

Exploring semantic primes in the Karakalpak language

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Abstract:

This article explores the concept of semantic primes within the Karakalpak language, a Turkic language spoken by the Karakalpak people in Central Asia. And learners can know some examples of semantic prime in the Karakalpak language. In addition to this, they can find the linguist who made a research about the semantic primes over the world.

Key words:

Background of the Karakalpak Language, Semantic primes: A Theoretical Framework, Examples of semantic Primes in the Karakalpak Language, Anna Wierzbicka's work.

Introduction:

Language is a powerful tool communication, allowing individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Semantic primes are the basic, irreducible concepts that are universally present in all languages, and they form the building blocks of human conceptualization and communication. These concepts are considered to be innate and are essential in understanding the meaning of words and expressions across different languages. Exploring semantic primes in various languages not only provides insight into the structure and organization of human thought, but it also sheds light on the unique cultural and linguistic aspects specific to each language. This article delves into the semantic primes within the Karakalpak language, examining the fundamental concepts that underpin its lexicon and contribute to its distinct identity. By understanding the semantic primes in Karakalpak, we can gain a deeper understanding of its cultural context and appreciate the rich linguistic heritage of this unique Turkic language spoken by the Karakalpak people in Central Asia.

Background of the Karakalpak Language:

The Karakalpak language belongs to the Kipchak branch of the Turkic language family and is spoken mainly in the Karakalpakstan Autonomous Republic of Uzbekistan. Its speakers, the Karakalpak people, have a rich cultural heritage and a distinct linguistic tradition. The Karakalpak language has been influenced by various historical and cultural factors, resulting in a unique set of linguistic features, including semantic primes. [1, 2024]

Semantic primes: A Theoretical Framework:

Semantic primes (or primitives) refer to a set of basic and universal concepts that are thought to be innately understood and common to all languages and cultures. These primes are considered to be the fundamental building blocks of meaning, representing the simplest and irreducible elements of human thought and communication. [2, 15-43]

The theory of semantic primes was developed by linguist Anna Wierzbicka, whose work on the subject has been influential in the field of linguistics and cognitive science. Wierzbicka proposed a set of approximately 60 semantic primes, which she argued are the elementary components of meaning and are shared by all languages. These semantic primes serve as the foundation for expressing a wide range of concepts and ideas in human language and thought. [3, 215-224]

According to Wierzbicka, semantic primes are characterized by their irreducibility and universality. They are considered to be innate and are thought to be understood, regardless of linguistic or cultural differences. Wierzbicka’s approach to semantic primes has been influential in the study of cross-cultural communication and the universality of certain aspects of human cognition.

One of the key aspects of Wierzbicka’s work on semantic primes is the idea that these basic concepts can be defined and explicated using a small set of simple and universally understood words. For example, Wierzbicka proposed that words like; “I”, “you”, “someone”, “something”, “do”, “in”, “if”, “because”, “think”, “know”, “want”, “feel”, “good”, and “bad” are among the core semantic primes that underlie human language and cognition. These words are believed to represent fundamental human experiences and concepts that are shared by all people, regardless of cultural or linguistic background. By identifying and analyzing semantic primes in the Karakalpak language, we can unravel the core concepts that underpin the Karakalpak worldview. [4, 3-15]

Semantic Primes in the Karakalpak Language:

1. “I”

The concept of self or individuality is universal across languages, and it is expressed in the Karakalpak language through the semantic prime “men” (я). This concept encompasses the sense of self-awareness and personal agency, reflecting the fundamental nature of human identity.

2. “You”

The fundamental concept of addressing or referring to another person is captured by the Karakalpak semantic prime “siz” (ты). This prime encapsulates the notion of the second person, acknowledging the presence of others in the linguistic and social framework.

3. “Someone”

The concept of an unspecified person or individual is conveyed in the Karakalpak language through the semantic prime “birew” (кто-то). This prime represents the idea of an indefinite

human presence, allowing for the expression of generic or non-specific references in communication.

4. “Something”

The universal concept of an unspecified object or entity is represented in the Karakalpak language by the semantic prime “bir zat” (что-нибудь). This prime enables the expression of indeterminate entities or substances, serving as a fundamental concept in the conceptualization of objects and phenomena. [4, 87-102]

5. “Do”

The concept of action or doing is fundamental to human experience and communication, and it is expressed in the Karakalpak language as the semantic prime “isle” (делать). This prime encompasses the notion of performing actions, engaging in activities, and exerting influence in the world.

6. “Say”

The action of speech and communication is crucial to human interaction, and in the Karakalpak language, this concept is encapsulated by the semantic prime “ayt” (сказать). This prime underlines the significance of verbal expression and the conveyance of thoughts, ideas, and emotions through language.

7. “Think”

The cognitive concept of mental processes such as thinking and reasoning is captured by the Karakalpak semantic prime “oyla” (думать). This prime represents the fundamental nature of human cognition and the internal mechanisms that shape our perception and understanding of the world. [6, 201-218]

Conclusion:

The exploration of semantic primes in the Karakalpak language offers valuable insights into the fundamental concepts and cognitive structures that shape the linguistic and cultural landscape of the Karakalpak people. By identifying and analyzing these semantic primes, we can gain a deeper understanding of the universal human experiences and the unique perspectives that are embedded in the Karakalpak language. The study of semantic primes in the Karakalpak language not only enriches our knowledge of linguistic diversity but also provides a window into the intricate tapestry of human cognition and communication.

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