

A Comparative Study of Legal Terminology in English And Karakalpak

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Abstract: This article studies the use of legal terminology in English and Karakalpak legal discourse. It examines how key terms function in legislation, judicial procedure, legal education, and translation practice, with particular attention to lexical choice, semantic accuracy, and institutional usage. The material includes general legal dictionaries, terminology studies on Karakalpak, and legal texts relevant to multilingual judicial communication. The analysis identifies a stable group of international legal terms that circulate in both languages, as well as a set of terms that require descriptive rendering, contextual expansion, or careful variant selection in Karakalpak. Special attention is given to terms connected with procedure, evidence, appeal, legal responsibility, and constitutional language. The results show that effective work with English and Karakalpak legal terminology depends on conceptual precision, consistency across documents, and sensitivity to the practical context in which a term is used.

Keywords: Legal terminology, legal English, Karakalpak language, comparative linguistics, legal translation, institutional discourse, terminology standardisation.

Introduction: Legal terminology occupies a special place within the lexicon of any language because it is expected to combine conceptual density with maximal interpretive precision. In ordinary communication, lexical flexibility may enrich expression; in legal communication, however, uncontrolled variation may alter obligations, rights, liabilities, and procedural consequences. For that reason, legal terminology must be studied not only as a linguistic subsystem but also as an instrument of institutional certainty. This is particularly important when terms are transferred across languages that belong to different typological families and operate within legal cultures shaped by different historical traditions.

English legal terminology developed within the common-law tradition and preserves multiple historical layers. Native Germanic vocabulary coexists with a large body of Norman French and Latin items, which explains the persistence of forms such as plaintiff, defendant, tort, affidavit, jurisdiction, injunction, and testament. Modern legal English also contains highly conventionalised collocations whose

meaning cannot be reduced to the sum of their parts, including due diligence, burden of proof, presumption of innocence, right to counsel, and separation of powers. The continuing authority of Black's Law Dictionary illustrates the degree to which English legal terminology depends on standardised definitions and citation-based usage in legal practice and scholarship (Garner, 2024). At the same time, contemporary legal writing increasingly moves toward plain-English drafting, which seeks to preserve legal validity while improving public accessibility (National Adult Literacy Agency, 2003).

Karakalpak legal terminology has evolved under different sociolinguistic and institutional conditions. Its development is grounded in a Turkic linguistic base but has also been influenced by long-term contact with Uzbek, Russian, and broader international legal vocabulary. As a result, the Karakalpak legal lexicon combines inherited lexical material, adapted borrowings, and hybrid formations. Recent scholarship on Karakalpak terminology emphasises that terminological consolidation remains an ongoing task

and that scientific discussion is still needed on the boundaries between term, nomenclature, and specialised vocabulary (Tursinbaev, 2024). Research on word formation in Karakalpak legal terminology likewise shows that affixation remains an important mechanism for developing specialised units, even when the lexical core of the term is borrowed (Allamuratov, 2022).

From a structural point of view, the contrast between the two languages is especially revealing. English often compresses legal content into noun phrases and prepositional constructions: breach of contract, rule of law, abuse of process, standard of review, and power of attorney are typical examples. These combinations are compact, but their exact meaning depends heavily on legal context and precedent. Karakalpak, by contrast, tends to distribute semantic load across a broader morphosyntactic frame. In translated or parallel legal discourse, a short English unit may require a more explicit Karakalpak rendering in order to preserve procedural or doctrinal meaning. This is not a sign of deficiency; rather, it reflects a different mode of linguistic packaging. Agglutinative structure, case marking, and derivational suffixes often participate directly in the formation and adaptation of specialised legal vocabulary.

The semantic organisation of legal terminology also differs in significant ways. In English, many terms are tightly embedded in common-law institutions and therefore resist direct transfer into languages associated with different legal traditions. Terms such as tort, equity, consideration, estoppel, plea bargain, and habeas corpus are especially difficult because they denote concepts that are historically specific and only partially reproducible outside their original legal system. Karakalpak legal discourse, by contrast, often

relies on institutionally recognisable international terms such as *konstituciya*, *kodeks*, *prokuror*, *advokat*, *notarius*, and *apellyaciya*, while also permitting more explanatory equivalents in contexts where a borrowed term would be less transparent. This dual tendency creates a dynamic terminological field in which borrowed forms and descriptive formulations may coexist.

A comparative view of individual terms makes this divergence even clearer. English constitution, court, judge, prosecutor, code, evidence, appeal, legal norm, and liability have relatively stable conceptual domains, but their Karakalpak counterparts may show variation depending on genre, administrative practice, and degree of institutional standardisation. In some cases the equivalence is direct, as in constitution - *konstituciya* or court - *sud*. In other cases, the translator must choose among partially overlapping options, as with contract, which may correspond to *shartnama* or *kontrakt* depending on textual environment, or appeal, which may appear as *apellyaciya* in technical procedural usage but require a more explanatory formulation in pedagogical or public-facing discourse. The term liability is even more sensitive, since its rendering must distinguish between broad responsibility and legally enforceable responsibility. Such examples show that terminological equivalence is not purely lexical; it is pragmatic, doctrinal, and genre-dependent.

The table below presents representative examples used in comparative teaching, translation, and terminological discussion. The Karakalpak forms should be read as working equivalents attested in legal or terminological literature and, in some instances, as parallel variants whose final selection depends on the drafting environment.

English term	Karakalpak form	Typical legal domain
<i>constitution</i>	<i>konstituciya</i>	constitutional law
<i>court</i>	<i>sud</i>	judicial procedure
<i>judge</i>	<i>sudya</i>	judicial procedure
<i>prosecutor</i>	<i>prokuror</i>	criminal procedure
<i>advocate / lawyer</i>	<i>advokat</i>	representation and defence
<i>code</i>	<i>kodeks</i>	legislation
<i>contract</i>	<i>shartnama / kontrakt</i>	civil and commercial law
<i>evidence</i>	<i>dalil</i>	procedural law
<i>crime</i>	<i>jinayat</i>	criminal law
<i>liability</i>	<i>juwapkerlik</i>	civil and administrative law

<i>appeal</i>	<i>apellyaciya / shikayat</i>	procedural review
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The most difficult problems arise in translation where legal asymmetry coincides with linguistic asymmetry. A translator working from English into Karakalpak cannot assume that a formally close or etymologically transparent unit will always perform the same legal function. A borrowed internationalism may be terminologically elegant but pragmatically opaque to a non-specialist reader; a descriptive translation may be understandable but too broad for a binding legal text. This tension becomes especially sharp in multilingual legal settings, where the same concept may circulate through English, Uzbek, Russian, and Karakalpak channels before appearing in an official document. Under such conditions, consistency across related documents becomes just as important as lexical accuracy within a single sentence.

In sum, the comparison of English and Karakalpak legal terminology reveals both structural divergence and convergent pressure toward standardisation. English displays a historically sedimented, internationally influential legal lexicon characterised by compressed phraseology and conceptually loaded tradition-bound terms. Karakalpak legal terminology, while fully capable of expressing modern legal concepts, remains a more visibly evolving system in which borrowing, adaptation, and explanatory reformulation interact. For researchers, this means that comparative analysis must combine lexical, morphological, semantic, and institutional perspectives. For translators and drafters, it means that the search for equivalence should proceed from legal function, not from superficial lexical similarity. For terminographers, it suggests the urgent value of curated bilingual and trilingual legal glossaries, parallel corpora of statutes and procedural documents, and more explicit norms for preferred variants in Karakalpak legal usage.

A fully standardised legal terminology does not emerge from dictionaries alone; it develops through sustained alignment among legislation, judicial usage, education, and translation practice. The English-Karakalpak comparison therefore has significance beyond lexical description. It demonstrates how legal language reflects legal culture, and how terminological work can support clarity, institutional trust, and the practical exercise of rights in multilingual environments.

For that reason, the comparative study of English and Karakalpak legal terminology should move beyond simple word lists. It should be supported by parallel corpora of laws, court documents, procedural forms, legal correspondence, and educational materials. Such

corpora would make it possible to track which variants remain stable, which forms compete with each other, and which expressions gradually become preferred in official usage. They would also help distinguish between truly established equivalents and temporary translation solutions adopted for convenience. In the long term, this approach would strengthen legal clarity, support more reliable translation, and improve access to legal information for Karakalpak-speaking users.

This requirement is especially important for document drafting and translation memory work. A translator may correctly recognise the term burden of proof in one context yet mishandle it in another if the surrounding clause structure changes the scope of the obligation or the procedural burden. Likewise, due process may require a broader formulation in one text and a narrower procedural rendering in another. Similar difficulties arise with contract language, where terms such as party, consideration, assignment, termination, waiver, and force majeure often function within formulaic clusters rather than as independent units. In Karakalpak practice, successful rendering depends on preserving not only denotative meaning but also the legal effect of the clause in which the term appears.

An additional practical implication of this comparison concerns legal pedagogy and terminography. In bilingual or multilingual classrooms, students often encounter English legal vocabulary in internationally circulated textbooks while meeting Karakalpak equivalents in local institutional settings. If the teacher presents terms such as plaintiff, defendant, judicial review, legal capacity, and witness statement without clarifying their functional range, students may develop a merely lexical understanding rather than a procedural one. The same problem emerges in reverse when terms like dalil, jinayat, isenim xat, or apellyaciya are learned as isolated equivalents without reference to document type, legal branch, and communicative purpose. A modern legal glossary for English and Karakalpak should therefore include not only equivalents, but also field labels, usage restrictions, and model contexts.

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