultural vocabulary claims that are frequently advanced with reference to kinship terminology or color terminology, but less frequently tested systematically against ritual vocabulary specifically. The present study accordingly aims also to contribute, through a single well-documented case, to this broader methodological conversation within comparative and cognitive lexical semantics.

The notion of the lexical-semantic field derives from the field theory developed in European structural semantics in the first half of the twentieth century, and subsequently elaborated within Soviet and post-Soviet linguistics in the work of scholars concerned with the systemic organization of vocabulary. A lexical-semantic field is generally understood as a set of lexical units of a given language that share a common semantic component (an integral seme) and are organized around a core, or dominant, lexeme expressing the most general meaning of the field, with peripheral units expressing more specific or more marked variants of that meaning. Applied to ethnocultural vocabulary, the lexical-semantic field approach has proven productive in the study of kinship terminology, calendar and agricultural vocabulary, and as in the present case ritual terminology, since these domains are characterized by dense

internal structuring, sharply defined semantic subgroups, and a high degree of cultural specificity.

Within Uzbek linguistics, the ritual lexicon has most often been examined in dialectological and ethnographic studies, which record regional variants of ritual terms without always situating them within an explicit field-theoretical framework; the present study seeks to complement such descriptive work with a systematic field-based classification. Within Russian linguistics, the vocabulary of the traditional wedding (*svad'ba*) has likewise been documented extensively in dialectological atlases and in specialized studies of ritual folklore, which similarly tend toward regional cataloguing rather than cross-linguistic comparison. The comparative dimension of the present study setting the Uzbek and Russian fields directly against one another is intended to address this gap.

A further theoretical distinction relevant to the present study is that between the core and the periphery of a lexical-semantic field. The core of the wedding-ritual field in both languages is occupied by a small number of highly frequent, stylistically neutral lexemes covering the most general stages and participants of the ceremony (*sovchilik*, *nikoh*, *kelin* in Uzbek; *svad'ba*, *venchanie*, *nevesta* in Russian); the periphery, by contrast, is occupied by a much larger set of lexemes with narrower denotation, restricted regional currency, and, frequently, marked stylistic or emotional colouring a category into which most of the culturally specific terms discussed in Section 4 fall. This core–periphery distinction has direct consequences for translation practice: core terms tend to admit stable, dictionary-recorded equivalents, whereas peripheral terms are precisely those most likely to generate the lexical lacunae examined below. A related theoretical notion employed in this study is that of the microfield, understood as a tightly bound subset of a lexical-semantic field organized around a single more specific concept (for instance, the microfield of terms naming the groom's ritual companions, nested within the broader field of participant designations). The microfield concept allows for a more fine-grained comparative analysis than would be possible if the wedding-ritual vocabulary of each language were treated as an undifferentiated whole.

It should also be noted that the lexical-semantic field of ritual vocabulary is not static but historically layered. In both Uzbek and Russian, the wedding lexicon preserves strata of markedly different chronological depth: alongside a productive, everyday layer of vocabulary still in active use, both languages retain an archaic layer terms now largely restricted to folkloristic and dialectological sources, rarely if ever produced spontaneously by younger native speakers, and known chiefly through the memory of elderly informants of the kind consulted for the present study. The distinction between the active and the archaic layer of the field is itself a further parameter of comparison pursued below, since the two languages do not appear to be losing their archaic ritual vocabulary at an identical rate: several of the Uzbek terms recorded from elderly informants for this study (e.g. terms associated with the fire-circling rite) proved unfamiliar to younger consultants, suggesting a comparatively rapid recession of this layer of the Uzbek field, whereas certain correspondingly archaic Russian terms (e.g. banya-related vocabulary) appear, on the evidence of the informants consulted, to enjoy somewhat more robust intergenerational transmission, in part owing to the continued everyday currency of the bathhouse as a cultural institution independent of its ritual associations.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material for this study consists of two complementary sources. The first is published lexicographic and folkloristic material: explanatory and dialectal dictionaries of the Uzbek and Russian languages, and scholarly descriptions of Uzbek and Russian wedding ritual folklore. The second, and methodologically central, source is original field data gathered by the author through structured interviews with elderly native-speaker informants both Uzbek and Russian resident in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan, an area with a long-established, multiethnic Uzbek-Russian population. Each informant was asked to describe, in their own words, the stages of the traditional wedding ceremony as they remembered it or as it had been described to them by their parents and grandparents; the ritual

terms and, where available, associated ritual songs were then extracted from these recorded narratives and entered into a working glossary.

The lexical units so collected were grouped into semantic subgroups using a componential approach, whereby each term was assigned to a subgroup on the basis of its core denotative meaning (stage of the ritual named, participant designated, object designated, or action designated). Within each subgroup, Uzbek and Russian terms were then set against one another to establish the degree of semantic correspondence, ranging from full equivalence, through partial equivalence (overlap in core meaning but divergence in connotative or culturally specific components), to lexical lacunae, where no corresponding lexeme exists in the other language and the concept can only be rendered by a descriptive phrase or a borrowed (transliterated) term.

Table 1 below lists, for reference, the informants whose field recordings contributed most directly to the lexical material analyzed in Section 4 and Section 8 of this article; personal identifying details are given in abbreviated form in accordance with standard ethnographic practice, full details being retained in the author's field archive.

Table 1. *The informants whose field recordings contributed most directly to the lexical material*

Informant (initials, age)	Native language	Location
Sh.J., 76	Uzbek	Alotdistrict, Bukhararegion
O.U., 71	Uzbek	Asakadistrict, Andijanregion
Q.H., 78	Uzbek	Pakhtaoboddistrict, Andijanregion
M.Q., 72	Uzbek	Quvadistrict, Ferganaregion
B.B., 73	Uzbek	Andijandistrict, Andijanregion
L.A., 83	Russian	Andijan city (family origin: Yaroslavl)
N.A., 70	Russian	Andijancity
G.B., 65	Russian	Marhamat district, Andijan region (family origin: Tula)

As Table 1 indicates, the Russian-speaking informants consulted for this study, while currently resident in the Andijan region, in several cases trace their family's ritual knowledge to regions of Russia proper (Yaroslavl, Tula), a circumstance that affords a

useful methodological safeguard: the Russian-language ritual terminology recorded reflects, at least in significant part, tradition transmitted from within Russia itself, rather than a purely local, potentially already Uzbek-influenced variant of Russian wedding custom as practiced within Central Asia. This is an important consideration for a study whose comparative claims rest on the assumption that the two lexical fields under comparison represent, as far as possible, historically independent cultural-linguistic systems rather than a single already-hybridized local tradition.

The lexical-semantic field of wedding ritual in both languages may be divided into four principal subgroups: 1) designations of ritual stages and events; 2) designations of ritual participants; 3) designations of ritual objects, attire, and space; and 4) designations of ritual actions and associated verbal genres (songs, laments, blessings). Each subgroup is examined in turn below.

This subgroup comprises the terms naming the successive stages of the wedding process, from initial negotiation between the two families to the concluding rites of the young couple's integration into their new household. In Uzbek, the field is anchored by the term *sovchilik* ("matchmaking," literally "the sending of matchmakers"), with further stages designated by *qizuzatish* ("giving away the bride"), *nikoh* ("the religious marriage rite"), *kelinsalom* (the greeting rite performed by the bride before the assembled relatives), and *kuyovqochdi* (a colloquial term, literally "the groom has fled," designating a post-wedding custom in which the groom's closest friend leads him away from the house on the morning following the main ceremony). In Russian, the corresponding field is anchored by *svatovstvo* ("matchmaking"), with further stages designated by *devichnik* (the pre-wedding gathering of the bride's female friends, literally "maiden's evening"), *venchanie* (the church marriage rite), and the general term *svad'ba* itself, which unlike Uzbek, where no single lexeme covers the entire multi-day ritual complex with equal generality functions as both the superordinate term for the whole ceremony and the term for its central day.

Table 2.

Uzbek term	Literal meaning	Russian term	Degree of equivalence
<i>sovchilik</i>	matchmaking / sending of matchmakers	<i>svatovstvo</i>	Full equivalence
<i>qizuzatish</i>	giving away the bride	<i>vydachevesty</i>	Partial equivalence (Uzbek term is more institutionalized as a distinct ritual stage)
<i>nikoh</i>	the religious (Islamic) marriage rite	<i>venchanie</i>	Partial equivalence (different religious traditions; <i>nikoh</i> is not tied to a church building)
<i>kelinsalom</i>	The bride's greeting rite	—	Lexical lacuna in Russian; no corresponding ritual
—	—	<i>devichnik</i>	Lexical lacuna in Uzbek in this exact institutionalized form; the closest functional analogue is the informal gathering preceding <i>qizuzatish</i>
<i>kuyovqochdi</i>	“the groom has fled” (post-wedding custom)	—	Lexical lacuna in Russian

As the table shows, the two fields overlap closely at the level of the general concept of matchmaking (*sovchilik/svatovstvo*) but diverge sharply once the ritual sequence is examined in finer detail: several stage-names in each language correspond to ritual practices that either do not exist, or exist only in a functionally attenuated form, in the other tradition. The Uzbek *kelinsalom* rite, for instance, in which the bride bows individually before each senior relative and receives ritual gifts, has no institutionalized counterpart in the Russian tradition and must be rendered in Russian, when necessary, by a descriptive periphrasis such as *obryadprivetstviyanevestki* (“the rite of the daughter-in-law's greeting”).

This subgroup names the individuals who occupy institutionalized ritual roles during the ceremony, as distinct from the bride and groom themselves. Both languages exhibit a rich and structurally similar subfield here, reflecting a broadly comparable social need in both cultures for designated companions who assist, protect, and orchestrate the couple's passage through the ritual. In Uzbek, the central terms are

kuyovjo'ra (the groom's closest companion, functioning as best man and master of ceremonies) and *yanga* (a close female relative or family friend who accompanies and guides the bride through the ritual, analogous to but not identical with the English “brides maid”). In Russian, the structurally corresponding terms are *druzhka* (the groom's companion, historically vested with considerable ceremonial authority) and *svakha* (the professional or semi-professional matchmaker, a role with no direct structural counterpart among the Uzbek terms discussed here, since matchmaking in Uzbek tradition is typically carried out by senior relatives rather than a specialized intermediary).

Uzbek term	Functional description	Russian term	Degree of equivalence
<i>kuyovjo'ra</i>	the groom's chief companion; master of ceremonies, protector, entertainer	<i>druzhka</i>	Close functional equivalence, though the Russian <i>druzhka</i> historically carried a more codified, quasi-official authority over the ritual proceedings
<i>yanga</i>	the bride's companion; guide, protector, ritual assistant	—	Partial equivalence; the closest Russian analogue, <i>podruzhkanevesty</i> (“the bride's friend”), lacks the <i>yanga</i> 's institutionalized ritual functions (e.g. performing the <i>kelinsalom</i> song, handling gift exchange)
—	—	<i>svakha</i>	Lexical lacuna in Uzbek as a specialized social role; the corresponding function is distributed among senior relatives (<i>sovchilar</i>)
<i>sovchi</i>	matchmaker (generic; typically a senior relative)	<i>svat</i> / <i>svat'ya</i>	Full equivalence at the level of general function, though the Russian terms additionally carry a secondary kinship meaning (“parent of one's child's spouse”) absent from Uzbek <i>sovchi</i>

The comparison of participant terminology reveals a broader typological pattern: both languages elaborate a rich set of designated ritual helpers, but the precise distribution of functions among these roles differs. The Uzbek *yanga*, for example, combines functions that in the Russian tradition are distributed across several distinct figures (the *podruzhka*, who offers emotional companionship, and, in the historical bath-house rite,

the older female relative who ritually prepares the bride) a divergence that is significant for translators, who must decide, case by case, whether to render *yanga* by a descriptive phrase, a semantic loan, or a direct transliteration accompanied by a gloss.

This subgroup comprises terms naming material objects, garments, and spatial loci that acquire ritual significance in the course of the wedding. In Uzbek, the central terms include *chimildiq* (the curtained nuptial space or canopy prepared for the young couple within the house), *sarpo* (the ceremonial set of garments and gifts presented to the bride), and *ko'rpacha* (the quilted mat on which the bride stands or sits during the *kelinsalom* rite). In Russian, the corresponding subfield includes *venets* (the ceremonial marriage crown placed on the heads of bride and groom during the church rite), *banya* (the ritual bathhouse), and *karavai* (the ceremonial wedding bread).

Table 3.

Uzbek term	Denotation	Russian term	Degree of equivalence
<i>chimildiq</i>	curtained nuptial space/canopy prepared within the house for the couple	—	Lexical lacuna in Russian; the closest functional analogue, the marriage bed prepared in the groom's house, is not marked by a comparably specialized single lexeme
—	—	<i>venets</i>	Lexical lacuna in Uzbek; tied specifically to Orthodox Christian church ritual
<i>sarpo</i>	the ceremonial set of garments and gifts given to the bride	<i>pridānoe</i>	Partial equivalence (Russian <i>pridanoe</i> denotes dowry more broadly, including household goods, whereas <i>sarpo</i> denotes specifically garments and gift textiles)
—	—	<i>karavai</i>	Lexical lacuna in Uzbek in this exact ritual-bread form; the functional analogue is the ceremonial <i>patir</i> (flatbread) broken during the <i>sovchilik</i> rite
<i>ko'rpacha</i>	quilted mat used as ceremonial seating	—	Lexical lacuna in Russian

<i>chillalikholti</i>	the couple's liminal, ritually vulnerable state during the wedding period	—	Lexical lacuna in Russian; no single lexeme corresponds to this culturally specific concept of ritual vulnerability
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The object-and-space subgroup displays the highest proportion of lexical lacunae among the four subgroups examined in this study. This is unsurprising, since material culture and its associated ritual symbolism tend to be the most culturally particular stratum of the wedding lexicon: objects such as the *chimildiq* or the *karavai* are embedded in belief systems (regarding, respectively, the protective enclosure of the newlyweds and the fertility symbolism of bread) that are not shared, or are shared only partially, between the two cultures. In such cases the translator has essentially three options: transliteration with an explanatory gloss (e.g. *chimildiq*, “the curtained nuptial canopy”), a descriptive calque that names the object by its function rather than its cultural form, or where an approximate functional analogue exists substitution by the nearest corresponding term in the target language, with an accompanying caveat regarding the resulting loss of cultural specificity.

The fourth subgroup comprises terms naming ritual actions proper, together with the verbal genres songs, laments, and blessings that accompany them. In Uzbek, this subfield includes *yor-yor* (the genre-name of the antiphonal wedding song, itself derived from its refrain), *qizbasm* or *laparkechasi* (the pre-wedding evening gathering at which *lapar* songs are performed), and *duo* (the ritual blessing pronounced by an elder). In Russian, the corresponding subfield includes *prichitanie* (the ritual lament performed by the bride and her female relatives), *velichanie* (the ceremonial song of praise addressed to the newlyweds or to a ritual participant), and *blagoslovenie* (the parental blessing).

Table 4.

Uzbek term	Denotation	Russian term	Degree of equivalence
<i>yor-yor</i>	genre of antiphonal wedding	—	Lexical lacuna in Russian as a distinct genre-name; the nearest generic term, <i>svadebnayapesnya</i> (“wedding song”),

	song, named for its refrain		lacks the genre-specificity of <i>yor-yor</i>
—	—	<i>prichitanie</i>	Partial equivalence; Uzbek wedding tradition includes lament-like expressions of the bride's sorrow, but these are not organized into a formally named, independently classified genre as in Russian folkloristics
—	—	<i>velichanie</i>	Partial equivalence; functionally comparable praise-songs exist within the <i>yor-yor</i> and <i>lapar</i> repertoire, but <i>velichanie</i> is a formally distinct genre category in Russian folkloristic terminology
<i>duo</i>	ritual blessing pronounced by an elder	<i>blagoslovenie</i>	Close functional equivalence, though <i>duo</i> carries additional Islamic religious connotation absent from the more secular Russian term
<i>lapar</i>	genre of lyric courtship song performed at the qizbasm	—	Lexical lacuna in Russian as a distinct genre-name

The verbal-genre subgroup illustrates a further important asymmetry between the two lexical-semantic fields: Russian folkloristic terminology, as codified over some two centuries of scholarly description, distinguishes genre-names (*prichitanie*, *velichanie*) with considerable formal precision, whereas the corresponding Uzbek terms (*yor-yor*, *lapar*) function simultaneously as genre-names and as performance-event names, reflecting a somewhat different, less formally stratified indigenous system of folkloristic classification. This asymmetry is not a deficiency of either language but a reflection of differing traditions of both oral genre-naming and scholarly codification, and it constitutes, in itself, a finding of comparative-typological interest.

A further microfield meriting separate attention, since it does not fit neatly into any of the four subgroups discussed above, concerns the set of kinship terms whose reference shifts, or whose usage is extended, specifically as a consequence of the wedding event. In Uzbek, the bride, upon marriage, acquires an

entirely new set of kinship designations for her husband's relatives (*qaynota*, “father-in-law”; *qaynona*, “mother-in-law”; *qaynsingil*, “husband's sister”), and is herself referred to by a term, *kelin*, that itself undergoes a further internal semantic narrowing immediately after the wedding (from the general sense “bride” to the more specific, longer-lasting sense “young daughter-in-law,” a sense in which the term *kelin* may continue to be applied to a woman for a period of years, or even decades, after her actual wedding day). The Russian field displays a structurally comparable, though not identical, set of shifts: *svekor* (“father-in-law,” husband's father), *svekrov'* (“mother-in-law,” husband's mother), and *nevestka* (a term with a semantic range closely paralleling Uzbek *kelin*, though with a narrower period of currency in contemporary usage, being more often replaced in practice by the woman's given name once the initial post-wedding period has passed).

Comparative analysis of this microfield reveals an interesting asymmetry in the degree of terminological differentiation between the two languages: Uzbek maintains a more elaborated set of distinct lexemes for specific in-law relations depending on relative age and side of the family (for example, distinct terms distinguishing an older from a younger sister-in-law), whereas Russian tends to rely more heavily on descriptive phrases (*staruaya* / *mladshayasestramuzha*, “the husband's elder / younger sister”) rather than dedicated single-word lexemes for the same distinctions. This finding is consistent with the broader typological observation, made in several comparative studies of Turkic and Slavic kinship systems, that Turkic languages tend toward a higher degree of lexicalization of relative-age and relative-generation distinctions within the kinship field than do the Slavic languages, a pattern that the wedding-triggered kinship shifts examined here appear to confirm within this specific ritual context.

Beyond the semantic classification pursued in Section 4, the wedding-ritual vocabularies of Uzbek and Russian display characteristic and partly divergent patterns of word formation, the comparison of which offers a further, structurally oriented dimension of analysis. In Uzbek, a substantial proportion of ritual

terms are formed by nominal compounding, in which two independently meaningful roots are juxtaposed to form a single semantic unit: *kelinsalom* (literally “bride” + “greeting”), *qizuzatish* (“girl” + “sending off”, itself a compound built on a converb construction), *kuyovqochdi* (“groom” + “has fled”, a compound of the narrative-compound type common in Uzbek colloquial idiom formation), and *ko'rpacha* (a diminutive-suffixed form of *ko'rpa*, “quilt,” illustrating the productive use of diminutive suffixation to derive a specialized ritual-object term from a general household-vocabulary root). This pattern the derivation of ritual terminology from ordinary household or kinship vocabulary by compounding or suffixation, rather than by the introduction of dedicated, semantically opaque roots is characteristic of Uzbek ritual lexicon formation more broadly, and has the effect that many Uzbek ritual terms remain semantically transparent to ordinary speakers even where the specific ritual referent is unfamiliar.

The Russian wedding-ritual lexicon displays a partly different distribution of word-formation strategies. While compounding is not absent (*svad'ba* itself derives historically from a root associated with matchmaking), a comparatively larger share of the core ritual vocabulary consists of formally simple, monomorphemic roots (*svad'ba*, *venets*, *banya*) whose ritual meaning is not recoverable from their internal structure and must instead be learned as a distinct lexical item; alongside this, a productive layer of suffixal derivation is found in agentive and diminutive nouns naming ritual participants and objects (*druzhka*, from a diminutive-agentive suffix on the root *drug*, “friend”; *svakha*, an agentive-feminine derivation from the same root as *svad'ba* and *svat*). The comparatively greater semantic opacity of core Russian ritual terms, relative to their Uzbek counterparts, is a structural difference with direct consequences for language-internal comprehensibility: an Uzbek speaker unfamiliar with the specific referent of *kelinsalom* can nonetheless recover a general sense of its meaning from its transparent compound structure, whereas a Russian speaker unfamiliar with the specific ritual referent of *venets* cannot recover any comparable clue from the word's internal form.

This structural asymmetry has a further consequence for translation practice, complementing the semantic analysis below: because a substantial share of the Uzbek ritual lexicon is semantically transparent by internal construction, descriptive calque translation into Russian (or English) of such terms is often comparatively straightforward and yields a target-language phrase that preserves much of the source term's internal logic (*kelinsalom* → “the bride's greeting [rite]”); by contrast, the greater semantic opacity of core Russian ritual terms means that their translation into Uzbek more frequently requires either outright borrowing or a periphrasis that, unlike the Uzbek case, cannot draw on any internal etymological transparency in the source term itself.

The classification presented in Section 4 makes it possible to characterize, in general terms, the strategies available for rendering the wedding-ritual lexicon of one language into the other. Three principal strategies may be distinguished. The first is direct lexical substitution, applicable where a term in the source language corresponds closely, in both denotation and cultural connotation, to an existing term in the target language (as with *sovchilik/svatovstvo*). The second is descriptive calque or periphrasis, applicable where the source term names a culturally specific concept lacking a ready lexical equivalent, but where the concept can be adequately conveyed by a descriptive phrase (as with *kelinsalom*, rendered as “the rite of the bride's ceremonial greeting”). The third is transliteration with an accompanying gloss, reserved for those cases *chimildiq*, *yor-yor*, *karavai* in which the term names an object, space, or genre so deeply embedded in a single culture's belief system that any descriptive rendering in the target language would either lose essential cultural specificity or require a phrase too cumbersome for practical use; in such cases the source-language term is typically retained in its original form (in italics, on first use, with a brief explanatory gloss) and thereafter used as a naturalized loanword within the target-language text.

The distribution of lexical lacunae across the four subgroups examined above is itself linguistically significant. Lacunae are least frequent in the subgroup of ritual-stage designations, where

both cultures share a broadly similar overall structure (matchmaking, betrothal, the wedding proper, post-wedding integration), and most frequent in the subgroup of ritual objects and space, where cultural specificity is at its highest. This distribution supports a more general hypothesis in the comparative lexicology of ritual vocabulary: namely, that the degree of lexical equivalence between two languages' ritual fields correlates inversely with the degree to which the underlying ritual practice is tied to religiously or cosmologically specific belief practices with a more universal social function (the negotiation between families, the marking of a change in social status) tend to be named by more readily equivalent lexemes, whereas practices tied to culturally particular belief systems (the protective symbolism of the chimildiq, the fertility symbolism of the karavai) generate lexical items with no ready cross

To make the distribution described above more precise, Table 5 summarizes the proportion of full equivalents, partial equivalents, and lexical lacunae identified among the lexical items examined within each of the four principal subgroups discussed in Section 4 of this study. While the sample examined here is not exhaustive a fully corpus-based quantitative study would require a substantially larger lexical inventory than could be assembled within the scope of the present article the proportions observed are nonetheless suggestive of the broader tendency described above.

Table 5.

Sub group	Full equivalence	Partial equivalence	Lexical lacuna
4.1 Ritual stages	2 of 6 items (33%)	2 of 6 items (33%)	2 of 6 items (33%)
4.2 Ritual participants	1 of 4 items (25%)	2 of 4 items (50%)	1 of 4 items (25%)
4.3 Ritual objects /space	0 of 6 items (0%)	1 of 6 items (17%)	5 of 6 items (83%)
4.4 Ritual actions/genres	1 of 5 items (20%)	2 of 5 items (40%)	2 of 5 items (40%)

As Table 5 indicates, the subgroup of ritual objects and ritually marked space is the only one of the four subgroups in which not a single full equivalent was identified among the items examined,

and in which lexical lacunae account for the substantial majority of items; this stands in marked contrast to the subgroup of ritual-stage designations, in which full and partial equivalents together account for two-thirds of the items examined. This pattern is consistent with the general hypothesis advanced above and offers a preliminary empirical basis to be tested on a larger corpus in future research for the claim that lexical equivalence in ritual vocabulary correlates with the degree of shared, as opposed to culture-specific, belief underlying the corresponding practice.

The general strategies outlined above may be illustrated more concretely by considering two specific translation problems encountered in the course of preparing the field-based glossary underlying this study. The first concerns the Uzbek term *chimildiq*. A purely transliterated rendering (*chimildiq*) preserves cultural specificity but conveys no meaning whatsoever to a reader unfamiliar with Uzbek wedding custom; a purely descriptive rendering (“the curtained corner of the house prepared for the newlyweds”) conveys the object's function but loses the connotative associations protective enclosure, the couple's liminal and ritually vulnerable state that the single Uzbek lexeme carries for a native speaker. The solution adopted in the glossary compiled for this study, and recommended here as a general practice for translators working with this and comparably culture-bound terms, is a hybrid strategy: retention of the source-language term on first mention, accompanied by a descriptive gloss, with the term thereafter used without further explanation, in the manner already standard for other well-known culture-specific ritual terms (e.g. the retention of Russian *troika* or Japanese *tatami* in English-language texts).

The second example concerns the Russian term *prichitanie*. Existing Uzbek-language ethnographic writing on Russian wedding custom has not settled on a single standard rendering of this term: it has been variously rendered by the descriptive phrase *yig'i-yo'qlov* (“lament-invocation,” a phrase constructed from existing Uzbek roots rather than borrowed), by simple transliteration (*prichitaniye*), and, in some popular writing, by loose assimilation to the semantically broader Uzbek term *yig'i* (“lament, weeping”) without qualification. Of these options, the

descriptive calque *yig'i-yo'qlov* is, in the view of the present study, preferable on two grounds: first, it is more readily comprehensible to a general Uzbek-language readership than a transliterated borrowing; second, unlike the unqualified use of *yig'i* alone, it preserves the genre-specific, formally structured character of the Russian *prichitanie*, distinguishing it from a merely spontaneous expression of grief. This example illustrates a more general principle that may be drawn from the present study: that descriptive calquing, when it can be constructed from existing native-language roots in a semantically transparent way, is generally to be preferred over either bare transliteration or assimilation to a semantically broader native term, since it best balances comprehensibility against precision.

To ground the classification proposed in Section 4 in concrete linguistic material, this section presents brief excerpts from the author's field recordings, together with lexical and, where relevant, morphological commentary on the ritual terms they contain. The excerpts are chosen to illustrate, respectively, the ritual-stage subgroup, the participant subgroup, and the object/space subgroup.

The following excerpt was recorded from an elderly Uzbek-speaking informant describing the traditional *sovchilik* rite: *Sovchilaro'tirishib, gaplashishadi, lekinularning ko'zidoimuygarazmsoladi* ("The matchmakers sit and talk, but their eyes are constantly surveying the house"). The term *sovchi* ("matchmaker") is morphologically transparent, being formed from the verbal root *sov-* (as in *sovg'a*, "gift," reflecting the historically gift-mediated character of the matchmaking visit) with the agentive suffix *-chi*, a highly productive suffix in Uzbek forming occupational and role nouns (cf. *o'qituvchi* "teacher," *ishchi* "worker"). This suffix pattern recurs throughout the participant subgroup of the Uzbek ritual field and represents one of the chief formal devices by which the language derives ritual-role nouns from more general roots, a pattern with no direct structural counterpart in the corresponding Russian terms (*svat*, *sam*, is an underived root; *svakha* is formed by a distinct feminine-agentive suffix *-kha*, of much more restricted synchronic productivity than Uzbek *-chi*).

A further point of lexical interest in this excerpt is the idiomatic phrase *uygarazmsolmoq* (“to survey/scrutinize the house”), a collocation specific to the discourse of matchmaking and not found with comparable ritual specificity outside this context; its closest Russian functional counterpart, *prismatrvat'sya* (“to look closely, to size up”), lacks the fixed, idiomatic association with the matchmaking scene that characterizes the Uzbek phrase, illustrating that lexical comparison of this field must attend not only to single lexemes but to ritual-specific collocations.

A Russian-speaking informant, describing the historical role of the *druzhka*, offered the following account: *Druzhkabylblizhayshim drugomzhenikhanasvadebnyy den', ego glavnayazadachapomogat'isoprovozhdat' zhenikhana protyazh eniivsegomeropriyatiya* (“The *druzhka* was the groom's closest friend on the wedding day; his main task was to help and accompany the groom throughout the event”). The term *druzhka* displays the diminutive-agentive suffix *-k(a)* attached to the root *drug-* (“friend”); the resulting form is formally a diminutive but functions, in this ritual context, as a specialized role-designation rather than as an affectionate diminutive of “friend” in the ordinary sense – an instance of what may be termed ritual lexicalization of a morphologically diminutive form, whereby a productive diminutive pattern becomes fixed as the standard designation of an institutionalized social role. The corresponding Uzbek term *kuyovjo'ra* shows a different formal strategy for essentially the same semantic result: rather than diminutive suffixation, Uzbek here employs nominal compounding (*kuyov* “groom” + *jo'ra* “companion, friend”), directly naming the role by specifying both the person to whom the companion is attached (the groom) and the nature of the relationship (companionship) within a single transparent compound confirming, at the level of a specific lexical pair, the broader word-formation asymmetry.

Finally, an informant's account of the *chimildiq* rite offers a further illustrative example: *Chimildiqichiga kirgandaustlari danshirinlikvatangasochishadi* (“When [the couple] enter the *chimildiq*, sweets and coins are scattered over them”). Here the verb *sochmoq* (“to scatter”) is of particular lexical interest: while

sochmoq is a semantically general verb of Uzbek (applicable to the scattering of any granular or small-item substance), its collocation with *shirinlik* (“sweets”) and *tanga* (“coin[s]”) in this specific ritual frame constitutes a fixed ritual collocation, comparable in function, though not in literal content, to the Russian ritual collocation *osypat' molodykh* (“to shower/scatter [grain, sweets, coins] over the newlyweds”), which employs a semantically related but morphologically distinct verb, *osypat'* (a prefixed, perfective-aspect verb built on the root *сып-*, “to pour, to strew”), likewise restricted, in this exact grammatical frame, to ritual contexts of this kind. The comparison of these two collocations *sochmoq* + *shirinlik/tanga* in Uzbek, *osypat'* + *molodykh* in Russian illustrates a further methodological point relevant to the study of ritual lexical-semantic fields generally: that the field cannot be adequately described purely at the level of single lexical items, since much of its meaning resides in fixed, ritually restricted collocational patterns that a single-word-based classification, of the kind presented in Section 4, necessarily leaves partly implicit.

DISCUSSION

The findings summarized bear directly on two applied domains: the training of translators working between Uzbek and Russian, and the compilation of specialized bilingual lexicographic resources. With respect to translator training, the present study suggests that culturally competent translation of ritual vocabulary cannot be reduced to the application of a single uniform procedure (for example, systematic transliteration, or systematic descriptive calquing) but requires a graduated, item-by-item judgment informed by the kind of equivalence classification, full equivalence, partial equivalence, or lexical lacuna together with attention to the collocational and word-formational properties of the individual term. Trainee translators would, in the view of the present study, benefit from explicit instruction in recognizing these categories of equivalence as a preliminary step in any translation task involving ritual or other ethnoculturally marked vocabulary, rather than proceeding directly to translation by

intuition or by uncritical reliance on existing bilingual dictionaries, with respect to the term *prichitanie* frequently fail to record a settled, standardized equivalent for precisely the most culturally specific items.

With respect to lexicography, the present study has identified the absence of any comprehensive, specialized bilingual glossary of Uzbek-Russian wedding-ritual terminology as a continuing gap; the classification, together with the illustrative glossary entries compiled in the course of this research, may be regarded as a preliminary contribution toward such a resource. A fully developed glossary of this kind would ideally record, for each entry, not only a target-language equivalent (where one exists) but also an explicit indication of the type of equivalence involved, following the classificatory scheme proposed here, together with illustrative collocations of the kind discussed; such a resource would be of evident value not only to professional translators but to ethnographers, folklorists, and students of comparative Turkic-Slavic linguistics more broadly.

Although the present study is centrally concerned with the Uzbek-Russian comparison, a brief consideration of material from a third, typologically related language usefully tests the generality of the word-formation asymmetry proposed. *Kazakh*, like Uzbek a Turkic language of the *Qarluq-Kipchak* contact zone, exhibits a ritual-opening song genre, *toibastar* (literally “wedding” + “to begin,” a verbal-nominal compound closely paralleling the structure of Uzbek *kuyovqochdi*, recorded by the author from a *Kazakh*-speaking household in Shymkent. The refrain-bearing structure of the *toibastar* song (*Toibastar, endeshetoibastayiq...*, “Let us begin the wedding, let us begin the wedding...”) displays the same compositional principle of refrain-based repetition already identified, in the author's related folkloristic research, as characteristic of the Uzbek *yor-yor* genre namely, an open, phonetically prominent refrain repeated at fixed structural intervals, rather than the more covert, plot-internal repetition characteristic of the corresponding Russian genre forms. The *Kazakh toibastar* accordingly supports, on independent lexical-typological grounds, the more general claim, advanced above, that the Turkic-language ritual-song lexicon of

this broader region favors semantically transparent, compound-based genre nomenclature bound to an equally transparent, overt refrain structure, in contrast to the more formally differentiated but internally less transparent genre nomenclature of the Russian tradition. A fuller Turkic-internal comparison, extending to Kyrgyz and Karakalpak material, is identified below as a priority for future research.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis presented in this article demonstrates that the wedding-ritual vocabularies of Uzbek and Russian, while structurally comparable at the most general level both languages elaborate a rich, internally differentiated lexical-semantic field covering ritual stages, participants, objects, and verbal genres diverge substantially once examined at the level of individual lexical items. Of the four subgroups analyzed, the subgroup of ritual objects and ritually marked space displayed the highest incidence of lexical lacunae, while the subgroup of ritual-stage designations displayed the highest degree of cross-linguistic equivalence. The analysis of word-formation patterns further showed that the two languages differ systematically in the internal transparency of their core ritual vocabulary, with Uzbek terms tending toward compound, semantically transparent formations and Russian terms tending toward simple, semantically opaque roots a structural difference with direct practical consequences for translation strategy.

These findings have both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, they contribute to the comparative lexicology of ritual and ethnocultural vocabulary and support the broader hypothesis that lexical equivalence across languages correlates with the degree of shared versus culture-specific belief underlying the named practice, while also drawing attention to word-formation typology as a further, independent axis of comparison alongside purely semantic classification. Practically, the study provides a systematic basis including a set of concrete, exemplified translation strategies for the accurate and culturally sensitive rendering of Uzbek wedding terminology into Russian,

and vice versa, a task of continuing relevance given the extensive shared social space of the two linguistic communities in present-day Uzbekistan, and of evident relevance also for lexicographic work, since no comprehensive bilingual glossary of Uzbek–Russian wedding-ritual terminology currently exists in published form.

The present study is naturally limited by the size of its lexical sample and by its geographic focus on a single region (Andijan) as the source of original field data; further research extending the field-based comparison to additional regions of Uzbekistan, to additional Turkic languages (Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Karakalpak), and to a larger, corpus-based lexical inventory would allow the typological claims advanced here particularly the correlation between cultural specificity and lexical-lacuna frequency, and the word-formation asymmetry to be tested with greater statistical rigor and on a broader cross-linguistic basis. Such further work would also make it possible to compile the systematic bilingual glossary of wedding-ritual terminology whose absence the present study has identified as a continuing gap in Uzbek–Russian comparative lexicography.

More broadly, the case examined here suggests that the lexical-semantic field of ritual vocabulary constitutes a productive object of study not only for folkloristics and ethnography, to which it has traditionally been assigned, but for structural and comparative linguistics in its own right. The systematic classification of such a field into semantic subgroups, the identification of equivalence relations across languages, the analysis of word-formation strategies, and the close lexical-collocational reading of authentic field-recorded speech together constitute a methodology that, as this study has attempted to show, can be applied with equal rigor to ritual vocabulary as to any other structured lexical domain – and one whose results bear directly on practical tasks, from translation to lexicography to language pedagogy, in bilingual and multilingual communities such as that of present-day Uzbekistan.

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