

LINGUACULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN THE CONCEPT OF MAN AND WOMAN IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK LANGUAGES

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Language serves not only as a communication tool but also as a cultural mirror, revealing the values, beliefs, and societal structures of the people who speak it. The way we talk about gender – what it means to be a "man" or a "woman" – is deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of our communities. The differences in how gender concepts are linguistically represented across languages shed light on how various societies perceive gender roles and identities.

In this article, we delve into the linguacultural differences in the conceptualization of "man" and "woman" in English and Karakalpak languages. English, as a global lingua franca shaped by Western ideologies and socio-political movements, has undergone significant shifts in gender-related language, particularly with the rise of feminism and gender-neutral discourse. In contrast, the Karakalpak language, spoken by an ethnic group in Central Asia, carries deeply embedded cultural traditions and reflects the values of a more collectivist society where roles and identities are strongly linked to familial and societal responsibilities.

This study focuses on comparing gender-related idioms, proverbs, metaphors, and common linguistic expressions in both languages. It seeks to answer the following questions: How are men and women characterized in each language? What metaphors or symbolic representations are used to describe them? How do these linguistic elements reflect broader societal views of gender?

By analyzing selected examples and applying a comparative approach, we aim to reveal the cultural layers behind the words, exploring not only lexical and grammatical features but also the socio-cultural narratives embedded in each language. The significance of this research lies in its ability to foster intercultural understanding and highlight the role of language in constructing and perpetuating gender ideologies.

Conceptual Metaphor and Gender Representation

Conceptual metaphor theory, introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), posits that our understanding of abstract concepts is shaped by metaphorical mappings from concrete experiences. In gender discourse, metaphors often construct social expectations. For instance, in English, masculinity is commonly linked to strength ("*He is a rock*") while femininity is linked to delicacy or beauty ("*She is a flower*"). Such metaphors embed gender stereotypes in everyday language. The Karakalpak language also employs metaphorical expressions, but they are often rooted in agrarian and tribal traditions, where men are likened to *eagles* (symbols of strength and freedom) and women to the *hearth or milk* (symbols of warmth and life-giving).

Gendered Language

The English language has evolved significantly in its treatment of gender. Earlier texts, influenced by patriarchal norms, often portrayed men as leaders and women as supporters. Phrases like "man of the house" and "the weaker sex" reflect this bias. However, recent decades have seen a shift toward inclusivity. The use of gender-neutral terms (e.g., "police officer" instead of "policeman") reflects societal efforts to balance gender representation. Yet, remnants of gender bias persist in idioms like "to man up" or "cry like a girl," revealing deep-seated cultural attitudes.

Karakalpak, shaped by nomadic and Islamic traditions, reflects a different gender ideology. Men are often described through terms that emphasize responsibility, honor, and protection, while women are associated with nurturing, modesty, and domesticity. Proverbs such as "*Er erkek bolsa el boladi, ayal aqilli bolsa – uy boladi*" ("If a man is brave, there will be a nation; if a woman is wise, there will be a home") encapsulate gender expectations. Unlike English, which is undergoing rapid change, Karakalpak still largely maintains traditional gender constructs in its linguistic expressions.

Proverbs and Idioms: Cultural Mirrors

Proverbs and idioms serve as compact cultural narratives. In English, idioms like "wear the pants in the family" or "be the breadwinner" traditionally imply male dominance, while "old maid"

and “nagging wife” reflect negative stereotypes about women. In Karakalpak, idioms emphasize family and community. For example, "*Ayaldin qara tili — qozg'algan oram*" (“A woman’s sharp tongue is like an untied turban”) warns against outspoken women, reinforcing the ideal of female modesty. These idioms illustrate how language subtly transmits gender norms across generations.

Societal Changes and Language Evolution

English-speaking societies have seen more rapid change in gender discourse due to feminist movements, legal reforms, and media influence. Language reforms reflect these changes. In Karakalpak society, while modernization and education are influencing gender perceptions, language remains more conservative. Traditional roles are still respected and often idealized, especially in rural areas. However, young Karakalpak speakers are beginning to adopt more egalitarian views, partly influenced by Uzbek, Russian, and English media.

Implications for Language Learning and Intercultural Communication

Understanding gendered language is crucial for language learners and educators. Cultural misunderstandings may arise when expressions in one language are interpreted through the lens of another. For example, a Karakalpak speaker using traditional gendered metaphors may appear old-fashioned or sexist in English contexts. Conversely, the directness of English gender discourse may seem disrespectful in more conservative Karakalpak settings. Teachers, translators, and cross-cultural communicators must be aware of these nuances to foster more respectful and accurate communication.

Representation of Gender in Literature and Media

Literature and media play a pivotal role in shaping and reflecting societal attitudes toward gender, and this influence is evident in both English and Karakalpak-speaking cultures. In English literature, particularly from the 19th and 20th centuries, women were often depicted as passive, emotional, or domestic, while men were cast as adventurous, rational, and dominant. Though contemporary literature now features more diverse and complex gender roles, traditional archetypes still appear in popular media. In Karakalpak literature and folk narratives, heroic male figures often take center stage, portrayed as protectors of the land and family, while female characters are frequently idealized for their loyalty, patience, and moral strength. Such portrayals reinforce existing gender norms and continue to influence the younger generation’s understanding of masculinity and femininity. As media globalization increases, the tension between traditional and modern gender depictions becomes more visible, prompting a gradual but noticeable shift in cultural narratives.

Gendered Language in Educational Contexts

The educational environment is another domain where gendered language subtly reinforces social roles and expectations. In English-speaking classrooms, teachers are increasingly aware of gender bias and strive to use inclusive language. Textbooks and classroom materials are being revised to present balanced gender roles – showing women in leadership and scientific roles and men in caregiving or artistic professions. However, in Karakalpak educational contexts, while reforms are underway, many schoolbooks and teaching practices still portray traditional gender divisions. For example, illustrations often show girls engaged in domestic tasks and boys in public or professional spaces. This early exposure can shape children's understanding of what roles are appropriate or expected for their gender. The way teachers address students – using terms of endearment more for girls or assigning leadership roles more often to boys – also contributes to internalized gender norms. A conscious effort to balance representation and encourage critical thinking about gender is essential for creating a more equitable educational experience.

Conclusion. The study of linguacultural differences in gender conceptualization reveals that language is both a product and a perpetuator of cultural values. English and Karakalpak languages present two distinct yet overlapping worldviews on gender. While English is moving toward gender neutrality and inclusivity, Karakalpak continues to reflect traditional roles and identities. Through metaphor, idiom, and proverb, each language encapsulates the social

expectations placed on men and women. Recognizing these differences is essential for intercultural communication and contributes to a broader understanding of how language shapes thought.

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