

## LEXICAL UNITS EXPRESSING UZBEK AND GERMAN WEDDING RITUALS: A LINGUOCULTURAL AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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**Annotation.** *This article examines lexical units that verbalize wedding rituals in Uzbek and German cultural contexts. The study focuses on the names of ritual objects, ceremonial actions, symbolic colours, verbal formulas and pre-wedding practices such as Verlobung, Verlobungsring, Polterabend, Gästebuch and Junggesellenabschied. The analysis demonstrates that wedding vocabulary is not a simple set of nominative units, but a complex linguocultural system in which collective memory, religious values, social roles and symbolic meanings are encoded.*

*Uzbek wedding terminology reflects the importance of modesty, family blessing, communal participation and religious consent, whereas German wedding vocabulary more strongly emphasizes individual choice, public promise, legal recognition and ritualized symbolic acts. At the same time, both cultures share universal ideas of loyalty, purity, continuity and social recognition.*

*The article also discusses borrowed and globalized ritual elements, such as the white wedding dress, the wedding cake and the throwing of the bouquet, showing how intercultural contact influences the semantic structure of wedding vocabulary.*

**Keywords:** *wedding lexicon, Uzbek language, German language, marriage ritual, linguoculturology, symbolic meaning, comparative analysis.*

### INTRODUCTION

Wedding rituals are among the most expressive cultural events in any society because they unite legal, religious, social and emotional meanings. The vocabulary used during wedding ceremonies therefore contains more than simple names of objects and actions. Lexical units such as wedding cake, bridal veil, engagement ring, oath, blessing, guest book and bouquet reflect ideas of purity, loyalty, family honour, social approval and the transition to a new life stage.

The comparison of Uzbek and German wedding vocabulary is relevant for modern linguoculturology because both languages encode marriage traditions in culturally specific ways.

Uzbek wedding terminology is closely connected with family participation, modesty, parental blessing and religious consent. German wedding terminology, while also preserving traditional values, often emphasizes personal choice, public promise, legal recognition and symbolic pre-wedding practices. At the same time, both cultures share universal concepts such as loyalty, continuity, prosperity and respect for the new family. Modern wedding discourse is also influenced by globalization. Practices such as wearing a white bridal dress, cutting the wedding cake together or throwing the bouquet have spread across many countries.

However, when such customs enter Uzbek culture, they are adapted to local norms and are not always performed with the same ritual importance as in Western weddings.

The aim of this article is to analyze lexical units expressing Uzbek and German wedding rituals, identify their semantic groups and reveal their cultural similarities and differences.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The material of the research consists of Uzbek and German lexical units related to pre-wedding, wedding-day and post-wedding rituals. The German material includes *Verlobung*, *verlobt*, *Verlobungsring*, *Polterabend*, *Gästebuch*, *Junggesellenabschied*, *Trauzeugen*, *Brautkleid*, *Brautschleier* and *Hochzeitstorte*. The Uzbek material includes *unashtirish*, *oq libos*, *fata*, *palak*, *ota duosini olish*, *rozilik so‘rash*, *uzuk taqish*, *asal yedirish*, *kelinni kuzatish* and *gul irg‘itish*.

The study applies descriptive, comparative, semantic and linguocultural methods. The descriptive method explains the ritual function of the selected units. The comparative method reveals common and different features in Uzbek and German wedding vocabulary. The semantic method shows denotative and connotative meanings, while the linguocultural method interprets the social values encoded in these words. Wedding vows and formulas of consent are also viewed as performative speech acts because they do not only describe marriage but help to create a new social status.

#### **RESULTS**

The analysis shows that wedding vocabulary can be divided into several semantic groups.

The first group names participants of the ceremony: bride, groom, parents, witnesses, friends and guests. In German, *Braut*, *Bräutigam*, *Trauzeugen* and *Verlobte* are important units. In Uzbek, *kelin*, *kuyov*, *ota-ona*, *dugonalar*, *kuyov jo‘ralar* and *imom* are culturally significant. These words reflect the social structure of the ceremony and show whose participation is expected.

The second group names ritual objects. In German weddings, *Verlobungsring*, *Brautkleid*, *Brautschleier*, *Hochzeitstorte* and *Gästebuch* have strong symbolic meanings. The engagement ring represents an official promise and personal commitment. The white bridal dress is associated with purity, beauty and the beginning of a new life. The bridal veil may symbolize modesty and protection. The guest book preserves the memory of the ceremony by recording the names and wishes of guests.

In Uzbek wedding culture, *oq libos*, *fata*, *palak*, *uzuk*, *asal* and *choyshab* are important ritual objects. The white dress and veil entered Uzbek weddings partly through Western and Russian cultural influence, but today they are perceived as natural elements of the modern ceremony. The *palak* or decorative cloth under which the bride and groom enter the wedding circle symbolizes honour, protection and public recognition. The ring expresses unity and loyalty, while honey symbolizes sweetness and harmony in family life.

The third group consists of ritual actions. German wedding discourse includes *das gemeinsame Anschneiden der Hochzeitstorte*, *Geschirr zerschlagen*, *den Brautstrauß werfen*, writing in the *Gästebuch* and making a wedding vow. Uzbek wedding discourse includes *duo olish*, *rozilik so‘rash*, *uzuk taqish*, *asal yedirish*, *kelinni kuzatish* and *davruga kirish*. These actions organize the ceremony and express cultural attitudes toward marriage.

Verlobung is one of the most important German pre-wedding lexemes. It means an official promise to marry someone. The related words verlobt and Verlobte show the status of engaged people, while Verlobungsring, Verlobungsfeier and Verlobungsanzeige create a wider lexical field. This field demonstrates that engagement in German culture is socially recognized and connected with personal decision. In Uzbek culture, engagement is also important, but it is more strongly connected with family agreement and public recognition by relatives.

Polterabend is another culturally specific German unit. It denotes the evening before the wedding, usually celebrated with friends and relatives. According to tradition, guests bring old dishes or porcelain and break them. The noise is believed to drive away evil spirits, and the bride and groom clean the pieces together. This action symbolizes their future ability to solve problems jointly. The word Polter itself is associated with noise, so the form of the lexeme reflects the character of the ritual.

The Gästebuch, or guest book, refers to a book in which wedding guests write names and wishes.

Its main cultural function is memory preservation. In Uzbek weddings, memory is more often preserved through oral wishes, photographs and videos, although guest books may also appear in modern ceremonies. Junggesellenabschied, the groom's pre-wedding gathering with unmarried friends, marks a symbolic farewell to bachelor life. In Uzbek culture, similar gatherings may occur, but they are usually more family-centered.

Wedding vows are central in German wedding discourse. Phrases such as in guten wie in schlechten Zeiten express loyalty and support in both good and difficult moments. Such formulas are performative: by saying them, the bride and groom publicly establish their new roles as spouses. In Uzbek religious ceremonies, consent is often expressed through a question-answer formula in the presence of an imam and witnesses. The bride's reserved answer reflects cultural ideas of modesty and ritual dignity.

Colour symbolism also plays an essential role. The white bridal dress, das weiße Brautkleid, and the white veil, weiße Brautschleier, symbolize purity, light and a new beginning.

The expression etwas Altes, etwas Neues, etwas Blaues und etwas Geborgtes illustrates another symbolic system. The old object represents family heritage, the new object expresses hope, the borrowed object indicates support, and the blue object symbolizes loyalty, love and modesty.

Some ritual elements are shared internationally but realized differently. The wedding cake is a global symbol of celebration. In many German and Western weddings, cutting the cake together is a meaningful ritual act. In Uzbek weddings, the cake may decorate the bride and groom's table, but joint cutting is not always central. The throwing of the bouquet has also entered some Uzbek weddings, but it remains a borrowed practice and is not performed everywhere.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results show that wedding vocabulary is a culturally loaded part of language. Uzbek wedding lexicon reflects a family-centered worldview in which marriage is not only the union of two individuals but also the connection of two families.

For this reason, lexical units related to blessing, farewell from the parental home, modest behaviour and collective participation have strong cultural value. German wedding lexicon gives more space to individual promise, engagement, legal-social recognition and symbolic personal actions.

A key difference concerns the relation between religious, social and legal meanings. Uzbek wedding vocabulary often combines religious consent, traditional ceremony and family authority.

German wedding vocabulary may include religious formulas, especially in church weddings, but it also contains many units connected with civil, festive and individual practices.

This difference shows that the same concept of marriage may be structured differently in two linguistic cultures.

At the same time, both cultures share universal semantic components. Rings symbolize loyalty and continuity; white colour is connected with purity; public participation confirms social recognition; ritual objects and actions express wishes for prosperity and happiness. These similarities prove that wedding rituals perform comparable social functions, although their linguistic forms and cultural interpretations differ.

Globalization has made wedding vocabulary more dynamic. Borrowed elements do not simply replace national customs; they are adapted to local cultural expectations. For example, the white dress and bouquet throwing are visible in many Uzbek weddings, but Uzbek values such as modesty, parental blessing and respect for relatives remain central. Thus, wedding lexicon demonstrates both cultural continuity and cultural change.

### **CONCLUSION**

The comparative analysis of Uzbek and German lexical units expressing wedding rituals shows that marriage vocabulary is an important linguocultural system. It preserves information about traditions, religious views, family values and social expectations. Uzbek wedding lexicon highlights family unity, modesty, parental blessing and religious consent, while German wedding lexicon emphasizes engagement, personal promise, symbolic objects and pre-wedding rituals such as Polterabend and Junggesellenabschied.

The study proves that wedding-related words should not be studied as isolated lexical items. Their meanings are formed by ritual action, social context and cultural memory. The same object, such as a ring, veil or wedding cake, may have different levels of importance in different cultures. Therefore, correct interpretation and translation of wedding vocabulary require knowledge of the cultural practices behind the words. Further research may examine regional varieties of Uzbek and German wedding terminology, the translation of wedding discourse and the influence of digital media on modern wedding vocabulary.

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