

# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF KARAKALPAK AND ENGLISH CULTURES THROUGH HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

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## ABSTRACT

In this study, Hofstede's cultural dimensions was used to compare English and Karakalpak culture. The analysis demonstrates that English culture emphasizes formality and distance, while Karakalpak cultural parameters is rooted in respect and collectivist values. In fact, understanding these cultural differences enhances intercultural communication and minimizes misunderstandings.

**KEYWORDS:** Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Individualism, Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Karakalpak Language, Masculinity and Femininity

## INTRODUCTION

Culture is one of the main aspects of science and it is closely linked with linguistic culture, cultural studies, linguistics, history and sociology and the context significantly influences the specifics of our behavior during the communication process, including the words and phrases. Importantly, there are a few phrases that can be useful for keeping well-organized communication process in both cultures. Through analyzing different cultural contexts, we have noticed that in English culture people's attitude is primarily expressed through indirect requests, mitigating expressions, and formal phrases such as "May I...", "Let me...", "Please" "Thank you" and "Excuse me" similarly Karakalpak languages as "Íltimas", "Raxmet", "Keshirersiz", and "Múmkinbe...?". Regarding to express respect for personal boundaries, such phrases are common, particularly, "I'm afraid that..." or "Unfortunately, we are unable to...", "I am so sorry to bother you, but I wonder...", "I know this is a big deal...", and "I hate to ask this..." are used to maintain minimize confrontation.

While communicating, the communication process might be different according to closeness of relations, in other words, it depends on age, status, time, and place as well as communicators whether parents or friends. Let us look through some definitions of the word and analyze its importance in communication. More generally, several scholars such as, Hofstede, Hall, Kluckhohn, Williams, Kravchenko and Strodtbeck have put forward research on the cultural dimensions and their impact on communication norms (Larina, 2009). There are more than five thousand meanings of the word culture, and all of these might give different meaning according to the examined subject (Kravchenko, 2001). Similarly, culture has several meanings in European languages, it has been suggested by Williams as following, culture, the original difficult word, is an exact example. It has specialized meanings in particular fields of study, and it might seem an appropriate task simply to sort these out (Williams, 2013).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Both English and Turkic languages could be different according to their typological, morphological and sociocultural features and many scientists have worked on language families, its cultural values, internal and external pressures. The number of languages has developed during the centuries, for instance, from XI-XII centuries Uzbek, on the other hand Kazakh, Karakalpak and Nogai nations and their languages started to appear in XIV-XV centuries (Berdimuratov & Dawletov, 1988). Lars Johanson's extensive work on Turkic languages provides foundational insights into the structural features shared across the Turkic language family. In *The Turkic Languages*, he outlines typological characteristics such as agglutination,

vowel harmony, and Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order as defining traits (Johanson, 1998). His analysis spans both widely spoken and lesser-documented Turkic languages, including Karakalpak, which he notes as a Northwestern Kipchak language sharing features with Kazakh and Nogai (Johanson, 2001). Bernard Comrie's typological studies add further contrast. In *Language Universals and Linguistic Typology*, he contrasts analytic languages like English—which rely heavily on fixed word order and auxiliary constructions—with agglutinative languages like Turkish and Karakalpak, which use extensive suffixation to encode grammatical relationships (Comrie, 1989). This morphological distinction is a central theme in cross-linguistic studies and provides the groundwork for analyzing syntactic and semantic differences between the two language families. Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions' theory provides a widely recognized framework for analyzing how values influence communication and behavior across cultures. This model is particularly valuable in cross-linguistic and intercultural studies, where language reflects deeply rooted cultural norms. Hofstede's dimensions—such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance—offer a structured way to compare the cultural values underlying communicative behaviors in different linguistic communities. For example, speakers of Turkic languages, such as Karakalpak, often operate within collectivist, high-context cultures where group harmony and indirect communication are prioritized. In contrast, English-speaking cultures tend to value individual autonomy and directness, traits associated with low-context and individualistic societies. These cultural orientations significantly affect pragmatic norms such as politeness strategies, forms of address, and conversational implicature. By applying Hofstede's model, researchers can more precisely examine the linguacultural worldview embedded in each language, shedding light on how culture shapes linguistic expression and interpretation. Moreover, Hofstede's framework is instrumental in fields such as intercultural pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and language education, where cultural awareness is critical to effective communication and pedagogy (Hofstede, 1991).

## METHODS

This study employs a comparative analysis of communication in English and Karakalpak cultures. Data were gathered through literature review, linguistic analysis of expressions, and observation of communication patterns. To identify cultural influences on communication styles the researcher analyzed expressions of respect, forms of addressing, and their different contexts.

## ANALYSIS

In order to understand representatives of another culture, first, it is necessary to determine what type of culture they belong to. The most important parameter for classifying cultures is individualism/collectivism. This does not mean that all cultures are divided into two types according to this parameter - individualistic and collectivistic. Rather, they represent a kind of continuum, at one end of which are extremely individualistic countries, at the other - extremely collectivistic (Triandis, 1995). In general, individualistic societies structure their systems around the idea that individuals function independently of the group, while collectivistic societies emphasize interdependence among group members (Berry et al., 1997). Individualism is considered as the main feature of English culture, and it serves to maintain not only personal autonomy but also independence. Culture that emphasizes individualism, people mainly draw their attention to themselves, in other words, individuals put their priorities in the first place in any surrounding like job, family, society, behavior as well as in communication. Based on our analysis, unlike English culture in Karakalpak culture collectivism is main priority which means they prefer highlighting group harmony and social bonds. Also, here people emphasize "We" rather than "I", put simply, group of people's goal is higher compared to individuals and politeness in collectivistic cultures often involves deference to elders and community leaders, influencing communication practices such as decision-making and conflict resolution.

## POWER DISTANCE

In English culture, lower power distance allows for more egalitarian interactions, where individuals feel comfortable expressing opinions and questioning authority. Power distance is one of the crucial parameters in culture and it may be influence unconsciously on people's behavior and social norms. While analyzing, we have found that high power distance in Karakalpak culture reinforces hierarchical relationships, where subordinates and younger individuals show deference to authority figures.

## UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE

The analysis demonstrates that uncertainty avoidance in cultures could be two different types such as high and low uncertainty avoidance, and this is because people's preferences and values. In most cases Western societies prefer clear communication structures and formal etiquette and this form of communication will be helpful for reducing misunderstandings and might foster interactions. English speakers may use structured politeness expressions to reduce ambiguity and might be used for giving clear instructions, additionally, serve as a clear communication technique. As an example "Could you elaborate...?", "Could you help me that...?", "Please, follow these steps...", "May I request...?" are common expressions that is used widely in many situations.

**TABLE 1**

*A Comparison Analysis of Karakalpak Expressions and English Expressions*

| Karakalpak Expressions                     | English Expressions        |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Tolǵıraq túsindirip bere alasız ba?        | Could you elaborate?       |
| Sorawǵa ruxsat etesiz be?                  | May I request?             |
| Maǵan járdem bere alasız ba?               | Could you help me?         |
| Tómen degi qádemlerdi orınlasañız, ótinish | Please, follow these steps |

Table 1 shows that, these expressions needed mainly minimize the occurrence of unknown circumstances and to adapt changes smoothly by planning and keeping rules and regulations. When it comes to low uncertainty avoidance, people accept easily any unplanned changes, Karakalpak speakers rely on culturally embedded customs and traditional respect-based interactions to maintain social stability.

## MASCULINITY AND FEMINITY

Analysis show that this dimension is linked with individualism and collectivism as we might face in any culture with masculine and feminine parameters. Differences between them is masculine cultures prioritize competition and achievement, whereas feminine cultures emphasize social harmony and empathy. English culture balances both aspects, integrating individualism with formal politeness while other cultures lean towards collectivist values, fostering warm interpersonal relationships and emphasizing family and community obligations.

## DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of politeness expressions in Karakalpak and English (shown in Table 1) reveals significant cross-cultural differences shaped by underlying cultural values. These differences can be interpreted using Hofstede's cultural dimensions' theory and Brown and Levinson's politeness framework. One of the most striking contrasts lies in the individualism versus collectivism dimension. English-speaking cultures, such as those in the UK and the US, rank high in individualism, which promotes self-expression, independence, and autonomy (Hofstede, 2010). This is reflected in negative politeness strategies — such as hedging "Would you mind...", indirectness, and minimizing imposition — which prioritize the hearer's personal space and freedom (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In Karakalpak, politeness is deeply embedded in collective identity and social order, while English encodes individual autonomy and equal footing. As Wierzbicka notes, linguistic expressions of politeness are not universal but shaped by

culturally specific understandings of interpersonal relationships (Wierzbicka, 2003). In contrast, Karakalpak society, influenced by traditional Turkic and Central Asian values, leans toward collectivism, emphasizing group harmony, respect for elders, and relational obligations. Consequently, Karakalpak speakers often employ positive politeness strategies, such as respectful address forms, kinship-based honorifics, and formulaic greetings that reinforce social bonds and group cohesion. In Karakalpak culture, individuals, on the other hand, is deeply rooted in social hierarchy, collectivist values, and respect for elders. Direct communication is generally avoided when addressing elders or authority figures, reinforcing the cultural value of respect and here mostly we might address for people by using pronouns like “biz” and “siz” and these are closely connected with collectivistic culture. The dimension of power distance further explains variation in politeness norms. English-speaking societies typically exhibit low power distance, favoring informal address and egalitarian interaction. For example, the use of first names in professional or academic settings is common and culturally acceptable. In contrast, Karakalpak culture reflects a higher power distance, with explicit linguistic markers of status and hierarchy.

**TABLE 2**

*Karakalpak Respect Expressions to English Direct/Indirect Translation*

| Karakalpak Respect Expressions | English Direct/Indirect Translation                                         |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ağa /ata /apa                  | direct translation is grandpa/grandma dad but indirect is Sir/Mr./Mrs.      |
| Ajağa/ájapa                    | Direct translation brother/sister but indirect is a reference to friendship |

As is shown in Table 2, expressions are used in certain situations and we could link with Power distance. “Cultures are nothing more than common ways of thinking and acting, which develop because of relativity isolated within-group communication. Cultures differ from one another because there is less contact between cultures than within them. If everybody communicated with people outside their culture their culture as much as they do with people within it, cultures would soon disappear” (Guirdham, 1999). Each language and culture have its own unique ways of expressing politeness, which depend on the cultural and historical characteristics of the people (Qaypova, 2024)

Addressing older individuals or those in authority requires formal titles, deferential language, and fixed greeting routines, reflecting the cultural expectation to recognize and respect social roles. Fixed expressions for greetings, farewells, and requests ensure mutual understanding and help avoid misunderstandings in high-context, relationship-oriented communication. These linguistic choices reflect the respective linguistic worldviews of each culture.

Understanding these distinctions are essential for effective cross-cultural communication. Misinterpretations of expressions can lead to misunderstandings in intercultural interactions. By applying Hofstede’s framework, individuals can develop a deeper appreciation for diverse communication styles, fostering mutual respect and more effective intercultural interactions.

## CONCLUSION

The two languages continue to pose challenges in translation because each language expresses themselves in unique ways. Karakalpak generally associates hierarchy when denoting respect which is seen in how young people address a person who is elderly or in a position of power. English on the other hand is individualistic in its delivery between age groups and does not recognize the same age or hierarchal structures. This is problematic in unstructured conversation within the Karakalpak language and does not directly correlate to a seamless English translation. The subtle nuances observed in the Karakalpak language are issues which persons learning language must consider when communicating using English or the Karakalpak language.

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