

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF MAN IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK LANGUAGES

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**Abstract.** This article explores the historical development of the concept of "man" in English and Karakalpak languages, focusing on the cultural, religious, and linguistic shifts that have influenced the representation of masculinity over time. Through a comparative analysis, the paper examines the etymology, societal roles, and evolving values associated with the concept of manhood. The study draws from mythology, literature, religious traditions, and modern discourse to illustrate how language reflects changing gender identities. While English has experienced dynamic transformations due to globalization and progressive movements, the Karakalpak language retains strong traditional markers, though subtle shifts are emerging. The article highlights the significance of linguistic study in understanding gender evolution across cultures.

**Keywords:** *man, masculinity, gender, historical linguistics, Karakalpak language, English language, sociocultural change, traditional roles, language and identity.*

Language not only records history – it shapes and defines it. The concept of "man" is not merely a biological or social designation; it is a culturally and historically constructed identity. The way different societies express and define "manhood" through language reveals much about their values, power structures, and collective consciousness. In both English and Karakalpak languages, the term "man" has carried a range of meanings across time, influenced by religion, mythology, political ideology, and cultural traditions.

This article examines the diachronic (historical) development of the concept of "man" in these two languages, exploring how masculinity has been linguistically shaped and reshaped from ancient times to the present day. In English, the evolution reflects shifts brought about by industrialization, colonialism, feminism, and postmodern identity politics. In Karakalpak, the influence of Turkic traditions, Islam, and the Soviet legacy play a dominant role, with modern influences gradually becoming visible in urban centers and educational systems.

Understanding the historical construction of masculinity in these languages is important not only for linguistic scholars but also for educators, sociologists, and cultural historians. It helps shed light on ongoing debates about gender identity and the influence of language on thought and behavior. In a world that is increasingly interconnected yet culturally diverse, exploring such topics can deepen cross-cultural understanding and empathy.

**Etymology and Early Usage of "Man" in English and Karakalpak.** In Old English, the term "*man*" (originally *mann*) was gender-neutral, referring to a human being regardless of sex. Over time, it began to narrow in meaning, especially with the introduction of *wifmann* (woman) and *wer* (male person), though "man" eventually became associated specifically with the male gender. In contrast, in the Karakalpak language, the word "*erkek*" or "*adam*" has always referred specifically to males, often with connotations of strength, leadership, and responsibility. The historical Karakalpak word "*batır*" (hero/brave man) also reflects a culturally idealized male figure. These early terms reveal that while English initially embraced a more human-focused term, Karakalpak emphasized gender-specific roles from the outset.

**The Role of Religion and Mythology.** Religious and mythological narratives have deeply influenced the concept of manhood. In English-speaking cultures, Christianity emphasized male authority, often portraying man as the image of God and the head of the household. The Biblical figure Adam became a linguistic and symbolic reference point for "man." Similarly, Karakalpak folklore, which draws from Turkic mythology and Islamic

tradition, frames men as protectors, moral leaders, and providers. Tales of legendary male warriors, such as Alpamys and Er Tostik, highlight ideals of bravery, sacrifice, and honor. Islamic teachings also reinforced the idea of the man as the head of the family and community, embedding these roles in everyday speech and expectations.

**Medieval to Pre-modern Period: Man as Warrior and Leader.** In medieval English society, the ideal man was the knight – chivalrous, courageous, and dominant. The concept of "manhood" was associated with honor, self-discipline, and loyalty to one's lord or kingdom. Linguistically, terms such as "man-at-arms" and "gentleman" reflected these social roles. In Karakalpak society, the tribal structure elevated the status of men as decision-makers and defenders of the land. The oral tradition preserved these images through *maqals* (proverbs) and *dastans* (epic poems), often portraying men as wise, generous, and physically strong. This period solidified the gendered concept of man as a public figure and leader.

**The Industrial and Colonial Periods: Shifts in Masculine Identity.** With industrialization in England, masculinity began to be redefined. The man became a breadwinner – measured not only by courage but by his ability to provide economically. Language reflected this shift with phrases like "man of the house" and "working man." Meanwhile, colonial ideologies emphasized rationality, discipline, and power as masculine traits. For Karakalpak men, the Soviet era introduced a new ideological framework. The "Soviet man" was educated, disciplined, and productive. While some traditional roles were retained, language began incorporating new ideals like *mekhnetsevar* (hard-working) and *partiyaviy* (party-loyal), indicating a state-influenced masculine identity.

**Modern Period: Redefining Masculinity.** Today, the concept of man in English is more fluid. Masculinity is increasingly seen as inclusive, allowing emotional expression, diversity, and sensitivity. Phrases like "stay-at-home dad" and "emotional intelligence" are now associated with masculinity. The language has evolved with gender-neutral pronouns and more equitable representations. In contrast, in Karakalpak, traditional views of manhood still dominate, especially in rural areas. However, modern education, social media, and urbanization are introducing new interpretations. Young men in cities may be more open to expressing vulnerability or supporting gender equality, though such changes are gradual and sometimes controversial.

**Comparison and Discussion.** A key contrast lies in the pace and nature of change. English has undergone rapid linguistic and cultural transformation, with masculinity being debated and redefined in public discourse. Karakalpak, while not immune to change, retains a stronger connection to historical and religious gender roles. Both languages, however, encode masculinity through metaphor and social expectation. In English, "to man up" implies strength through emotional suppression, while in Karakalpak, idioms like "*erkek adam sozinda turadi*" ("a real man keeps his word") emphasize honor and reliability. These linguistic expressions reveal different but equally complex views of manhood.

**Representation of Man in Literature and Media.** Literature and media further shape perceptions of what it means to be a man. In English literature, figures like Shakespeare's Macbeth or Hemingway's male protagonists reflect evolving ideas of strength, morality, and conflict. In modern media, male characters range from traditional heroes to emotionally complex individuals. In Karakalpak literature, male characters often embody communal values—strength, patience, and loyalty. Folk epics like *Qırk Qız* (Forty Girls) and modern novels continue to portray men as cultural symbols of endurance and leadership. While English media increasingly questions traditional masculinity, Karakalpak literature tends to preserve it, albeit with emerging nuances.

**Conclusion.** The historical development of the concept of "man" in English and Karakalpak languages reflects deeper cultural and ideological transformations. While both languages have portrayed men as strong, responsible figures, the evolution of this concept has followed different trajectories. English has moved toward inclusivity and redefinition, influenced

by modern ideologies and global discourse. Karakalpak maintains a rich heritage of traditional masculinity, rooted in cultural pride and religious belief, though modern pressures are beginning to reshape its expressions. Studying these differences not only enhances our understanding of language and gender but also contributes to intercultural awareness and critical reflection on societal values.

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