

The Stages, Structure and Content of the Marriage Ceremony in Uzbek Linguoculture

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Abstract: The Linguistic Significance of Blessings and Farewell Rituals One of the most emotional moments in the wedding process is when the bride bids farewell to her family. This departure is accompanied by sorrowful songs and poetic blessings, emphasizing the deep emotional ties between the bride and her parents.

Keywords: Matchmaking, engagement, dowry, islamic marriage contract, blessings, linguistic traditions, poetic expressions, cultural rituals, wedding customs, traditional proverbs and sayings, family unity and symbolism, folklore, verbal art, social and religious significance.

Marriage in Uzbek culture is more than just a union between two individuals—it is a carefully structured process that involves multiple stages, each deeply connected to the language, traditions, and social values of the Uzbek people. Every step of the marriage ceremony follows a well-defined structure, with linguistic expressions, traditional dialogues, and ritualistic speech playing a crucial role in shaping the experience. From the first conversations of matchmaking to the final words of blessing at the wedding, the Uzbek language serves as a medium to express emotions, establish social bonds, and reinforce cultural heritage. The stage structure of an Uzbek wedding is divided into several key phases, each with distinct linguistic elements, symbolic actions, and traditional exchanges. These stages not only define the process of marriage but also illustrate the importance of language in shaping social customs. The Beginning of the Marriage Process matchmaking

The initial ceremony that starts the wedding ceremonies is matchmaking, and we find the first information about matchmakers in the Orkhun-Enasay inscriptions belonging to the VII-VIII centuries. In the inscription of the great statesman Tonyukuk (7th century), the word "sov" is used in the sense of sab-word, speech. In Irk bitig (book of divination), the word "sab" is used in the sense of "sabchi" - messenger, bringer of words. The famous medieval linguist Mahmud Kashgari writes about this: "Sovchi - one who conveys messages between the bride and groom." It is clear from this that the tradition of matchmaking in the emergence of a new family existed in the distant past. The first stage in an Uzbek marriage is matchmaking, known as "Sovchilar Kelishi" (the arrival of matchmakers). This stage is guided by formal speech and traditional etiquette, with elders playing a significant role in initiating the union. The groom's family, represented by matchmakers, visits the potential bride's home to propose the marriage. The dialogue during this stage is formal and indirect, as Uzbek culture values modesty and respect.

A key linguistic aspect here is the use of metaphorical and poetic expressions. For example, instead of directly asking for the bride's hand, the matchmakers might use phrases like: "Biz sizga mehmon bo'lib keldik, niyatimiz yaxshi" (We have come as guests with good intentions). The bride's family

does not immediately accept or reject the proposal but responds with polite, indirect expressions to show respect and consideration: "Hamma narsaning o'z vaqti bor" (Everything has its time). If the proposal is accepted, the agreement is sealed with a special prayer and "Fotiha-Tuy," where elders recite blessings for the future couple. Once the families agree, the engagement ceremony takes place. This stage, known as "Non Sindirish" (breaking bread), symbolizes the formalization of the couple's bond. Linguistic rituals are prominent here, with elders making blessing speeches and reciting traditional prayers. The phrase "Alloh yo'lida duo qilib, baxt tilaymiz" (We offer prayers in the name of Allah and wish for happiness) is often heard during this stage.

During the engagement, the groom's family presents gifts to the bride's family, including sweets, clothing, and jewelry. The bride's family, in turn, begins preparing the "Sep" (dowry). Language plays a vital role in these exchanges, as specific phrases and expressions convey gratitude and mutual respect. A notable linguistic tradition is the poetic recitation of blessings. Elders and guests often include rhyming phrases and proverbs, reinforcing the idea that marriage is a sacred and well-wished event. Pre-Wedding Rituals and Linguistic Customs, as the wedding approaches, several pre-wedding rituals take place, each with its own linguistic features. One of the most significant is "Kelinsalom," where the bride visits her future in-laws' home and is welcomed with traditional greetings. Upon entering, she is expected to lower her gaze and listen to blessing speeches from elder women, who use formal, poetic language to wish her prosperity and patience in her new home. Another important stage is "Chimildiq" (bridal veil ceremony), which involves linguistic expressions of modesty and purity. The elders use symbolic phrases to remind the couple of their responsibilities. For instance, they may say:

"Hayot yo'li – sabr va mehr bilan bezatilgan" (The path of life is adorned with patience and love). The Wedding Ceremony: "Marriage" is considered a ceremony of legalization of a husband and a wife by means of Sharia, and it is

held publicly. This ceremony has partially changed over time and differs in each ethnic group with its own characteristics. In this wedding system, a number of ceremonies and customs are performed, the basis of which is to predict the happiness and luck of two young people (hair combing, foot stomping, old woman died, greetings to the bride, to y came"). The wedding begins when the groom goes to the bride's house. On the bride's side, the groom and his attendants are welcomed with a rich table. Then the marriage ceremony will be held. Since Uzbeks have high religious faith, they prefer poetic marriage. That is why they are not recognized as husband and wife until the religious leader marries them. After the duties and rights of marriage are explained to the bridegroom and the bride, "Khutbai Nikah" (prayer about marriage) is recited. After that, the bride and groom return to the groom's house after receiving white blessing from the girl's father. On the way, they visit the matrimonial home to undergo a legal marriage and are declared both sharan and legal husband and wife. The wedding party will last until the evening. Nikah is an Arabic word and is a union formed based on the consent of representatives of two sexes. That is why it is based not only on the legal obligations of two young people to each other, but also on the love and great responsibility for the family, society, and, moreover, the country where they live. Because the family is the main link of the society, and the society unites to form the country. That is why marriage is considered the most important principle of humanity that serves beneficial purposes.

In the concept of a certain nation, the field of national concepts is formed from a complex of concepts characterized by universal value, that is, universal, national, class, individual, group concepts. That is why the worldview of a deaf people appears based on its own values and culture. . Marriage is also a ceremony that shows the complete national thinking of Uzbeks. Although there are differences in the conduct of the marriage ceremony in different local groups, in its essence, the existence of the interests of the family, society, and homeland means that they are conceptually common. Traditional speeches, toasts, and blessings play a central role throughout the wedding. Elders take turns offering words of wisdom, often incorporating proverbs and historical references. Some common phrases include:

"Baxtli bo'linglar, farzandlaringiz bilan kam bo'lmanglar" (Be happy and never be lacking in children). "Turmush yo'lingiz guli-guliston bo'lsin" (May your married life be full of flowers and

happiness). Poets and "bakhshis" (folk narrators) are often invited to perform lyrical recitations that celebrate love and commitment. These performances highlight the strong connection between language, folklore, and marriage traditions.

"Oyoq bosdi" (Stepping on the foot): During this ritual, the groom gently steps on the bride's foot, and then carries her into the room where the nuptial bed has been prepared. This act symbolizes the question of dominance in the new marriage. The person whose foot is stepped on is believed to become the head of the household. Traditionally, the bride avoids stepping on the groom's foot, acknowledging the patriarchal structure of Uzbek families. **"Joy yig'di/O'rin yig'ar"** (Collecting the bed folding): On the morning after the wedding (or three days later in some regions like Kokand), before the "yuz ochdi" (unveiling) ceremony, the bride's female relatives gather and collect the bedding from the nuptial chamber. The groom traditionally leaves a gift of money or valuables under one of the blankets as a gesture of respect and appreciation for the women's help. This ceremony is exclusively for women.

"Yuz ko'rdi" (Seeing the face): This ceremony involves the unveiling of the bride's face and takes place the day after the wedding (or three days later in Kokand). It's a public event attended by relatives and neighbors, often with music and entertainment. In Kokand, the bride is led by a female relative with her face covered by a white cloth. A young boy from the groom's family then playfully snatches the cloth away. This ceremony is known as "yuz ochdi" (unveiling) for the bride and "kuyov chiqdi" (groom's appearance) for the groom in some areas.

"Kelinsalom" (Bride's greeting): On the morning after the wedding (or three days later in Kokand), the bride is escorted by a female relative to greet her in-laws. She bows and greets each of them with respect. This custom is known as "salom" (greeting) in some regions. The provided excerpt from Aybek's novel "Sacred Blood" illustrates how this custom was practiced in Tashkent, where the bride greeted everyone from the youngest to the oldest. **"Kelin ko'rdi/Kelin ko'rar"** (Seeing the bride): On the day after the wedding (or three days later in Kokand), relatives and neighbors visit the bride to offer their congratulations and gifts. The bride greets them with deep bows as a sign of respect and gratitude.

"Charlar(i)" (Invitation): This refers to the first invitation extended to the bride or groom by their respective in-laws after the wedding. If the bride is invited to her parents' home, it's called "kelin charlar/kelin chaqirdi" (bride's invitation). If the groom is invited to his in-laws' home, it's called "kuyov charlar/kuyov chaqirdi" (groom's invitation). In the Fergana region, this is generally referred to as "chaqirindi" (invitation). **"Quda charlar"** (In-laws' invitation): This is a feast organized by one set of in-laws for the other set of in-laws after the wedding. It's also known as "quda chaqiriq" (in-laws' invitation). This event often involves a large gathering of relatives from both sides and requires significant preparation. Interestingly, the text mentions that sometimes disagreements between the in-laws begin with this quda chaqiriq.

"Non sindirish/Nonushatish" (Breaking bread): This ceremony marks the agreement to the betrothal between a young man and woman. It's also known as "patir ushatish" (breaking flatbread) in some areas. During this ritual, a representative from the groom's side takes two loaves of bread brought by the groom's family, places them on top of each other, and breaks them in half, symbolizing the union of the couple. This is done with the hope that the couple will have a happy future. After this, the families discuss the details of the upcoming wedding. In Beshariq, the sweets brought by the groom's family are called "miyanji."

The Linguistic Significance of Blessings and Farewell Rituals One of the most emotional moments in the wedding process is when the bride bids farewell to her family. This departure is accompanied by sorrowful songs and poetic blessings, emphasizing the deep emotional ties between the bride and her parents. The mother of the bride often recites a poetic farewell, such as:

"Qizim, yo'ling nurli bo'lsin, boshingni doim baland tut, Eshigingdan baxt kirsin, uyinga tinchlik yor bo'lsin." (My daughter, may your path be filled with light, always hold your head high. May happiness enter your home, and peace be your companion.)

At the groom's home, the welcoming process involves more structured speech and greetings. The bride is expected to greet her in-laws using formal language, reflecting the importance of respect and politeness in Uzbek culture.

The Uzbek marriage ceremony follows a clear stage structure, where linguistic expressions, poetic recitations, and formal blessings play an essential role in each step. From matchmaking to the wedding feast, traditional speech and structured dialogues shape the social and emotional aspects of marriage. The use of proverbs, metaphors, and ceremonial phrases reflects not only the beauty of the Uzbek language but also its power in preserving cultural identity.

Through these carefully maintained linguistic customs, Uzbek weddings continue to uphold their historical and social significance, ensuring that the wisdom and traditions of past generations remain alive in modern marriage ceremony

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