

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Similarities and Differences in Vietnamese-Japanese Language and Culture: A Study on the Domain of Words Indicating Kinship Relations from Role Schema Theory

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**Abstract:** When it comes to the perception and processing of social information, role schema serves as a key concept in cultural linguistics, which processes information about the perception of humans to make sense of the complex world and society, information about people, social groups, and events; therefore, the theory is valuable in deciphering culturally constructed concepts with the full range of human experience expressed through the linguistic picture of each ethnic community. Recognizing that the hierarchical cultural characteristics of the two ethnic communities of Vietnam and Japan are most clearly shown through the kinship words in the family and display the meaning of the role of each person in each family and society, we have named the paper “Similarities and Differences in Vietnamese- Japanese Language and Culture: A Study on the Domain of Words Indicating Kinship Relations from Role Schema Theory.” In this paper, based on the theoretical perspective of the role schema in cultural linguistics, a survey and a study are conducted in detail on the similarities and differences between the Vietnamese and Japanese kinship words with collected data from *Từ Điển Tiếng Việt* (Vietnamese Dictionary; Phe, 2021) and Japanese dictionary - Shinmeikai Kokugojiden (Yamada et al., 2021). Based on the semantic characteristics, structural system, and cultural characteristics of Vietnam and Japan, the qualitative method is deployed to definitely demonstrate the characteristics through specific hierarchies in the class from kinship. In addition, quantitative methods are applied to draw diagrams and tabulate the number of kinship words in Vietnamese and Japanese to clarify the ability to operate similar and different cultural characteristics in these two languages. Thereby, we apply the research results of the article as a source of materials that not only support teaching and translation of a second foreign language but also serve as a foundation for applying situations of intercultural communication between Vietnamese and Japanese.

**Keywords:** role schemas, culture, cultural linguistics, kinship words, Vietnamese ethnic community

Thanks to the close relationship between language and culture during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the period when the intersection of these two fields became more and more prominent, a new field emerged: cultural linguistics, which refers to a

recently developed discipline with multi-disciplines that explores the relationship between language and cultural concepts (Sharifian, 2011, 2012, 2017). The term “cultural linguistics” (Palmer, 1996) or the term “ethnolinguistics” recommended by Underhill

(2012) is a widespread term used to refer to the field of researching the relationship between language and culture (as pointed out, for instance, by Peeters, 2016), according to Duranti (2009). There are many prominent scholars in this field, including Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835), Franz Boas (1858–1942), Edward Sapir (1884–1939), Benjamin Whorf (1897–1941), who raised many problems to emphasize the relationship between language, ideology, and culture (Blount, 1995; Leavitt, 2015). There have been many different schools of cultural judgment. For example, culture is considered a cognitive system, a symbolic system, a social practice, or as an entity structure (Foley, 1997; Mills, 2015; Atkinson, 2015). During the development of culturology in the first half of the 20th century, there were important contributions of American cultural anthropologists in terms of broadening the audience and scope. In the 1930s and 1940s, the movement to study the culture and language of the Native Americans developed quite vigorously.

By perception and the formation of cultural schemes, the characteristics of human language are elucidated for use in cultural concepts. These cultural schemas are applied to not only develop the culture but also store information and experiences of other cultures and will aid in preserving the national cultural identity family (Sharifian, 2017). The theories of cultural linguistics are developed based on different multidisciplinary theories, especially the concepts of cultural schemas that are developed from the theories of researchers in social psychology.

The concept of schema refers to people in different cultural communities who have analogous categories and role schemas. Considered a small community, the categories and role diagrams of a family are clearly expressed through the terms of kinship relations. These kinship words not only have a hierarchical function but also contain the meaning of specifying the roles and responsibilities of all family members. Over many generations, these word classes have been increasingly developed with a perspicuous scale and system. Depending on the relationship, bloodline, equal or not, the division in the usage of the word for kinship relationship will be different. These word classes not only show the specific features of the language but also clearly show the culture of the nation.

In this paper, we hope that the comparative study of these two different languages will contribute to the improvement of the theory of cultural linguistics and

the problems of role schemas. Moreover, the research results contribute to the teaching of Vietnamese and Japanese as foreign languages. Based on the theory of role schema, we aim to address the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of words indicating kinship relations in Vietnamese and Japanese from the theory of role schemas?
2. How are the similarities and differences in the kinship words between Vietnamese and Japanese languages?

These schemas can be applied to intercultural communication between two communities when used in specific cultural situations and, at the same time, compare and contrast the cultural features contained in the kinship words.

## Review of Literature

The concept of schema has existed since the 19th century when the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1787/1963) developed the idea that the experiences of every person were grouped together in memory to form higher-order concepts. Moreover, this concept was also mentioned in the early 20th century, such as a study by Piaget in the 1920s investigating schemas in infants and a study by Bartlett in the 1930s testing memory for schemas (Matlin, 1989). Culture schema is a subclass constituted from *cognitive schemas*. As a result, the concept of schema is the basis for a number of terms that have been widely used in cognitive science, including “script,” “frame,” “global concept,” “scenario,” “encyclopedic entry,” “plan,” “memory object,” “mental model,” “cognitive field,” and so on.

In cognitive psychology, the traditional schemas have been perceived as the associative blocks that help organize, interpret, and communicate information (Bartlett, 1932; Bobrow & Norman, 1975; D’Andrade, 1995; Derry, 1996; Hil & Cole, 1995; Minsky, 1975; Rumelhart, 1980; Sharifian, 2001; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Furthermore, because many scholars (Cohen et al., 1993; Mandler, 1984; Markus, 1977; Matlin, 1989; Rumelhart, 1975, 1980; Schank & Abelson, 1977; Taylor & Crocker, 1981; Thorndyke, 1984) have used and improved the schema concepts, schema theory has become very popular in cognitive psychology models (Rumelhart, 1980; Rumelhart et al., 1986; Schank & Abelson, 1977).

The term “schema” originated from the sub-discipline of social psychology. According to Augoustinos and Walker (1995), schema theory is a model of information processing about human cognition to understand the world and the complex society where people live. Whereas cognitive science is concerned with how people perceive, understand, store, and remember physical phenomena. On the other hand, social schema theory focuses on the perception and processing of social information about people, social groups, and events. In social psychology, the four main categories of schemas are person schemas, self-schemas, role schemas, and event schemas (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Taylor & Crocker, 1981). Based on social psychology, role schema plays a function that refers to the frameworks of knowledge that everyone has about the norms and expected behavior in specific role positions in society. In a general view, role schema is a framework of knowledge that people have in a particular role of a cultural group (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995).

Schema theory demonstrates that schemas are learned or acquired over time from direct and indirect experience with the social environment. By experience, a large schema store was built (Rumelhart, 1984). According to social psychologists, schemas are divided into four main areas: person schemas, self-schemas, role schemas, and event schemas (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Taylor & Crocker, 1981). However, Nishida’s (1999) interdisciplinary study was the first time to classify eight major schemas in social interaction: (a) fact-and-concept schemas mention factual information, (b) person schemas include knowledge of human characteristics, (c) self-schemas mention the awareness of how people see themselves and how others see them, (d) role schemas, (e) context schemas, (f) procedure schemas, (g) strategy schemas, and (h) emotion schemas. From the viewpoints of psychology, social psychology, and cultural linguistics, role schemas consist of knowledge frameworks that everyone in a society has and expects about the behavior of a certain role in society. Accordingly, different cultural communities will have similar role schemas.

## Methodology

The paper concentrates on studying the kinship word classes in Vietnamese and Japanese from the

theory of role schemas in cultural linguistics. We define the object of this research to be Vietnamese and Japanese kinship words. Quantitative study is conducted to determine the frequency of occurrence of kinship words in the survey taken from *Từ điển tiếng Việt* (Phe, 2021) and Japanese dictionary - Shinmeikai Kokugojiden (Yamada et al., 2021). The samples taken from *Tục ngữ, ca dao, dân ca Việt Nam* (Vu Ngoc Phan, 2020) are specific examples to clarify the characteristics of the kinship word system and national culture of the two countries. The qualitative analysis describes the semantic features and the determinants in the Vietnamese and Japanese kinship words. Moreover, because the majority of traditional Vietnamese and Japanese families are *Tam đại Đồng đường* [three-generation family], kinship nouns will be classified according to the hierarchy from the top. Specifically, the relationships of grandparents to ego, parents to ego, uncle-aunt to ego, husband-wife to ego, and brother-sister to ego will be scrutinized in this paper. In addition, this article will not analyze the affinity between the child-grandchild and ego because the roles and positions of the ego with the child-grandchild are analogous to the relationships of grandparents to ego and parents to ego. Based on the results of the survey data, we began to sketch out the role schemas of each specific position of the tiers in the Vietnamese and Japanese families to conclude the similarities and differences between the kinship word skin in Vietnamese and Japanese.

## Results and Findings

### *Collation From Kinship Words of Relationship Between Grandparents and Ego (Called Grandchild) From Role Schema Theory*

In Vietnamese, these kinship words also act as address words because of the *Con Rồng Cháu Tiên* [dragons and descendants of fairies] in Vietnamese culture. For more specifics, these nouns are used to address the family and are suitable for communicating with outsiders. Consequently, there are more definitions of grandparents than in Japanese. However, the similar definition of grandparents in both Vietnamese and Japanese languages refers to the man and woman who gave birth to a father or mother and are respectable persons. Subsequently, the typical cultural characteristics of the two communications

are expressed conspicuously. Therefore, the Vietnam kinship words at this level are combined with spiritual and religious nouns to address some God, which not only shows respect for people but also brings intimacy to the believer, such as *Ông Táo* [God who governs the kitchen], *Ông Tơ Bà Nguyệt* [according to Chinese legend, they are male and female Gods who specialize in making people in love], *Ông Trời* [Creator, God of all beings], *Phật Bà Quan Âm* [according to the history of Buddhist literature, she is a symbol of the Buddhist spirit of universal salvation for sentient beings, enlightenment for those who have lost their way]. Moreover, according to the Vietnamese tradition “*Kính lão đắc thọ*” [respecting the elderly to get longevity], grandparents are the oldest generation in the family. The Law on Marriage and Family (2014) has also stipulated that paternal and maternal grandparents have the following rights and obligations to take care of and instruct their grandchildren and set good examples for children. On the other hand, grandchildren (ego) have the compulsion to respect, care for, and serve their paternal and maternal grandparents. If neither paternal nor maternal grandparents have children, adult grandchildren are obligated to nurture them.

For a long time, the expression *Tiên học lễ, hậu học văn* [study manners first, then reading and writing] has been not only the motto of Confucian education but also a traditional educational viewpoint in Vietnam. Based on the concept of thousands of years old, the older people are, the more experience they will accumulate

in life and bequeath a lot of valuable experience for later generations. Therefore, there are sentences such as *Gìng càng già càng cay* [with age comes wisdom] or *Trúng mà đòi khôn hơn vịt* [do not teach your mother/grandmother to suck eggs] in Vietnam and *老いたる馬は道を忘れず* - *Oitaruumahamichiwowasurezu* [old horse never forgets the way] or *年寄りの言うことと牛の鞭は外れない* - *Toshiyori no iu koto to ushi no shirigai wa hazurenai* [opinion of experienced old people is never wrong] in Japan. By inheriting and following the precepts of the previous generations, the tradition of *Kính lão đắc thọ* [respecting the elderly to get longevity] has become not only better and better but also more and more sustainable.

In Japan, where there is an aging population, because respecting the elderly tradition is promoted and preserved, there is an idiom *年寄り は家の宝* - *Toshiyori wa ie no takara* [the elderly are the precious asset of the families]. In Japan, there is a day *敬老の日* - *Keiro no hi* [Day of Older Persons], wherein the third Monday of September every year is a special holiday to pay respects to the elders and previous generations. Moreover, in Japan, there are many benefits and services for the elderly based on the Law on Welfare Services for the Elderly (1963) and the Regulations of the Law on Health and Medical Services for the Elderly (Rojin Hoken Ho).

From the above analysis, we summarize the role schemas of grandparents and grandchildren in the Vietnamese and Japanese family in Figure 1.

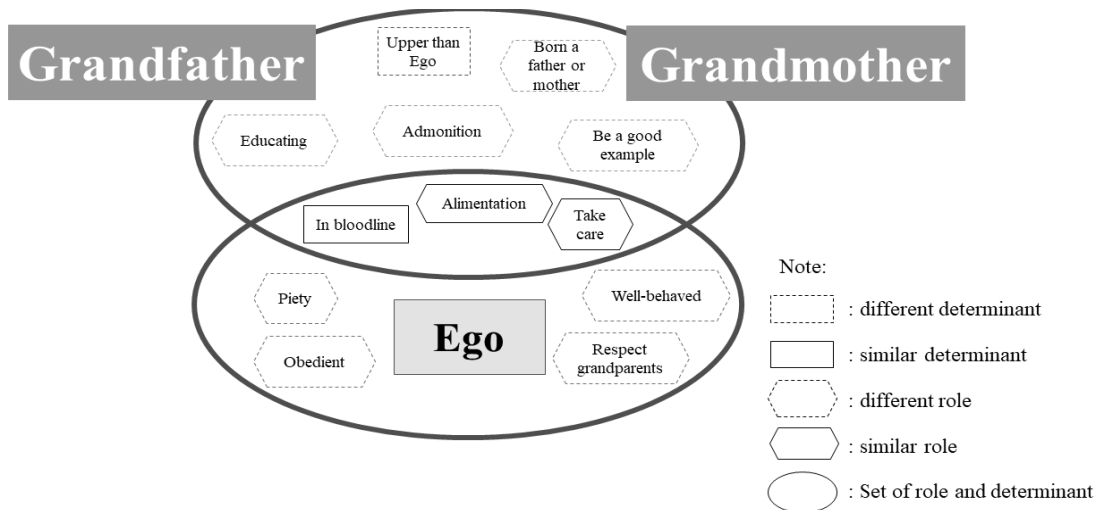


Figure 1. Role Schemas of the Grandparents and Grandchildren

The figure shows two large circles including the roles of grandparents and grandchildren. Specifically, the roles of grandparents are giving birth to parents, having the merit of teaching, and admonishing the grandchild (*Thương cho roi cho vọt, ghét cho ngọt cho bùi* [spare the rod, spoil the child]), and teaching life experience, the knowledge that grandparents have gone through to future generations. The square represents the determinants, of which the similar determinant in the grandparent is “above ego” in terms of hierarchy.

When distinguishing paternal and maternal grandparents, Vietnamese uses additional suffixes such as *nội* after the word “father,” called *ông nội* [father of father], *bà nội* [mother of father], *ông ngoại* [father of mother], *bà ngoại* [mother of mother]. In that manner, there is not any difference in their roles, but the role of generating the father or mother of ego. Furthermore, in this case, the Japanese will also use compound or explanatory phrases, such as 母の父 - *Haha no chichi* [father of mother], 父の母 - *chichi no haha* [mother of father], 母方の祖父 - *hahagata no sofu* [father of mother], 父方の祖父 - *chichikata no sofu* [father of father].

Homogeneously, extended words such as Ông trẻ, Bà trẻ [young uncle, young aunt] mostly include similar roles and determinants to grandparents. The suffix *trẻ* is added to distinguish not directly spawning parents of ego or not being related by bloodline, which refers to the person born after grandparents (brother, sister of grandparents) or having a marital relationship with the person born before or born after grandparent (brother-in-law, sister-in-law of grandparents) in the family.

It is interesting that in the Vietnamese language, there is also a paternal-maternal determinant in the “grandchild” tier, for example, “paternal grandchild, maternal grandchild.” The main reasons leading to the distinction between paternal grandchildren and maternal grandchildren are the separated roles and responsibilities. Specifically in Vietnamese culture, there is a tradition of *Uống nước nhớ nguồn* [when drinking water, think of its source], and worshipping ancestors is the duty of the eldest son or the first son of the eldest son called *cháu đích tôn* [first paternal grandson]. In contrast to Vietnam, there is no distinction between paternal member and maternal member in Japan. Therefore, the clearly defined role between paternal grandchild and maternal grandchild is completely absent. Based on the general role scheme above, the similarities and differences between role or determinant factors give rise to words that include

extended meanings to indicate the specific position of each person in the family and kinship.

### ***Collation From Kinship Words of Relationship Between Parents and Ego (Called Child) From Role Schema Theory***

Vietnam, Japan, and East Asian countries are heavily influenced by Chinese culture, singularly Confucianism. It is extremely important to maintain and protect the value of family relationships, especially the bond between parents and children: *Con có cha như nhà có nóc/ Con không cha như nòng nọc đứt đuôi* (a father is like a roof that covers the whole house, protecting his children from storms); *Con có mẹ như măng áp bẹ* [bamboo shoots always wrap the outside, and always protect the leaf sheath like a mother takes care of and protects her child]. According to Confucian thought, parents have the amenability to raise, care for, and set an example for their children to follow. What parents do will affect the future of their children: *Đời cha ăn mặn, đời con khát nước* [the sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children]; *Cây xanh thì lá cũng xanh, cha mẹ hiền lành để đức cho con* [gentle parents are virtuous for children]. There is also a similar sentence in Japanese: 蛙の子は蛙 - *kaeru no ko wa kaeru* [like father, like child]. On account of saying *Phải sống tích đức cho con cháu đời sau* [people have to be gentle for the following generations], people ought to be aware of what they are making, doing good without evil, so that their children and grandchildren may enjoy happiness in their future lives thanks to grandparents and parents.

In Japanese, the noun 父 - *Chichi* [father] also refers to great, pioneering people with a reverential meaning. The definitions of the word 母 - *Haha* [mother] in both Vietnamese and Japanese similarly refer to a woman who is related by blood to her child. In addition, this noun also refers to the root, from which many other things are born. For example, in Japanese, the phrase *hituyou wa hastumei no haha* [need is the mother of invention] implies that invention is born from the pressure of need; there is also the phrase *hahanaru taichi* [nature mother]. Similarly, in Vietnamese, there are many metaphors for the word *Mẹ* [mother] as *thất bại là mẹ thành công* [failure is the main factor that helps people to grow up to go to success].

According to Article 69 of the Law on Marriage and Family (2014), parents are obliged to look after, nurture, care for, and protect the lawful rights and interests of

their minor children and adult children who have lost their civil act capacity or are unable to work and have no assets to support themselves. At the same time, parents have equal obligations and rights to jointly care for and raise their minor children and adult children who have lost their civil act capacity or are unable to work and have no property to feed themselves according to the Law on Marriage and Family (2014). On the contrary, according to the provisions of Clause 2, Article 71 of the Law on Marriage and Family (2014), children have the obligation and right to take care of and nurture their parents, especially when the parents lose their civil act capacity or are sick, weak, and disabled. In case there are many children in a family, the children must jointly care for and raise their parents.

On the other hand, the “children” in the family must be responsible for serving the parents who gave birth and raised them. According to Confucianism and Buddhism, the word *Hiếu* [filial piety] is considered as the root of humans, so there is the statement *Bách thiện hiếu vi tiên* [in hundreds of virtues, filial piety is first]. In Japanese, the word *Oyakōkō* [filial piety] appears a lot in proverbs such as 親孝行と火の用心は灰にならぬ前 - *Oyakōkō to hinoyōjin wa hai ni naranu mae* [children should be filial to their parents while they are alive because parents do not live forever], 子を持って知る親の恩 - *kowomotteshiruoyanoon* [when having children, people will understand the love and all situations of parents], and 父母の恩は山よりも高く 海よりも深し - *fubo no onha yamayorimo takaku umiyorimo fukashi* [gratitude of parents is higher than the mountains and deeper than the ocean].

According to the role schema of parents tier, the parents contain the determinants which are higher than ego in the hierarchy and the same bloodline, whereas their roles are having the responsibility to give birth, raise, care for, teach, and protect the legitimate rights and interests of their children. Children, on the other hand, are obligated to nurture and take care of their parents when they are sick, old, or weak; should be filial; obedient to adults; and preserve the honor of the family (shown as Figure 2).

From Figure 2, the intersection point of the two sets of parents and children is the roles of nurturing, caring, and the same bloodline determinant. Moreover, there are some extension words because of the different determinants. For example, *cha kéké* [stepfather], *cha nuôi* [adoptive father], *cha vợ* [father-in-law], and *cha chồng* [father-in-law) are nouns that are extensions of the word *cha* [father) when the nouns contain some different determinant from the word *cha*. For more details, stepfather and adoptive father are different from the noun father in blood-line determinant, and they are not blood-related to children. Moreover, the blood determinant of the father-in-law is no blood relation, which is the opposite of the word *cha* [father); in addition, *cha vợ* is maternal side, and *cha chồng* is paternal side. This extension also occurs in the word *mẹ* [mother). In addition, compared to the general role schema, *cha chồng*, *cha vợ* [father-in-law), *mẹ chồng*, and *mẹ vợ* [mother-in-law) are different in the paternal-maternal determinant in order to distinguish the person who gave birth to husband or wife, which is influenced by the matriarchal era because during this

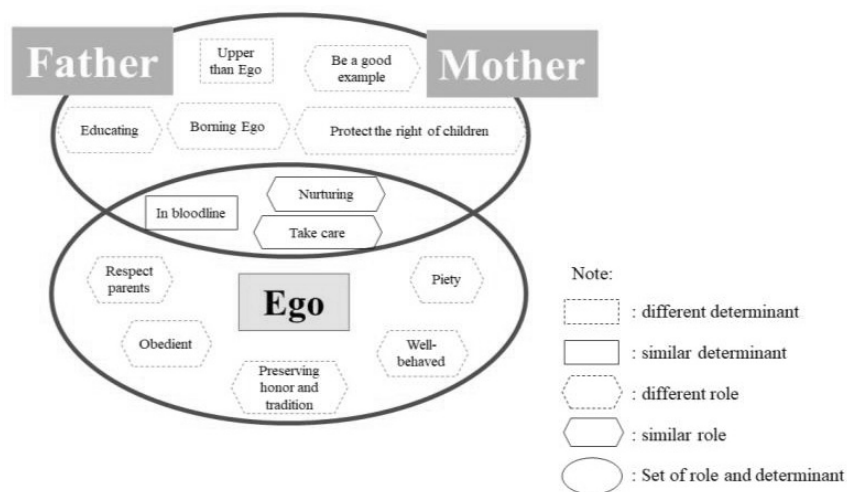


Figure 2. Role Schemas of the Parents and Children

period the roles of the mother role in the family were extremely crucial. In Japanese, there are examples like 雨は花の父母 - *Ame wa hana no fubo* [rain is the parent of flowers], which implies that the rain has the role of helping flowers be nourished to maintain life and develop more, like the role of parents in nurturing adult children, and 勤勉は成功の母 - *kinbenhaseikōnohaha* [diligence is the mother of success].

In the role schemas of the relationship between parents and ego, depending on the historical and cultural circumstances of the community, the roles and responsibilities of parents or children will reorganize. For instance, in the role schema of parents, there was a matriarchal era in Vietnam and some countries, such as India and Indonesia, but not in Japan. For this period, the form of social organization was run by women. Particularly, the mother in the family will take the leadership role, the breadwinner, and all power is concentrated in the mother because, in the history of human evolution, the children of the wild community only recognized their own mother and the family names of children were from the mother. Men at that time played a very obscure role and always depended on women. However, thanks to the development of humans, the role of the father has become significant, and the father is the breadwinner in the family. The patriarchal era was most clearly found in the Feudal society, when the power of men was unlimited, from the right to divide labor to the power in the family, and all authorities belonged

to men and fathers concretely. On the contrary, the position of the mother was underestimated, although the roles and responsibilities of the mother did not change because the division of labor was not equal and the roles between men and women were too strict. Because men have power and a voice in both society and family, they played the roles of managing the family, worshiping ancestors, and making all decisions; women have to follow *Tam tòng, tứ đức* [the rule of three subordinations and four virtues], which made the thought of *Trọng nam khinh nữ* [respecting men and disrespecting women] more and more profound. Therefore, the distinction between male and female is highly appreciated by the Vietnamese in the family kinship words.

The determinants and roles in defining father or mother are shown distinctively in each certain period. For example, the noun “father” is defined as a male who is above the ego, has the same bloodline as the ego, has the role of giving birth to the ego, is the breadwinner in the family, raises and educates children, and is an exemplary member for children to follow. On the antithesis, thanks to the role schema, the social structure and culture of each community are clearly reflected in each period of the historical developments in a country. Based on the above analysis, the role schema of the word *Cha* [father] is given as an example to accurately define this noun and identify the similarities and differences between Vietnamese and Japanese.

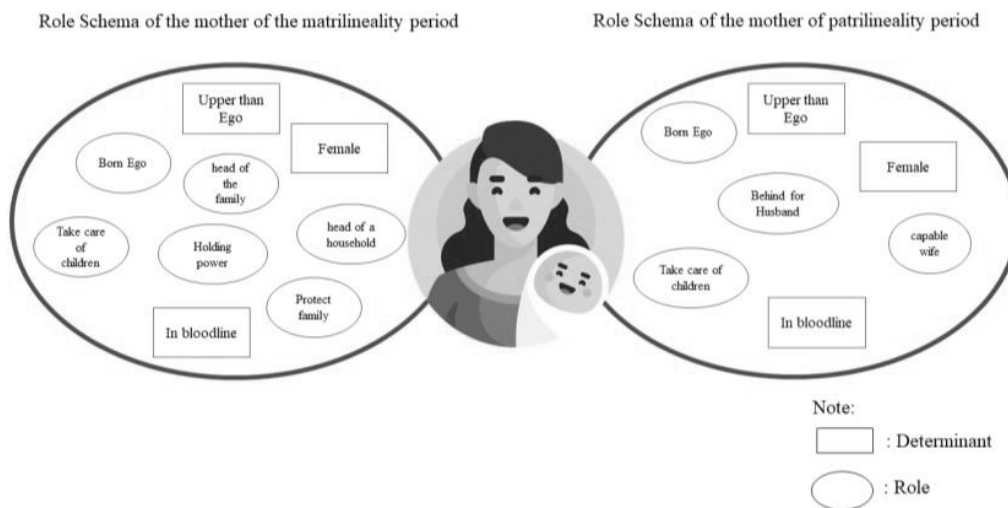
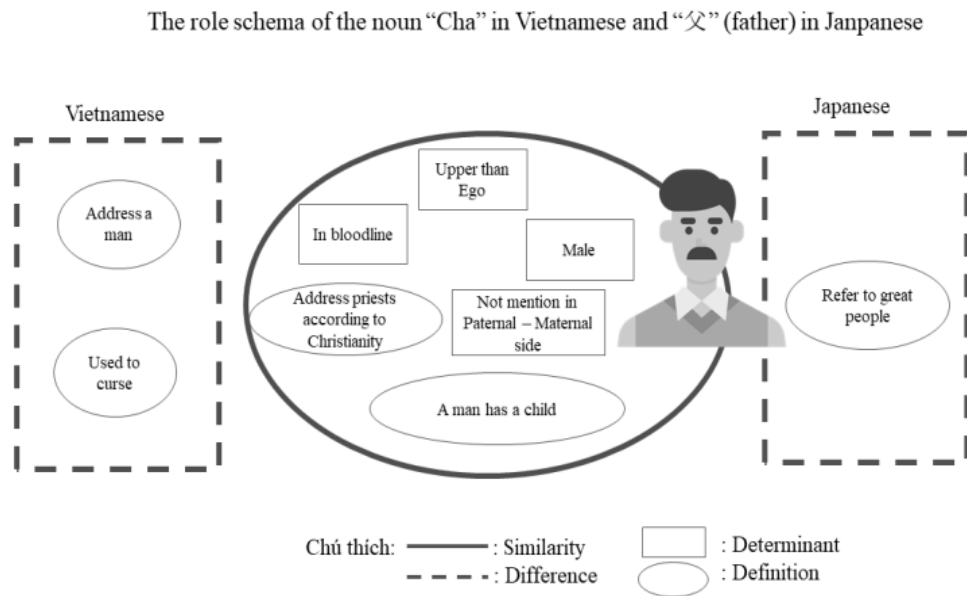


Figure 3. The Role Schema of “Mother” in the Matriarchal and Patriarchal Period



**Figure 4.** The Role Schema and Definition of “Father”

The father mentioned in the role schema is the man who plays the role of giving birth, raising, educating children, and being the breadwinner in the family. From the role schema of the Vietnamese and Japanese communities, the similar determinants of the word *cha* - 父 - *Chichi* [father] is a male, having a blood relationship with ego regardless of the paternal or maternal side, higher than ego on the hierarchy, and a man who has a child in the definition. Besides, the word *cha* - 父 - *Chichi* [father] is also used to call a Catholic priest. Nevertheless, there are some differences. For instance, *cha* - 父 - *Chichi* in Vietnamese is also used to address and curse, but this word refers to great people who have made great contributions to the country and the world in Japanese.

***Collation From Kinship Words of Relationship Between Uncle - Aunt and Ego (Called Nephew or Niece) From Role Schema Theory***

The members of the uncle-aunt tier are born before or after the persons who give birth to ego or have a marital relationship with someone who is in the same bloodline with ego and is higher than ego in terms

of hierarchy. Thus, there are many specific expected behaviors they should do for ego and family. According to Vietnamese law, Article 106 of the Law on Marriage and Family (2014) stipulates the rights and obligations of aunts and uncles to love, care for and help each other, and have the right and obligation to nurture each other in case the person who needs to be nurtured but lack of a father, mother, child, or there are ones who have no conditions to fulfill the nurturing obligation.

The Vietnamese typical culture is *Trọng tình - Trọng nghĩa* [a respectful lifestyle], which means that family affection, the value of sibling relationships, upholding gratitude for parents, or even outside people who have the merit of helping are extremely important for Vietnamese. According to a survey of Vietnamese kinship words in the uncle-aunt tier, the percentage of not mentioning in the paternal-maternal side determinant and the blood-relationship determinant are completely low, which makes out that Vietnamese attaches great memorabilia to the distinction between the paternal and maternal sides as well as those of the same blood or not in their family.



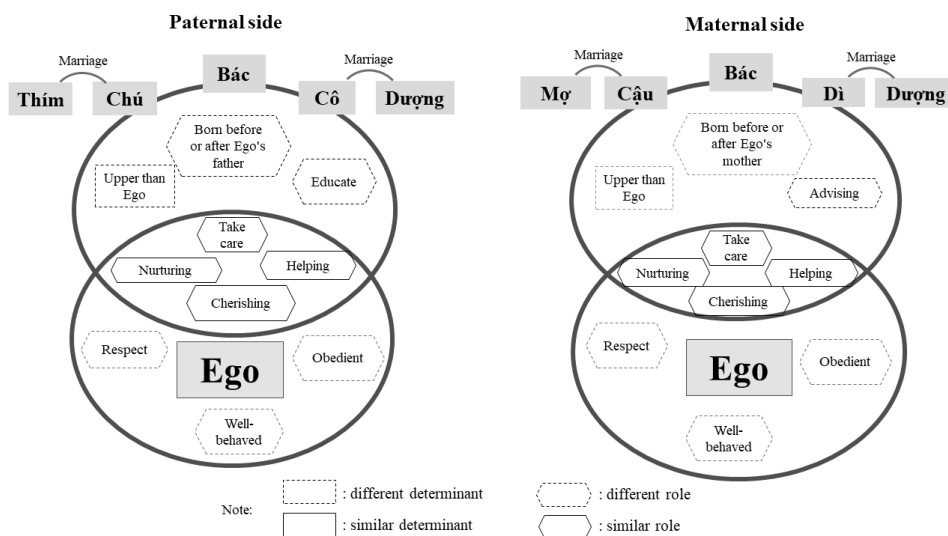


Figure 5. Role Schema of the Relationship Between Uncle-Aunt and Ego

When the Vietnamese kinship words of this tier are divided into agnate and cognate, the same bloodline with ego or not, there are symmetrical relationships in turn: *chú* [younger brother of father]–*cậu* [younger brother of mother], *cô* [younger sister of father]–*đì* [younger sister of mother] (same bloodline as ego), and *thím* [wife of the younger brother of father]–*mợ* [wife of the younger brother of mother] (not same bloodline as ego). Besides, *bác* and *đựng* are two neutral words in terms of paternal and maternal side determinants. Therefore, there are some discrepant responsibilities and roles of the folks of parents and those with the same lineage or not. The values of positions in uncle–aunt tier have been taught by the ancients as equivalent to the liabilities of parents. When the parents succumb, *chú* [younger brother of father] is like the father, whereas *đì* [younger sister of mother] replaces the mother because they are the closest relatives. This is shown by the rich historical folk songs and proverbs: *Sây cha còn chú, sây mẹ bú đì* [if you lose your father, you will have an uncle. If you lose your mother, you will have an aunt]; *Không cha có chú ai ơi/Thay mặt, đổi lời chú cũng như cha* [the precepts of uncle are like what fathers teach their children]; *Đì ruột thương cháu như con/Rủi mà mất mẹ, cháu còn cậy trông* [It means that blood relatives always love each other, whether they are biological children or not. Uncles and aunts are always concerned about their nephews and nieces].

However, a Japanese man who is born after or before ego's parents or has a marital relationship with a woman born after or before ego's parents is called

*oji*, but a woman similarly is called *oba*. Because of the cultural influence of *うち–そと*–*Uchi - Soto* [inside–outside], the Japanese only distinguish family members from outsiders by the honorific grammar system. Therefore, the blood relationship determinant appears quite faintly in Japanese kinship words. Besides, in Japanese civil law, there are no certain rights and roles of uncles and aunts to ego in the family.

This is also the cause of the extremely low rate of discrimination in paternal–maternal side determinant in the Japanese kinship words. However, in Vietnamese, there are clear distinctions between these two determinants in the whole family, especially the uncle–aunt tier, like the statement *Cậu chết mợ ra người đưng, chú tôi có chết thím đưng lấy ai* (when uncle dies, aunt becomes a stranger; if my uncle dies, don't marry anyone). In the family, the wife of the younger brother of the mother and the wife of the younger brother of the father are still considered different bloodline members. The Vietnamese inherently value the same bloodline relatives, the paternal side, respect men, and disrespect women. This can also be seen in funeral customs. The mourning is the last opportunity for the living persons to pay respects to the deceased. However, funeral customs are strictly regulated for each tier of kinship relations in the hierarchy; there is even unfairness in the uncle–aunt tier. There are some sayings in the folk such as *Chồng cô, vợ cậu, chồng đì/Trong ba người ấy chết thì không tang* [funerals of the husband of aunt and wife of uncle doesn't matter].

In contrast, compared with the strict regulations on funerals and mourning of Vietnamese people, the Japanese' are very simple. Everyone in the family and relatives will gather around the coffin of the deceased to burn incense, pray all night, and watch the candles and incense without going out. Most of the strict regulations in Vietnamese culture are also heavily influenced by outdated feudalistic concepts derived from Confucianism, which affects the nowadays kinship words.

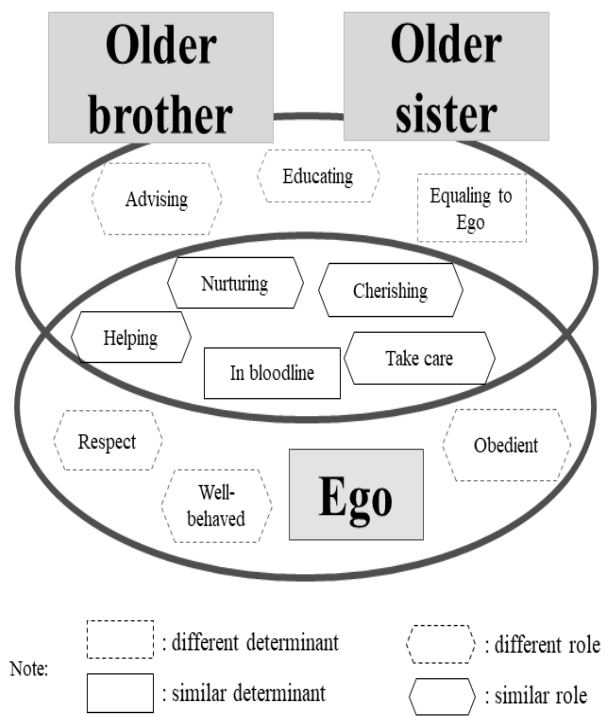
In addition, there are strict distinctions between paternal and maternal blood relationships and non-blood relationships in Japanese culture, especially in uncles–aunts tier, which is also shown very clearly in the Japanese kinship nouns. Moreover, the responsibilities, rights, and obligations of uncles and aunts are not mentioned by Japanese law, and most of their expected behaviors and responsibilities are quite faint.

#### ***Collation From Kinship Words of Relationship Between Brother–Sister and Ego From Role Schema Theory***

In the basic relationships of the traditional family, the relationship between brother–sister and ego comes from the family bloodline. Considering that traditional Vietnamese families are influenced by Confucian views and ethics, parents always want their children to always love and protect each other, as statement shows: *Khôn ngoan đã đáp người ngoài/Gà cùng một mẹ chớ hoài đá nhau* [due to metaphorical images from chickens born with the same hen, brothers and sisters in the family must love and care for each other]. The brothers and sisters' relationship must behave according to the rule of *Hiếu Đễ* (The word “Hiếu” is remunerating the love and nurturing of parents while the word “Đễ” stands for behavior for brothers and sisters in the family), which is the requirement and ethical standard governing the sibling relationship. *Anh* [brothers] and *chị* [sisters] ought to love and take responsibility for *em* [their younger siblings], especially when parents disappear soon. Those obligations become even heavier because the young are immature. The younger brother should respect, love, and listen to his brother and sister's advice and instruction like *Một giọt máu đào hơn ao nước lã* [blood is thicker than water], *Anh em như thể chân tay/Rách lành đùm bọc, dở hay đỡ đần* [hands and feet are two body parts that support each other to complete the job—averse that exalts the love between

brothers and sisters. Brothers and sisters in the same house must love and care for each other], and *Em thuận anh hòa là nhà có phúc* [in the family, brotherly love and unity will bring many good things].

According to Article 105 of the *Law on Marriage and Family* (2014), brothers and sisters have the right and obligation to love, care for, help, and nurture each other even when their parents have no conditions to look after, take care of, and educate the children. In terms of hierarchy, brother–sister tier is equal to the level of ego, so this is the closest relationship due to not only the same bloodline but also not a large gap in age, quite similar mentality, and way of thinking. The ancients used to say *Anh em như thể chân tay/Rách lành đùm bọc, dở hay đỡ đần* [the sacred affection between siblings is always close and lasting with time, whether being full or hungry, difficult or happy, and no matter how the circumstances change]. Through the poems, ancestors gave advice on how to behave in a family in all circumstances. Thanks to the evidence, the role schema between the brother–sister and ego is presented, in which there is a reciprocal symmetrical role between the older brothers, sisters, and the ego (younger ones) or younger brothers, sisters, and ego (older ones).



**Figure 6.** Role Schema of the Relationship Between Brother–Sister and Ego

From childhood, every kid is taught by grandparents and parents to love and respect their older brothers and sisters and to yield to younger ones, which is a traditional culture of *Kính trên nhường dưới* [giving priority with respect]. When starting school, all students learn the value of brotherhood in the family with stories such as the fairy tale *Trầu Cau* [Betel nut] or *Cây khế* [star fruit]. Although the contents of the story are different, the messages about family values, especially sibling love, are recommended by the forefather, who criticizes brothers and sisters who do not know how to love each other, compete, and envy their brothers and sisters. Building a close relationship between brothers and sisters in the family is to always yield, share, love, and care for each other to better live together. Sometimes, brothers and sisters might sit together to share feelings with each other to avoid causing quarrels and not to let selfishness overwhelm love, like the saying *Anh giận thì em bớt lời* [if older are angry, younger brother and sister ought to reduce words].

During the period of high economic development, the young generation left their parents, hometown, moved to live in the city to study, look for job opportunities, then got married and built their own families. Although there were many brothers and sisters in a Japanese family in the 1960s–1970s, not only the younger children left the family, but the eldest son also left the countryside to go to the city to find new occupations and life opportunities. Despite being influenced by Confucianism on the *Hiếu Đễ* [filial piety] ritual, there is a transition from a multi-generational family to a nuclear family. Moreover, Japanese women give birth later and later to balance work and married life, which is a reason why there are more and more one-child families. Therefore, the value of roles, responsibilities, and affection in the Japanese family is relatively weaker than in the Vietnamese community culture.

#### ***Collation From Kinship Words of Relationship Between Husband–Wife and Ego (Called Grandchild) From Role Schema Theory***

Both Vietnamese and Japanese cultural communities follow the concept of husband and wife religion like the statement *Đàn ông xây nhà, đàn bà xây tổ ấm* in Vietnamese and *男は仕事、女は家庭 - Otoko wa shigoto, on'na wa katei* in Japanese, which implies that men are responsible for doing heavy work in the society,

whereas the women will be responsible for housework, cook, and take care of and educate children. In the family, there are also very strict regulations on roles and responsibilities between men (strongness) and women (weakness). Specifically, men have the duty of great responsibilities such as earning money, worshipping ancestors, and being the breadwinner in the family, but the weak have to take care of children, kitchen work, and need to be protected by men.

In Confucianism, there are three highly valued relationships (military god, father–son, and wife–husband), which are considered as three fundamental relationships to build an ideal society. In feudal times, the position of women in society was lower than men in the family, so the marriage regime during this period was built on the basis of old conceptions of life and outdated economic models. Women have to follow the religion of *Tam tông* (three subordinations: at home, a woman is subordinated to her father; after her marriage, she is subordinated to her husband; and after her husband's death, she is subordinated to or follows her son), and their economy ought to depend on her father, husband, or son, which is proved by the statements *Thuyền theo lái/Gái theo chồng* [boat follows the driver/girl follows her husband]. In marriage, the issue of choosing a bride or a groom is also mentioned by grandparents in the proverb *Lấy vợ xem tông, lấy chồng kén giông* [must find out the relatives of the bride and observe the genealogy of the groom when getting married] because marriage affects the whole family.

In feudal society, according to the patriarchal family model, the role of the husband and father was extremely important. The husband set the family rule and made all decisions because he was both the material and spiritual pillars of the wife and children. In the old society, women only struggled with kitchen work and could not study or read books, so teaching children was also the responsibility of the husband. In ancient Vietnamese society, agriculture was the main occupation of the majority of laborers, so our grandparents put great emphasis on reproduction and maintenance of the lineage—*Con đàn cháu đông* [many children and grandchildren]; *Đông con hơn nhiều của* [number of children is larger than asset]—because a huge number of member could create more labor and more products. Therefore, the husbands in wealthy families were allowed to marry many wives, and these men were called peach blossom, elegant *năm thê bảy thiếp* [polygamy]. However, in a society

*Trọng nam khinh nữ* [respecting men and despising women], the position of a woman must always remain hidden behind her husband. In Japan, there are also strict regulations on the role of women in relationships. According to Japanese law, a husband and wife after marriage have the same family name, but according to a 2016 survey by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, there is only 4% of men who changed their last names to ones of wives among more than 600,000 married couples (Saori, 2022).

From an early age, Japanese children are taught about responsibilities and roles for their family in the subject *Kateika* [female housework]. In this subject, students will learn all of the knowledge and skills related to cooking, meal planning, grocery shopping, sewing, and making wooden furniture. Moreover, motherhood is also considered a Japanese occupation, so there is a *Sengyō shufu* phrase referring to women who do not work but only wholeheartedly take care of the housework and children. Thus, the responsibilities bound by marriage are extremely heavy. The husband is the breadwinner of the family and all expenses and living in the house depend on the man, but the wife should stay at home to take care of the family and does not have to go out for work.

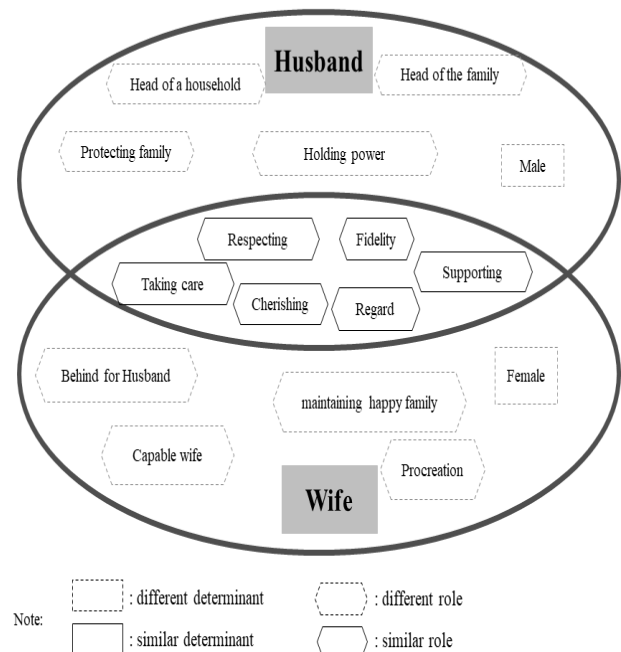
Although living in a society that strictly distinguishes between the roles of husband and wife, grandparents still teach their children and grandchildren a lot of good and right doctrines in the marriage that is not obsolete to this day, such as *Thuận vợ thuận chồng/ Tát biển Đông cũng cạn* [marital harmony is important for success], and *Râu tôm nấu với ruột bầu/ Chồng chan vợ húp gật đầu khen ngon* [husband compliments every dish his wife makes, even if it is cheap food]. In Japanese, there are also examples such as 夫婦は二世 - *Fūfuhānise* [husband and wife are forever], meaning that the love of husband and wife is a deep and heavy predestined relationship that lasts not only in this life but also in the next life, or the sentence 夫婦はいとこほど似る - *Fūfu wa itoko hodo niru* [husband and wife are like brothers], meaning that when husband and wife live together, they love each other like siblings in the family.

The morality of husband and wife, drawn from many generations, is a standard model for marriage and family life. Moreover, it is also a shining example for children to learn and follow. For example, if children grow up in a family where their parents love and respect each other, their children will also rely on that to develop and grow physically and mentally in

a positive way. On the contrary, if the child lives in domestic violence, witnesses the image of the father beating and scolding the mother, or the parents do not love and respect each other, the child will be affected psychologically and emotionally and will tend to be mentally more negative and shier than other children. Therefore, building a solid foundation for the family is the relationship between the wife and the husband as these phrases embody: *Của chồng công vợ* [the important role of the wife in the success of the husband] and *Giàu vì bạn sang vì vợ* [choosing a friend or a wife is very important].

Today, marriage is considered a legal relationship; when life is developing, gender equality is increasingly necessary as the obligation of husband and wife is equal in marriage. Accordingly, husbands and wives have the imperative to respect, love, be faithful, care for and help each other, and share household chores together.

Moreover, the government also promulgates policies to protect marriage and family, creates all conditions for men and women to get married in a voluntary, equal, and progressive marriage relationship, encourage monogamy, and establish a happy family. People should abolish the outmoded customs of marriage and promote good traditions.



**Figure 6.** Role Schema of the Relationship of Husband–Wife Tier

## Conclusion

A role schema is a concept that encompasses knowledge paradigms that everyone in society understands and requires the behaviors they expect of a given role in the social world. The unfamiliar cultural communities will have different categories and behavior expectations for the same role. Relying on the theory of the role schema allows people to decipher linguistic concepts through the cultural characteristics of the ethnic community. This study is conducted with the general purpose of understanding and analyzing the characteristics of the group of words indicating kinship relations, which we can approach and understand more clearly about the cultural characteristics between Vietnam and Japan.

From the research results using the role diagram of nouns indicating kinship relations in Vietnamese and Japanese, the paper's findings show that there are many similarities and differences in the roles of each member in the family from the view of the role schemas theory between Vietnamese and Japanese language and culture. With the concept that the family is the home of each person, the cell of society is an important environment to form, nurture, and educate people. In the course of the historical development of mankind and through many years of formation and progress, now the class from kinship increasingly contains deeply the typical culture of each nation. In addition, based on this common role schema, two different cultural communities will have similar perception points about similar things and phenomena. Thanks to this similarity, we can learn, translate languages, and learn from each other easily from one language to another.

## Declaration of Ownership

This report is our original work.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare. All authors agree with the content of the manuscript. There is no financial conflict of interest to report.

## Ethical Clearance

This study was approved by our institution.

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