

Structural and Word-Formation Characteristics of Legal Terms in English and Karakalpak

PATULLAEVA GULMIYRA

Karakalpak State University, Nukus, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article presents a comparative analysis of the structural and word-formation features of legal terms in English and Karakalpak. Within the scope of the study, simple, derived, compound, phrasal, abbreviated, and compressed legal units are examined on the basis of concrete examples. The analysis shows that English legal terminology is mainly formed through analytical constructions, whereas Karakalpak legal terminology is more strongly shaped by affixation, derivation, and lexical compactness. The article also argues that untranslated examples reveal the formal structure of terms more clearly and therefore serve as important evidential material in comparative research.

Keywords: Legal term, English language, Karakalpak language, structural analysis, derivation, abbreviation, compactness, legal translation, terminology.

INTRODUCTION

The language of law is closely linked to law itself because legal norms are created, interpreted, and applied through language. Legal rules do not exist in an abstract form; they are expressed through words, fixed in legal documents, and transmitted through legal discourse. Therefore, language serves not only as a means of communication in the legal sphere, but also as an essential instrument for the formulation and functioning of legal concepts. The precision, stability, and clarity of legal language are

especially important, since even minor differences in wording may lead to different interpretations and legal consequences.

At the same time, scholars emphasize that legal language does not have a single universal definition. There is no satisfactory description of this variety of English. Indeed, there is no consensus on what type of variety it is [1; 2]. This is due to the complexity of law as a social institution and to the diversity of legal traditions, legal systems, and linguistic structures. Legal language may be studied from different perspectives: as a specialized professional language, as a subsystem of the national language, or as a terminological system with its own lexical, semantic, and structural characteristics. For this reason, its structural description has particular scientific importance. A detailed analysis of legal terminology makes it possible to identify the regularities of term formation, classify the main models of legal nomination, and determine the relationship between linguistic form and legal meaning.

Comparative legal terminology becomes particularly important when legal systems interact through translation, international agreements, legal reforms, and globalization. In such conditions, terms that appear formally similar may differ in meaning, while formally different terms may perform the same legal function. This creates serious challenges for translators, legal scholars, and comparative linguists. The correct understanding of legal terms requires not only knowledge of their lexical meaning, but also awareness of the legal concepts, institutions, and traditions behind them. As a result, comparative analysis of legal terminology helps reveal both linguistic similarities and conceptual differences between legal systems. The comparison of English and Karakalpak legal terminology is of special interest for several reasons. English is one of the most influential languages in international legal communication and has a rich and highly developed legal terminological system shaped by common law traditions, Latin and French borrowings, and centuries of legal practice. Karakalpak, on the other hand, represents a Turkic language with its own structural and word-formation patterns, functioning within a different legal and linguistic environment. The analysis of legal terms in these two

languages allows researchers to observe how similar legal notions are expressed through different morphological and syntactic means, and how national linguistic resources are used to form specialized legal vocabulary.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs comparative-typological, structural-semantic, and descriptive methods. The main object of the research is the legal terminology of English and Karakalpak. The terms were analyzed comparatively with regard to their structural composition, word-formation patterns, morphological features, and spheres of usage. In the course of the analysis, simple, derived, compound, phrasal, and abbreviated forms were identified and examined.

The comparative-typological method made it possible to determine the similarities and differences between English and Karakalpak legal terms. Structural-semantic analysis was used to examine the relationship between the formal structure of terms and their semantic properties. The descriptive method was applied to characterize the practical use of legal terms, the productivity of their word-formation patterns, and their place in the language system.

The research also distinguished English analytical term models and Karakalpak legal units formed through affixation, derivation, and lexical compactness. On this basis, the structural features, word-formation patterns, and comparative linguistic characteristics of the terms were described.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A comparative analysis of legal terms in English and Karakalpak shows that the two languages rely on different structural means in the formation of terminological units. In English, legal terms often appear in analytical models, that is, in the form of stable multi-word combinations. This can be seen in noun + noun terms such as “contract law,” “court decision,” “property rights,” and “human rights.” In these units, the final component expresses the

conceptual core, while the first component specifies the legal field or semantic scope. Likewise, adjective + noun combinations such as “legal remedy,” “civil case,” “criminal procedure,” “legal system,” and “constitutional law” are widely used in English legal language. In such units, the modifier indicates the particular legal domain to which the term belongs.

In Karakalpak, however, a significant part of legal terminology is formed through derivation and affixation. Although there are many word-forming affixes in the Karakalpak language, their levels of productivity differ. Some word-forming affixes are used very productively and create a large number of new words with distinct meanings, while others have a narrow word-formation scope, meaning they form only a small number of words [2: 37]. For example, *tergewshi*, *aqlawshu*, and *qaralawshu* are formed with the suffix *-shu/-shi* and denote procedural participants or legal actors. In addition, forms such as *juwapker* and *dawager* are derived through the *-ker/-ger* suffix and make it possible to express legal role and procedural status in a single term. In English, this semantic area is often conveyed through separate lexical items such as “defendant,” “respondent,” or “liable party.” This shows that in Karakalpak, legal meaning is frequently encoded in the internal structure of the word, whereas in English it is often expressed through ready-made lexical or syntactic units.

A notable difference is also observed in abstract legal terms. In Karakalpak, forms such as *a'dillik*, *advokatliq*, *sudyaliq*, and *juwapkershilik* are created on the basis of derivational models and illustrate the morphologically compact formation of legal concepts. In English, comparable meanings are more often expressed through syntactic patterns such as “civil liability,” “criminal liability,” and “legal system.” Thus, Karakalpak legal terminology demonstrates a strong morphological foundation, whereas in English terminological precision is more often achieved through syntactic constructions.

An important structural distinction is also found in the naming of documents. In Karakalpak, forms such as *wa'siyatnama* and *sha'rtinama* are created through the *-nama* suffix and form a productive derivational family of document

names. In English, document names such as “complaint,” “petition,” “memorandum,” and “affidavit” exist, but they do not form a uniform and transparent derivational series like the Karakalpak-nama pattern. In this respect, document names in Karakalpak display a more systematic word-formation character, while English document names are more lexical in nature.

English also makes active use of terms that express relations syntactically. Units such as “burden of proof,” “rule of law,” “cause of action,” “breach of contract,” and “presumption of innocence” show that legal meaning often emerges through the whole phrase rather than through a single word. As noted in one handbook on Legal English, distinctive features of Legal English, can be divided into two categories: those having to do with vocabulary and those having to do with syntax [3: 7]. This idea means that in Legal English, meaning is often expressed through a complete phrase, not through one isolated word. Legal terms are frequently built syntactically, so the relationship between the words is what creates the exact legal concept. For example: “letter of credit” does not simply mean an ordinary letter; it refers to a financial document used to guarantee payment. “Power of attorney” is not just a combination of “power” and “attorney”; as a whole, it means legal authority given to one person to act for another.

In Karakalpak, similar meanings are conveyed through combinations such as *húqqlarhámerkinlikler*, *sudislerinjúrgiziw*, and *juwapkershilikketartiw*. However, what is observed here is not a purely syntactic model of the English type, but rather the joint participation of case marking, phrase structure, and derivational means. As a result, relations in English are more often expressed through syntactic structure, while in Karakalpak they arise through morphosyntactic devices. Legal language is always tied to a specific national legal system which has its own legal culture and traditions, terminology and underlying concepts [4: 4].

Table 1. *Comparative examples*

Type	English examples	Karakalpak examples	Structural observation
Simple terms	law; court; judge; contract; claim	<i>nizam; sud; huqiq; piqara; ayıp</i>	Both languages contain simple legal units, but Karakalpak roots more readily enter derivational patterns.
Analytical noun model	contract law; court decision; property rights	<i>sudhákimiyati; mámleketlikhákimiyat; normativlikhuqiqiyakti</i>	The analytical model is stronger in English, whereas Karakalpak combines lexical and morphosyntactic means.
Modifier model	legal remedy; civil case; criminal procedure	<i>mámleketliktil; normativlikakt; huqiqiyakti</i>	Modification is active in both languages, but in Karakalpak it often takes a derivational form.
Expression of relation	burden of proof; rule of law; cause of action	<i>húqıqlarhámerkinlikler; sudislerinjúrgiziw; juwapkershilikketartıw</i>	English expresses relation mainly through syntax, whereas Karakalpak does so through case and derivation.
Participant terms	plaintiff; defendant	<i>tergewshi; aqlawshı; qaralawshı; juwapker; dawager</i>	Participant terms in Karakalpak are formed very clearly through affixation.
Document names	complaint; petition; memorandum; affidavit	<i>wa'siyatnama; sha'rtmama</i>	In Karakalpak, document names are grouped into one family through the -nama pattern.
Institution/place term	court; agency	<i>bajixana</i>	In Karakalpak, an institutional name may also arise through a derivational model.

Another important feature of Karakalpak legal terminology is that it also includes a layer of borrowed vocabulary. However, units borrowed from external sources do not remain unchanged in Karakalpak; instead, they adapt to the local derivational system. For this reason, the overall structural profile of the terminological system is still determined by the internal morphological resources of Karakalpak. This shows that

Karakalpak legal terminology is not merely receptive but also productive and adaptive.

From the perspective of translation, these structural differences are highly significant. Some English legal terms, for example “arbitration,” may pass into other languages with a relatively stable equivalent, whereas units such as “due diligence” often require explanatory or adapted translation. The same situation is visible in the English-Karakalpak comparison: a compact derivative such as *juwapker* may require broader explanation in English, while an English analytical phrase such as “burden of proof” may need formal restructuring in Karakalpak. Therefore, legal translation must take into account not only the lexical meaning of a term but also its structural type.

CONCLUSION

The results of the analysis show that legal terminology in English and Karakalpak differs not only in lexical composition but also in the structural mechanisms that play the leading role in term formation. In English, legal terms are mainly expressed through analytical combinations and syntactic models, whereas in Karakalpak they are more often shaped through affixation, derivation, and internal lexical compactness.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that in English legal meaning often emerges through syntactic combinations, while in Karakalpak it is frequently embodied in the internal morphological structure of the word. This confirms the existence of substantial differences in the structural organization of legal terminology in the two languages.

Therefore, the study of legal terms in English and Karakalpak requires joint analysis of their semantic, structural, and word-formation properties. Such an approach is of considerable theoretical and practical significance for comparative legal linguistics, terminology studies, and legal translation research.

REFERENCES

1. Veda, R. C. & Crandall, J. A. 1978. *Legal Language: What Is It and What Can We Do About It?* Washington, D.C.
2. Patullayeva, G. 2020. *Qaraqalpaq tilinde sóz jasaltw*. Tashkent.
3. Miguel, Á. & Pardillos, C. 2016. *Handbook English for Judicial Cooperation in Civil Matters*. European Judicial Training Network.
4. *Legal Style Guide*. 2025 Swiss Federal Chancellery.
5. Berdimuratov, E. 1999 *Karakalpak tili terminleri (Karakalpak language terms)*. Nukus, "Bilim"
6. <https://dictionary.law.com/>

PATULLAEVA GULMIYRA
KARAKALPAK STATE UNIVERSITY,
NUKUS, UZBEKISTAN.
E-MAIL: <PATULLAEVAGULMIRA9696@GMAIL.COM>