

NUMERATIVE PHRASEOLOGY IN ENGLISH AND KARAKALPAK LANGUAGES: A COMPARATIVE COGNITIVE VIEW

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Abstract. This article analyzes numerative phraseological units in English and Karakalpak from a comparative cognitive perspective. The study examines how numerals function in idiomatic expressions and convey meanings related to unity, duality, emotion and social behaviour. Using examples from Karakalpak phraseological materials and English idioms, the article identifies both universal and culture-specific conceptual features. The analysis shows that numerals in phraseology reflect national worldview, cultural values and cognitive perception.

Keywords: numerative phraseology, cognitive linguistics, Karakalpak, English, phraseology, numerals, idioms, comparative analysis.

Numerative phraseology occupies an important place in both English and Karakalpak because numbers do not function only as mathematical signs; rather, they become cultural, cognitive and symbolic markers through which people express experience, emotion, evaluation and social behaviour. In phraseological units, numbers are often semantically expanded: they may denote quantity, intensity, completeness, exaggeration, duality, opposition, uncertainty or collective experience. Therefore, numerative phraseological units can be studied not only as fixed expressions but also as cognitive models that reflect how a nation conceptualizes the world.

In Karakalpak phraseology, numerals are especially productive in expressing emotional states, social relations and human behaviour. For instance, the expression otız eki tisin tamağına ketiriw literally means “to bring thirty-two teeth to someone’s throat,” but cognitively it represents strong fear, threat or intimidation. Here the number otız eki is connected with the full set of human teeth, and the phrase metaphorically describes a situation in which a person is frightened so strongly that bodily reaction becomes the main image of meaning.

Moreover, Karakalpak numerative phraseology frequently uses the number eki “two” to express duality, contradiction, uncertainty or extremity. For example, eki oyılı bolıw means to be doubtful or uncertain, literally “to have two thoughts.” This phrase shows that indecision is conceptualized as mental division. In the same way, eki sóylew means speaking inconsistently or dishonestly, while eki sózdiń basına barmaw means avoiding quarrel or not entering into conflict. Thus, the number two often symbolizes division, instability and opposition.

In addition, eki kózi tórt bolıw is a very expressive Karakalpak phrase meaning to wait for someone anxiously and for a long time. Literally, it means “his two eyes became four.” Cognitively, the phrase is based on visual intensification: when a person waits impatiently, it is as if ordinary seeing is doubled. Another example, eki kózin almaw, means to stare without taking one’s eyes away. Here, two eyes represent full attention and emotional concentration. Therefore, eye-related numerative phraseology in Karakalpak reflects observation, expectation, fear and emotional tension.

The number bir “one” is also highly meaningful. In phrases such as bir awız sóz “one word,” bir sózli bolıw “to be firm in one’s word,” and bir tırnaqqa zar bolıw “to be deprived of even one child,” the numeral bir expresses unity, minimum quantity, sincerity or lack. Especially bir tırnaqqa

zar bolıw is emotionally strong because “one nail” metaphorically refers to a child or descendant. Consequently, the smallest body image becomes a symbol of family continuity and human sorrow.

English numerative phraseology shows similar cognitive tendencies, although its cultural imagery differs. For example, to be in two minds is close to Karakalpak eki oyılı bolıw, because both languages conceptualize hesitation as the division of thought into two parts. Likewise, English two-faced resembles Karakalpak expressions connected with inconsistency and double behaviour, such as eki sóylew. Both languages therefore associate the number two with duplicity, uncertainty and moral instability.

Furthermore, English expressions such as at first sight, one and only, in one word, and one heart and one mind show that the number one symbolizes unity, uniqueness and completeness. This is comparable to Karakalpak bir sózli bolıw, where “one” indicates firmness and reliability. However, English also uses one for isolation, as in one man alone, while Karakalpak phraseology often connects bir with social value, kinship, word, promise and minimum possession.

Another important similarity is the use of body-based numerative images. English has expressions such as keep both eyes open, with both hands, second sight, and to have eyes in the back of one’s head. Karakalpak has eki kózi tórt bolıw, eki kózin almaw, eki qolın kóteriw, and kózinen bir-bir usıw. In both languages, eyes and hands are not only physical organs; they become cognitive symbols of attention, control, helplessness, fear or readiness. Nevertheless, Karakalpak examples are often more emotionally concrete and dramatic, while English examples are usually more conventionalized and concise.

From a cognitive point of view, numerative phraseology is based on conceptual metaphor and metonymy. Numbers are mapped onto human experience: one means unity or minimum existence, two means opposition or division, four may intensify perception, and thirty-two represents the whole physical set of teeth. Therefore, numerical meaning is transformed into emotional and evaluative meaning. In this process, numbers lose their exact mathematical function and become symbolic signs.

At the same time, numerative phraseology reveals cultural differences. Karakalpak phraseological units are strongly connected with everyday life, family relations, bodily experience, honour, shame, patience and social behaviour. Expressions such as eki qolı jaǵasında bolıw “to be anxious and cautious,” eki qolın kóteriw “to surrender or submit,” and bir turnaqqa zar bolıw show a close connection between body, emotion and social destiny. English phraseology, on the other hand, often reflects individual psychology, practical behaviour and abstract evaluation, as in in two minds, second to none, one-sided, or two wrongs do not make a right.

Consequently, English and Karakalpak numerative phraseology share universal cognitive mechanisms, but they differ in cultural imagery and emotional density. Both languages use numbers to organize human experience, yet Karakalpak phraseology often presents meaning through vivid bodily and social images, whereas English tends to use more generalized and idiomatically compressed forms. Thus, numerative phraseological units are not random fixed expressions; they are cultural models of thinking. They show how speakers perceive fear, waiting, unity, doubt, loyalty, poverty, conflict and human relations through the symbolic power of numbers.

In conclusion, the comparative study of numerative phraseology demonstrates that numbers in language are culturally meaningful signs. In English and Karakalpak, numerals such as one and two help structure emotional, moral and social meanings. However, Karakalpak examples from the phraseological dictionary show particularly rich metaphorical connections with the body, kinship and communal life. Therefore, numerative phraseology should be regarded as an important field for

cognitive and linguocultural analysis, because it reveals not only how people speak, but also how they think, feel and evaluate the world.

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