

# The Interpretation of the Concept of Home in Kyrgyz Language View of the World: Associative Experiment

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## ABSTRACT

The topicality of the research is based on the interest in the study of the concept of "home" in Kyrgyz cognitive linguistics. The concept of home is topical from the cultural, spiritual, and moral values of any culture including Kyrgyz. The novelty of the research is that the concept of home has been analyzed in the framework of the Kyrgyz Language. The aim of the paper is to study the concept of home in the Kyrgyz linguistic view of the world based on the associative experiment. To reach the aim of the paper, the following research methods were used: analysis, synthesis, observation, statistical analysis, interpretation, and an associative experiment. In this paper, we have shared the results of the survey hold in Kyrgyzstan and 60 people participated as native speakers of the Kyrgyz language. This research provides an in-depth analysis of the results of the sociolinguistic survey and interviews, to determine the understanding of the concept of "home" in the Kyrgyz language view of the world. We have made up several detailed questions in order to learn the true meaning of the concept of home in current world of Kyrgyz people.

**Keywords:** *Concept, Perception, Linguistic worldview, Semantics, Concept of home, Analysis, Associative experiment, Mentality.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Culture and language influence the way we think and perceive concepts. According to differences between cultures, two nations can interpret the same concept differently, as we do accept the concept of time and space, success, respect and acceptance. According to the numerous researches that we have studied [1], [2], [3], we have learned that any concept is perceived differently in different countries; i.e. time is concise, order is important for German people. However, Asian people understand the concept of time in a different way, they need some time to think and rethink serious issues and behave patiently, additionally it is okay to be late. Such perceptual differences made this research even more interesting for us and we investigated the way modern representatives of Kyrgyz nation perceive the concept of home.

Linguists of Kyrgyzstan currently started focusing their research on concept studies. A significant contribution to the development of modern fields of linguistics in Kyrgyzstan was made by K. Z. Zulpukarov, M. I. Lazaridi, E. I. Zholamanova, U. D. Kambaralieva, Ch. K. Naimanova and others. [4], [5], [6]. Most of the researches are based on Russian and Kyrgyz languages. Therefore, there are not so many researches devoted to concept studies based on English and Kyrgyz languages in our country. The article was produced as one of the results of Master thesis entitled "The Concept of 'Home' in the English and Kyrgyz Linguistic View of the World" performed by Kanikey Aalyeva in 2020 under the thesis supervision of Prof. Dr. Cholpon Naimanova.

This paper is devoted to the interpretation of the concept of "Home" based on the associative experiment that we made in the form of questionnaire among Kyrgyz respondents. The

possibility to hold an experiment while researching the topic became a very informative advantage to see the nominative fields of the concept of home along with reliable resource to learn the way modern people perceive the concept of home in daily practice. Thus, the answers of the poll helped us to analyze the concept of home as a meaningful part of life and to see its cognitive features. This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the results of the sociolinguistic survey and interviews, to determine the understanding of the concept of home in the Kyrgyz language view of the world. We have made up several detailed questions in order to learn the true meaning of the concept of home in the current world.

Questions that were asked help us to distinguish the differences in perceiving the concept. Additionally, if to take into consideration that such experiments are mostly done by researchers of cognitive linguistics and sociologists, they mention that interpretations of the results may be done through the number of determining features and psycholinguistic point, also the results may be interpreted directly through defining cognitive meanings. Therefore, the following information is given to share our findings from the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was held among Kyrgyz citizens and among people who answered in Kyrgyz; there are respondents who filled in the questionnaire in the Russian language.

First things to mention are the age and gender of respondents. Numerous things, such as reasons why a person thinks in a particular way, may become clear if we learn the age of respondents, because depending on the age people may change their opinions about the same issue, also according to the age people behave differently.

## 2. ASSOCIATIVE EXPERIMENT: THE WAY KYRGYZ PEOPLE ACCEPT THE CONCEPT OF HOME

As you may see in the figure above ("Figure 1"), most of the respondents are between 23-28 ages, which is 35%, on the second place there are respondents among 29-35 ages, overall it is 28%. The least number of respondents is one person between 18 and 23 aged group, and people between 56-65 ages gave 8% of answers. The number of respondents is 40 people, 15% of respondents are men, 85% of respondents are women, and number of women is 37.

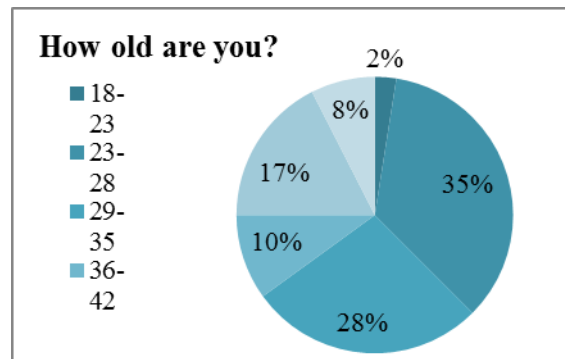


Figure 1 The Age of Kyrgyz Respondents in the associative experiment "the perception of the concept of time".

Most of respondents are young; this fact would help us to see the new generation's way of perceiving things and the role of home for young people, hence the majority of respondents are representatives of youth; we still have an option to compare the answers of young people and adults. There were also questions about the distinguishing features of respondents, which are their social status (a student, not a student), marital status, living/housing conditions.

Social status of 25 respondents are graduates who work, overall it is 62%; 25% of respondents are not working, it is 10 people and 13% are

students, so there are five students among respondents. Due to the fact, the majority of respondents already graduated and the amount of married people is 24, which is 60% of all, and the rest 16 are single, which is 40%.

The results of the question about the living conditions are counted according to the four options to answer: 1) with parents; 2) a rented apartment; 3) own house; 4) dormitory. 47% are living in their own houses, 25% of respondents are living with their parents, and 28% are living in rented apartments. That means that among respondents there are no people living in dormitories.

Additionally, the most of the respondents are living in convenient conditions and despite the fact that majority was the representatives of young generation, most of them already live in their own apartments.

Further, we present questions more oriented to learn cognitive perceptions and feelings. The first question is about the first thing that pops up when the respondents think about home.

This was the question for Russian speaking respondents. Seven respondents firstly think about family and one of them says that he/she remembers his/her mother and two respondents answered that the word "home" reminds them of parents. One respondent perceives home as a shelter where loving people wait for him/her. Other three respondents remember family. Nine respondents think of the comfort, warmth and coziness. Additionally, one of respondents mentioned that he/she remembers good memories. Overall, all the

The next question of questionnaire is to see if people associate houses with people or with place.

answers are about something important and valuable filled with sincere feelings. Kyrgyz speaking respondents were asked a little bit different question: *What is the meaning of the concept of "home" for you?*

Two of thirteen respondents answered that home is equal to family; one more respondent said that home is associated with mother in his/ her perception. Five respondents filled the question that home has the great meaning for them. One answer was that home is associated with food, we think that this answer belongs to a young respondent and probably it is a student. One person wrote that home is associated with warmth and the other said that home is happiness. Two respondents answered that home is a building for living. In addition, the most significant answer is: *"Home is my wealth, treasure"* that actually contains all the answers above, meaning that home is the most valuable wealth for Kyrgyz people.

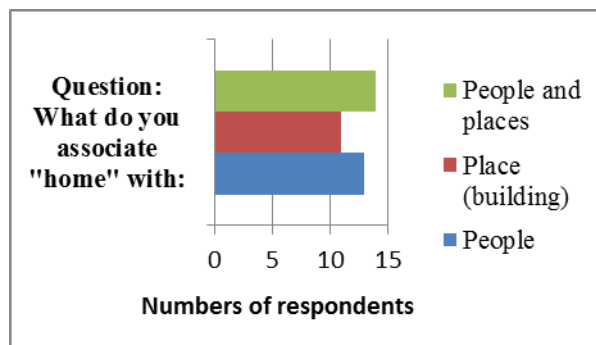


Figure 2 The answers of respondents on the question "What is home for you?".

In "Figure 2", we could observe that the answers to the question "what is home for you" are approximately equal; however, 14 respondents think that home is both people and places, and we can observe it in a green line, which is a bit longer than other rows. So those people may not feel at home if family members are absent at their home; 13 respondents associate home with people that is shown in a blue row and 11 respondents associate home with place. If to analyze the answers, we may see that 14 people could not imagine people and places separately while talking about home. However, 13 of respondents probably think that only people make homes which might bear the meaning that they can feel at home anywhere where the right people are, so they feel at home when they are united with their families, however 11 of all the respondents associate home with the building that can show that they are bound to places.

The following question is about the way people feel when they are at home; most of respondents answered that they feel safe and comfortable; some people follow the idea of *"east and west, home is the best"* which may symbolize the convenient feelings and conditions of own home. There are also answers that at home respondents feel free, convenient, calm, relaxed and safe, consequently, we may see the idea of my *"home is my castle"*. Home is the place where we are the seniors and the place where we may just be ourselves.

Five respondents feel almost safe, it is 14 % of all the respondents and other 86% meaning 32 people do feel safe at home.

Similar question but measuring the degree of feeling happy at home has the following results: 28 people answered that they feel happy at home, six people feel almost happy, the degree was 4 out of 5

and one person feels unhappy. Unfortunately, due to the anonymousness of our questionnaire, we are not aware of the identity of respondent to ask what the reason of feeling unhappy was, but at least we may be sure that answers are reliable and respect the feelings of our respondent.

The next question is also of the similar type and it is the measurement of feeling homesick when being far from home.

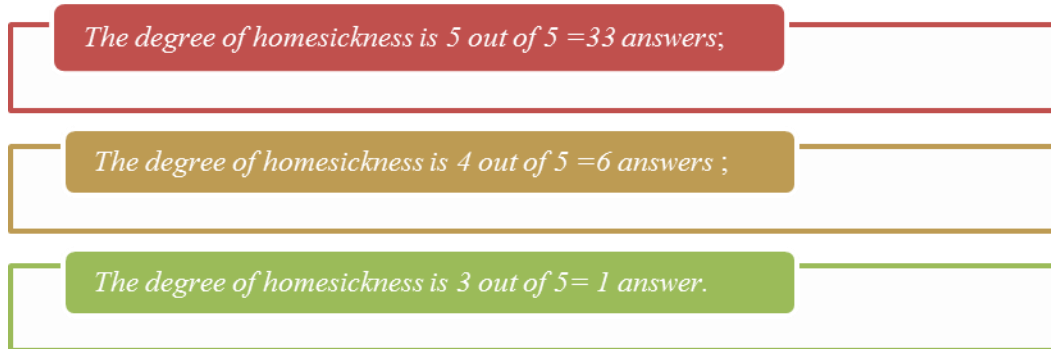


Figure 3 Do Kyrgyz people feel homesick?

The majority feels strong homesickness and less people feel quite okay when they are far from home, that could be observed in "Figure 3".

However, the first idea that come to our mind was that even though the most of respondents are young, despite the acceptance of young people' being less bounded to home and family, most of the answers are showing the opposite idea. Maybe it might be connected with the way we were up brought and the stable cultural value of home.

Also we were interested in the way people feel at home as in the place for solitude or the place they join society or home is a place to feel comfortable the way you either are alone or not. According to the answers, most of the respondents accept home as a place to spend time with their family and the second place is given to home as a place for being yourself, which means that home is a trustworthy place; only 8.7% accepts home as a place for solitude, that may be caused by our collectivistic background.

The next question was asked to see the way modern Kyrgyz people feel about having guests. The reason why we have decided to ask this very

question is the historical way of considering guests as a good thing for home.

In the following diagram, you may see the current viewpoints about guests, which is corresponding with the way it was accepted in the past. Therefore, 71% or respondents consider guests as a good sign for home and family and 21% feel that guests do not bring good things to home. One person answered that he/she himself is a good sign.

Besides all the asked above we also have asked about home and neighbors. 21 respondents said that neighbors matter, nonetheless 11 people answered that neighbors do not matter and four people said that neighbors may be and may not be important.

Furthermore, in "Figure 4", we want to mention about the way people feel about unexpected guests and according to our questionnaire 43 % of respondents feel good about unexpected guests, at the same time approximately the same number of respondents feel unhappy about them - 41%. Also 5% of people who answered that their feelings are dependent on the time unexpected guests come and 11 people said that their feelings matter from the personality of unexpected guest.

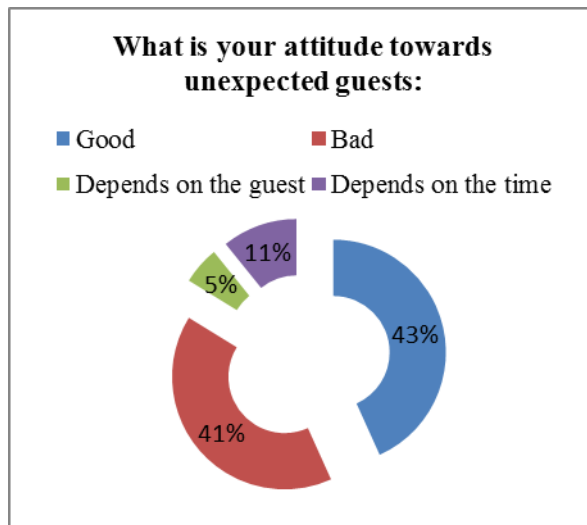


Figure 4 The way Kyrgyz people feel about unexpected guests.

Undoubtedly, all the respondents answered that mother creates the atmosphere at home and that mother is the treasure inside the house. That is the consequence of our cultural moral views. Kyrgyz people consider mother as the most important person in the life. Therefore, the answers are obvious even without the question.

Taking into consideration the current situation in the world we without any doubts decided that it is important to know the way people feel about home during pandemic, long, and hard stay home period. For this reason, several questions are about the quarantine and home.

Consequently, to the question if they have changed their minds about home people answered as follows:

37% (14 people) of respondents said that they have changed their opinions about home in the period of pandemic, on the contrary majority- 59% (22) answered that they did not change their opinions about home and one respondent said that he just started thinking about some necessary physical changes.

On the table below ("Figure 5"), you could observe the results percentage visually.

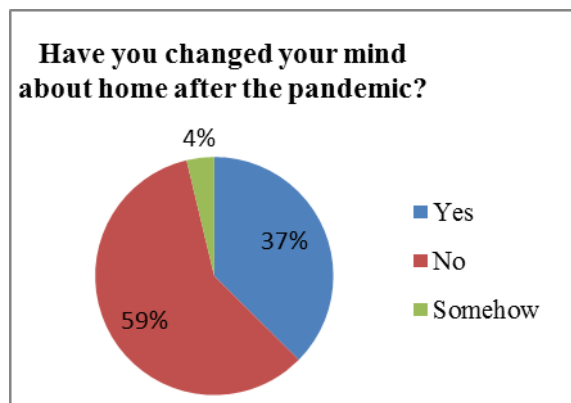


Figure 5 The way people think about home after they struggled pandemic.

According to the answers, we were able to observe that 13 people want more space at their present houses; 8 respondents want to exchange their houses to apartments or vice versa. The percentage of people who appreciate their living conditions in spite of the pandemic is the 14 of all the respondents. Additionally, two respondents

answered that they made some repairs at home. People during quarantine and without quarantine always need more space at home.

Overall, we could observe the real perception of the little part of population; all the respondents were randomly chosen.

Consequently, after analyzing all the answers we came to the idea that according to our cultural and historical background, we used to live in a collectivistic society and we used to keep our doors along with hearts open 24/7. This is the way we were brought up and the way we believe to be true, however, the era of globalization influenced our perception and style of life. We could observe through the answers mostly among young and middle generation that life is different from the way it was before. Thus, we could see among the answers that people of present days are not open to meet unexpected friends and guests. People becoming more individualistic and comfort means more than it meant before. However, we cannot judge or see it as a bad thing because this is the way the world goes.

### 3. CONCLUSION

We have analyzed and observed the answers of the respondents. The questionnaire was in two languages: Kyrgyz and Russian. The majority is female respondents, consequently, the minority of the respondents are men. Forty of respondents are Kyrgyz and Russian speaking people and twenty people are English-speaking respondents.

Due to the results we came to the idea that home is associated with family and was represented through such answers as mother, parents, children, and family. Also among the answers were detected such as, home is coziness, comfort, convenience, warmth and love.

Despite the fact that every respondent was unique and different according to age, social status, marital status and living conditions, all of them have something that unites their answers, which is the attitude toward home. Home is considered as a sacred place, which has great impact on each respondent.

It was productive and interesting to find out how people perceive having guests. We could see that mostly Kyrgyz speaking respondents feel okay about having guests, thus we made a connection with the cognitive phenomena. The language people speak influences their personality, consequently may it be the power of Kyrgyz language that contains in itself the historical traditions of keeping doors open for every traveler and passing by people who were welcome to have a rest and some food in *boz uy* (grey house). There was a time when Kyrgyz people used to live in *Boz Uy*, a type of housing used by nomad people in

Central Asia, primarily Kyrgyzstan. It is the symbol of the Kyrgyz people.

As a concluding idea, we want to discuss the period of pandemic and isolation. We expected that most of respondents would say that they had changed their opinions about home and they would say that they need something more. However, we are happy to learn that the answers are different from what we expected. Most of the respondents have said that they did not change their attitude towards their houses, which means that they have already loved their houses without any external facts as pandemic or something else. On the other hand, we are happy to learn that people appreciate the things they have and that means that human beings are able to be pleased.

Eventually, we have found out that the concept of "home" is universal, since there are perceptions even among animals. However, there are different values and perceptions given through the same concept. The culture and its background, and history, traditions and language enabled us to reveal the soul of the nation and its worldview. Therefore, it is important to consider the style of living of people, since the Kyrgyz culture is a collectivistic culture, where people are interdependent and value the opinion of the society.

The biggest result that we got from the associative experiment is a great opportunity to see the real role of the concept of home.

Our associative experiment that was held in the form of questionnaire showed us some current points of view. People of nowadays started changing their ideas about "what the home is", probably as a consequence of globalization. According to our research, most of the respondents are young or the representatives of middle-aged group of people, so most of the answers are personal oriented. People are becoming individualistic, as the era of globalization requires. As an obvious example, we could see the way elder people think about having guests and about keeping doors open 24/7. In addition, they do believe that you should be hospitable and you got good things. However, young and middle aged people do not consider the same way, they are more reserved and do not like unexpected guests. That also cannot be considered bad because time changes and people also do.

The importance of history, lifestyle, sayings and proverbs created a fixed idea about any concept,

however any fixed idea cannot stand still against the stream of time and globalization.

### **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

Kanikey Aalyeva conducted the associative experiment and described its results. And Cholpon Naimanova contributed to revising and editing the whole article.

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