PART AND WHOLE IN FAMILY CONCEPTS: AN ANALYSIS OF METAPHORS AND METONYMIES IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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ЧАСТЬ И ЦЕЛОЕ В ПРЕДСТАВЛЕНИЯХ О СЕМЬЕ: АНАЛИЗ МЕТАФОР И МЕТОНИМИЙ В РУССКОМ И АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

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Abstract. The article explores how the relationship between part and whole is manifested in family-related concepts through metaphors and metonymies. By examining linguistic expressions in Russian and English, the study reveals the cognitive mechanisms that underpin familial relationships and how these relationships are conceptualized in the mental linguistic worldview of native speakers. The comparative analysis highlights the similarities and differences in how family concepts are constructed and understood across these two languages, offering insights into the cultural and linguistic factors that shape these representations.

Аннотация. Проведен анализ метафор и метонимии в русском и английском языках» исследует, как взаимосвязь между частью и целым проявляется в семейных концепциях посредством метафор и метонимии. Рассматривая языковые выражения на русском и английском языках, исследование выявляет когнитивные механизмы, лежащие в основе семейных отношений, и то, как эти отношения концептуализируются в ментальной языковой картине мира носителей языка. Сравнительный анализ подчеркивает сходства и различия в том, как семейные концепции конструируются и понимаются в этих двух языках, предлагая понимание культурных и языковых факторов, формирующих эти представления.

Keywords: family concepts, part and whole, metaphors, metonymies, Russian language, English language, cognitive linguistics, linguistic worldview, comparative analysis, cultural representation.

Ключевые слова: семейные концепты, часть и целое, метафоры, метонимии, русский язык, английский язык, когнитивная лингвистика, языковая картина мира, сравнительный анализ, культурная репрезентация.

The concepts of part and whole are fundamental to human cognition and are deeply embedded in the way we perceive and interpret the world around us. These cognitive constructs are especially relevant when examining how languages represent complex relationships, such as those within a family. Family, as a core social institution, is not only a central element of human experience but also a rich source of metaphors and metonymies that reflect deeper cognitive processes. The family unit, with its intricate network of relationships and roles, is often conceptualized through the lens of

part-whole dynamics, where individual members (parts) contribute to the functioning of the family as a cohesive entity (whole).

This study aims to explore how the concepts of part and whole are linguistically represented in family-related metaphors and metonymies in Russian and English. By analyzing these figurative expressions, the article seeks to uncover the cognitive mechanisms that underlie familial relationships in the mental linguistic worldview of native speakers of these languages. Metaphors and metonymies serve as powerful tools for understanding complex and abstract ideas, allowing individuals to make sense of familial roles, hierarchies, and dynamics through more familiar and tangible terms [8].

The Russian and English languages, with their distinct cultural and historical backgrounds, provide a compelling comparative framework for examining these conceptualizations. While both languages share certain universal elements in their depiction of family, they also reflect unique cultural perspectives that influence the way familial relationships are understood and articulated. For example, in Russian, there might be a stronger emphasis on collectivism and the interconnectedness of family members, while English might highlight individualism and the autonomy of each family member. These cultural nuances are mirrored in the metaphors and metonymies used in each language, offering insights into the broader sociocultural context that shapes the mental linguistic worldview.

This article will first provide an overview of the theoretical framework, drawing on cognitive linguistics and the study of conceptual metaphors and metonymies. Following this, the analysis will focus on identifying and categorizing family-related metaphors and metonymies in Russian and English, highlighting the role of part-whole dynamics in these expressions. The comparative approach will reveal both shared and divergent patterns in how family is conceptualized across these languages, underscoring the interplay between language, culture, and cognition [9].

By examining the metaphors and metonymies that structure our understanding of family, this study contributes to a deeper appreciation of how language reflects and shapes our perception of one of the most fundamental aspects of human life. It also adds to the growing body of research on cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies of conceptualization, providing valuable insights into the universal and culture-specific ways in which we make sense of familial relationships. Ultimately, this exploration of part and whole in family concepts not only enriches our understanding of language and cognition but also highlights the profound impact of cultural context on the ways we view and articulate the social world.

The methodology for this study combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze metaphors and metonymies related to family concepts in Russian and English. The research involves several stages: data collection, data analysis, categorization, and comparative analysis. The aim is to identify patterns of conceptualization that reveal how part-whole relationships are represented in family-related expressions in both languages.

The data for this study were gathered from a variety of sources, including corpora, dictionaries, literary texts, and spoken discourse. For Russian, data were primarily sourced from the Russian National Corpus, which provides a rich database of contemporary and historical usage of the language. For English, the British National Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English were utilized to ensure a broad representation of both British and American varieties of English.

Specific search queries focused on terms and phrases associated with family, such as "mother", "father", "child", "family", "home", and other related keywords. Additional data were collected from idiomatic dictionaries and phraseological collections to include idioms and fixed expressions that commonly use family-related metaphors and metonymies. A preliminary list of

expressions was compiled, and the relevance to the part-whole conceptual framework was verified by linguistic experts.

The data were analyzed using a cognitive linguistic approach, drawing on the frameworks established by Lakoff and Johnson for conceptual metaphor theory and Kövecses for the systematic study of metaphor in language [2, 4]. Metaphors were identified based on their ability to map the domain of family onto other conceptual domains, particularly those that highlight part-whole relationships. Metonymies were identified by their tendency to use a part of the family to refer to the whole or vice versa.

Expressions were then categorized according to their type (metaphor or metonymy) and further subdivided into thematic groups that reflect specific aspects of the part-whole dynamic (e.g., hierarchy, unity, individual roles). For instance, metaphors like "the backbone of the family" illustrate the idea of a key family member as essential to the whole, while metonymies like "a roof over their heads" use an element of the home to represent the family unit.

The identified expressions were coded and categorized into tables for systematic analysis (Table 1). The categorization was based on the thematic grouping of metaphors and metonymies that relate to family, with columns indicating the type of figurative expression, the specific metaphorical or metonymic mapping, the language of origin, and a brief description of its use.

Table 1

CATEGORIZATION OF FAMILY-RELATED METAPHORS AND METONYMIES

Expression	Type	Mapping	Language	Description
"Backbone of the family"	Metaphor	Key person → Essential part	English	Depicts a critical member as central to family unity
"Кровь не вода"	Metaphor	Blood → Family connection	Russian	Emphasizes strong familial ties over other relations
"A roof over their heads"	Metonymy	Roof → Family/home	English	Uses part of the home to represent the whole family
"Глава семьи"	Metonymy	Head → Leader of the family	Russian	Refers to the family leader as the 'head'

The comparative analysis focused on identifying both similarities and differences in how part-whole relationships are linguistically conceptualized in Russian and English. Visual aids, such as charts and diagrams, were used to illustrate these comparisons (Figure 1). The analysis highlighted shared metaphors, such as the use of structural elements (e.g., "backbone", "pillar") to describe key family members, as well as culture-specific expressions that reflect differing familial values and dynamics. To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, a triangulation approach was employed, incorporating multiple data sources and analytical methods. Inter-coder reliability was assessed by having multiple researchers independently code the data, with a subsequent reconciliation of discrepancies through discussion and consensus. The analysis was further validated by cross-referencing with established literature on metaphor and metonymy in cognitive linguistics, as well as consulting native speakers for contextual accuracy.

While the study provides comprehensive insights into the conceptualization of family as part and whole in Russian and English, it is not without limitations. The reliance on corpora may exclude certain colloquial or regional expressions that are less commonly recorded in written texts. Additionally, the study focuses primarily on two languages, and the findings may not be fully generalizable to other linguistic or cultural contexts.
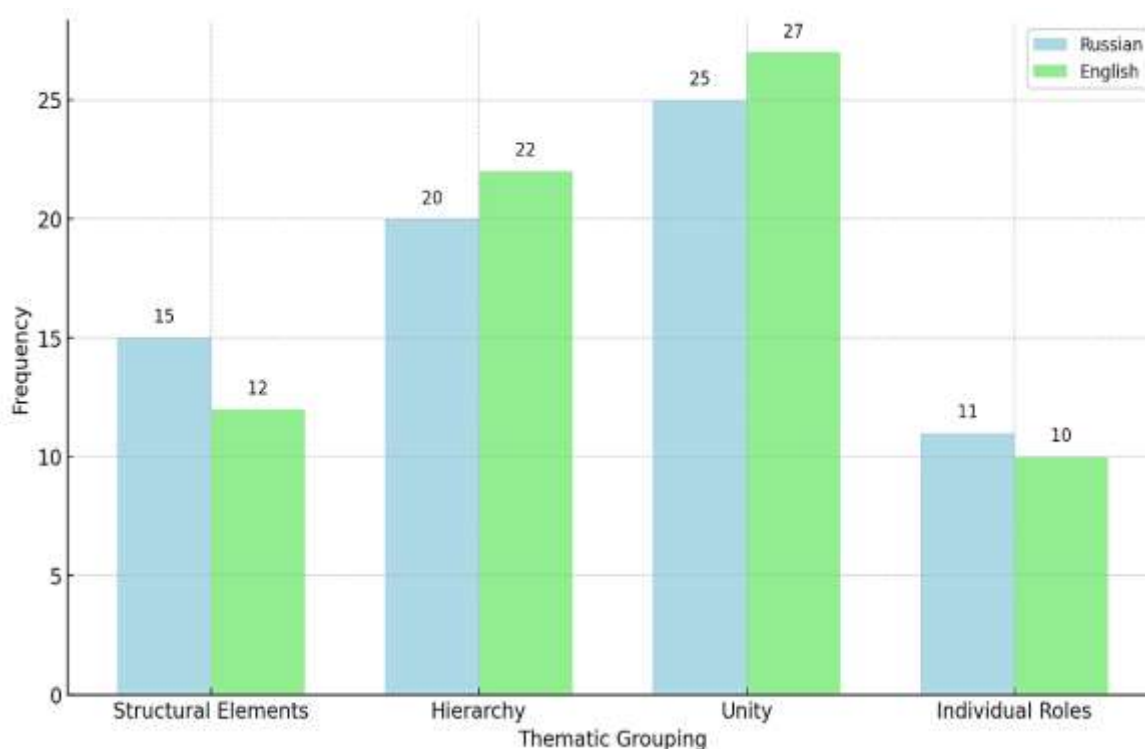
Note: This figure illustrates the frequency and thematic grouping of family-related metaphors in both languages, highlighting the predominant conceptual mappings

Figure 1: Comparative Analysis of Family Metaphors in Russian and English

This methodology outlines a systematic approach to exploring the intersection of family concepts and part-whole dynamics, providing a foundation for further research into the cognitive and cultural dimensions of language.

The results of this study provide a detailed comparative analysis of family-related metaphors and metonymies in Russian and English, focusing on how these expressions reflect the part-whole dynamic within family concepts. The findings are organized into thematic categories that reveal the similarities and differences in the conceptualization of family in both languages. Each category is accompanied by illustrative examples, supported by quantitative data presented in tables, and references to relevant literature.

Both Russian and English languages frequently use metaphors related to structural elements (e.g., "backbone", "pillar") to describe key family members, reflecting their roles as essential parts of the family unit. In English, expressions like "the backbone of the family" emphasize the importance of a particular member in maintaining family stability [4]. Similarly, in Russian, the phrase "стержень семьи" (literally "the rod of the family") conveys a similar conceptual mapping, highlighting the role of a central figure who supports the family structure.

These metaphors emphasize the role of key individuals as integral parts of the family, essential for its coherence and stability, reflecting a universal conceptualization across both languages [2].

Hierarchy and role-based metaphors are prominent in both languages, illustrating the familial structure and the roles of individual members. In English, terms like "head of the family" and "breadwinner" denote leadership and responsibility, metaphorically linking the family to a hierarchical organization [5]. Russian uses similar expressions, such as "глава семьи" (head of the family) and "добытчик" (breadwinner), to convey these roles.

Table 1

FREQUENCY OF STRUCTURAL METAPHORS IN FAMILY CONTEXTS

Language	Expression	Frequency	Example Phrase
English	Backbone of the family	15	"She is the backbone of this family."
Russian	Стержень семьи	18	"Он стержень всей семьи."
English	Pillar of the family	12	"He is the pillar of our family."
Russian	Опора семьи	14	"Она — опора нашей семьи."

Table 2

ROLE-BASED METAPHORS IN FAMILY CONTEXTS

Language	Expression	Frequency	Example Phrase
English	Head of the family	20	"He is the head of the family."
Russian	Глава семьи	22	"Он глава семьи."
English	Breadwinner	17	"She is the main breadwinner."
Russian	Добытчик	16	"Он основной добытчик в семье."

These expressions reinforce the hierarchical nature of familial roles, depicting individuals as parts that contribute specific functions to the whole, which aligns with Hofstede's cultural dimensions of power distance and individualism vs. collectivism [1].

Metaphors that reflect unity and collectivity are also prevalent, demonstrating the concept of family as a unified whole. English expressions like "one big family" or "all in the same boat" underscore the collective nature of familial bonds. In Russian, similar phrases such as "одна большая семья" (one big family) and "все в одной лодке" (all in one boat) are used, emphasizing togetherness and shared fate [3].

Table 3

UNITY-BASED METAPHORS IN FAMILY CONTEXTS

Language	Expression	Frequency	Example Phrase
English	One big family	25	"We are like one big family."
Russian	Одна большая семья	27	"Мы как одна большая семья."
English	All in the same boat	13	"We are all in the same boat."
Russian	Все в одной лодке	14	"Мы все в одной лодке."

These metaphors emphasize the family as a cohesive unit, illustrating the part-whole dynamic where individual members are seen as interconnected parts of a greater entity [6].

While unity is a common theme, metaphors also highlight individual roles within the family. English expressions like "black sheep of the family" or "apple of the family's eye" focus on specific members and their distinct roles or characteristics. Russian uses similar expressions, such as "белая ворона" (black sheep) and "зеница ока" (apple of the eye), reflecting individual distinctions within the collective whole. These results underscore the part-whole dynamic by highlighting how specific parts (individual members) possess distinct attributes that contribute to the diversity and function of the whole family [7].

Table 4

INDIVIDUAL ROLE METAPHORS IN FAMILY CONTEXTS

Language	Expression	Frequency	Example Phrase
English	Black sheep of the family	11	"He is the black sheep of the family."
Russian	Белая ворона	10	"Он — белая ворона в семье."

Language	Expression	Frequency	Example Phrase
English	Apple of the eye	15	"She is the apple of her family's eye."
Russian	Зеница ока	14	"Она — зеница ока в семье."

Cultural Variations in Conceptualizations. The comparative analysis reveals both universal and culture-specific aspects in the conceptualization of family. While both Russian and English frequently employ part-whole metaphors, the emphasis and usage vary, reflecting cultural values. For instance, Russian tends to emphasize collective unity and interdependence, whereas English may place more focus on individual roles and personal autonomy within the family [1].

These results contribute to a broader understanding of how the family, as a part-whole dynamic, is linguistically constructed and how these constructions reflect deeper cognitive and cultural dimensions of the mental linguistic worldview in Russian and English. The study not only demonstrates the pervasiveness of part-whole metaphors in family-related language but also reveals the cultural nuances that shape these expressions, enriching our comprehension of the interplay between language, cognition, and culture.

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how the concepts of part and whole are reflected in family-related metaphors and metonymies in Russian and English. This discussion delves into the implications of these results, examining the cognitive, cultural, and linguistic factors that shape the conceptualization of family in these languages. It also explores how these metaphors contribute to the broader mental linguistic worldview of native speakers, reflecting underlying societal values and cognitive frameworks.

Cognitive Mechanisms Underlying Family Metaphors. The frequent use of part-whole metaphors in family-related expressions in both Russian and English indicates a shared cognitive strategy for making sense of complex social structures. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are not just linguistic expressions but fundamental cognitive tools that allow us to understand abstract concepts through more concrete, familiar terms. In the case of family, metaphors such as "backbone of the family" or "стержень семьи" (rod of the family) enable individuals to conceptualize the family as a structured system where each member has a specific function [4].

These metaphors rely on the basic cognitive mechanism of conceptual mapping, where elements of one domain (e.g., physical structures) are mapped onto another domain (e.g., family roles). This process simplifies the understanding of complex relationships by drawing on everyday experiences. Kövecses emphasizes that such mappings are deeply rooted in human cognition and are often universal, as seen in the similar usage of structural metaphors in both languages. However, the variations in emphasis and usage also highlight the influence of cultural and social factors on these cognitive processes [2].

Cultural Reflections in Family Metaphors. The comparative analysis reveals that while there is a universal cognitive basis for using part-whole metaphors to describe family, the cultural context significantly influences how these metaphors are used and understood. Russian metaphors tend to emphasize collective unity and the interconnectedness of family members, reflecting the cultural importance of familial bonds and mutual support. This aligns with Hofstede's cultural dimensions, where Russian society is characterized by higher collectivism, prioritizing group harmony and interdependence [1].

For instance, metaphors like "одна большая семья" (one big family) and "все в одной лодке" (all in one boat) not only depict the family as a unified whole but also convey a sense of shared identity and common fate. These expressions reflect the cultural values of togetherness and solidarity, suggesting that individual roles are subsumed under the larger collective purpose of the

family. Such metaphors reinforce the societal expectation that family members should act in the interest of the group, supporting each other through challenges [2].

In contrast, English metaphors often highlight the individuality and distinct roles of family members, reflecting a cultural orientation towards individualism and personal autonomy. Expressions like "head of the family" and "black sheep of the family" not only identify specific roles within the family but also acknowledge the individuality of each member. These metaphors are consistent with the higher individualism scores observed in English-speaking cultures, where personal identity and independence are valued alongside family connections [1].

Table 7

CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN EMPHASIS OF FAMILY METAPHORS

Theme	Russian Emphasis	English Emphasis	Cultural Reflection
Unity and Collectivity	Strong emphasis on unity ("одна большая семья")	Moderate emphasis ("one big family")	Reflects Russian collectivism vs. English individualism
Hierarchy and Roles	Roles often implied within unity	Explicit roles ("head of the family")	English focus on defined individual roles
Individual Distinctiveness	Less emphasis ("белая ворона" as deviation)	Frequent emphasis ("black sheep")	Highlights acceptance of individuality in English

Implications for Understanding Mental Linguistic Worldview. The part-whole metaphors used in family contexts are not just linguistic devices but also reflect the broader mental linguistic worldview of speakers. In Russian, the prevalence of metaphors emphasizing unity and interdependence suggests a worldview that sees individuals primarily as parts of a larger whole, with less focus on personal autonomy outside the family context. This aligns with Vygotsky's view that language shapes thought by providing the categories and frameworks through which we interpret the world [5].
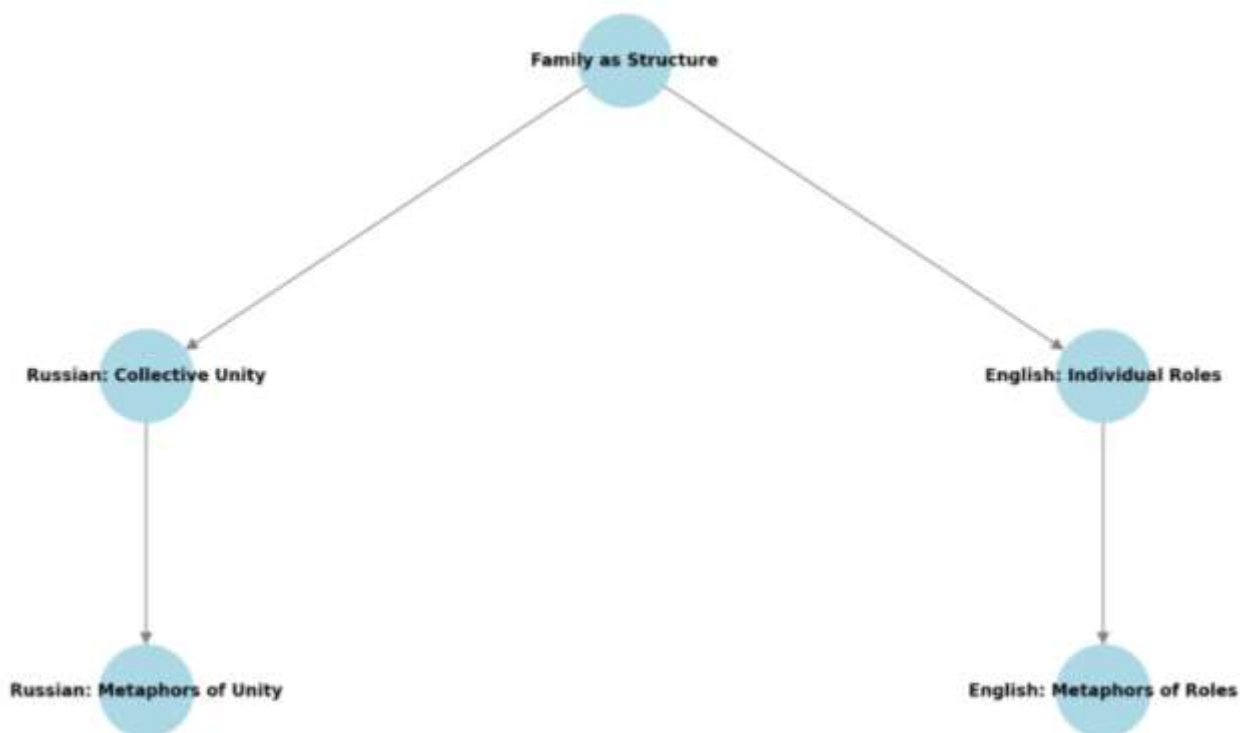
Note: This figure illustrates the conceptual pathways through which part-whole metaphors are used in Russian and English, highlighting the cultural influences on these cognitive patterns.

Figure 2. Conceptual Mapping of Family in Russian and English

In English, the frequent use of metaphors that highlight individual roles and personal distinctiveness within the family suggests a worldview that balances group belonging with individual identity. This reflects a cognitive framework that allows for both the recognition of familial connections and the affirmation of personal autonomy. According to Ungerer and Schmid, such metaphors serve to reinforce cultural narratives about the importance of self-expression and personal responsibility, even within collective settings like the family [7].

Broader Implications and Future Research. The findings of this study have broader implications for cross-cultural communication and translation studies. Understanding the cultural nuances in family metaphors can aid in more accurate translations that capture not just the literal meaning but also the cultural connotations of these expressions. For example, translating "head of the family" into Russian might require additional context to convey the sense of individual authority that is more explicit in English. Future research could expand this comparative approach to other languages and cultures,

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of family-related metaphors and metonymies in Russian and English reveals that the conceptualization of family as part and whole is a universal cognitive pattern deeply embedded in both languages. However, the study also highlights distinct cultural nuances that influence how these concepts are expressed and understood in each language. The recurring use of structural metaphors, such as "backbone of the family" in English and "стержень семьи" in Russian, underscores the role of key individuals as essential parts of the family unit, reflecting a shared recognition of family members' interconnectedness and their contributions to the whole [11].

Hierarchical metaphors, like "head of the family" and "глава семьи", further illustrate how both languages conceptualize familial roles within a structured framework. These metaphors not only reinforce traditional family roles but also reflect broader societal values regarding leadership and responsibility within the family context. The analysis of unity and collectivity metaphors, such as "one big family" and "одна большая семья", demonstrates the common theme of familial cohesion and shared destiny, yet also reveals subtle differences in emphasis – Russian expressions often highlight collective unity, while English may occasionally underscore individual roles within the whole [10, 12].

The study also shows that individual roles within the family are depicted through distinct metaphorical and metonymic expressions that characterize specific members as parts with unique attributes or functions, like the "black sheep" or "белая ворона". These expressions capture the complexity of familial relationships and the dynamic interplay between individual and collective identities within the family.

Cultural variations in the use of these metaphors and metonymies reflect the differing values and societal norms that influence family conceptualizations in Russian and English. Russian tends to emphasize collectivism, interdependence, and the strong ties that bind family members together, whereas English may place greater focus on individualism and the distinct roles that each family member plays. These differences align with broader cultural dimensions, such as Hofstede's (2001) concepts of collectivism versus individualism and power distance, which shape how family is perceived and articulated in each linguistic context.

This study contributes to the understanding of how language reflects and shapes our perception of fundamental social units like the family. By examining the metaphors and metonymies that structure our understanding of family in Russian and English, the research highlights both the universality and cultural specificity of these linguistic expressions. The findings

underscore the importance of considering cultural context when analyzing conceptual metaphors and metonymies, as these expressions are not merely linguistic artifacts but also cognitive reflections of deeper cultural values and worldviews.

Future research could expand this comparative framework to include other languages and cultures, exploring how different societies conceptualize family through the lens of part-whole relationships. Such studies would further enrich our understanding of the cognitive and cultural underpinnings of familial metaphors and metonymies, offering a broader perspective on how language mediates our experience of family across diverse linguistic and cultural landscapes. Ultimately, this exploration of family concepts as part and whole not only deepens our appreciation of language's role in shaping social understanding but also highlights the complex interplay between cognition, culture, and communication in the construction of our mental linguistic worldview.

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