

PROVERBS AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS OF THE KARAKALPAK AUDIENCE

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Abstract. Proverbs serve not only as repositories of cultural wisdom but also as potent pedagogical tools for fostering intercultural communicative competence (ICC). This article explores how English proverbs can be effectively integrated into language instruction for Karakalpak students, taking into account their rich folkloric heritage and distinct linguistic identity. By analyzing the structural and semantic features of proverbs in English and Karakalpak, the study demonstrates how comparative proverb analysis enhances students' cognitive, linguistic, and intercultural sensitivity. The article proposes a methodological framework for using proverbs in classroom discourse to develop ICC and bridge the cultural gap between English-speaking and Karakalpak-speaking societies.

Keywords: Proverbs, intercultural communicative competence, Karakalpak students, English language teaching.

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary global context, language education transcends grammatical mastery and fluency—it must also cultivate the learner's ability to understand and navigate intercultural contexts. This skill, known as intercultural communicative competence (ICC), involves the integration of linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, empathy, and the ability to interpret and mediate across cultures. For English language learners in non-Western societies, such as the Karakalpak audience, ICC development is particularly vital, as they engage with cultural norms, worldviews, and communicative strategies distinct from their own. One of the most culturally rich and pedagogically versatile tools for fostering ICC is the proverb—a linguistic unit that encapsulates the values, ethics, humor, and philosophy of a culture in a concise and memorable form.

The Karakalpak language, like many Turkic languages, is deeply rooted in oral tradition. Its proverbial expressions are widely used in everyday speech and carry strong cultural resonance. Given this tradition, Karakalpak learners are naturally inclined toward paremiological thinking. English proverbs, with their own embedded moral codes and cultural schemas, offer fertile ground for cross-cultural comparison and linguistic reflection. Thus, proverbs present an effective and culturally sensitive medium for enhancing ICC in English language instruction [1].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

One of the core benefits of teaching English proverbs to Karakalpak students lies in their function as cultural scripts—miniature narratives that reflect the logic, values, and behaviors of the source culture. For instance, the English proverb “Time is money” reveals the Western cultural emphasis on productivity and economic efficiency, which contrasts with the Karakalpak worldview embodied in proverbs like “Waxt — bu hazina” (Time is a treasure), which also values time but from a more philosophical and spiritual angle. Presenting such pairs for analysis prompts students to identify not only lexical equivalences but also deeper cultural distinctions. This process cultivates a form of metacognitive awareness about cultural relativity, a cornerstone of ICC.

In a classroom setting, comparative paremiology—the study and comparison of proverbs across languages—can be used to sharpen students' interpretive skills. For example, teaching the English proverb “Don't count your chickens before they hatch” alongside its Karakalpak equivalent

“Tuyuq danasini qazmay turip, pişirmen” (Don’t cook the egg before digging it up) not only reinforces vocabulary but also deepens understanding of metaphorical language and cultural attitudes toward planning and optimism. These comparisons help students appreciate metaphor as a universal linguistic phenomenon while recognizing its culture-specific applications [2].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From a pedagogical standpoint, proverbs enhance the discourse competence of students—their ability to produce and interpret extended spoken and written texts in culturally appropriate ways. When learners encounter English proverbs in texts, conversations, or media, they must not only decode their literal meanings but also infer implied meanings and social contexts. For Karakalpak students, whose native language employs proverbs prolifically in both formal and informal speech, this transfer of skill is natural and effective when guided properly. Moreover, encouraging students to create dialogues, skits, or short stories around proverbs further develops their pragmatic competence—the ability to use language appropriately in real-life contexts.

In terms of curriculum design, integrating proverbs into English language teaching materials allows for the development of modules focused on specific ICC components. For example, a lesson on conflict resolution can include English proverbs such as “Let bygones be bygones” or “Two wrongs don’t make a right,” which can then be discussed alongside Karakalpak equivalents. Students not only learn new lexical items and idiomatic expressions but also reflect on how different cultures conceptualize forgiveness, justice, or humility. This type of instruction contributes to the cultivation of critical cultural awareness, one of Byram’s five components of ICC [3].

CONCLUSION

Proverbs function as a bridge between language and culture, offering a compact yet profound means of accessing the worldview of a people. For Karakalpak students learning English, proverbs serve not merely as vocabulary items but as cultural artifacts that can be analyzed, discussed, and internalized to build intercultural communicative competence. By incorporating English and Karakalpak proverbs into comparative analysis, classroom discourse, and reflective tasks, educators can create rich learning environments where language and culture mutually reinforce each other. The pedagogical potential of proverbs, especially in culturally rich regions like Karakalpakstan, should be further explored and institutionalized in English language teaching programs. Doing so will not only enhance linguistic proficiency but also nurture globally competent citizens who can navigate cultural diversity with sensitivity and respect.

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