

## The Semantic Study of the “Or-Nomus” Concept in the Linguocultural Aspect

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### ABSTRACT

*This study is devoted to the analysis of the semantic features of the concept of “or-nomus” from a linguocultural perspective. The research examines the role of the notion of “or-nomus” in Uzbek national consciousness and culture, as well as its manifestation in linguistic units, proverbs and sayings, phraseological expressions, literary texts, and oral speech. Furthermore, the semantic field of the concept, its socio-ethical content as a value, its historical roots, and its modern interpretation are explored through a linguoculturological approach. The study also reveals the intrinsic connection of the “or-nomus” concept with national mentality, customs, and traditions, highlighting its function as a moral criterion regulating individual behavior and social relations within society. As a result, the place of this concept in the Uzbek linguistic worldview and its significance as a cultural code are scientifically generalized.*

**Keywords:** “Or-nomus”, concept, aspect, linguocultural research, national mentality, moral value, semantic field

### INTRODUCTION

In contemporary linguistics, at a time when the foundations of anthropocentric linguistics have become deeply established, the category of the concept considered a central unit within this field is being extensively studied. In numerous scholarly works, the essence of this term is being explored with increasing depth.

As a linguistic category, the concept initially emerged as an object of study in several disciplines, including philosophy, logic and psychology. With the development of neolinguistic approaches, it later entered the domain of linguistic grammar as well. A concept is defined as a mental unit that embodies cultural, social, and psychological experiences within human cognition. The term derives from the Latin word *conceptus*, meaning “notion” or “to comprehend.” In modern cognitive sciences, a concept is described as a mental unit that records knowledge and skills through human intellectual and psychological capacities. In linguistics, the concept represents the mental image of a word in human consciousness, encompassing its emotional, affective, and cultural layers.

Since a concept arises from human social life, when a person is asked to express their understanding of a particular notion, their response itself represents the concept. In other words, when discussing the concept of “or-nomus” advanced in this article, different perceptions emerge in people’s minds, and these are expressed through various linguistic units. For example, men may associate it with “pride” or “honor,” women with “modesty” or “chastity,” adolescents with “upbringing,” while others may respond with a proverb such as “When your honor is gone, your life is gone,” or with similar related notions. It is precisely these diverse responses given by different social groups that constitute the manifestation of the concept. This is because a concept reflects responses shaped by a person’s gender, lifestyle, age, worldview, and social environment.

The linguistic units of “or-nomus” in the Uzbek language form a semantic system that expresses an individual’s moral dignity, honor, and social reputation. These units carry not only lexical meaning but also strong cultural and emotional connotations. From the perspective of their influence on and relation to a person, this concept is interpreted in several types:

1. **Internal moral meaning:** a seme related to a person’s inner attitudes and feelings. For example, lexemes such as conscience, shame, and modesty correspond to this meaning.

2. **External social meaning:** the meaning that reflects an individual's standing or reputation in front of society as a whole. For instance, honor and prestige in the eyes of the community.
3. **Emotional-expressive meaning:** the strong impact associated with a particular component. For example, "to defile one's honor" or "to tarnish one's reputation."
4. **Evaluative meaning:** the positive or negative judgment attributed to a person. For example, conscientious, honorable, dignified, dishonorable, unjust, and similar terms.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

In the Russian linguistic school, the issue of the "concept" has received particular attention and has been interpreted as a key category in elucidating the complex relationship between language, consciousness, and culture. Prominent representatives of this school, such as S. A. Askoldov, Y. S. Stepanov, and V. A. Maslova, have made significant contributions to the development of conceptology. S. A. Askoldov defines a concept as a "mental unit that expresses notions in human thinking during the cognitive process."

S. A. Askoldov distinguishes between two types of concepts:

1. **Individual concept:** a unit formed on the basis of personal experience and individual consciousness.
2. **General concept:** a unit shaped and reinforced within the experience of society, culture, and the linguistic environment.

Y. S. Stepanov interprets the concept as the "fundamental unit of culture." According to him, each concept consists of three components:

1. **Core meaning:** the semantic content fixed in linguistic units;
2. **Additional layer:** historical and cultural connotations;
3. **Personal-emotional facet:** meaning associated with the national psyche and individual experience [3].

According to Y. S. Stepanov, a concept is a mental “map” formed in the collective consciousness, which is manifested through language but also possesses a broader semantic scope beyond the linguistic sphere.

V. A. Maslova interprets the concept from a linguoculturological perspective, defining it as a “mental map of the collective consciousness” which is a scientifically grounded view. This is because a concept is not merely a linguistic unit, but a cognitive unit that embodies a nation’s historical and cultural heritage, values, and traditions.

In his work *The Spiritual Foundations of Human Perfection*, E. Yusupov emphasizes the significance of the notions of honor and dignity (or-nomus) in human life, noting their crucial role.

Morality is the practical reflection of spirituality. If a person’s knowledge, worldview, perception, and faith are manifested in their behavior, morality appears as a phenomenon that brings concepts such as conscience, justice, faith, and honesty into practical activity. This, morality serves as a parameter that reflects the forms and standards of self-regulation of individuals as distinct persons within social relations, as well as the level of spiritual development inherent in their interactions and relationships. [1]

In Abdulla Sher’s textbook *Philosophy of Morality*, there are discussions about Democritus, one of the ancient Greek philosophers.

Among the ancient Greek philosophers, Democritus was one of the first to address the inner world of a human being. He distinguishes intention (the reason for an action) from the action itself. At the same time, he asserts that one can judge a person’s honor or dishonor not only by their deeds but also by their intentions. Democritus defines shame and trust as forces that prevent a person from engaging in wrongful acts. Only spiritually weak and misguided individuals attribute their failures to gods, fate, or chance. Ignorant and evil people, having a mistaken understanding of pleasure, happiness, and the purpose of life, bring misfortune upon themselves. [2]

In literary works, the use of the words “or” and “nomus” or any term within this category, enhances the expressiveness and vividness of the text and serves as a clear reflection of our national cultural identity. For example:

- Ena, I say, does my behavior trouble you? Are you showing honor?  
Or am I causing you harm?  
(To'ra Sulaymon, “*The Old Man in the Thicket*”)
- Let me tell you,” he said, “you don’t need your money; just working is enough! I will honor you as if you were my own husband!  
(Abdulla Qahhor, *Jonfig'on*)
- He carried his suitcases halfway with ease, walking firmly, yet further on his face turned pale, and his knees began to tremble; even so, driven by honor, he somehow managed to reach the car...  
(Abdulla Qahhor, *To'ydaaza*)

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, the theoretical foundations of the “or-nomus” concept, the semantic interpretation of linguocultural units related to this category, and the expression of “or-nomus” notions through various linguistic units from a semantic perspective were examined using the following methodological approaches and research methods:

1. **Theoretical research method:** The theoretical part of the study involved the explanation of the concept (based on the views of Askoldov, Maslova, and Stepanov) and the theoretical analysis of linguocultural units related to the “or-nomus” concept, applying various approaches from the semantic perspective. The methodology of the study includes the following main methods and principles:
2. **Conceptual analysis method:** Using this method, the core meanings of the “or-nomus” concept such as honor, dignity, and shame were examined, along with additional peripheral meanings like conscience, reputation, responsibility, and

chastity, as well as its positive or negative evaluative characteristics.

3. **Semantic-component analysis method:** Using this method, the additional semantic elements of the units related to the “or-nomus” concept were analyzed. For instance, the notion of “or” reflects a person’s inner self-control and moral responsibility, while the word “nomus” conveys concepts such as an individual’s honor, social reputation, and dignity within society, forming the basis of the semantic analysis.
4. **Linguoculturological analysis method:** Using this method, the intrinsic connection between the linguistic units of the concept and culture was examined. For example, the study analyzed how the “or-nomus” concept is used in proverbs, phraseological expressions, and literary texts, as well as its role within the national mentality.
5. **Contextual analysis method:** This method examines the use of units that can express the concept in different texts, taking into account situational variations in meaning, enhanced emotional coloring, and increased pragmatic load as additions to the core meaning.

As a result, using these methods, the semantic structure, cultural content, and axiological characteristics of the linguocultural units related to the “or-nomus” concept were scientifically revealed.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The category of the concept entered linguistics as a term in the early 20th century. In his famous article published in 1928, Russian scholar S. A. Askoldov described the concept as a “unit reflecting the process of thinking about various notions.” This approach opened the way to understanding the concept not merely as a linguistic unit, but as a broader phenomenon closely connected with cognitive and intellectual activity. Nevertheless, until the 1970s, the term “concept” had not been clearly defined in scientific discourse, and different scholars interpreted it in various ways. This is because the essence of a concept

simultaneously relates to language, cognition, and culture, making its precise definition a complex issue.

Since the 1980s, the issue of the concept began to be studied more comprehensively. In this context, the works of English scholars Ray Jackendoff and George Lakoff in the field of cognitive linguistics gained particular significance. They interpreted language as a direct reflection of human thought and examined the concept alongside notions such as “conceptualization,” “conceptual system,” and “conceptual essence.” From this period onward, the concept became one of the central categories in linguistics.

The formation of the “or-nomus” concept dates back to ancient times. For instance, this notion is discussed in the *Avesta*, where issues of purity and morality are addressed alongside concepts such as good and evil, honesty, and truth. Similarly, in the Orkhon-Enasoy inscriptions – ancient written monuments – there are units and ideas that could form the basis of the “or-nomus” concept. In A. Sher’s work *Philosophy of Morality*, the views of the ancient Greek philosopher Democritus on this notion are also presented. For example, Democritus described “shame and trust as forces that prevent a person from engaging in wrongful acts,” which aligns closely with the focus of our research.

In the Middle Ages, the encyclopedic scholar Abu Nasr al-Farabi described humans as “the most perfect and accomplished culmination of worldly development” and, when enumerating the virtues of a morally exemplary person in society, paid special attention to the notions of honor and dignity. He condemned vices such as dishonesty and greed, while praising truthfulness and integrity. Similarly, in Mahmud al-Kashgari’s *Diwan Lughat al-Turk*, it is noted that the word “shame” has various roots. In addition, several works of Alisher Navoi contain interpretations of units related to the linguocultural concepts of “or-nomus.”

In the early 20th century, the works of Jadid figures such as Abdulla Avloniy, Abdulla Qodiriy, MahmudkhojaBehbudi, and others also explored and elaborated on the essence of the notions of honor and dignity.

## CONCLUSIONS

The semantic study of the “or-nomus” concept from a linguocultural perspective shows that this notion occupies a central place in Uzbek national consciousness, value systems, and social relations. Formed through the semantic unity of its components “or” and “nomus,” the concept reflects not only individual moral standards but also the ethical criteria recognized by society. It manifests as a multilayered cultural-cognitive unit that embodies a person’s responsibility toward themselves, their family, descendants, community, and nation.

Linguistically, the “or-nomus” concept is widely expressed in Uzbek through stable expressions, proverbs and sayings, phraseological units, and literary texts. For example, expressions such as “to preserve one’s honor and dignity,” “to sacrifice one’s life for honor,” and “to soil one’s honor” demonstrate the emotional-expressive force of this concept. This shows that the concept is not limited to lexical meaning alone but is enriched with strong evaluative and moral significance.

From a cultural perspective, the “or-nomus” concept is closely connected with the historical lifestyle, customs, and traditional social structure of the Uzbek people. It occupies an important place in family upbringing, gender roles, collective opinion, and mechanisms of social control. In particular, it is intimately linked with notions such as a woman’s honor, a man’s bravery, and the family’s reputation, functioning as an ethical standard passed down from generation to generation.

From a cognitive perspective, the “or-nomus” concept, as a component of the national mentality, forms certain stereotypical perceptions and evaluative criteria in the human mind. It is structured through positive (chastity, loyalty, honesty, bravery) and negative (shamelessness, dishonor, immorality) oppositions. As a result, this concept functions as an internal regulatory mechanism that governs individual behavior.

The “or-nomus” concept in the Uzbek linguocultural space constitutes a multilayered, value-rich, and socially significant semantic field. Its study holds important theoretical and practical significance not only for linguistics but also for cultural studies,

ethnopsychology, and social philosophy. A deep examination of this concept provides a scientific foundation for understanding national identity, preserving moral heritage, and strengthening ethical values in contemporary society.

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