

Conceptual and Axiological Representation of the Concept “Bala” (Child) in Karakalpak Paremiology

ORAZGALIEVA AYJAMAL MARAT QIZI
USENOVA GULMIRA ABILLAEVNA
Nukus State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the linguistic and axiological representation of the concept bala (“child”) in Karakalpak paremiology through the analysis of proverbs and sayings functioning as repositories of ethnocultural knowledge. The research addresses the insufficient scholarly attention to the conceptualization of childhood within Turkic paremiological traditions and aims to identify the dominant semantic and value-based models underlying the representation of children in Karakalpak linguoculture. The empirical corpus consists of forty-one Karakalpak proverbs and sayings containing the lexemes bala, perzent, ul, qiz, and semantically related units. The material was examined through semantic, cognitive, contextual, interpretative, and linguocultural methods. The findings demonstrate that the concept bala possesses a multidimensional conceptual structure extending beyond biological age and reflecting broader sociocultural meanings. Five dominant conceptual models were identified: child as the result of upbringing; child as family continuity; child as gendered social identity; child as moral reflection of the family; and child as divine blessing. The results reveal that Karakalpak paremiology conceptualizes childhood primarily through collectivist values, lineage preservation, parental authority, social responsibility, and family continuity. The study contributes to cognitive paremiology and comparative linguocultural research by expanding understanding of childhood conceptualization in Turkic linguistic traditions.

Keywords: Concept; child; Karakalpak paremiology; linguocultural analysis; proverb; cognitive semantics

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary linguistic research, paremiological discourse is increasingly examined within anthropocentric and cognitive paradigms that interpret language as a repository of culturally organized knowledge rather than merely a formal communicative system [2; 6]. Proverbs and sayings occupy a special position within this framework because they preserve socially approved behavioural norms, collective experience, value orientations, and culturally specific interpretations of reality [1].

Within cognitive linguistics, concepts are understood as culturally mediated mental formations reflected through language and reconstructed through verbal material [4]. Paremiological units are particularly valuable for conceptual analysis because they represent compressed models of social knowledge and preserve culturally stabilized evaluations across generations [7].

The concept of CHILD has attracted increasing scholarly attention due to its importance for understanding social organization, identity formation, and systems of cultural values [3]. However, despite the growing number of conceptual and linguocultural studies, the representation of childhood in Karakalpak paremiology remains insufficiently explored.

The present study aims to investigate the linguistic representation of the concept *bala* in Karakalpak proverbs and sayings and to identify the dominant semantic and axiological models through which childhood is conceptualized. Particular attention is devoted to revealing how paremiological units encode traditional views of upbringing, family continuity, gender expectations, and moral responsibility.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The empirical material of the study consists of forty-one Karakalpak proverbs and sayings containing the lexemes *bala*, *perzent*, *ul*, *qız*, and semantically related lexical units extracted

through continuous sampling from available paremiological sources.

The methodological framework combines several complementary approaches.

First, **semantic analysis** was employed to determine the dominant lexical meanings and thematic clusters represented in the corpus.

Second, **cognitive analysis** was used to reconstruct conceptual models underlying the linguistic representation of childhood and to identify culturally established metaphorical patterns.

Third, **linguocultural analysis** enabled interpretation of proverbs as carriers of ethnically specific systems of values and social expectations.

Additionally, **contextual and interpretative methods** were applied to reveal implicit evaluative meanings and reconstruct culturally embedded axiological attitudes.

The integration of these methods allowed identification of stable conceptual categories and reconstruction of the conceptual structure of *bala* within Karakalpak linguistic consciousness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Within Karakalpak linguoculture, the concept *bala* occupies a central position due to its close connection with family organization, kinship, social continuity, upbringing, moral values, and traditional perceptions of human fulfilment. Unlike individualistic models of childhood found in some Western traditions, Karakalpak paremiology conceptualizes the child primarily as a continuation of lineage (*násil, urpaq*), a social value, and a guarantee of family stability.

For the purposes of this section, forty-one Karakalpak proverbs and sayings containing the lexemes *bala*, *perzent*, *ul*, *qız*, and semantically related nominations were selected and analyzed through semantic, cognitive, contextual, interpretative, and linguocultural methods.

The analysis revealed several dominant conceptual models.

1. *Child as the result of upbringing and early formation*

One of the most productive semantic groups presents the child as an object of upbringing whose future personality is determined from early childhood.

Bolarbalabesjasmanbelgili

“A future worthy child is recognizable from the age of five.”

The proverb reflects the traditional belief that personality traits become visible during early development. Childhood is represented not as a biologically incomplete stage but as the beginning of social maturity. Similarly:

Balaniskebuyır, artınanózińjuwır

“Assign work to the child and follow behind.”

This proverb expresses a culturally approved pedagogical principle: labour education and parental supervision should coexist. Another example:

Atanıńsiltegensoqpağı, balağamıńgúzarjol

“The path shown by the father becomes a thousand roads for the child.”

The proverb metaphorically conceptualizes parental authority as a mechanism of future orientation and social navigation.

The same pedagogical orientation appears in:

Tılalğışhbolsaperzentiń, aqıhartıqkısıdey; Tılalmasaperzentiń, túsıńdekórgenisıńdey

Here obedience functions as a cognitive indicator of wisdom and successful socialization.

Thus, childhood in Karakalpak linguoculture is conceptualized primarily as a formative period during which moral qualities and future social success are established.

2. *Child as family continuity and social capital*

A large number of proverbs conceptualize children as symbolic extensions of parental identity.

Ata ulimenenuzaqjasaydı
 “A father lives long through his son.”

This proverb reveals a metaphorical understanding of symbolic immortality through descendants. Similarly:

Atadanaltawtuwǵannińatqanoǵıjoǵalmas,
atadanjalǵıztuwǵannińatqanoǵıtabilmas

This proverb reflects collectivist values and emphasizes the social security created by kinship networks.

The value of offspring is further strengthened in:

Jaqsıperzent – súyinish, jamanperzent – kúyinish

Children are conceptualized as emotional outcomes influencing family well-being.

The same model appears in:

Kewilquwanıshı – lala, Turmısquwanıshı – bala

The child is interpreted as a central source of existential fulfilment. Likewise:

Balalıqshaǵı – patshanıńtaǵı

Childhood is idealized as the happiest and most carefree period of human existence.

These units demonstrate that in Karakalpak conceptualization, children possess both emotional and social value.

3. *Child as gendered social identity*

Unlike English material, Karakalpak paremiology demonstrates strong differentiation between male and female children.

Qızosseeldińkórki, ulósseeldińbórki

The daughter symbolizes beauty and prestige, while the son symbolizes social strength and protection. Similarly:

Erbalaata-anaġatayaw, qızbalatıygejaqqanboyaw

The son is conceptualized as support; the daughter as emotional and aesthetic enrichment.

Gender expectations are reinforced through:

Anasınkóripqızın al, tabaġınkóripasınış

Female behaviour is interpreted as inherited through maternal modelling.

Another proverb:

Ata dańqımenenulósedı, Enedańqımenenqızósedı

The division of parental influence reflects traditional gender-role distribution.

Thus, gender identity forms an essential component of the Karakalpak conceptual model of childhood.

4. *Child as moral reflection of the family*

Several proverbs conceptualize children as indicators of parental quality.

Kórgensızperzent, atasınasózkeltirer

Children's behaviour functions as social evidence of family upbringing. Similarly:

Ananıńkewlibalada, balanıńkewlidalada

The proverb reveals asymmetrical emotional investment between generations.

The same idea appears in:

Aqsút Bergen ananıń, baladahaqıkópolar

Maternal sacrifice establishes a moral obligation.

Likewise:

Ata menebala, gúlmenenlala

Parent and child are represented as inseparable complementary entities.

5. *Child as divine gift, blessing, and existential necessity*

The strongest axiological layer emerges in proverbs connected with fertility.

Ayqudayımbalaber, balaberseñdanaber

The child is conceptualized as a sacred gift whose value exceeds biological reproduction.

Similarly:

Bağı bar qızımBağdatabolsın

Distance is secondary to the child's prosperity.

This worldview culminates in:

*Úyindeasıjoqtıń, dúzdedosıbolmaydı, Perzentsızamanıń,
kewlinińxoshıbolmaydı*

Childlessness is conceptualized as emotional incompleteness.

CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrates that the concept *bala* occupies a central position in Karakalpak conceptual space and represents a multidimensional cultural construct rather than a purely biological category.

The analysis identified five dominant conceptual models organizing the representation of childhood: upbringing, family continuity, gender identity, moral reflection, and divine blessing. These models collectively reveal that Karakalpak linguoculture conceptualizes children through collectivist values, parental authority, intergenerational continuity, and social responsibility.

The results support contemporary cognitive-linguistic assumptions that concepts emerge through interaction between language, culture, and collective experience [4: 6]. At the same

time, the findings confirm that paremiological discourse functions as an effective mechanism for preserving ethnocultural knowledge and transmitting value systems across generations [1: 2].

The study contributes to cognitive paremiology and Turkic linguocultural research by expanding current understanding of childhood conceptualization and providing a basis for future comparative studies involving English and Karakalpak linguistic worldviews.

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ORAZGALIEVA AYJAMAL MARAT QIZI
DOCTORAL STUDENT,
NUKUS STATE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE,
UZBEKISTAN.

USENOVA GULMIRA ABILLAEVNA
PHD., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
NUKUS STATE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE,
UZBEKISTAN.