



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE STRUCTURE AND SEMANTICS OF LEXICAL UNITS EXPRESSING CUSTOMS AND CULTURE IN THE KARAKALPAK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a vessel for cultural transmission. Lexical units related to customs and culture are particularly significant because they encapsulate the values, traditions, and social practices of a community. This article aims to investigate the structure and semantics of lexical units expressing customs and culture in the Karakalpak and English languages. By comparing these two languages, the study reveals how cultural nuances influence linguistic expressions and how meaning is shaped by social context.

Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a vessel for cultural transmission. Lexical units related to customs and culture are particularly significant because they encapsulate the values, traditions, and social practices of a community. This article aims to investigate the structure and semantics of lexical units expressing customs and culture in the Karakalpak and English languages. By comparing these two languages, the study reveals how cultural nuances influence linguistic expressions and how meaning is shaped by social context.

Firstly, the structural analysis of lexical units in both languages shows notable differences and similarities. In Karakalpak, many lexical units related to customs are compound or derivational words, often formed through agglutination. For example, the word "toy" (wedding/celebration) can combine with other morphemes to form specific terms such as "toylyq" (festive event) or "toyshi" (wedding guest). This morphological flexibility allows for nuanced expression of customs.

Conversely, English tends to utilize phrases or idiomatic expressions rather than extensive morphological derivation for cultural concepts. For instance, the concept of a traditional wedding is expressed through the phrase "wedding ceremony" rather than a single derivational word. Moreover, English relies heavily on loanwords and calques when expressing foreign cultural concepts, which can create semantic shifts [3:28].

Secondly, the semantics of customs-related lexical units in both languages is deeply rooted in the cultural context. In Karakalpak, words like "mereke" (holiday/festival) carry connotations beyond mere celebration; they invoke communal identity, religious observance, and historical memory. The semantic range is often broad, and the words are context-dependent.

In English, while words such as "festival" or "holiday" are generally more specific, their semantic range can vary greatly depending on the cultural background of the speaker.

Furthermore, some English lexical units have culturally neutral denotations but acquire connotative meanings in particular social settings [4: 67-72].

Another critical aspect is the issue of cultural specificity and untranslatability. Many Karakalpak lexical units express customs with no direct equivalents in English. For example, the term "shashiw", referring to a traditional ceremonial sprinkling of sweets or money, lacks a single-word English counterpart and requires descriptive translation. This lexical gap highlights the intimate connection between language and culture [1: 36-44].

On the other hand, English has borrowed certain words from other languages to fill these gaps (e.g., "haj" from Arabic). However, such borrowings sometimes fail to convey the full semantic and cultural nuances, necessitating additional explanation.

Moreover, the pragmatic dimension plays a crucial role. Lexical units related to customs are not merely referential; they function within rituals, social interactions, and identity construction. In Karakalpak culture, the use of certain lexical units during specific events, such as weddings or religious holidays, carries performative power. The pragmatic context influences their meaning and acceptability.

In English, although some lexical units related to customs are ritualistically important (e.g., "toast" in a wedding), the performative force is often less embedded linguistically and more reliant on contextual factors.

To further illustrate these differences, consider the following examples:

Karakalpak Lexical Unit	English Equivalent	Notes
Toy	Wedding ceremony	Single word vs. Phrase
Shashiw	Sprinkling sweets/money	No direct equivalent; descriptive translation needed
Mereke	Festival/Holiday	Broader cultural connotations in Karakalpak
Pátya	Blessing	Cultural ritual embedded in social interactions

Furthermore, these lexical units not only name customs but also perform social functions such as reinforcing community bonds, expressing respect, or marking social status. For instance, the "pátya" in Karakalpak culture is more than a blessing; it is a communal ritual that reaffirms social ties and transmits moral values. Similarly, English toasts during celebrations perform a social bonding function, even if the language itself does not encode the ritual as explicitly as Karakalpak.

The differences highlighted pose challenges for translators and intercultural communicators. Literal translation risks loss of meaning, while explanatory translation can disrupt natural flow. Hence, a culturally informed approach that considers both linguistic and extralinguistic factors is necessary. This study contributes to the broader field of ethnolinguistics and translation studies by underscoring the inseparability of language and culture.

In conclusion, the study of lexical units expressing customs and culture in Karakalpak and English reveals significant structural, semantic, and pragmatic differences shaped by the respective cultures. Karakalpak exhibits morphological richness and semantic depth closely

tied to its cultural practices, whereas English tends toward phraseological expressions with broader semantic fields. The cultural specificity of many lexical units poses challenges for translation and cross-cultural understanding, underscoring the inseparability of language and culture.

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