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THE EXPRESSION OF THE CONCEPTS OF "FRIEND" AND "ENEMY" IN KARAKALPAK CULTURE

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ABSTRACT
This article examines the linguistic and axiological representation of the concepts of "friend" and "enemy" in Karakalpak culture. The study identifies the principal lexical units through which these concepts are verbalized and explains their semantic, evaluative, emotional, and cultural components. Drawing on Karakalpak explanatory dictionaries, selected proverbial expressions, and established theories of linguistic evaluation, the analysis applies descriptive, componential, comparative, and linguocultural methods. The findings show that the concept of friend functions as a positively evaluated cultural value associated with loyalty, trust, mutual assistance, emotional closeness, respect, tolerance, and support. By contrast, the concept of enemy functions as a negatively evaluated anti-value associated with betrayal, distrust, harm, estrangement, envy, confrontation, and hostile intent. The opposition between the two concepts forms a culturally meaningful binary model through which interpersonal behavior and moral expectations are evaluated in Karakalpak linguistic consciousness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language is often described as a mirror of culture because it records a community's worldview, value system, social experience, and models of interpersonal behavior. Culture-specific key words can encode historically developed social meanings and shared values, while cultural conceptualizations provide a framework for explaining how such meanings are distributed across a speech community (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b; Wierzbicka, 1997). In contemporary linguistics, the concept has therefore become an important analytical category for investigating the relationship between language, cognition, and culture. A concept is not limited to the dictionary meaning of a word; it also contains evaluative, emotional, historical, and culturally specific associations.

Evaluation is central to the linguistic representation of cultural concepts. It is a semantic and discourse-pragmatic process through which speakers express positive or negative attitudes toward a person, object, action, event, or state of affairs (Martin & White, 2005; Volf, 1985). Consequently, concepts connected with human relations are commonly organized around oppositions such as good and bad, valuable and harmful, close and alien, reliable and dangerous. In Karakalpak culture, the concepts of friend and enemy occupy a particularly important place within this axiological system.

The two concepts form a binary opposition that provides culturally recognizable criteria for evaluating relationships between people. Friend represents a cluster of positive qualities, including loyalty,

trust, support, companionship, and moral closeness. Enemy represents a cluster of negative qualities, including hostility, betrayal, distrust, harm, and opposition. Research on belonging and relational models explains why durable attachment, communal sharing, and mutual obligation are central to close relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fiske, 1992), whereas research on intergroup relations cautions that attachment to insiders and hostility toward outsiders are related but not identical processes (Brewer, 1999). The meanings of friend and enemy have developed not only through lexical definitions but also through the historical experience, social organization, oral traditions, and moral values of the Karakalpak people.

The purpose of this study is to identify the main lexical-semantic realizations of the concepts of friend and enemy in the Karakalpak language and to describe their axiological structure. The article also demonstrates how the opposition between the two concepts reflects broader patterns of Karakalpak cultural consciousness. The analysis focuses on dictionary definitions, culturally marked lexical variants, proverbial expressions, and the evaluative features attributed to each concept.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The category of evaluation has been examined from semantic, discourse, and philosophical perspectives. Volf (1985) established a functional-semantic account of evaluative meaning, while Martin and White (2005) demonstrated how attitudes, judgments, and affect are linguistically organized and negotiated in discourse. These approaches support the treatment of friend and enemy not merely as denotational labels but as lexical units that carry positive or negative cultural positioning.

Lexical-semantic research further shows that word meaning is context-sensitive, conceptually structured, and connected with encyclopedic knowledge (Evans, 2009; Geeraerts, 2010). Cross-linguistic semantic analysis is particularly important for culture-laden social words because apparently equivalent terms can encode different cultural histories, relationship expectations, and emotional associations (Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2013; Wierzbicka, 1997).

From a cognitive-ethnolinguistic perspective, culturally significant lexical units participate in a linguistic worldview through which a community interprets and evaluates experience (Bartmiński, 2009). Cultural Linguistics similarly treats language as a repository of culturally grounded conceptualizations (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b), while research on metaphor and cultural models explains how figurative and embodied associations contribute to culturally variable meanings (Kövecses, 2005). In the social domain, the positive value of affiliation and the negative evaluation of threat can also be interpreted through research on belonging, in-group attachment, and differentiated emotional responses to perceived danger (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Brewer, 1999; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). These perspectives justify analyzing friend and enemy as interconnected axiological concepts rather than as isolated dictionary entries.

The material for the present study was drawn from Volumes 1, 3, 4, and 5 of the 2023 Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language, together with the Karakalpak proverbial and literary examples reported in the source material (Qaraqalpaq tiliniń túsindirme sózligi, 2023). The study used descriptive analysis to identify lexical meanings, componential analysis to distinguish semantic features, comparative analysis to contrast the two conceptual fields, and linguocultural analysis to interpret their cultural and evaluative significance. The research is qualitative and does not claim statistical representativeness. Sociolinguistic observations about age- or gender-associated usage are treated as tendencies in contemporary speech rather than absolute rules.

Karakalpak lexical items are presented in italics, followed by an English gloss. English translations of proverbial and literary examples are provided by the author for explanatory purposes.

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3. RESULTS

3.1. Lexical-Semantic Realization of the Concept of "Friend"

In Karakalpak culture, the concept of friend is a positively evaluated linguocultural unit that represents an important type of interpersonal relationship. Its content extends beyond the neutral identification of a person and includes ethnic norms, social expectations, emotional attachment, and moral values. The conceptual field is verbalized through several lexical units whose meanings partially overlap but differ in social nuance, degree of closeness, gender association, or communicative context.

Table 1. Principal Karakalpak lexical realizations of "friend" and "enemy"

Concept	Lexical unit	Core meaning	Cultural or usage note
Friend	*jora*	A male peer, companion, or close friend	Frequent in informal speech among men; may occur in paired expressions referring to companionship.
Friend	*joldas*	A fellow traveler; a respected person close in worldview, social environment, conduct, or feeling	Combines the meanings of companion, associate, and socially or emotionally close person.
Friend	*ashna*	An acquaintance, intimate companion, or close friend	Often implies familiarity and emotional closeness; culturally associated with established male friendship.
Friend	*tuwısqan*	A relative or sibling; figuratively, a brother-like friend	Kinship vocabulary is extended metaphorically to close friendship.
Friend	*bawır*	Literally "liver"; figuratively, a close relative, brother, or dear companion	Expresses affection, intimacy, and solidarity.
Friend	*qurbı*	A female peer or female friend	Traditionally associated with friendship among girls or women; more literary in some contexts.
Friend	*qurdas*	An age-mate or peer	Used for both male and female peers; also occurs in the paired form qurbı-qurdas.
Enemy	*jaw*	Enemy, foe	The most direct and widely used lexical realization of hostility.
Enemy	*jat*	Stranger, outsider, alien person	May acquire a negative meaning through social distance, unfamiliarity, or opposition.
Enemy	*qarsılas*	Opponent, adversary	Emphasizes confrontation, resistance, or opposing position.
Enemy	*qas*	A malicious, hostile, or harmful enemy	Highlights deliberate ill will and the intention to cause harm.

Note. Definitions are synthesized from the relevant entries in the Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language (2023, Vols. 1, 3, 4, and 5).

The noun *jora* denotes a male peer, age-mate, companion, or friend. The dictionary definition emphasizes equality of age and social proximity (*Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language*, 2023, Vol. 3, p. 367). In contemporary speech, the term is especially productive among male speakers. It may also appear in paired expressions with words meaning companion or fellow traveler, thereby strengthening the idea of shared experience.

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The noun *joldas* has two connected meanings. First, it denotes a person who travels together with someone. Second, it refers to a respected person who is close in worldview, social environment, conduct, or emotional disposition (*Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language*, 2023, Vol. 3, p. 365). The term therefore combines physical companionship with social and moral closeness. It is productive in both spoken and literary Karakalpak.

The word *ashna* refers to an acquaintance, intimate companion, or emotionally close friend (*Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language*, 2023, Vol. 1, p. 239). Its semantic field includes familiarity, mutual recognition, and established personal closeness. The proverb "Oshna bo'lish oson, ayrilish qiyin" may be translated as "It is easy to become friends, but difficult to part." The related expression *ashna-yor-do'st* accumulates several meanings—companion, associate, intimate friend, and familiar person—and presents friendship as a socially meaningful bond.

Kinship terms may also be metaphorically extended to friendship. *Tuwısqan* primarily denotes a relative or a person born within the same family, but in colloquial speech it may be used by young men as a brother-like form of address to a close friend. The word *bawır* literally refers to the liver as an organ, yet figuratively it expresses kinship, affection, and emotional closeness. In friendly interaction it may function as an equivalent of "brother," "dear companion," or "close friend." Such usage demonstrates that friendship is conceptualized through the culturally powerful model of kinship.

The term *qurbı* denotes a contemporary, age-mate, female peer, or female friend (*Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language*, 2023, Vol. 5, p. 42). It is traditionally associated with friendship among girls and women, although the more general word for friend is increasingly common in everyday speech. *Qurdas* similarly denotes an age-mate or peer and can be used for both male and female speakers. The paired form *qurbı-qurdas* collectively refers to one's peers and friends.

3.2. Lexical-Semantic Realization of the Concept of "Enemy"

The concept of enemy is a complex linguocultural unit that represents hostility, threat, conflict, social distance, and deliberate opposition. It may denote a concrete hostile person or group, but it can also express an abstract state of antagonism. The relevant lexical units differ according to whether they emphasize direct hostility, foreignness, opposition, or malicious intent.

The noun *jaw* directly means "enemy" or "foe" (*Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language*, 2023, Vol. 3, p. 336). It is widely used in both literary and spoken Karakalpak. The proverb "Attı baqsań ardaqlap, jawǵa bermes tar jerde" may be rendered as "If you care for a horse properly, it will not surrender you to the enemy in a difficult place." Another proverb, "Xan kóp bolsa, jaw kóp boladı," means "Where there are many khans, there are many enemies." These examples connect the concept of enemy with danger, political rivalry, and the need for preparedness and loyalty.

The word *jat* means "stranger," "outsider," or "alien person" (*Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language*, 2023, Vol. 3, p. 335). Although it does not always mean enemy, it may develop a negative evaluative meaning when social distance and unfamiliarity are associated with distrust or opposition. A traditional expression states: "A relative may not recognize that his kinsman has gone astray, but a stranger will; the owner may not notice that the rear girth has slipped, but the horse will." The proverb contrasts insider and outsider knowledge and shows that the stranger can occupy an ambivalent cultural position: socially distant, yet perceptive.

The word *qarsılas* is derived from the idea of standing opposite or acting against someone. It denotes an opponent or adversary and highlights confrontation rather than necessarily permanent hatred. Related constructions meaning "to oppose," "to speak against," "the opposing side," and "to resist" belong to the same semantic field (*Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language*, 2023, Vol. 4, p. 363). The lexical unit thus represents enemyhood as active resistance or conflict between positions.

The noun *qas* denotes a person who wishes harm upon another—an enemy, hostile person, or malicious adversary (*Explanatory Dictionary of the Karakalpak Language*, 2023, Vol. 4, p. 369). A line

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attributed to the Karakalpak poet Berdaq, “Xiywalı menen qas bolıp, Xojanazar batır bas bolıp,” can be translated approximately as “They became enemies of the Khivans, with Khojanazar Batyr at their head.” The term is particularly characteristic of literary and historical discourse, while *jaw* and the general word meaning enemy are more frequent in ordinary speech.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1. “Friend” as a Positive Cultural Value

In the Karakalpak worldview, friend belongs to the domain of highly valued interpersonal relations. The concept is structured around a set of positive attributes that define the moral expectations associated with genuine friendship. The most prominent features are loyalty, trust, mutual assistance, closeness, respect, tolerance, support, and companionship.

Loyalty is one of the central features of friendship. A genuine friend is expected to remain faithful, avoid betrayal, and preserve the relationship under difficult circumstances. Loyalty provides stability and transforms friendship from a temporary association into a durable moral commitment.

Trust is the foundation of open and sincere communication. Friendship presupposes the possibility of speaking freely without constant suspicion. Where trust is present, emotional and moral ties deepen; where trust disappears, the relationship becomes unstable and may move toward alienation or hostility.

Mutual assistance is the practical expression of friendship. In Karakalpak cultural consciousness, a friend is not merely a pleasant companion but a person who provides help in times of difficulty. This feature demonstrates that friendship has both emotional and behavioral dimensions. It is evaluated through what a person does, especially when another person is vulnerable or in need.

Closeness represents the spiritual and emotional dimension of the concept. Friends share experiences, feelings, and ways of understanding the world. Such closeness distinguishes friendship from formal acquaintance and creates the sense that two people are “on the same wavelength.” The metaphorical use of kinship terms such as *tuwısqan* and *bawır* confirms that close friendship may be conceptualized as chosen kinship.

Respect and appreciation form the ethical basis of friendship. True friends recognize one another as equal persons, value each other’s dignity, and preserve fairness and mutual understanding. Respect prevents closeness from becoming domination and allows the relationship to remain balanced and enduring.

Tolerance refers to the ability to understand imperfections, forgive mistakes, and preserve goodwill despite differences. In this respect, friendship is not based on complete similarity but on the willingness to accept another person without abandoning moral responsibility. Tolerance helps prevent minor disagreements from developing into lasting conflict.

Support and companionship complete the axiological structure of the concept. Support includes encouragement, emotional solidarity, and practical help. Companionship refers to shared movement toward a goal, participation in common activities, and continuity of the relationship across time. Together, these features explain why friend functions as a positive cultural value rather than merely a neutral social label.

4.2. “Enemy” as a Negative Anti-Value

Enemy is evaluated negatively because it concentrates actions, intentions, and emotional attitudes that threaten social and moral order. Its principal features are betrayal, distrust, harm, distance, envy, confrontation, premeditated malice, and hostile intent.

Betrayal is one of the strongest markers of enemyhood because it destroys a relationship previously based on trust. In Karakalpak cultural evaluation, betrayal is treated as a serious moral violation. It breaks interpersonal bonds and may transform a former friend or ally into an enemy.

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Distrust characterizes relationships in which openness is absent and each person views the other with suspicion. It increases psychological and social distance, obstructs cooperation, and creates conditions in which conflict can deepen. Distrust is therefore both a symptom and a mechanism of hostile relations.

Harm is the practical manifestation of enmity. An enemy is understood as someone who seeks to damage another person's life, reputation, property, social standing, or emotional well-being. The anticipated harm may be physical, material, social, or moral. This feature distinguishes an enemy from a simple stranger or temporary opponent.

Distance and estrangement represent the emotional and social separation between people who no longer understand, hear, or trust one another. The word *jat* demonstrates how the meaning of outsider can move toward negative evaluation when unfamiliarity is interpreted as alienness or potential threat. Nevertheless, the lexical evidence also shows that stranger and enemy are not identical; cultural context determines whether distance becomes hostility.

Envy is a negative response to another person's success, happiness, or favorable condition. It may produce internal resentment and motivate antagonistic behavior. Within the conceptual field of enemy, envy explains how hostility may arise not only from open conflict but also from concealed dissatisfaction with another person's achievements.

Confrontation is expressed by the concept of the opponent or adversary. It involves disagreement, conflict, and actions directed against another side. Unlike permanent enmity, opposition can be situational; however, repeated confrontation may develop into stable hostile relations.

Premeditated malice and hostile intent reveal the internal motivational basis of enemyhood. They refer to consciously planning harmful actions, maintaining ill will, or seeking an opportunity to injure another person. The lexical unit *qas* emphasizes precisely this deliberate and morally condemned dimension.

4.3. The Binary Axiological Model

The comparative analysis demonstrates that friend and enemy are not simply two unrelated social labels. They form an integrated binary model in which the meaning of each concept becomes clearer through contrast with the other. Loyalty is opposed to betrayal, trust to distrust, assistance to harm, closeness to estrangement, respect to hostility, and support to obstruction. The positive features of friendship are made more visible when compared with the negative features of enmity, while hostile behavior is judged against the moral standards established by friendship. This pattern is consistent with relational models that distinguish communal solidarity from adversarial or threatening relations (Fiske, 1992), and with evidence that out-group hostility should not be treated as a simple automatic consequence of in-group attachment (Brewer, 1999; Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005).

This opposition also reveals that Karakalpak linguistic consciousness draws a strong distinction between socially constructive and socially destructive relations. Friend represents a person who strengthens solidarity and shared life; enemy represents a person or force that threatens security, dignity, trust, or group unity. At the same time, the lexical system contains intermediate categories. A stranger is not automatically an enemy, and an opponent is not necessarily motivated by hatred. Such distinctions show that the conceptual model is structured rather than simplistic.

The use of kinship vocabulary for close friends is especially significant. It indicates that the highest degree of friendship is understood through the cultural model of family solidarity. Conversely, the movement from outsider to enemy reflects the role of social distance and perceived threat in negative evaluation. The friend-enemy opposition therefore provides insight into broader Karakalpak understandings of belonging, responsibility, loyalty, and moral danger.

5. CONCLUSION

The study has shown that the concepts of friend and enemy constitute an important axiological opposition in Karakalpak language and culture. The concept of friend is verbalized through several lexical

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units, including jora, joldas, ashna, tuwısqan, bawır, qurbı, and qurdas. These words differ in social nuance and usage but collectively represent companionship, emotional proximity, kin-like solidarity, and peer relations. The concept of enemy is expressed through jaw, jat, qarsılas, and qas, which emphasize direct hostility, foreignness, opposition, and malicious intent, respectively.

Axiologically, friend functions as a positive value associated with loyalty, trust, mutual assistance, closeness, respect, tolerance, support, and companionship. Enemy functions as a negative anti-value associated with betrayal, distrust, harm, estrangement, envy, confrontation, and hostile intention. The contrast between these semantic features forms a culturally meaningful model for evaluating interpersonal conduct.

The analysis confirms that the two concepts should be studied as an interconnected linguocultural system. Each concept helps define the boundaries and moral content of the other. Through this opposition, the Karakalpak language encodes culturally significant distinctions between solidarity and threat, belonging and alienation, constructive cooperation and destructive conflict. Further research may expand the corpus by examining folklore, literary texts, contemporary media, and naturally occurring spoken discourse in order to trace historical change, gender variation, and generational differences in the use of these lexical units.

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