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Research article

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LINGUOCULTURAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF “DEBT” AND “OBLIGATION” IN KAZAKH AND ENGLISH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Abstract. This study delves into the linguocultural features of the terms “debt” and “obligation” in Kazakh and English cultural models. It investigates how debt and obligation as concepts are built on the basis of anchoring moral values, social practices, and local history, particular to the specific culture. Despite debt and obligation being universal concepts, their meanings demonstrate extreme cultural specificity and represent various worldviews and moral requirements. Qaryz (debt) and paryz (obligation) in Kazakh tradition are very tightly connected with collective identity, social solidarity, and robust family and neighborhood bonds. They are the pillars of social norms of solidarity, generosity, and communal harmony.

In contrast, in English-speaking cultures, debt and obligation can be equated with personal responsibility, legal obligation, and contractual duty. English language terminology is individualistic in nature, putting stress on personal duty, rights, and autonomy rather than collective duty. This current study uses comparative semantic and contextual analysis to explore how such culturally embedded models are encoded in language and how they influence behavior and expectations in interpersonal relationships across various sociocultural contexts. The results enhance our knowledge of cross-cultural communication and the role of language in representing moral and social norms.

Keywords: debt, obligation, Kazakh worldview, English culture, moral responsibility, social norms, intercultural communication.

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Introduction

Beyond anything that we would normally find in dictionaries, the concepts of debt and obligation carry cultural connotations. Debt is a monetary concept in English, while an obligation leads one toward a social or legal duty. Yet, deeper cultural meanings are shaping these terms. The Kazakh word *qaryz* (debt) is not so much a matter of economic debt as it is a question of moral liability, especially in a family or communal framework. In a way, *paryz* (obligation) means to have an ethical or spiritual duty, often engendered through religious ideas and traditional views. There are subtle differences: shifting the perception of debt and obligation toward one view or another. Here, their analysis serves as a window toward the value systems that underlie each language. Thus, this comparative study is an attempt to illustrate the influence of culture upon meaning and how the language manifests the moral and social systems out of which people think and communicate.

Debts and obligations are two notions fundamental to society, and they form a major part of its values. As systems of social interaction, they have many variations and thus use language to communicate culture, values, and worldviews. The article presents a discussion on the linguistic features of debt and obligation in two cultural cores: Kazakh and English. R. Syzdykova (2006) emphasizes the importance of studying concepts that embody moral categories in language. She notes that “language is always at the heart of culture, and understanding these concepts requires considering the cultural norms and traditions that shape them”. This perspective supports the need to analyze vocabulary and expressions that reveal societal attitudes towards duty and moral responsibility. According to R. Syzdykova (2003), while dealing with the lexicology of Kazakh, each society has its specific moral codes, and language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a carrier of these codes. Such an observation bears meaning for the view that debt and obligation should be viewed in the cultural and social contexts in which they are employed. In Kazakh culture, unlike the mostly individually oriented notion of debt in many Western systems, the term may often embody collective or social responsibilities, such as caring for family members, respecting ancestral ties, or laws laid down on the people or clan.

Another point to take into account is that language does much more than signal cultural attitudes. It is also an agent in producing attitudes. Terms like *qaryz* (debt) and *paryz* (obligation) not only express culturally impregnated understandings of duty but, at the same time, affect how individuals think about their role and responsibility in society. In that sense, language embraces values upon which it has been founded and from which it becomes a common ground for values to be inwardly realized and outwardly manifested.

A significant body of research has explored the intersection of morality, obligation, and their linguistic and cultural manifestations. As M. Bloch (2008) notes, “religious and moral concepts are not merely lexical units but cognitive structures regulating the interaction of individuals with the social and natural environment”. This perspective highlights the role of such concepts in shaping both social behavior and the moral frameworks individuals rely on. Likewise, G. Lakoff stresses the idea that «the concepts that are embodied in language form the basis of the structure of human experience» (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Hence, from this perspective, debt and obligation theologize not only linguistic expression but also form coding on how different societies understand responsibility and ethical action. These are not separate lexical items; rather, they form part of a broader cultural narrative that socializes interaction and moral judgement.

The relationship between moral values and the way they are expressed through language has long attracted attention in the humanities. Cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz pointed out that moral and religious ideas should not be seen merely as collections of abstract beliefs.

Rather, they act as symbolic systems that help people make sense of the world and guide their behavior within it (Geertz, 2004). In a similar spirit, philosopher Charles Taylor emphasized that moral understanding is always rooted in the cultural and historical narratives of a society. According to him, it is through language that individuals come to internalize norms, assume responsibilities, and form a sense of ethical obligation (Taylor, 2010). In this sense, concepts like debt and obligation enter that conceptual space through people to understand their duties and the nature of their relationships. Language is not merely descriptive in this sense; it really helps in preserving and transmitting the various moral codes around which life is organized across cultures.

Using conceptual analysis to study these topics strongly supports and builds upon the ideas of writers like P. Berger and T. Lakoff in their article *The Social Construction of Reality*. They argue that concepts related to duties and obligations arise from the way society constructs reality, serving as guidelines for how individuals behave within their social environment. In line with this view, P. F. Stepanov (2007) points out that notions such as borrowing and duty are conceptual expressions of moral ideas embedded in language, reflecting fundamental cultural and ethical orientations. This suggests that fully understanding these concepts requires attention not only to their linguistic form but also to the cultural values they represent.

When one looks at those concepts of debt and obligation through language, there are various well-used tools available to researchers, namely conceptual analysis, contrasting languages, or looking into culture from a broader perspective. The comparative method becomes especially crucial because it brings home to us the fact that there can be quite disjointed interpretations of these ideas among various cultures. For instance, scholars like A. M. Shcherba (1977) and V. V. Vinogradov (1986) have carried out an important comparative study of moral concepts across languages. In doing so, they have made it clearer how culture and language shape people's views of right and wrong. There are also studies targeting how these moral concepts filter into the language itself. Let me take Russian as an example; researchers such as I. V. Dyakonov (2010) and S. I. Petrov (2015) have established that morality and religion are intricately entwined in everyday speech. But we still know very little when it comes to Kazakh, and there have been few studies that have taken a thorough look into how debt and obligation work in the cultural context of that language. Comparison of the Kazakh and English languages can bring both cultural uniqueness and some similarities to the forefront in people's thoughts on these heavy topics.

The goal of this research work is to understand and compare the expression and understanding of the concepts of debt and obligation in Kazakh and English cultures. The study basically focuses on the linguistic resources with which the main notions are expressed, and with which the cultural associations and moral values of these notions are linked in two languages. Thus, a great deal of contribution to linguocultural studies will be made, which will, in other words, provide a deeper insight into the function of moral concepts in intercultural communication. This work is important because it deeply explores the linguocultural side of the category's «debt» and «obligation» in different cultures. This, in turn, allows for a more focused distinction as to how moral norms and values are perceived, while pointing out some shared understanding of these concepts in Kazakh as well as in English.

Literature review

Looking into concepts like debt and obligation from the viewpoint of linguistic cultural studies and theolinguistics opens up a fascinating area in cross-cultural research. These ideas don't just mirror social and moral rules. They also carry layers of history, religion, and

cultural identity that are unique to each group of people. What's important to remember is that these concepts mean different things in different languages, which makes studying them even more interesting when we want to understand cultural identity through language. This review will cover some key theories and show how different research methods shape the way we understand debt and obligation in both Kazakh and English cultures.

The *linguocultural approach* examines two fundamental aspects of linguocultural research: language and culture. In his 1996 work *Language as a Cultural Phenomenon*, M. Sverdlov (1996) emphasizes the necessity of identifying cultural characteristics through linguistic expressions, particularly within moral domains such as *debt* and *obligation*. He asserts that "any word and expression in culture bears historical and social significance", a point especially pertinent when analyzing these concepts. Backing this view, R. Syzdykova (2006), a scholar from Kazakhstan, maintains that, in the collective Kazakh cultural psyche, the terms *debt* and *obligation* are side by side with «morality» and «religion» and all of these affect the social relations and norms of behavior.

Conceptual analysis and linguocultural studies are essential to tracing the production and transformation of moral notions in and across languages and cultures. For instance, K. Zhumabekova (2022) investigates the contemporary Kazakh social vocabulary and its conceptual framework, demonstrating that *debt* and *obligation* are embedded within social responsibility and cultural values. Her work offers valuable insights into the ways the Kazakh language expresses moral principles and how these ideas influence interpersonal relations. Similarly, S. Shayakhmetova (2023) explores the moral and ethical dimensions of these concepts within the Kazakh language, connecting them to traditional customs and cultural practices. V. Shakhnarovich (1998), in his work *Cultural Aspects of Lexical Semantics* (1998), claims, «Concepts related to duties are at the center of the national and religious worldviews, and they form a social organization». This viewpoint is especially Aristotle-like in analyzing how such concepts manifest in different cultures. It emphasizes understanding the lexical expressions in which these concepts find their utterance and the cultural meanings they carry.

Theolinguistics evaluates how language moulds and mirrors religious and moral beliefs. With debt and obligation as primary examples, it is evident that Christianity has influenced English-speaking cultures in this respect, including family and civic duties. In contrast, Islam, as the central religion for Kazakhs, influences these concepts as religiously and legally binding duties toward God and society. Syzdykova (2006) reports that for the Kazakh culture, the idea of debt is hardly separable from obligations toward both God and society at large. These foreign studies are also supported in arguing for the importance of religion in influencing moral views by Lakoff and Johnson, who contend in *Metaphors We Live By* that «the metaphors that underlie concepts determine how we perceive such notions as morality and debt» (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 58).

When it comes to comparing concepts of debt and obligation, *comparative analysis* is paramount as it exposes language-specific terms unique to each culture and also similarities across cultures. The methodology by Sverdlov and Shakhnarovich has proved particularly fertile because both scholars have worked with vocabulary and phraseology to open up deep cultural meanings and values behind them. An important distinction can be noticed in framing *debt* in English and Kazakh linguistic views. In English, having a debt is often seen in a negative light with regard to personal responsibility, especially when issues of financial and legal matters are concerned. Kazakhs, meanwhile, consider debt beyond the individual, including moral, familial, and religious obligations, to promote a collectivist orientation. This is supported by Lakoff's view in his book *The Nature of Human Thought* that thoughts and concepts are not simply

expressions of language, but reflections of social norms and rules, which gives us an excellent framework to understand how cultural attitudes shape the interpretation of these concepts in each society.

Importance of Previous Research. Kazakh and international scholars significantly contributed to the elucidation of the concepts underlying various ethical norms juxtaposed with social expectations and interpersonal relations, thus enhancing the importance of linguocultural and theolinguistic studies in these ideas concerning moral and social obligations. The works of V. V. Shakhnarovich, M. Sverdlov, and R. Syzdykova, as well as those pertaining to Lakoff and Johnson, provide a valuable platform for investigating cultural and religious-based dimensions underlying how various societies perceive the terms of indebtedness and obligation. Giving these concepts a linguocultural and theolinguistic analysis within a Kazakh versus English framework enables us to follow the course of meaning within different worldviews and traditions. Concepts of these notions express not only the society's moral values, but also actively create religious and social norms that set limits to individual conduct within certain cultural frameworks.

Research Methodology

The quest is to analyze and compare the linguistic properties of the concepts of *debt* and *obligation* in the Kazakh and English cultural contexts. Due to the nature and multidimensionality of the subject matter, choosing just one method would result in a flatter or more restricted analysis. The methodological framework is holistic and multidimensional. An integration is made among conceptual, linguistic, and cultural levels of analysis, allowing an understanding of how these concepts are operationalized in each language and culture. It means to use the methods of conceptual analysis, comparative linguistics, and cultural semantics so that the terms might be investigated in their respective sociocultural settings. Such an integrative view is all about rich and detailed data with a balanced perspective. The application of these methods takes the research beyond just a comparative study of languages. It lies within the Sociolinguistic research domain and sheds light on how moral and social categories are embedded within language and culture.

To examine the concepts associated with the words *debt* and *obligation* in Kazakh and English cultures, an integrated methodological approach is essential. This approach includes conceptual analysis, comparative methods, and linguistic analysis. These tools not only help uncover how these concepts are expressed through language but also shed light on the cultural and societal frameworks in which they are embedded. Among these, conceptual analysis serves as a core method for identifying and describing the semantic content of *debt* and *obligation* across languages and cultures. This method focuses on the mental structures that underlie these concepts and investigates how they are represented in lexical form. One of the early scholars to define the foundation of conceptual analysis was Y. Kapanadze (2019), who proposed that concepts should be viewed as mental representations articulated through the linguistic units that shape them

In the context of the Kazakh language, the concepts of debt and obligation are deeply rooted in traditional moral and ethical norms. These concepts reflect a strong orientation toward social responsibility and the cultural principle of mutual obligation. In this regard, the research conducted by Shayakhmetova S. (2023) and Zhumabekova K. (2022) plays a key role in revealing the cultural specificity of such normative categories. Shayakhmetova (2023), for example, explores how these concepts are closely tied to Kazakh traditions and the social expectations that shape daily life. Her analysis highlights the embeddedness of *debt* and *obligation* within customary practices and collective moral codes. Zhumabekova (2022), on the other hand,

investigates the broader system of social values in Kazakh culture, focusing particularly on how notions of obligation operate within public and interpersonal norms.

Comparative analysis of cultural concepts. A comparative approach is essential for examining the similarities and differences in how the concepts of *debt* and *obligation* are understood across cultures. In this context, comparing Kazakh and English cultural frameworks offers valuable insights into how cultural background shapes the perception and use of these terms. Wierzbicka (1992) emphasizes that even when lexical equivalents exist across languages, their conceptual meanings can differ significantly due to underlying cultural traditions. For example, in English, the term *obligation* often evokes associations with legal duties, formal commitments, and institutional frameworks. In contrast, the Kazakh understanding of similar concepts may extend beyond formal structures to include deeply rooted moral, familial, and communal responsibilities. Such distinctions highlight how shared vocabulary can conceal culturally specific values and worldviews.

Linguistic study will investigate the lexical encoding of the concepts of *debt* and *obligation* through language, usually via metaphorical and idiomatic constructions reflecting deeper cultural values. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that, with metaphors such as «*responsibility is a debt*» or «*moral duty as repayment*,» the abstract moral concept is tied to a concrete experience. In Kazakh, the expressions “*qaryzyn oteu*” (қарызын өтеу – repay your debt) and “*zhurtqa zhardem беру – adamdyq boryshyń*” (жұртқа жәрдем беру – helping the community is your human duty) reflect the social and moral side of an obligation. Other culturally loaded Kazakh expressions include “*ana sütin aqtau*” (ана сүтін ақтау – to repay mother’s milk), pointing toward the duty of a child to their parent; “*ata-ananyñ aldynda boryshyñdy oteu*” (ата-ананың алдында борышыңды өтеу – to repay your debt to your parents), implying moral expectations placed on an adult child towards their elder, and “*ata-baba amanatyna qıyanat zhasamau*” (ата-баба аманатына қиянат жасамау – not to betray the trust of ancestors), reflecting the plurality and intergenerational nature of obligation. One series of metaphorical phrases in English conveys binding contracts, either on a moral or legal scale, but in a more individualistic and/or institutional setting: “*to owe a debt of gratitude*”, “*to carry a burden of responsibility*”, “*to answer the call of duty, and to be duty-bound*”. The examples provided by the linguists suggest that the two languages have in their respective everyday languages some form of social and ethical value systems; so, we must consider that debt and obligation are concepts enmeshed in the philosophy of culture on a social plane.

Cultural Context in Cognitive Understanding. Kaal (2014) insists that cultural context substantially determines the meanings of concepts such as debt and obligation. Debt, for the Kazakhs, is associated with honor and reciprocal assistance, particularly for relations within the family and clan, where cooperative relations stand as the basis of social life. The general perception in England, however, tends to be more formalized, with meaning attached to a framework of laws or rules of conduct. These cultural distinctions shine through in folklore and literature. The Kazakh epic tradition presents a debt felt by a hero to his family and clan as a defining moral characteristic. Conversely, 19th-century English literature, with examples from Charles Dickens and Jane Austen, views debt in the first instance as an issue of individual moral responsibility, with ethical and social ramifications going beyond mere economic or legal ones.

Thus, employing conceptual, comparative, and linguistic analyses in the study of the concepts of *debt* and *obligation* enables the identification of significant cultural differences in how these notions are perceived within Kazakh and English cultures. The selection of these methods is justified by the necessity to consider cognitive, linguistic, and cultural factors, all

of which contribute to the diverse interpretations and meanings these concepts hold across different cultural contexts.

Results and discussion

Meaning of debt in Kazakh culture: In Kazakh culture, the word debt possesses several meanings aside from financial obligations. It can refer to moral debts owed to the community or traditional debts toward an elder or a relative. This plurality reveals deeply rooted cultural values concerning respect for elders and a predominantly collectivist view of life that have found expression in language itself. For example, in Kazakh, there is a saying that goes like this: «*Qaryzdy qaitaru–parız*» (қарызды қайтару– парыз – to pay off a debt is an obligation), which enforces the importance of debt repayment, hence marking that, on moral grounds, it has to be paid off without any delay (Zhumabekova, 2022). Kazakh *debt* is not just money owed—it's actually tied up in ideas of respect, honor, and responsibility. For instance, one might say: «*Qaryzdy ötemegen adamdy ömir tozdyrady*» (қарызды өтемеген адамды өмір тоздырады) which translates to «A person who never settles their debt will have a miserable life”. This indicates how much it matters to settle one's dues, not just economically, but because it upsets someone's conscience and reputation in society. There is another adage, «*Qaryz aldyм деп жақсы күннен бас тартпа*» (қарыз алдым деп жақсы күннен бас тартпа), which urges one to take every opportunity to pay one's dues and not shirk the responsibility. And «*Qaryzynı toleu – adamdyq ar*» or to pay one's debt is a matter of dignity» expresses a very firm sense of personal honor invested in doing so. Then there is «*Boryshyn bile bil*» or «*Know your duty well*», which instructs one to know and be earnest about their responsibility.

Debt in English culture is legal, social, and moral debt with a stress on personal responsibility. Shakespeare, on the other hand, advised in Hamlet: «*Neither a borrower nor a lender be; For loan oft loses both itself and friend*», emphasizing the risk of borrowing and harm to friendships. The line «*a debt unpaid is a sorrow to the debtor*» reflects the predicament of anxiety caused by non-payment of debts. «*Charity begins at home*» is one of those sayings that also reminds us that one's most urgent obligations are all too often to kin, as in Kazakhstan with its tight sense of family obligation. Other phrases such as «*To give someone their due*» or «*Paying one's dues*» emphasize justice and being due respect for responsibility. And «*Honesty is the best policy*» combines everything with trust and doing the right thing. These examples show that obligation and debt are not merely about money or contracts. They involve assumptions and values regarding how individuals should behave towards one another, either in Kazakh society or in English society. In the English cultural heritage, debt is not only economic but also moral and social. In the expression «*It is your debt to help*», for instance, the word debt is metaphorical, i.e., an obligation or a responsibility of a moral or social nature which has to be paid according to expected norms of ethics. This idiomatic usage positions assisting others within the framework of return—restatement of social equilibrium rather than exchange.

In Kazakh, such conceptions of *obligation* are communicated through a range of culturally charged terms, among them *qaryz*, *páriz*, and *mindet*. Although *qaryz* most commonly suggests debt in the economic sense, it also involves moral responsibility, particularly within family or community society. *Paryz*, which is so Islamic in its morality, would be employed to suggest a religious obligation — something obligatory under spiritual or moral law. *Mindet*, by contrast, suggests an obligation or duty imposed, normally by social ranks or jurisdiction. One quite vivid example of the Kazakh understanding of moral obligation is contained in the epic «Manas», a classic of Turkic oral tradition. In *Manas*, one saves one's own kind at the expense of one's security and personal interest for the sake of a felt not option, but religious obligation to one's

clan and motherland. These stories mark the manner in which social debt is an ethical obligation in Kazakh ideology. The sense of obligation to one's society is not honored — it is demanded.

This cosmology is also expressed in folk wisdom. The proverb «*Qaryzdy ötemegen adamdy ömir tozdyrady*» (A man who doesn't repay a loan will die a wretched death) summarizes a belief that unpaid loans — financial, moral, or social — upset the equilibrium of being. Repayment in this case is a restoration of not only social balance but of the internal order of justice. In Kazakh culture, failure to meet an obligation is not just personal failure, but a distortion of a higher cosmic balance.

In English, words like *debt*, *obligation*, and *responsibility* have a dense semantic field connoting moral as well as legal commitment. English thought regarding debt is individualistic and legalistic in nature, casting duty in terms of personal responsibility, civic membership, or contract. This is accomplished in phrasings such as «*It is my debt to defend my country*», in which the sense of debt invokes a national identification and moral obligation underlying civic duty (Smith, 2007). English literature also demonstrates this view. In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the conflict between social obligation, moral obligation, and family obligation gives rise to character development in Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy. They are both driven by extensive personal codes of conduct and implicit social contracts. Darcy's pride at first and later moral consciousness reveal the conflict between social obligation and personal choice typical of the English moral system (Irsalieva, 2025).

The Kazakh language, on the other hand, conveys the idea of *debt* and *obligation* in terms of culturally derived words such as *qaryz*, *paryz*, and *mindet*, each one of which has distinct connotations based on common values. *Qaryz*, literally debt, not only refers to financial obligations but also to profound moral commitments, that is, to family, community, and kinship. *Paryz*, used interchangeably with *qaryz*, stresses a religious or moral obligation, a preoccupation with a higher metaphysical sense of obligation towards one's family, fatherland, and culture. This difference is aptly brought out in Kazakh literary heritage. The philosopher is constantly suggesting in Abai Kunanbayev's *Kara Sozder* (Words of Edification) that real happiness in life is not in individual achievement but in doing one's work responsibly for people and family. For Abai, a man's moral height is measured by how well he works for his people, not by ambition, but through adherence to inherited custom (Shaiahmetova, 2023). In Kazakh society, therefore, *debt* is not merely an exchange or a legal status. It is an ethical column that references one's identity and purpose. Popular wisdom, oral poetry, and introspective philosophy all converge on a worldview in which defaulting on one's *paryz* not only causes individual shame but social and even spiritual dissonance.

In Anglo-Indian and wider English-speaking cultures, the word *debt* takes on a more nuanced meaning with civic, moral, and legal accountability. In these cultural contexts, *debt* is typically accompanied by individual responsibility, especially in the realms of public service and social responsibility. While the word does imply communal ties, its emphasis tends to fall on personal liability and the individual's internalized moral compass. This stands in contrast to the Kazakh conceptualization of *debt*, where the term inherently presumes collective responsibility — a shared *duty* to family, tribe, and society at large (Kaal, 2014). This inconsistency also appears in other cultural stories. In John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, for example, the main character, Tom Joad, grapples with family obligation and the movement for more social justice. His sense of obligation includes both an emotional connection with his family and a growing awareness of oppression by society. The story uncovers a quintessentially Anglo-American dilemma: how far can individual responsibility go before it clashes with one's rights or with opposition to institutionalized injustice? Analogously, in English medical discourse, the *debt*

metaphor can be similarly used for caregiving and self-sacrificing relatives, again typically to emphasize the collision between selfish preservation and obligation to others. Here again, the notion of debt emerges as a moral reckoning — a personal burden that must be balanced, not collectively shared.

In contrast, Kazakh epics and oral tradition articulate a markedly different ethos. In texts such as *Alpamys Batyr*, the hero’s actions are guided by a deeply ingrained sense of communal duty. Alpamys, despite facing personal danger and hardship, risks and ultimately offers his life for the well-being of his people. His *qaryz* is not limited to familial loyalty but extends to the entire nation, illustrating how Kazakh culture conceptualizes debt as a sacred, inherited obligation (Syzykova, 2003). These cultural models reveal a fundamental divergence: while English discourse often treats *debt* as an internalized, often negotiable commitment, Kazakh discourse frames it as a collective, unconditional moral imperative. The Kazakh hero does not question whether he owes his people; the debt is a given. By contrast, the English protagonist must often weigh, justify, or redefine the terms of his moral contract.

The idea of *debt* to family, country, and society is deeply ingrained in English cultural consciousness and usually expressed through literature and law. Here, *debt* is no less moral and emotional than it is financial or contractual, and often creates a dichotomy between individual wants and public or familial *obligations*.

The same motif can be found in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, though in a domestic and social rather than a tragic one. Elizabeth Bennet, the novel’s heroine, has to balance the expectations of social convention and filial obligation with her own needs. Her choices typically come down to a compromise between her emotional independence and her obligation as a daughter in a class-based society. In both instances — Elizabeth and Hamlet — the figures are defined by the burdens of moral obligation to kin, which embody the much-worn theme of inner turmoil wrought by conflict between personal liberty and ancestral responsibility (Irsalieva, 2025). What unites these stories is the insistent English literary tradition’s probing of moral obligation: usually imagined as an existentially binding force that binds not merely legally or socially, but existentially. From Hamlet’s paralytic tragedy or Elizabeth’s diplomatic negotiation of social tightropes, English literature situates debt as an emotional and ethical exchange, fiercely intimate, yet regulated by larger communal codes.

What this implies is that within English culture, *debt* to the family or to society is not merely a weighty burden beyond the self, but a pivot upon which selves and character decisions turn. This is an area where this *debt* is performed in literature, but also tested, internalized, and, in certain instances, renegotiated.

Table 1: Definitions of the concepts “debt” and “obligation”

Aspect	Kazakh Culture	English Culture
Debt	<i>Qaryz</i> – covers both material (e.g., borrowed goods, money) and non-material forms (e.g., duty to family, clan, society).	<i>Debt</i> – includes legal (financial) and metaphorical (moral/civic) meanings, often tied to individual accountability.
Obligation	<i>Paryz</i> – emphasizes moral and spiritual duty to community, relatives, and nation. Often framed as a sacred or inherited responsibility.	<i>Obligation</i> – refers to moral or legal responsibility, especially in civic or contractual contexts. Emphasis on personal duty and choice.

Cultural Focus	Collective responsibility, duties rooted in social harmony and ancestral continuity.	Individual responsibility, duties linked to the social contract, and personal ethical decisions
Semantic Range	Strong link to concepts of honor, sacrifice, and loyalty within the family and societal structure.	Often highlights tension between private will and public duty (e.g., literature, law).
Literary Examples	<i>Alpamys Batyr, Kara Sozder</i> (Abai) – characters fulfill debt to family and nation regardless of personal cost.	<i>Hamlet, Pride and Prejudice, The Grapes of Wrath</i> – protagonists wrestle with obligations to family/society vs. personal desires.
Moral-Ethical Dimension	Moral failure to fulfill a debt is seen as shameful and spiritually damaging.	Ethical conflict is often portrayed as an inner struggle; responsibility is seen as an individual moral choice.

This research focused on the cultural and linguistic conceptualization of *debt* and *obligation* notions in Kazakh and English cultures. From the analysis, it was found that the two cultures explain and perceive these concepts differently due to variations in values, history, and social norms. *Debt* and *obligation* in Kazakh culture are inseparably intertwined with collective responsibility, familial duty, and social balance, but in English culture, they are likely to follow individual responsibility, the law, and personal righteousness. Beyond these variations, however, a common thread runs through the two cultures: in both cultures, the standards ultimately congeal around a common sense of moral responsibility — a moral obligation that informs human relationships and social conduct.

Conclusion

One of the most characteristic aspects of Kazakh conceptualization of *debt* is that it is deeply grounded in collectivity, family, and respect for elders. Such linking is not only established at the language level but is also clearly apparent at the level of cultural practice with regard to familial and clan duty. English culture, on the other hand, tends to conceptualize the notion of *debt* in terms of man's obligation to society at large, including legal and societal obligations. Such cultural differences affect usual social behavior and manifest themselves in each nation's literary and folklore heritage.

Particular attention in the current work is given to the semantic analysis of words and expressions with these notions, i.e., proverbs, sayings, and blocks of idioms. For example, the Kazakh proverb «*Jauyngerdin zholy – kyzmetinde, eldin zholy – yeldi süyde*» (roughly translated as «A warrior's path is in service, the people's path is in loving people») evokes a social feeling of responsibility and dedication. The second illustration is the English proverb «*Debt is the soul of a man*», which similarly expresses the profound moral perception of duty, individual and collective. These examples most clearly illustrate how language reflects culturally specific concepts of responsibility and obligation and exhibits the tie between individual morality and shared values.

The results of this study make it possible to carry out large-scale additional research in linguocultural studies and comparative conceptual analysis in cultures and languages. Additional research can include associated concepts like honor, conscience, and *debt* to the Motherland, and their cultural interpretation and transformation in different linguistic

communities in greater depth. In addition, it is required to examine how these ideas emerge due to recent developments in society, particularly under the pressures of globalization and migration, which may have the potential to fundamentally alter moral and social norms (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Most pressing is the development of research on intercultural communication, in which respectful awareness of alternative views toward *obligations* and *duties* becomes paramount to optimizing effective communication between cultures. It should be mentioned that moral duties are historically contingent, socially diverse, and religiously influenced, and these all point to the importance of cultural sensitivity in the intercultural setting. It is important to be sensitive in this respect if mutual respect is to be promoted and misunderstandings avoided in a more globalized and multiculturalized world. The meanings of responsibility and debt are of supreme importance in the field of intercultural communication, particularly in our globalized modern world. Different perceptions of the two words in different cultures bring about differences in interpretation in various fields of international politics, commercial deals, and personal relationships. Proper knowledge of how differently cultures signify and comprehend notions of duty and responsibility is essential to avoid misunderstandings due to the encounter of differently constructed cultures.

Hence, one must proceed to study these phenomena from the viewpoint of intercultural communication, analyzing their manifestation and use in different areas of life. To deepen our understanding of cultural differences in debt and obligation, we may develop more productive international cooperation and create communication strategies that are harmonious and culturally diplomatic in the contemporary world.

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**Қазақ және ағылшын тілдеріндегі «қарыз» және «парыз» концептілерінің
лингвомәдени аспектісі**

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада қазақ және ағылшын тілдеріндегі «қарыз» және «парыз» ұғымдарының лингвомәдени ерекшеліктері қарастырады. Зерттеуде ұғымдардың әрбір мәдениетке тән моральдық құндылықтары, әлеуметтік тәжірибелері және тарихи контекст негізінде қалай қалыптасатыны талданады. «Қарыз» пен «парыз» ұғымдары әмбебап болғанымен, олардың мағыналары мәдени тұрғыдан ерекше болып, әртүрлі дүниетанымдар мен моральдық талаптарды көрсетеді. Қазақ дәстүрінде қарыз және парыз ұғымдары ұжымдық бірегейлікпен, әлеуметтік тұтастықпен, сондай-ақ берік отбасы мен көршілік байланыстармен тығыз байланысты. Бұл ұғымдар өзара көмек, жомарттық және қоғамдық үйлесімділік секілді әлеуметтік нормалардың негізі болып табылады.

Ал ағылшын тілдес мәдениеттерде қарыз бен парыз көбінесе жеке жауапкершілікпен, заңды міндеттемелермен және келісім-шарттық міндеттермен байланыстырылады. Ағылшын тіліндегі терминология дарашылдыққа бағытталған, жеке борыштар мен құқықтарға, тәуелсіздікке басымдық береді, ал ұжымдық міндеттерге көңіл бөлінбейді. Бұл зерттеуде салыстырмалы семантикалық және контекстуалдық талдау әдістері қолданылып, мәдени модельдердің тілде қалай көрініс табатыны және олар түрлі социомәдени контексттердегі адамдар арасындағы қатынас пен күтуге қалай ықпал ететіні зерттелді. Зерттеу нәтижелері мәдениаралық коммуникацияны түсінуді кеңейтіп, тілдің моральдық және әлеуметтік нормаларды көрсетудегі рөлін айқындайды.

Түйін сөздер: қарыз, парыз, қазақ дүниетанымы, ағылшын мәдениеті, моральдық жауапкершілік, әлеуметтік нормалар, мәдениетаралық коммуникация.

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**Лингвокультурные аспекты концептов «долг» и «обязанность»
в казахском и английском языках**

Аннотация. Данное исследование посвящено лингвокультурным особенностям понятий «долг» и «обязанность» в казахской и английской культурных моделях. В работе рассматривается, как эти концепты формируются на основе моральных ценностей, социальных практик и исторического контекста, характерных для каждой культуры. Несмотря на универсальность понятий «долг» и «обязанность», их значения проявляют значительную культурную специфику, отражая различные мировоззрения и моральные требования. В казахской традиции понятия қарыз (долг) и парыз (обязанность) тесно связаны с коллективной идентичностью, социальной солидарностью, а также крепкими семейными и соседскими связями. Они являются основой социальных норм взаимопомощи, щедрости и общественной гармонии.

В противоположность этому, в англоязычных культурах долг и обязанность зачастую ассоциируются с личной ответственностью, юридическим обязательством и договорными отношениями. Лексика английского языка отражает индивидуалистический подход, делая акцент на личных обязанностях, правах и автономии, а не на коллективных обязательствах. В данном исследовании применён сравнительный семантический и контекстуальный анализ с целью изучения того, как подобные культурные модели отражаются в языке и влияют на поведение и ожидания в межличностных отношениях в различных социокультурных контекстах. Полученные результаты расширяют понимание межкультурной коммуникации и роли языка в отражении моральных и социальных норм.

Ключевые слова: долг, обязательство, казахское мировоззрение, английская культура, моральная ответственность, социальные нормы, межкультурная коммуникация.

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