

Linguocultural Features of Translating Proverbs from English Into Karakalpak

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Received: 24 April 2026; **Accepted:** 18 May 2026; **Published:** 11 June 2026

Abstract: The article examines the linguocultural features of translating proverbs from English into Karakalpak. In particular, it focuses on the interaction between language, culture, and cognition in the process of proverb translation. It is argued that proverbs represent culturally marked units that reflect national worldview, traditions, and social values. Therefore, their translation requires not only semantic accuracy but also cultural adaptation. The analysis, based on authentic Karakalpak proverbs, shows that while some proverbs have functional equivalents, many require transformation due to differences in imagery, symbolism, and conceptualization. Consequently, successful translation depends on the translator's linguocultural competence and ability to preserve communicative effect.

Keywords: Proverb, translation, linguoculture, equivalence, cultural adaptation, Karakalpak language, English language, metaphor, folklore, semantics.

Introduction: Proverbs represent a unique intersection of language, culture, and cognition, since they preserve collective wisdom in a condensed and metaphorical form. Therefore, translating proverbs is not a simple linguistic operation; rather, it is a process that involves transferring culturally embedded meanings between different linguistic communities [6]. In this respect, the comparison of English and Karakalpak proverbs reveals both universal and culture-specific patterns. On the one hand, English proverbs often rely on abstract reasoning and generalized experience. On the other hand, Karakalpak proverbs, as reflected in folklore collections, are deeply grounded in everyday life, labor, and nature. Consequently, their translation requires both linguistic and cultural reinterpretation.

To begin with, some proverbs demonstrate functional equivalence, meaning that both languages express similar ideas, although sometimes through different imagery [1, 161-173]. For example, the English proverb "Practice makes perfect" corresponds to the Karakalpak proverb:

"Isti bilip isle, aqıldı qosıp isle" (Do work knowingly, with wisdom)

Although the wording differs, both proverbs emphasize

the importance of skill and conscious effort. Thus, the translation preserves the core meaning while adapting the expression.

Likewise, the English proverb "Time and tide wait for no man" can be related to:

"Jürgen ozar, turğan tozar" (The one who moves progresses, the one who stands still decays)

Here, the English version refers to time, whereas the Karakalpak proverb focuses on action versus stagnation. Nevertheless, both convey the inevitability of change and the need for activity. Therefore, equivalence is achieved at the conceptual level.

However, in many cases, translation requires cultural substitution, because the original imagery may not be relevant to the target culture. For instance, the English proverb "Don't put all your eggs in one basket" expresses the idea of risk diversification. In Karakalpak, a similar idea is conveyed differently:

"Bir qolda eki ğarbızdı tutıp bolmas" (You cannot hold two watermelons in one hand)

Here, the English "eggs" are replaced by "watermelons," which are more culturally familiar. Thus, the metaphor is adapted while preserving the

underlying meaning.

Furthermore, some proverbs require interpretive translation, since their meanings are deeply embedded in cultural practices. For example, the English proverb “A stitch in time saves nine” emphasizes timely action. In Karakalpak, a comparable idea is expressed as:

“Jan qıynamay jumıs pitpes, talab qılmaı muratqa jetpes”

This proverb expands the idea into a broader moral statement about effort and persistence. Therefore, translation involves not only equivalence but also semantic expansion.

In addition, Karakalpak proverbs often reflect environmental and ecological realities, which differ significantly from those in English. For example:

“Jamgır menen jer kógerer” (The land flourishes with rain)

This proverb emphasizes the dependence of life on natural conditions. While English also has nature-based proverbs, the specific imagery may differ. Consequently, translators must consider ecological context.

Moreover, Karakalpak proverbs frequently emphasize social relationships and moral values. For instance:

“Jaqsı isleseń asındı jerseń, jaman isleseń basırda jerseń”

This can be compared to the English proverb “As you make your bed, so must you lie in it.” Both express moral responsibility; however, the Karakalpak version uses more concrete and vivid imagery. Therefore, translation requires preserving moral force as well as stylistic tone.

Another important feature is the use of concrete, experience-based metaphors in Karakalpak. For example:

“Qıymıladań qır asadı” (The one who moves crosses the hill)

This can be related to English expressions like “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” However, the Karakalpak proverb uses physical movement as a metaphor for success, reflecting a more action-oriented worldview.

At the same time, Karakalpak proverbs often highlight collective values. For example:

“Awızdıń kóbi asqa jaqsı, qoldıń kóbi iske jaqsı”

This corresponds to the idea behind the English proverb “Many hands make light work.” [3]. Nevertheless, the Karakalpak version explicitly mentions both eating and working, thus emphasizing both social and practical cooperation.

In contrast, English proverbs may focus more on

individual experience. Therefore, translating them into Karakalpak sometimes requires shifting emphasis from individualism to collectivism.

Furthermore, it should be noted that Karakalpak proverbs frequently contain didactic and moralizing elements, reflecting their role in education and socialization. For example:

“Bilmeseń sóyleme, miynetsiz házlik izleme” [5].

This proverb advises restraint and effort, combining ethical and practical guidance. While English has similar proverbs, the structure and tone may differ.

Taking all these observations into account, it becomes clear that proverb translation involves multiple layers of transformation. Firstly, there is linguistic adaptation, where words and structures are modified. Secondly, there is cultural substitution, where unfamiliar imagery is replaced. Thirdly, there is conceptual alignment, where meanings are reconstructed to fit the target worldview.

Therefore, the translator must carefully balance fidelity to the original meaning with cultural appropriateness. In other words, successful translation is achieved not when words are preserved, but when the communicative effect is reproduced.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, translating proverbs from English into Karakalpak is a complex linguocultural process that reflects deep differences in worldview, environment, and social values. While some proverbs allow direct or near equivalence, many require adaptation or reinterpretation. Ultimately, proverbs demonstrate that language is inseparable from culture, and thus, their translation demands both linguistic skill and cultural insight.

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