



LINGUISTIC TABOOS AND EUPHEMISMS IN THE KARAKALPAK LANGUAGE: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Jannazarova Jamila Reypnazar kizi

Doctoral researcher, Karakalpak Humanities Scientific Research
Institute, Department of Karakalpak Language
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17670665>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 18th November 2025

Accepted: 19th November 2025

Online: 20th November 2025

KEYWORDS

Karakalpak language, euphemisms, linguistic taboos, ethnolinguistics, semantics, Turkic languages, communication culture.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the system of linguistic taboos and euphemisms in the Karakalpak language as an integrated cultural, communicative, and ethnolinguistic phenomenon. It contextualizes the emergence of tabooed and euphemistic lexical units within traditional Karakalpak society, exploring their historical origins, mythological underpinnings, religious influences, and sociocultural functions. The study highlights how these linguistic strategies regulate social behavior, maintain interpersonal harmony, and reflect culturally embedded norms of respect, modesty, and sacredness

This thesis examines the system of linguistic taboos and euphemisms in the Karakalpak language as an integrated cultural, communicative, and ethnolinguistic phenomenon. It contextualizes the emergence of tabooed and euphemistic lexical units within traditional Karakalpak society, exploring their historical origins, mythological underpinnings, religious influences, and sociocultural functions. The study highlights how these linguistic strategies regulate social behavior, maintain interpersonal harmony, and reflect culturally embedded norms of respect, modesty, and sacredness. With the rapid expansion of digital communication, globalization, and intercultural contact, the relevance of researching these linguistic elements has increased significantly. The thesis identifies existing gaps in prior studies—such as the absence of a unified classification system, insufficient analysis of euphemisms in contemporary media discourse, and limited cross-Turkic comparative approaches. It proposes a comprehensive framework for investigating Karakalpak euphemisms and taboos using structural-semantic analysis, ethnolinguistic interpretation, discourse analysis, and Turkic comparative methodology. The thesis contributes both theoretical insights and practical implications for cultural preservation, linguistic identity, and modern communication studies.

Linguistic taboos and euphemisms reflect deeply rooted cultural values and social structures. In the Karakalpak language, these phenomena have been preserved through centuries, functioning as mechanisms for regulating speech behavior, showing respect, and avoiding culturally sensitive or sacred topics. This thesis aims to provide a systematic investigation of these units, exploring their origins, functions, and evolution.

Historical and Cultural Background

The formation of taboos and euphemisms in the Karakalpak language is closely tied to:

- ancient Turkic mythological beliefs,
- animistic views of nature,
- the totemic significance of animals,
- Islamic ethical influence,
- family hierarchy and kinship norms,
- ritual and ceremonial practices.

Traditional Karakalpak society maintained a rich system of speech restrictions, especially in familial interactions such as the avoidance of elder in-laws' names, which led to the creation of extensive euphemistic vocabulary.

Theoretical Framework

The study integrates multiple linguistic approaches:

- Ethnolinguistics: interpreting cultural meanings encoded in taboo expressions.
- Structural-semantic analysis: classifying euphemisms based on lexical structure and meaning.
- Pragmatics: analyzing communicative intentions behind speech softening or avoidance.
- Comparative Turkic linguistics: tracing shared Turkic patterns and unique Karakalpak features.

Methodology

The research is based on:

- folklore materials (epics, songs, ritual texts),
- ethnographic field data,
- contemporary media discourse,
- social network language,
- lexicographic sources.

A corpus of more than 1200 euphemisms and taboo terms was analyzed.

Classification of Euphemisms and Taboos

Euphemisms are categorized into:

- sacred and mythological expressions,
- kinship-related euphemisms,
- illness and death-related euphemisms,
- nature- and animal-related euphemisms,
- socially sensitive topics (poverty, misfortune, conflict),
- modern digital-media euphemisms.

Each category is analyzed according to semantic motivation, symbolic meaning, and pragmatic purpose.

Discussion

The thesis identifies several important findings:

- traditional euphemisms are still preserved in everyday Karakalpak speech,
- digital communication has introduced new strategies of speech softening,
- younger generations use hybrid euphemisms influenced by global media,
- some taboo systems (e.g., kinship avoidance) remain extremely strong.

Conclusion

Linguistic taboos and euphemisms constitute a vital part of the Karakalpak linguistic worldview. They embody collective memory, cultural identity, and traditional ethics. This research contributes to understanding how linguistic behavior is shaped by cultural norms, and offers a foundation for further interdisciplinary studies across linguistics, anthropology, and communication sciences.

