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A Comparative Linguocultural Analysis of Beverage-Based Phraseological Units in English and Karakalpak

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Abstract: This article examines beverage-based phraseological units in English and Karakalpak from a comparative linguocultural perspective. The study focuses primarily on phraseological expressions containing the lexical components milk and coffee. These components are treated not only as names of beverages but also as culturally significant elements that encode social experience, values, traditions and patterns of conceptualization. The analysis demonstrates that beverage-based phraseological units reflect both universal human experience and culture-specific patterns of interpretation. The study concludes that semantic equivalence between English and Karakalpak phraseological units is often possible, while structural equivalence is considerably more limited.

Keywords: phraseology, linguoculture, English, Karakalpak, milk, coffee, conceptual metaphor, cultural values, semantic equivalence, phraseological units

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1. Introduction

Phraseological units represent one of the most important areas in which language and culture interact. Unlike individual lexical items, phraseological expressions often preserve historical experience, social practices, cultural values and traditional ways of conceptualizing reality [1]. Their meanings cannot always be understood through the meanings of their individual components. For this reason, phraseology has become an important area of research in linguistics, cognitive science and linguocultural studies [2].

The relationship between language and culture is particularly visible in expressions based on everyday objects and activities. Food and beverages are among the most productive cultural domains because they are closely connected with human experience [3]. People encounter food and drink in family life, hospitality, work, religious practices, celebrations and everyday communication. Consequently, words referring to beverages may acquire meanings that extend far beyond their literal meanings [4].

Milk and coffee provide an interesting basis for comparative analysis. Milk has a long history in both English and Karakalpak cultural environments and is closely connected with nourishment and childhood [5]. Coffee, on the other hand, has a particularly strong connection with modern English-speaking societies and is associated with work, urban life, alertness and social interaction. The different cultural histories of these beverages make their phraseological representations particularly useful for comparative linguocultural research [6].

Phraseological meaning is shaped by collective experience and cultural conceptualization, and stable expressions may encode communicative practices and culturally shared interpretations [7]. From this perspective, a phraseological unit

containing the name of a beverage can be regarded as a cultural sign that reflects how a particular society interprets everyday experience. The present study compares English and Karakalpak phraseological units containing beverage names. The main focus is placed on milk and coffee. The study aims to identify similarities and differences in their semantic structures, cultural associations and conceptual functions [8].

The research is guided by four main objectives. First, it identifies and classifies selected beverage-based phraseological units in English and Karakalpak. Second, it examines the cultural meanings associated with milk and coffee. Third, it compares the conceptual structures underlying the expressions. Finally, it investigates the relationship between semantic equivalence and structural equivalence in the two languages [9].

The theoretical basis of the study includes conceptual metaphor theory and the cultural scripts approach. Conceptual metaphor theory treats metaphor as a cognitive mechanism through which abstract experience is structured by more concrete domains [10]. The cultural scripts approach likewise emphasizes culturally specific patterns in cross-cultural communication. These approaches provide a useful framework for examining how ordinary beverages become culturally meaningful linguistic elements [11].

2. Materials and Methods

Research material

The material for this study consists of selected English and Karakalpak phraseological units containing beverage-related components. Particular attention is given to expressions containing milk and coffee. The examples were selected because they demonstrate clear semantic and cultural associations.

The English material includes expressions such as:

milk and honey
milk and water
to cry over spilt milk
mother's milk
pigeon's milk
wake up and smell the coffee

The Karakalpak material includes expressions associated with milk and traditional beverages, including:

ana súti
ana súti menen kirgen
sútten aq, suwdan taza
ana súti awzınan ketpegen
aq sútine ırza bolıw
ana sútin aqlaw

The analysis does not treat all expressions as identical types of phraseological units. Some are established idioms, some are proverbial expressions and some represent fixed or semi-fixed contemporary expressions. This distinction is important because modern English contains many culturally recognizable combinations that are not necessarily idioms in the strict structural sense.

Research methods

The study employs several complementary methods. The descriptive method is used to describe the semantic and cultural characteristics of individual expressions. The comparative method is used to identify similarities and differences between English and Karakalpak phraseological systems. The componential analysis focuses on the semantic

features associated with beverage components. For example, the component milk may activate meanings such as nourishment, purity, childhood or regret depending on the phraseological context. The linguocultural method examines phraseological units as carriers of cultural information. It considers historical experience, social practices and cultural values reflected in the expressions. The conceptual metaphor approach is used to explain how concrete experience with beverages is transferred to abstract domains. Conceptual metaphor theory explains how speakers understand abstract concepts through more concrete domains; the analysis also follows established procedures for identifying metaphorical language. Finally, the study applies semantic equivalence analysis to determine whether an English phraseological unit has a corresponding Karakalpak expression. Equivalence is considered at both semantic and structural levels.

3. Results

General classification of beverage-based phraseological units

The comparative analysis demonstrates that beverages constitute an important source domain for phraseological conceptualization in both languages. However, the range and cultural interpretation of beverage-related expressions differ. In English, beverages such as milk, coffee, tea, wine and beer participate in numerous fixed expressions [12]. Their meanings extend into areas such as personal preference, social interaction, work, productivity, emotional experience and moral evaluation. In Karakalpak, traditional beverage-related expressions are more strongly associated with hospitality, family relationships, respect, purity and communal life. Milk has particularly strong cultural associations because of its relationship with livestock-based traditional life and maternal nourishment [13]. This difference suggests that the productivity of a phraseological component is influenced by its cultural importance and historical frequency in everyday experience. Milk is therefore a useful example of a culturally shared but differently conceptualized element. Both English and Karakalpak speakers recognize milk as a source of nourishment [14]. However, the additional meanings attached to milk are not identical. Coffee presents an even clearer difference. Coffee has become an important cultural symbol in English-speaking societies and is connected with professional life, productivity and modern urban culture. In traditional Karakalpak phraseology, coffee has a much weaker presence. This difference can be interpreted as a cultural asymmetry rather than simply a lexical gap [15].

Milk as a cultural symbol

Milk occupies a significant position in both English and Karakalpak linguistic consciousness. Its primary physical associations include nourishment, childhood, health and naturalness. These associations provide the basis for metaphorical extension [16].

In Karakalpak culture, milk has particularly strong associations with motherhood and moral responsibility. Expressions containing *ana sùti* can refer not only to biological nourishment but also to upbringing and moral obligation. The expression *ana sùti menen kirgen* refers to a quality, ability or characteristic acquired naturally from early childhood. Its semantic structure connects maternal nourishment with the formation of personality and ability. The cultural meaning of milk in this context can therefore be interpreted through three interconnected concepts: milk, motherhood and upbringing. These concepts form an important cultural association in Karakalpak phraseology [17]. The expression *ana sùtin aqlaw* similarly connects maternal milk with moral responsibility. To “justify” or “repay” one’s mother’s milk metaphorically means to live according to the expectations and values transmitted through upbringing. Such expressions demonstrate that milk is not simply a nutritional substance in Karakalpak linguistic culture. It can function as a symbol of parental sacrifice, upbringing, moral responsibility and family honour. This cultural interpretation corresponds with the broader observation that recurrent concepts may acquire stable cultural associations through historically accumulated social experience [18].

Milk in English phraseology

English phraseology also demonstrates a wide range of meanings associated with milk. One of the most prominent examples is to cry over spilt milk. The expression refers to unnecessary regret over something that has already happened and cannot be changed. The literal situation is simple. Milk has been spilled and cannot be recovered. This concrete experience becomes a metaphor for irreversible events. The expression therefore contains several semantic components:

loss

regret

irreversibility

futility

The phrase encourages the speaker to adopt a practical attitude toward the past. Instead of continuing to express regret, the individual is expected to accept the situation and move forward. From a linguocultural perspective, the expression can therefore be associated with practical reasoning and emotional self-control. The concrete experience of spilled milk provides the source domain for a more abstract concept of irreversible loss. This interpretation is consistent with cognitive accounts in which everyday embodied experience provides a basis for conceptualizing abstract ideas.

Another expression is milk and honey. It refers to abundance, prosperity and an ideal state of life. The expression has strong biblical associations and therefore demonstrates how religious and cultural traditions influence phraseological meaning. The expression mother's milk refers to something learned or acquired naturally from an early stage of life. The expression can describe knowledge, skills or values that have become deeply integrated into a person's character. Thus, both English and Karakalpak use milk to conceptualize early experience and natural acquisition. However, the cultural emphasis differs. In Karakalpak, maternal milk is strongly connected with moral upbringing and parental responsibility. In English, the expression is more frequently extended to acquired knowledge, habits and natural experience.

Semantic equivalence between English and Karakalpak

The comparison demonstrates that several English milk-based expressions have semantic equivalents in Karakalpak, although the images used to express the meaning may differ.

For example:

Table 1. Semantic and Structural Equivalence of Selected Milk-Based Phraseological Units in English and Karakalpak

English expression	Main meaning	Karakalpak equivalent	Types of equivalence
<i>to cry over spilt milk</i>	regret over the irreversible past	<i>Ótken iske ókinbe</i>	semantic
<i>mother's milk</i>	something acquired naturally from childhood	<i>Ana súti menen kirgen</i>	semantic and partial structural
<i>milk and honey</i>	abundance and prosperity	<i>Qoy ústine boztorǵay jumirtqalaǵan zaman</i>	semantic
<i>pigeon's milk</i>	something impossible or unavailable	<i>Qustıń súti</i>	structural and semantic
<i>milk for babes</i>	something simple or elementary	no exact equivalent	partial

Table 1 shows that equivalence should not be understood only in terms of identical vocabulary. The expression *to cry over spilt milk* has no direct structural equivalent containing the word *milk* in Karakalpak. However, *Ótken iske ókinbe* communicates a very similar pragmatic message. The English expression uses a concrete image while the Karakalpak expression states the moral principle more directly. This represents semantic equivalence without structural equivalence. A different situation is found with *pigeon's milk* and *qustıń súti*. Here both languages use an apparently impossible combination involving a bird and milk. The structural and semantic correspondence is therefore much stronger. Such examples demonstrate that phraseological equivalence exists at different levels. Some expressions share both meaning and imagery, while others share only the underlying conceptual message.

Structural asymmetry in milk-based phraseology

One of the most important findings of the study is the presence of structural asymmetry between English and Karakalpak. English frequently retains *milk* as a lexical component when expressing abstract meanings. Examples include *mother's milk*, *milk and honey* and *milk and water*. Karakalpak also uses milk-related expressions, but in many cases the English semantic equivalent does not contain the same lexical component. For example, the concept of purity can be expressed in Karakalpak through *súttan aq, suwdan taza*. The English equivalent *as pure as snow* uses a different source domain. The conceptual meaning is similar, but the metaphorical source differs.

This phenomenon is important for translation because a translator cannot always preserve the original image. The translator must first identify the conceptual meaning and then determine whether the target language has an established expression based on the same or a different cultural image. The comparison therefore supports the distinction between: structural equivalence and semantic equivalence. A phraseological unit may be semantically equivalent to another expression without being structurally equivalent to it.

Coffee and modern cultural conceptualization

Coffee presents a different cultural pattern. In contemporary English, coffee is strongly associated with alertness, work, productivity and social interaction. Expressions such as wake up and smell the coffee illustrate this development. The expression means that a person should recognize reality and stop ignoring obvious facts.

The literal reference to coffee is connected with waking up. The metaphorical meaning extends this physical experience into the conceptual domain of awareness. The expression therefore involves the conceptual relationship between: coffee, wakefulness and awareness.

Coffee becomes a symbol of mental clarity and recognition of reality. From a cultural perspective, the expression reflects a modern social environment in which coffee is frequently consumed during work and daily routines. The cultural scripts framework is useful here because the meaning of an expression cannot always be separated from the social practices surrounding it. The expression coffee break provides another example. It refers to a short period of rest during work, usually associated with drinking coffee. The expression reflects the institutionalization of short breaks within modern working environments. Coffee is therefore not only a beverage but also part of a particular social organization of work.

The concept can be summarized as: coffee, work, short rest and productivity. This cultural association is particularly strong in modern English-speaking societies.

Coffee and cultural asymmetry

The comparative material indicates that coffee has a much smaller role in traditional Karakalpak phraseology. This does not mean that coffee is culturally irrelevant in contemporary Karakalpak society. Coffee is increasingly consumed and has become part of modern urban life. However, its limited representation in traditional phraseology reflects its relatively recent cultural position compared with beverages such as tea and milk. This distinction is important because phraseology normally develops over long periods of collective linguistic experience. Traditional Karakalpak culture has historically attached considerable importance to tea, hospitality and communal drinking practices. As a result, tea-related cultural associations are stronger than coffee-based traditional phraseology. The absence or limited presence of coffee-based idioms can therefore be interpreted as a linguocultural lacuna.

A lacuna is not simply an absence of a word or expression. It can reveal differences in cultural experience. If one language has a rich phraseological field around a particular concept while another language has relatively few corresponding expressions, the difference may reflect the different historical significance of that concept.

Milk and coffee as different conceptual domains

The comparison between milk and coffee demonstrates two different types of cultural conceptualization. Milk is primarily connected with:

childhood
motherhood
nourishment
purity
upbringing
moral responsibility
abundance

Coffee is primarily associated with:

alertness
productivity

modernity

work

urban life

social interaction

awareness These semantic fields demonstrate that beverage-based phraseology is not random. The cultural meaning of a beverage develops from repeated social experience.

Milk represents an older and more universal human experience. Coffee represents a more modern and socially specialized experience.

This difference also explains why milk has a stronger presence in traditional Karakalpak phraseology, while coffee has a stronger presence in contemporary English phraseology.

4. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that beverage-based phraseological units provide important evidence of the relationship between language, cognition and culture. The first important observation concerns the role of everyday experience. Both English and Karakalpak use beverages as source domains for conceptualizing abstract meanings.

This supports the central assumptions of conceptual metaphor theory. However, the fact that both languages use the same beverage does not necessarily mean that they construct the same metaphorical meanings. Milk provides a clear example. In both languages it can represent nourishment and childhood. However, Karakalpak phraseology places greater emphasis on motherhood, parental responsibility and moral upbringing. The English system, in contrast, more frequently extends milk into concepts such as regret, abundance and natural acquisition. This difference can be explained through cultural experience. Traditional Karakalpak life has historically been closely associated with livestock, dairy production, family organization and hospitality. Milk consequently acquired strong cultural and ethical associations. English phraseology also preserves historical associations with milk and agriculture, but the metaphorical development of milk has followed somewhat different paths. Coffee presents an even clearer example of cultural change. English coffee expressions are closely related to modern work culture and urban life. Expressions such as coffee break reflect institutionalized work practices, while wake up and smell the coffee uses coffee as a metaphor for awareness. This demonstrates that phraseology is not limited to traditional culture. It also changes as social practices change. The development of coffee-related expressions illustrates the relationship between language and modernization. As coffee became integrated into professional and urban lifestyles, it acquired new symbolic meanings. This observation is consistent with the cultural scripts approach. Words and expressions are meaningful not only because of their dictionary definitions but also because speakers associate them with culturally familiar situations and patterns of behavior.

Universal and culture-specific meanings

The comparative analysis identifies both universal and culture-specific elements. Universal meanings are based on common human experiences. Milk is associated with nourishment and childhood in many cultures. The idea of spilled liquid representing loss can also be understood across cultural boundaries. Culture-specific meanings develop through particular social practices. For example, the relationship between maternal milk and moral responsibility is especially prominent in Karakalpak phraseology. The cultural meaning of coffee as a symbol of workplace productivity is more characteristic of modern English. Thus, phraseological meaning can be understood as the interaction of two dimensions: shared human experience and culture-specific interpretation. This interaction explains why some phraseological units have close equivalents while others do not.

Phraseological equivalence and translation

The findings have practical implications for translation. Literal translation of phraseological units can produce unnatural or misleading results. The translator must determine the semantic and pragmatic function of the source expression. For example, translating to cry over spilt milk literally as an expression containing spilled milk may preserve the image but fail to communicate the natural phraseological meaning in Karakalpak. A culturally appropriate equivalent such as Ótken iske ókinbe communicates the intended message more effectively. In contrast, pigeon's milk and qustıń súti demonstrate that literal or near-literal translation can be successful when the conceptual image exists in both languages. Therefore, phraseological translation requires attention to three levels: lexical structure conceptual meaning cultural function. The third level is particularly important in linguocultural translation.

Cultural values reflected in phraseology

Phraseological units can also provide evidence about cultural values.

Karakalpak milk-based expressions frequently emphasize family, motherhood, moral responsibility and purity. These meanings reveal the importance of family relationships and ethical behaviour. English expressions such as to cry over spilt milk emphasize practical acceptance of irreversible situations. Wake up and smell the coffee emphasizes awareness and recognition of reality.

These differences should not be interpreted as absolute differences between the two cultures. Rather, they represent tendencies reflected in particular phraseological expressions. Phraseology provides one perspective on cultural values but should be interpreted alongside historical, social and ethnographic evidence.

5. Conclusion

The comparative analysis of beverage-based phraseological units in English and Karakalpak demonstrates that ordinary beverages can function as important carriers of cultural meaning.

Milk has a strong phraseological presence in both languages. Its basic meanings are associated with nourishment, childhood and natural development. Nevertheless, its cultural interpretation differs. In Karakalpak phraseology, milk and especially mother's milk are closely connected with motherhood, upbringing, moral responsibility and family values. In English, milk participates in expressions related to regret, abundance, simplicity and natural acquisition.

Coffee represents a different cultural pattern. Its presence in English phraseology reflects modern urban life, productivity, work routines and mental awareness. Expressions such as wake up and smell the coffee and coffee break demonstrate that coffee has developed meanings beyond its literal function as a beverage.

The limited presence of traditional coffee-based phraseology in Karakalpak can be viewed as a linguocultural asymmetry. It reflects differences in the historical development and cultural significance of beverages in the two communities.

The study also demonstrates that phraseological equivalence is not necessarily structural. English and Karakalpak may express the same conceptual meaning through different cultural images. Consequently, semantic equivalence may exist even when lexical and structural equivalence is absent.

The findings support the view that phraseological units should be studied as complex linguistic and cultural phenomena. They preserve collective experience and provide evidence of how communities conceptualize everyday reality.

The comparative study of English and Karakalpak phraseology therefore contributes not only to phraseological theory but also to broader research on linguoculture, cognitive linguistics and intercultural communication.

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