

THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK PROVERBS

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Annotation. This narrative study examines how embodied cognition and linguoculturology work together in the meaning of English and Karakalpak proverbs. I read attested proverb pairs (Latin script for Karakalpak) through conceptual metaphor mappings and value-oriented cultural commentary. The analysis focuses on recurring images – forge/heat, orchard/gravity, precious metals, and local fauna – and groups the data as full, partial, and functional non-equivalents. Results show that shared cognitive frames (opportunity as heat, resemblance as proximity, prudence and restraint) are realized through culture-specific imagery that reflects craft traditions, rural ecology, and social etiquette. Differences in numeric heuristics and rhythmic form also support memory and norm strength in distinct ways. I argue that proverb analysis is an effective laboratory for observing the co-evolution of thought and culture, and I outline practical implications for pedagogy (concept-first explanations, equivalence matrices) and for future corpus building with standardized orthography.

Key words: cognitivism; linguoculturology; conceptual metaphor; embodied cognition; cultural scripts; paremiology; Karakalpak proverbs; English proverbs

There are moments when a proverb feels almost physical. The sentence seems to carry heat, weight, motion. You can sense metal, fruit, the breath of animals. This is not a coincidence of style; it is the regular work of embodied cognition, the way our minds rely on bodily experience to make abstract meanings. It is also the work of culture, which chooses what images will carry authority. In this narrative, I bring together cognitivism and linguoculturology to watch how English and Karakalpak proverbs build their wisdom from forging heat, orchard gravity, precious metals, and local fauna. These images are not just pictures; they are thinking-tools (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010). And because images are chosen from different ecologies, they become identity-tools as well (Telia, 1996; Maslova, 2001; Sharifian, 2017).

When two traditions meet – one that says metaphor structures thought, and the other that says units of language carry cultural values – we get a sharper lens. The cognitive side gives us a method: map source → target, list entailments, explain why the logic holds across many examples (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010). The cultural side gives us a duty: name the value script, the social evaluation, the ecological source of the image (Telia, 1996; Maslova, 2001). English and Karakalpak proverbs are a neat laboratory for this cooperation. English has broad documentation and diachronic notes (Mieder, 2004; Speake, 2015). Karakalpak, a Turkic language in Uzbekistan's northwest, has increasingly visible comparative work with English, including parallel proverb lists with clear equivalence classes – full, partial, and functional non-equivalents (Djumambetova & Shakurova, 2023; Djumambetova, Khabibullaeva, & Jumayeva, 2023). These sources allow us to verify examples and avoid



invention. For the Karakalpak lines I keep the Latin script, now standard in contemporary use (Omniglot, 2025).

Consider the proverb that keeps returning in both languages: “Strike while the iron is hot” in English and “Temirdi qizg'anda bas” in Karakalpak. The image is the same, and the logic is shared. The source domain is the forge; the target is opportunity; the entailments are almost algorithmic: heat is transient, softness allows change, delay causes loss. The imperative form (“strike” / “bas”) encodes urgency as a moral duty. In the comparative papers, this pair is printed as an example of full equivalence, meaning that meaning, lexis, and usage all align closely (Djumambetova & Shakurova, 2023; “Science and Innovation” compendium). This single pair models the thesis: where the craft ecology is shared, the metaphor can be shared too (Kövecses, 2010).

The smithy image does more than instruct action; it installs a time grammar into folk wisdom. Opportunity is not a static resource; it has temperature. People internalize this sensorimotor script: feel when the task is “hot,” move before it cools. Cognitive linguistics would say we access an image schema – a dynamic from heat to coolness – and build advice from it (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010). The cultural side notes that metalwork, whether in steppe settlements or industrial towns, is socially familiar; this familiarity gives authority to the proverb’s command (Telia, 1996; Maslova, 2001).

The orchard opens a quieter scene: “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree” in English matches “Alma tereginnen alisqa túspeydi” in Karakalpak. Again, a full-equivalent pair in the comparative literature (Djumambetova & Shakurova, 2023). The mapping is so transparent that it disappears: RESEMBLANCE IS PROXIMITY. Gravity, in this miniature physics lesson, becomes a moral explanatory model for family likeness. Children resemble parents because fruit falls near its tree. The proverb seems descriptive, but its social use is evaluative: it explains behavior (often with a small smile or shrug), naturalizing family continuity (Mieder, 2004; Speake, 2015). In a cultural reading, the rural image – tree, fruit, ground – fits both traditions. It is the ecology writing ethics on the board.

In many languages, the preciousness of something is explained by metals. The famous English line “Speech is silver, silence is golden” finds a crisp Karakalpak counterpart “So’z gumis, undemew altın.” Here the cultural scale is internalized: gold > silver. The mapping is VALUE IS PRECIOUS METAL, and the moral is the virtue of restraint. The pair appears in bilingual comparative sets; like the forge proverb, it is often treated as full or near-full equivalence (research compendia and parallel lists). The cognitive side sees the hierarchy (gold outranks silver); the cultural side reads the etiquette: in many contexts, a measured tongue protects status, keeps harmony, and honors elders (Mieder, 2004; Speake, 2015; Djumambetova & Shakurova, 2023).

Where the ecologies split, the imagery takes different roads to the same junction. English says “when pigs fly”; Karakalpak says “Tüyenin quyırığı jerge tiygende” – “when the camel’s tail touches the ground.” Both sentences are calibrated absurdity: they index impossibility and often carry humorous doubt. The function is equivalent, but the image inventory depends on local animal familiarity. Pigs as airborne jokes belong to English popular culture; the camel is a Central Asian icon, and its tail is pragmatically always in the air. The proverb pair is discussed as a case of non-equivalence with functional similarity in the comparative work (Djumambetova & Shakurova, 2023; “Science and Innovation” PDF). Cognitively, the mapping is stable: IMPOSSIBILITY IS AN ABSURD EVENT. Linguoculturally, the fauna is different, and that difference is meaningful (Mieder, 2004).



Some proverb pairs share the moral but not the detail. English “There is no place like home” is mapped to Karakalpak “O’z uyin’ – o’len’ to’segin’.” The sentiment is the same; the phrasing reflects a sanctuary script, where home gives safety and dignity. In labor ethics, English maxims like “Much effort, much prosperity” pair with Karakalpak “Miyinet tu’bi ra’ha’t” (“the bottom of effort is rest/comfort”). English tends to highlight prosperity; Karakalpak emphasizes repose and peace after work. The prudence frame is the same; the endpoint value differs (Djumambetova, Khabibullaeva, & Jumayeva, 2023). That difference is small but instructive: the economic angle versus the well-being angle (Speake, 2015).

Comparative papers routinely classify proverb pairs into full, partial, and non-equivalent sets (Djumambetova & Shakurova, 2023). This is not a dry taxonomy; it is a method for truth-testing our theories. If cognition were everything, we would expect near-universal images. If culture were everything, we would expect almost no matches. The reality is mixed and interesting. Full matches (forge, orchard) show that widespread craft and agriculture provide shared metaphor stock. Partial matches (home, effort) reveal how value scripts tilt the same moral in different directions. Functional non-equivalents (impossibility animals) confirm that cultures store different image catalogs for the same cognitive task. In short, the two disciplines – cognitive linguistics and linguoculturology – need each other to explain both the convergences and the divergences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Telia, 1996; Sharifian, 2017).

Although numerals are not our main stage here, they quietly arrange the audience. English relies on small integers as heuristics – *Two heads are better than one*, *Measure twice, cut once*, *A stitch in time saves nine*. The numbers organize procedure, verification, and prevention, and their rhythm makes the lines sticky. Karakalpak sometimes achieves the same prudence without a number (again, *Temirdi qizg'anda bas*), and sometimes with number-linked expressions in other domains, where proportion or collective obligation is emphasized (discussed in regional studies). The key point for this narrative is not to force “numeric twins,” but to see how procedural logic and local imagery can solve the same problem – risk control – with different semiotic choices (Speake, 2015; comparative Karakalpak–English studies).

There is also a technical story behind the cultural one. Because Karakalpak has moved through Arabic and Cyrillic scripts to a refined Latin alphabet (adopted in its current form in 2016), publishing proverbs in Latin supports searchability, pedagogy, and comparison with English (Omniglot, 2025). For international readers, this is not a cosmetic issue; it is a development strategy for research: it improves data access, enables aligned glossing, and reduces transliteration noise. In turn, more accessible Karakalpak data invites better paired analyses and more reliable equivalence tables in future corpora.

Imagine a lesson in the Faculty of Foreign Languages in Nukus. The instructor writes two lines: *Temirdi qizg'anda bas* and *Strike while the iron is hot*. Students first do cognitive mapping: HEAT → OPPORTUNITY; list entailments. Then they do cultural commentary: when do you actually feel “hot windows” in study, work, family life? Next, the instructor opens impossibility markers: *Tüyenin quyrıgı jerge tiygende* and *when pigs fly*. The class laughs and immediately sees the same function but different animals. The teacher ends with *So’z gumis*, *udemew altın* and its English twin, asking: in your family, when is silence “golden”? The proverb becomes a mirror for value reflection. What is learned today is not only equivalence; it is a habit of dual reading – map the mind, read the culture.

The forge teaches timing, the orchard teaches resemblance and responsibility, the metals teach restraint and worth, the animals teach the proportion of hopes and limits. English and Karakalpak are not distant planets; they share many conceptual frames because they share

human bodies and practical tasks. Yet they will always choose different details where ecologies differ. That is not noise; that is signature. The proverb form is ideal for seeing it, because it is short enough to hold in memory and strong enough to carry a norm.

If we look back at the growth of cognitivism, we see a discipline that gave us method – find the mapping, track the entailments, explain the generalization (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2010). If we look at linguoculturology, we see a discipline that gave us context – the social values, the etiquette rules, the ethnographic specifics (Telia, 1996; Maslova, 2001). The two together are not a polite alliance; they are an engine. They make our readings precise and honest. And proverbs, those compact machines of folk intelligence, remain our best laboratory for seeing how mind and culture co-author meaning – at the anvil, under the tree, in the silence of a golden pause, or in the comic sight of an animal that will never fly.

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