

The Semantic Classification of Nouns in the English and Karakalpak Languages

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ABSTRACT

This research is the systematic study of the semantic features of the noun in two unrelated languages. The different approaches and principles of the semantic classification of nouns in the English and Karakalpak languages have been investigated. The main novelty of this research is the fact that all the semantic categories of nouns: common and proper, concrete and abstract, collective and individual nouns in both languages have been compared and analyzed. A thorough investigation of the semantic structure of nouns enabled us to reveal structural-semantic and functional-semantic peculiarities of English and Karakalpak nouns. A contrastive analysis of both languages proved that there are both similarities and differences of nouns in English and Karakalpak languages.

INTRODUCTION

Every word belongs to a class of words, and that class is called the lexico-grammatical category or parts of speech. Lexico-grammatical categories consist of words with the same grammatical meanings, and their semantic and morphological sub-categories are fundamental units of a language. The words are categorized based on some universal language properties: morphological, semantic, syntactic or functional. The items of these common categories are further split into subclasses and carry partial grammatical features. Among parts of speech, the noun is one of the most important parts of speech and makes up almost half of all words in most languages. In English nouns make up about 42% of all words and it is also the most frequently used part of speech. According to statistics, every fourth word used in our speech belongs to the class of nouns [8].

The word “noun” comes from the Latin “*nomen*” meaning “name.” The categorical meaning of the noun is “substance” or “thingness.” Nouns directly name various phenomena of reality and have the strongest nominative force among notional parts of speech. Nouns denote things and object proper (*tree*), abstract notions (*love*), various qualities (*bitterness*), and even actions (*movement*). In both English and Karakalpak the question word who? –kim? is asked for only people and what? –ne? for other living and non-living things.

The morphological semantic and syntactic structures of each language vary from language to language in accordance with the types of their language family. For example, the English noun

lacks the category of possessiveness, which is typical of Turkic languages, and the meanings of this category are expressed syntactically by two or more words. Semantic classification of the noun is also different in these two languages mainly because of different cultural backgrounds and historical developments and other linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Therefore, it is important to investigate the inner structures of languages and the impacts of language units on the meanings and their pragmatic use in everyday life. In fact, linguistic studies are in a new phase today which requires investigating not only the formal structures of each language unit but also the inner contents of a concrete language. This demands looking into the functional-semantic and structural-semantic aspects of a language investigated.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Semantics deals with the meanings of concepts and as concepts are more or less common for all people in the world, there is not much difference between the semantic classifications of nouns in English and Karakalpak. Both “*noun*” in English and “*atlıq*” in Karakalpak are related to the word “name” and denote all the words which are conceived as thing. Thus, nouns name concrete things (*book, table*), living beings (*boy, dog*), places (*airport, London*), materials (*iron, oil*), processes (*life, work*), states (*health, consciousness*), abstract notions (*happiness, joy*) and qualities (*kindness, courage*), and always answer the questions who? (*kim?*), and what? (*ne?*).

There are different semantic classifications of nouns among different schools of linguistics. M. Blokh divides English nouns into four oppositional pairs: 1) proper and common nouns (according to the type of nomination), 2) animate and inanimate (according to the forms of existence), 3) human and non-human (on the basis of quality), countable and uncountable (for their quantitative structure) [2,52].

According to S. Greenbaum and R. Quirk, (A Student’s Grammar of the English language, London, 1990) the classification of the noun into subcategories is as follows: common nouns and proper nouns; common nouns in turn are count and non-count; both count and non-count nouns are subcategorized as concrete and abstract nouns.

Another scholar N. A. Kobrina divides nouns into individualizing (proper nouns) and classifying (common nouns) noun groups. Common nouns in turn are subcategorized into four types each having their subclasses: 1) count nouns (concrete animate and concrete inanimate nouns and abstract nouns), 2) non-count nouns (abstract and material nouns), 3) collective nouns (animate nouns of multitude and inanimate singularia-tantum nouns), 4) pluralia-tantum nouns (concrete, mass, and complex indivisible nouns) [3, 14].

Also different languages have different classifications of nouns. For example, Karakalpak nouns are not subdivided into animate and inanimate, countable or uncountable. A. Bekbergenov in his work states that ‘the question word “*Kim?* (*Who?*)” is used only for people and the question word “*Ne?*” (*What?*) is asked for all other living and non-living things. Therefore, the Karakalpak nouns lack the category of animacy and inanimacy [1, 37].

Uncountable or mass nouns are called “material” nouns (=zatlıq atlıqlar) in the Karakalpak language and therefore there’s no special term like “countable and uncountable” in Karakalpak grammar. “Material nouns” is a subcategory of common nouns and refer to 1) food items (*sút, un, duz, may, qant*), 2) chemical elements (*kislorod, gúmis, altın, alyuminiy*), 3) natural resources (*temir, kómir*), 4) agricultural products (*biyday, arpa, júweri, salı*, and other undifferentiated mass nouns (*cement, ilay, qum*). In the English language the materials which are made up of tiny parts such as (*sand-qum, sugar-qant, salt- duz, flour -un*) are uncountable nouns which are called particles. It should also be noted that material nouns in both English and Karakalpak do not take plural affix *-s\lar*, and are not followed by any numerals. However, although they are grammatically singular, they give plural meanings according to their semantic features. It is because they are mass objects and they consist of particles.

In Karakalpak grammars, nouns are divided into the following semantic groups: proper and common, concrete and abstract, individual and collective, personal and non-personal, and material nouns [7, 110]. A proper noun is not further subcategorized and always considered to be uncountable.

RESULTS

A common noun is a common name i.e. a name common to the class as a whole. *E.g. boy*—for all male young people, *girl*—for all female young people, *child* – a general name for all male and female young people, *book* – for all reading materials which have cover and pages, etc. Common nouns form two grammatically relevant groups in English: animate and inanimate. Animate common nouns are further subdivided into person and non-person (or human and non-human) nouns. This subdivision of nouns constitutes the basis for the category of gender in English. Person nouns can be either masculine or feminine, while non-person nouns are neuters.

Common nouns in English and Karakalpak fall under the following subclasses:

Table 1

	English	Karakalpak
Common Nouns	I Count noun a) concrete b) abstract II Non-count noun a) concrete b) abstract III Collective nouns a) Nouns of multitude b) Singularia Tantum nouns c) Pluralia Tantum Nouns	I Concrete and abstract nouns II Individual and collective nouns III Personal and non-personal nouns IV. Materials nouns

English abstract uncountable nouns such as *knowledge, education, love*, etc is called simply “abstract nouns” in Karakalpak, while concrete uncountable nouns like *water, oil, rice*, etc is called *zathiq athlqlar* (material nouns), respectively.

In the following sections we shall discuss in turn all the semantic peculiarities of nouns in both languages according to the classification table above. Both countable and non-countable nouns in English may be concrete or abstract. Count nouns cannot occur in the singular and plural forms, whereas non-count nouns can occur in the singular without a determiner.

I. Count nouns. Count nouns in their turn are subdivided into: 1) concrete (can be animate (*man, dog*), inanimate (*book, pen*)), and 2) abstract (*idea, talent, opinion, suggestion, view*).

1) Concrete nouns. Concrete nouns are those which have shape, size and weight, that is, the nouns which can be identified through one of five senses. Lexemes such as *dog, door, leaf, and stone* denote concrete objects, which can be seen or touched. Another point is that concrete nouns in English agrees with numerals and take plural affix *-s* as in: *one apple, two apples, three coins, four coins*, etc. By contrast, in Karakalpak nouns do not agree with numerals and they are always in zero form. *E.g. on kitap*.

From what we discussed above, we can distinguish the following types of concrete nouns. Concrete nouns can be: common nouns (e.g., *man, dog*), proper nouns (e.g., *Simon, Jonson*), countable (e.g. *bear, country*), non-countable nouns (e.g., *music, tennis*), and collective nouns. (e.g. *choir, group*).

2) Abstract countable nouns. Nouns that are names of a quality/action/state are called “abstract nouns”. A more detailed definition is that an abstract noun is the opposition to the concrete noun and denotes an aspect, experience, concept, idea, state of being, trait, quality, feeling, or other entity that cannot be experienced with the five senses i.e. abstract nouns cannot be seen, heard,

touched, tasted or smelled. In simple language, an abstract noun does not have shape, size, weight, etc and can only be thought about i.e. there can be no physical interaction. The objects denoted by lexemes like *idea*, *problem*, *reason*, and *knowledge* are *abstract* because they cannot be perceived directly through the senses. Similarly, in Karakalpak, all physically non-observable and non-measurable things are called abstract nouns. Abstract non-countable nouns in both languages (*gózzallıq*, *ar*, *kek*, *toqshılıq*, *shıdamlılıq*, etc) do not take plural affixes, and cannot be preceded by any numerals. We cannot say *úsh shıdamlılıqlar* / *three tolerances*.

II. Non-count nouns can be abstract\intangible (*music*, *information*, *advice*) and mass or concrete\material\tangible nouns (*water*, *oil*, *milk*, *rice*, *rubbish*, *meat*, *coal*, *gas*, *air*, *tea*, *wine*). Jespersen regarded both material nouns and abstract nouns as mass-words. According to R. Quirk, they are undifferentiated mass or continuum. [246] Mass nouns such as *water*, *oil*, *gas* are continuous substances, the whole mass of matter as they do not consist of natural discrete parts. A few uncountable nouns like *furniture*, *jewelry*, and *luggage* are collections which consist of different items. And abstract uncountable nouns such as *advice*, *information*, and *beauty* are treated in the English language as indivisible, non-observable and non-measurable. Uncountable nouns in English are grammatically singular and do not take plural affixes unless they are lexicalized. For example, *beauty* becomes *a beauty* or *beauties* when it denotes a beautiful girl. Uncountable collective nouns such as *tagınshaqlar* (*jewelry*), *bagaj* (*luggage*), *mebel buyımları* (*furniture*), *equipment* (*úsbap úskeneleri*), *fruit* (*miyweler*), *garbage* (*taslandılar*), etc. are treated as common nouns in Karakalpak and can be used in both singular and plural. They are used in plural by adding plural affixes *-lar* to denote common name for all similar items. For example, *furniture* refers to things such as: *chairs*, *tables*, *cupboards*, etc and it is a general name for all kinds of furniture. In Karakalpak, “*mebel buyımları*” (with plural affix) refers to different kinds of furniture. Without a plural marker, it denotes to one item only. The peculiarity of uncountable nouns is that non-count nouns cannot be used with 1) plural inflection *-s* in English, *-lar\ler* in Karakalpak 2) the cardinal numerals *one*, *two*, *three*, etc 2) quantifying expressions such as *both*, *a dozen*, *many*, *several*, *few* 3) *a*, *another*, *each*, *every*, *either*, *neither* which take singular heads. Thus, we cannot say *waters*, (=suwlar), *one water*, (=bir suw), *two happiness*, (=eki baxıt), *both milk*, *many education* (=kóp tálim), etc. However in both English and Karakalpak, there are some instances when uncountable nouns are used with plural affixes as in: 1) to refer to different kinds (e.g. *butters/maylar*=different kinds of butter), 2) to denote a large mass (e.g. the waters of the Atlantic/Atlantika suwları), 3) when material nouns viewed as individual objects (iron-an iron, stone-a stone).

Abstract uncountable nouns are often the names of actions, states or qualities formed from corresponding verbs and adjectives: *reading*, *love*, *kindness*, *strength*, *prosperity*, *whiteness*, *madness*, *absurdity*. These nouns are particularized by possessive pronouns – *his prosperity*, *the whiteness of her face*. Otherwise they remain abstract notion, not concrete. Derivative affixes – *ness* in English and *-lıq\lik* in Karakalpak are the most productive suffixes which makes abstract nouns from adjective and do not take any articles or plural inflection *-s/lar*. e.g.: *jas-lıq* (*youth*), *happi-ness*. We cannot say *jaslıqlar*, *happinesses*.

Abstract nouns may turn into countable nouns, sometimes into concrete nouns when they represent concrete objects: *beauty* (abstract) – *a beauty* (concrete); *youth* – *a youth*, *work* – *a work*\works, *drawing*\painting – *a drawing*\painting.

The most difficult part of the count/non-count distinction is that some nouns can be count or non-count, depending on the specific meaning and context. The meanings of some words may be similar or different when they are treated as count or non-count. Count ones usually have markers such as articles *a*\an and plural affixes.

E.g. *He has been doing this kind of work for many years, so he has a good deal of **experience**. It was **an unpleasant experience** and he didn't speak of it.*

In the first example, experience is an uncountable and means “practical knowledge or skill,” while in the second example that word is used as a countable noun denoting “events or occurrence which you undergo in your life”.

Other words like this: *law, society, space, nature*.

There are also some words which are used as countable and uncountable nouns preserving original meaning. The main difference is that the words which are used as uncountable give generic sense, while the other forms convey specific meanings. These nouns are: *war, peace, life, love, happiness, knowledge, education, suspicion, doubt, marriage, hatred, fear, hope, sound, war*.

E.g. *A love of animal is vital for a vet. (specific meaning)*

Love is everything. (in general meaning)

Other count / non-count distinctions are realized by different lexical items.

a garment – clothing	a job-work	a journey\trip - travel
a laugh – laughter	a suitcase – luggage	a view - scenery
a permit – permission	a poem – poetry	a suggestion - advice
a weapon – arms	a machine – machinery	a problem - trouble

While in English it is not acceptable to say *homeworks*, in Karakalpak, on the other hand, *úy jumısı* (homework) may take plural affix: *úy jumısları*.

III. Collective nouns denote a noun whose content consists of a number of things collected together regarded as a single object (*family, crew, and company*). Collective nouns in both languages share the same semantic characteristics. However, lexico-grammatical and syntactic use of collective nouns differs a lot. Collective nouns in English fall under the following division:

1) nouns of multitude which have both numbers (mostly animate). Nouns of multitude are wholes that comprise similar parts or represent a collection of individuals. They are: *committee, team, government, jury, Ministry, army, group, party, crowd, flock, generation, mob, staff, department, family, crew, clergy, herd, etc.* As well as being morphologically (i.e. formally) singular or plural (a family/ families) a collective noun can also be semantically singular or plural yet in the singular form only (the family is or the family are). The latter depends on how you see the individuals in the group.

If a collective noun is viewed as a single object then it is treated as a singular noun (with singular verbs and singular pronouns). E.g. **The jury** has delivered *its* conclusion to the judge.

If the constituents of a noun act individually, then you probably treat the collective noun as plural (with plural verbs and plural pronouns)

The jury have not reached a conclusion because **they** are still arguing among themselves.

According to Khaimovich and Rogovskaya, the lexemes *family, team, jury* and other collective nouns have two variants as in the following table:

SG	PL
family, jury, team	families, juries, teams
-	family, jury, team

Another important point is that the singular or plural use of collective nouns also depends on the action and state verbs used.

E.g. *My family is* big. (is- a state verb)

My family are having dinner. (having dinner-an action verb)

2) *Singularia tantum nouns.* Inanimate collective nouns such as *money, furniture, foliage, leafage, youth (jaslar)*, etc., are always used in the singular form. *Money* is an abstract noun which is a general term for different currencies such as the *dollar\ euro\yen*, etc. *Furniture* is used for all *tables, desks, sofas, beds, etc.*

3) *Pluralia Tantum nouns* i.e. collective nouns which are used in the plural form only are in turn subdivided into concrete things consisting of two parts- *scissors*, and mass –*oats, grapes, potatoes, stairs, archives, dregs.*

In Karakalpak, the words like *jaslar, qızıllar, baylar* behave as pluralia-tantum nouns, however, they are regarded as substantivized word forms from adjectives. The plural inflection –*lar* acts as a word-forming function and substantivizes adjectives.

In English, there are also pluralia tantum nouns which are used without inflection ‘-s’ and always take plural verbs and pronouns. They are: *cattle, police, people, vermin, and poultry.*

E.g. The poultry are in the yard. They are being fed.

The noun “*people*” in the meaning of “*adamlar*” is always plural. But in the meaning of “*xalıq*” has both numbers (a people –*xalıq*, peoples – *xalıqlar*).

E.g. The friendship of all the peoples of the country is essential.

The semantic classification and use of collective nouns (*jámlewshi atlıqlar*) in Karakalpak is completely different from that of English. According to the theory of grammatical opposition, an individual noun is differentiated by binary opposition from collective nouns as in singular-plural opposition. For example: “*mal*” (collective noun) is opposed to individual kinds of it- *siyır, qoy, eshki, jilqı*, etc.

Similarly ‘*miywe*’ (fruit) is a collective noun in that it is a general name for all individual kinds of fruit: *alma, erik, shabdal, qáreli*, etc. And also, there are different names for cities: *Shumbay, London, Tashkent, Moskva*, etc., and the word *city* is a generic name for all the city names of the world. So, the individual nouns (*jekkelik yamasa dara atlıqlar*) refer to a group of things which have similar qualities and collections of which can be grouped under one name as a collective noun. “Ulıwmalawshı atlıqlar dep bir neshe atlıqlardı ulıwmalap jıynaqlap kórsetetuǵın atlıqlarǵa ayıladı. Mısalı: *mal, aǵash, jemis, qala, osimlik*. Jekkelik atlıqlar dep tek jalǵız bir nárseniń, bir predmettiń atın bildiretuǵın predmetlik túrge bólinbeytuǵın atlıq sózlerge ayıladı. Mısalı: *aǵash-qaraǵay, torańǵıl, jıńǵıl, tal, aq terek*, h.t.b., sıyaqlı (dara atlıqlardıń) aǵash túrleriniń jámlewshi atlıǵı” [6, 38].

Other nouns which have collective meanings are: *adamzat, el, xalayıq, xalıq, haywanat, mashina, aqsha, taslandı, pada, shıbın - shirkey, qurt-qumırsqa*. It is worth noting that collective nouns can take plural inflection like individual countable nouns, i.e. collective nouns in Karakalpak are purely semantic, and their formal indicators do not affect the semantic contents of the words at all.

The nouns relating only to people such as kinship terms (*bala, qız, ana, dayı*), professions (*oqıwshı, shıpaker, alım*), proper names of people (*Azat Almagul*) are called personal nouns (*betlik atlıqlar*) in the Karakalpak language. Personal nouns have conjugation forms, i.e. they take affixes of the predicate, plural and personal possessiveness. e.g.: *Men oqıwshıman (I am a student). Men Nazıraman (I am Nazıra)*. Here *oqıwshı* and *Nazıra* are common and proper nouns and they are taking the I-person predicative affix “*man*”. Taking personal predicative affixes in the predicative position is one of the main characteristics of personal nouns in all Turkic languages. All other nouns which refer to living and non-living things except people are called non-personal nouns (*betlik emes atlıqlar*) and answer the question *ne?* Non-personal nouns do not take personal affixes in their original meaning unless they are used metaphorically to express people.

Proper nouns are names given to individuals of a class to distinguish them from other individuals of the same class (*John, the Neva, the Amudarya, Moscow, Moynaq*). In other words, proper nouns are specific names given to common nouns.

Proper nouns in both languages are geographical names (*New York, the Thames, Asia, the Alps, Aral, Qarataw*), names of individual (unique) persons (*John, Byron, Brown, Ernazar, Berdaq*), names of the months and the days of the week (*January, Sunday*), names of planets and astronomical objects (*the Moon, the Sun, the Earth, Qus Joli, Ay Quyash, Jeti Qaraqshi*), names of ships, and other means of transport (*Ford, Titanic, Jiguli*), of buildings, streets, parks, bridges (*Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, Regent Street, Piccadilly, The Savitsky Museum, Hyde Park, Waterloo Bridge*), of institutions, organizations, magazines and newspapers (*the United Nations, the New Times, the Guardian, Erkin Qaraqalpaqstan, Bilim (baspaxanasi)*). Proper nouns may also include a group of individuals (*The Alps, the Balkans, the Urals, the Canaries*).

In contrast to common nouns, proper nouns are conventionally capitalized in both Karakalpak and English. Common nouns are not usually capitalized unless they begin a sentence. In Karakalpak, the word “*úmit*” is a common noun, and it can also be given as a name for a child and can be both a male and female name. We can give the same interpretation with the word ‘*baxit, sapar, maqset, polat*, etc.”

The nouns *the sun, the moon, and the earth* are proper nouns and are written in the capital (*the Sun, the Moon, Earth*) when they denote planets. Otherwise, they are common nouns. Famous scientists’ inventions are named after their names and become common names they do not usually denote the scientists but their inventions. Some may be written in capital and some not be: *roentgen, ohm, amper, a Ford, a Mackintosh*. Proper nouns of the main characters in literary works may also undergo conversion to common nouns. e.g.: *Geologlar – dala robinzonlari. (I.Yu)*

Number contrasts also affect proper and common nouns distinction. When proper name takes plural inflection –s, it is used as a common noun. “*The three Johns*” means there are three people with the same name. Reclassification of proper nouns as common nouns removes their unique denotations. In both Karakalpak and English, the plural affix attached to proper nouns changes the meaning into “*like or resembling*” (*siyaqlı*). e.g.: *Shakespeares [authors like Shakespeare], Smiths [people whose names are Smith], Ernazarlar [people like Ernazar]*.

If reclassified as common nouns, proper nouns can have their meaning varied by articles and other determiners: *A Shakespeare [an author like Shakespeare]*.

When a surname is made plural and preceded by the definite article, it takes on the meaning “*the family called*.” e.g.: *The Wilsons, the Smiths, the Browns, etc.*

Similarly, in Karakalpak: *Abdirovlar (shañarağı), Kamalovlar, Ajiniyazovlar, etc.*

By contrast, the indefinite article placed before a personal name can have the meaning “*a certain person called...*” e.g.: *A Mrs Robertson tried to contact you.*

We can also add *-lar\ler* to the name of a person to mean all the people accompanied by this person. Normally, we choose the person whom we know better, or the person is more well-known among this group of people.

E.g. *Meniñ sumkam Sháribaylar otırǵan jerde qalıp ketipti.* Here “*Sháribaylar*” means *Sháribay and others*.

In Karakalpak, the proper name does not take a plural affix when we talk about people with the same name.

In English: *We have two Marys.*

In Karakalpak: *Bizlerde eki Gúlistan /Gúlistanlar-bar.*

CONCLUSION

This research is devoted to semantic peculiarities of the noun in the two unrelated languages English and Karakalpak. Almost any part of speech may undergo further differentiation into sub-groups. One of the traditional categorizations of the noun consists of two large classes –proper nouns and common nouns. It is a universal subcategory of the noun in almost all languages of the world including English and Karakalpak. Further differentiation of common nouns is also based on semantics. In both English and Karakalpak languages, concrete and abstract nouns, individual and collective nouns, and personal and non-personal nouns produce oppositions. Here, three classes of common nouns are distinguished in English: 1) count nouns (concrete and abstract), 2) non-count (concrete (=nouns of material) and abstract) 3) collective nouns (nouns of multitude; singularia tantum and pluralia tantum nouns.) The subcategories of common nouns in Karakalpak have almost the same properties as in English: concrete and abstract, personal and non-personal and individual and collective nouns and also material nouns. The only difference is Karakalpak nouns are not divided into countable and uncountable. Uncountable nouns in English correspond to nouns of material and abstract nouns in Karakalpak. Normally, abstract nouns and nouns of material in English cannot be made plural by the plural affix, but in Karakalpak all the nouns whether they are abstract or material may take plural affixes: *jaqsılıqlar, gózzallıqlar, suwlar*.

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