BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

THE SEMANTIC AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE "HUMAN" CONCEPT IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK

Karimxodjaeva Dilyafruz
Karakalpak State University named after Berdakh
karimhodzaevadilafruz@gmail.com
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23467602

Abstract. This article examines the semantic and historical development of the "HUMAN" concept in English and Karakalpak. It analyses the lexical units man, human, person, people, and humankind in English and adam, insan, kisi, adamzat, xalıq, and jurt in Karakalpak. Particular attention is paid to semantic differentiation, historical change, and the relationship between individual and collective meanings. The study highlights both shared conceptual features and language-specific patterns of lexical categorisation.

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается семантическое и историческое развитие концепта «ЧЕЛОВЕК» в английском и каракалпакском языках. Проводится сопоставительный анализ английских лексических единиц man, human, person, people, humankind и каракалпакских единиц adam, insan, kisi, adamzat, xalıq, jurt. Особое внимание уделяется семантическим различиям, историческим изменениям и соотношению индивидуального и коллективного значений. Исследование выявляет общие концептуальные признаки и специфические особенности лексической категоризации в двух языках.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz va qoraqalpoq tillarida "INSON" konseptining semantik va tarixiy taraqqiyoti o'rganiladi. Ingliz tilidagi man, human, person, people, humankind hamda qoraqalpoq tilidagi adam, insan, kisi, adamzat, xalıq, jurt leksik birliklari qiyosiy tahlil qilinadi. Asosiy e'tibor so'zlarning semantik farqlanishi, tarixiy o'zgarishi hamda individual va jamoaviy ma'nolar o'rtasidagi munosabatga qaratiladi. Tadqiqot ikki tilda inson tushunchasining umumiy va o'ziga xos leksik xususiyatlarini aniqlashga xizmat qiladi.

Keywords: human concept, historical semantics, comparative linguistics, English, Karakalpak, lexical meaning, conceptual categorisation.

Ключевые слова: концепт «человек», историческая семантика, сопоставительное языкознание, английский язык, каракалпакский язык, лексическое значение, концептуальная категоризация.

Kalit so'zlar: inson konsepti, tarixiy semantika, qiyosiy tilshunoslik, ingliz tili, qoraqalpoq tili, leksik ma'no, konseptual tasnif.

1. Introduction

The concept of a human being occupies an important position in the linguistic worldview because it connects biological existence with individual identity, social relations, and cultural knowledge. Language users do not represent humanity through a single lexical item. Instead, they employ different words according to whether they refer to an individual person, a member of the human species, a social group, or humanity as a whole.

In English, human, person, man, people, mankind, and humankind represent related but distinct semantic categories. The word human commonly identifies a member of the human species, while person foregrounds an individual. People frequently denotes a group or population, whereas humankind refers to humanity collectively. The historical development of man is particularly

significant because the word has been used both in a general human sense and in reference to an adult male. Contemporary English increasingly employs expressions such as humanity and humankind when an explicitly inclusive reference is intended [1; n.p.].

A comparable range of meanings can be explored through the Karakalpak lexical units adam, insan, kisi, adamzat, xalıq, and jurt. Although these words can be associated with human beings and collective life, their semantic boundaries should not be assumed to correspond exactly to English categories. Their meanings must be examined in dictionaries and authentic contexts.

Likhachev's concept-sphere approach emphasises the relationship between lexical meaning and the knowledge accumulated through individual and collective experience [2; 3–9]. This perspective provides a theoretical basis for understanding semantic development as a process influenced by linguistic usage, historical circumstances, and cultural interpretation.

The purpose of this article is to establish a comparative framework for investigating the semantic and historical development of the "HUMAN" concept in English and Karakalpak. The study focuses on lexical categorisation, historical semantic change, and the relationship between individual and collective reference.

2. Theoretical and methodological foundations

Historical semantics examines how word meanings emerge, change, expand, or become restricted over time. Comparative semantics, in turn, investigates how languages encode related conceptual domains through their respective lexical systems. When combined, these approaches make it possible to distinguish the historical development of individual words from the broader conceptual structures in which they participate.

A concept cannot be reduced to a dictionary definition. Although dictionaries provide essential information about conventional meaning, lexical units may acquire additional associations through literary usage, social interaction, and culturally significant expressions. Wierzbicka demonstrates the importance of analysing key words within their cultural contexts rather than treating them as isolated lexical forms [3; 1–31].

The present study employs three complementary methods. First, comparative lexical analysis identifies the central meanings and possible equivalents of the selected English and Karakalpak words. Second, componential analysis distinguishes semantic features such as individuality, species membership, collectivity, and social belonging. Third, historical-semantic analysis considers how changes in the meaning of a word may affect its contemporary interpretation.

The article is theoretical and exploratory. Its conclusions therefore identify analytical relationships and research directions rather than claiming statistically verified differences between the two languages.

3. Historical and semantic development of the English lexical field

The English lexical field of humanity illustrates how related words develop different semantic functions.

The adjective and noun human are associated with membership in the human species. The word appears in expressions such as human behaviour, human development, and human rights, where it can refer to biological characteristics, social experience, or the rights associated with human existence.

The noun person primarily identifies an individual. It is widely used in legal, institutional, and everyday contexts, as illustrated by expressions such as a responsible person and a person with experience. Its semantic focus is therefore different from that of human, even though the two words may refer to the same individual.

The history of man demonstrates the complexity of semantic change. The word has historically been used to refer to human beings generally, but its meaning referring specifically to an adult male has become prominent in many contexts. The coexistence of these senses shows that historical meaning does not always correspond to contemporary interpretation. It also explains the preference for more explicitly inclusive expressions in much present-day academic writing [1; n.p.].

The word people foregrounds collective existence. Depending on the context, it may refer to a group of individuals, the inhabitants of a geographical area, or a community with a shared identity. By contrast, humankind refers to the human species as a whole. These distinctions demonstrate that English differentiates between individual reference, social collectivity, and humanity at the species level.

Consequently, the English lexical field should be understood as a network of partially overlapping meanings rather than as a list of interchangeable synonyms.

4. Semantic differentiation in Karakalpak

The Karakalpak words adam, insan, kisi, adamzat, xalıq, and jurt provide a basis for investigating the relationship between individual identity and collective existence.

The word adam serves as a central point of reference for the human being. Its contextual uses can be examined to determine how biological existence, personal qualities, and social conduct are represented. The unit insan should be compared with adam in terms of distribution, collocation, and register, rather than automatically assigned a separate evaluative or stylistic meaning.

The word kisi provides another important point of comparison. Its relationship with adam can be investigated through grammatical patterns and authentic examples. Such analysis may establish whether the two forms differ in their preferred contexts or in the types of expressions in which they occur.

The unit adamzat is particularly relevant to the representation of humanity collectively. Its comparison with humankind makes it possible to examine how English and Karakalpak refer to the human species as a whole. The units xalıq and jurt, meanwhile, broaden the analysis towards collective identity, community, and population.

These proposed relationships require verification through Karakalpak explanatory dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, and contextual examples. A direct translation may capture a word's central meaning without representing its full semantic range.

5. Comparative discussion

The English and Karakalpak lexical fields share several broad semantic dimensions: individual existence, membership in the human species, and participation in collective life. Nevertheless, the two languages do not necessarily divide these dimensions into identical lexical categories.

Semantic dimension	**English examples**	**Karakalpak examples**
Human being	human, person	adam, insan, kisi
Humanity as a whole	humanity, humankind	adamzat
People as a collective	people	xalıq, jurt
Individual qualities	a good person, a responsible human being	Context-dependent expressions involving adam, insan, or kisi

The table represents a provisional comparison rather than a claim of complete lexical equivalence.

One important difference concerns the historical development of individual words. The English example man demonstrates that a lexical item may acquire a more restricted or socially marked meaning while retaining earlier senses in particular expressions. A comparable investigation of Karakalpak requires dated texts and historical dictionary evidence before any parallel development can be established.

Another difference concerns the distinction between a person and a collective. English often contrasts person with people and humankind. Karakalpak provides several lexical resources for exploring related distinctions, but their precise boundaries must be determined through usage-based research.

The analysis therefore supports a distinction between shared conceptual dimensions and language-specific semantic organisation. This approach is consistent with semantic typology, which examines how languages categorise experience through both common and divergent patterns [4; 3–28].

6. Conclusion

The semantic and historical development of the "HUMAN" concept in English and Karakalpak can be investigated most effectively through a combination of comparative lexical analysis and historical-semantic research. English words such as human, person, man, people, and humankind encode different perspectives on individual identity and collective humanity. The Karakalpak units adam, insan, kisi, adamzat, xalıq, and jurt provide a corresponding field for examining related conceptual distinctions.

The comparison demonstrates that apparent translation equivalents should not automatically be treated as complete synonyms. Their meanings, distributions, and historical development require independent examination. Future research should therefore use historical and contemporary dictionaries, literary texts, proverbs, and balanced corpora to establish the semantic relationships more precisely.

The principal contribution of this article is its comparative framework, which moves the analysis beyond direct translation towards the investigation of semantic correspondence, historical change, and lexical categorisation.

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