



STRUCTURAL AND SEMANTIC FEATURES OF KARAKALPAK AND GERMAN PAREMIOLOGICAL UNITS

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the structural and semantic features of Karakalpak and German paremiological units. It focuses on how proverbs in both languages convey collective experience through syntactic patterns, compression, and figurative meaning. The study shows that Karakalpak proverbs often rely on parallel structures and experiential imagery to express communal values, whereas German proverbs tend to use concise, logically framed statements to convey normative judgments. The analysis highlights the close interaction between structure and meaning and underlines the importance of proverbs for comparative linguistics and intercultural communication

Proverbs, as condensed verbal expressions of collective experience, reveal much more than practical advice; they encode culturally preferred ways of thinking, evaluating reality, and structuring knowledge [1, 22-26]. When the paremiological systems of Karakalpak and German are examined from a structural and semantic perspective, it becomes evident that, despite sharing universal human concerns, they differ significantly in how meaning is organized and communicated. These differences arise from distinct historical experiences, social organization, and worldview patterns, which are reflected in both the grammatical shape and the figurative content of proverbs.

Structurally, Karakalpak paremiological units are strongly characterized by balance and parallelism, a feature typical of many Turkic oral traditions. Parallel constructions often consist of two rhythmically and semantically coordinated parts that either contrast or complement each other. For example, the Karakalpak proverb “Barar jeriń mń bolsa da, jataq jeriń bir bolsın” is built on a concessive–contrastive structure: even if there are many places to go, there should be one place to rest. The parallelism here is not merely aesthetic; it organizes thought by opposing movement and stability, thereby guiding the listener toward the intended conclusion. Similarly, proverbs such as “Birlik bar jerde, tirilik bar” rely on syntactic symmetry to emphasize the social value of unity and collective strength. In such cases, structure itself functions as an argumentative tool, making the message persuasive and memorable [2].

German paremiological units, although they also employ balance, tend to favor a more compressed and logically framed structure. Many German proverbs resemble generalized statements or quasi-logical rules. For instance, “Aller Anfang ist schwer” presents a universal claim in a simple declarative sentence, without imagery or narrative elaboration. The

structure is minimal, yet highly effective, because it frames experience as a general law. Another example, “Übung macht den Meister,” uses a concise causal structure to link effort and success. In contrast to the more rhythmically expanded Karakalpak examples, German proverbs often achieve memorability through brevity and syntactic economy rather than parallel elaboration [5].

Ellipsis is a shared structural feature, but it functions differently in the two traditions. German proverbs frequently omit contextual details in order to appear universally applicable, as seen in “Ende gut, alles gut,” where the absence of explicit agents or circumstances allows the proverb to be inserted into many situations. Karakalpak proverbs, while also elliptical, often retain a situational flavor through implied imagery or culturally familiar contexts. For example, “Atımız basqa bolsa da, júregimiz, jolımız bir” omits explicit references to life or experience, yet the metaphor of the road implicitly evokes nomadic and travel-related knowledge deeply rooted in the cultural memory.

From a semantic point of view, metaphor plays a central role in both paremiological systems, but the source domains differ noticeably. German proverbs frequently draw on imagery from everyday labor, craftsmanship, and domestic life. “Viele Köche verderben den Brei” uses cooking as a metaphor for social organization, warning against excessive interference. The semantic focus is on efficiency, order, and responsibility, values strongly associated with structured social interaction. Karakalpak proverbs, by contrast, often rely on spatial, social, and existential metaphors. In “Barar jeriń mń bolsa da, jataq jeriń bir bolsın,” spatial multiplicity symbolizes life’s opportunities, while the single resting place symbolizes security and belonging. Thus, meaning is constructed through culturally salient experiences of movement, settlement, and community [4].

Evaluation, or axiological meaning, is another key semantic feature. Proverbs rarely describe reality neutrally; instead, they judge it. German paremiological units often present evaluation as rational and normative, as if expressing common-sense principles. For example, “Wer A sagt, muss auch B sagen” evaluates consistency positively and inconsistency negatively through a conditional structure that resembles logical obligation. Karakalpak proverbs tend to embed evaluation within communal and moral frameworks, emphasizing social harmony, moderation, and endurance. A proverb like “Elden ayrılğan biygána bolar” explicitly evaluates individualism negatively and collective belonging positively, reflecting a community-centered worldview.

The interaction between structure and semantics is particularly important. Parallel structures in Karakalpak proverbs often reinforce value hierarchies by juxtaposing alternatives, while compressed declarative structures in German proverbs reinforce the impression of objective truth. In both cases, form strengthens meaning: structure is not a neutral container, but an active component of semantic interpretation. Furthermore, the meanings of proverbs remain context-dependent. “Viele Köche verderben den Brei” may criticize disorganized teamwork in one context, while justifying strong leadership in another. Likewise, “Barar jeriń mń bolsa da, jataq jeriń bir bolsın” can function as moral advice, emotional reassurance, or social commentary, depending on the situation of use.

In conclusion, the structural and semantic features of Karakalpak and German paremiological units demonstrate how universal human experiences are filtered through

culturally specific forms of expression. While both traditions rely on brevity, memorability, and figurative language, Karakalpak proverbs tend to emphasize parallelism, situational imagery, and communal values, whereas German proverbs favor syntactic compression, logical framing, and normative generalization. These differences highlight the importance of considering both structure and meaning in paremiological analysis and show that proverbs, despite their small size, offer deep insight into the cognitive and cultural patterns of a speech community..

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