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**THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF HAPPINESS
IN KAZAKH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES**

Abstract. This article explores the national and cultural specificities of the concept of “*happiness*” in Kazakh and English through a comparative linguocultural and cognitive analysis. The research is grounded in a qualitative paradigm and aims to uncover the relationship between language and culture, as well as the unique features of national worldviews. The main objective is to identify the conceptual structure, semantic field, metaphorical models, and national-cultural representations of the notion of “*happiness*” in both languages. The analysis includes three main components: an etymological overview, a linguocultural examination based on paremiology and set expressions, and the interpretation of data from a semi-structured survey. Paremiological analysis shows that in Kazakh, “*baqyt*” is often portrayed as a gift or blessing that comes from outside (“the bird of happiness”, “fortune shines”), while in English, “*happiness*” is typically viewed as a state resulting from personal action and choice (“Happiness is a choice”, “Happiness blooms from within”). The metaphorical models associated with happiness in Kazakh include “light”, “bird”, “blessing”, and “gift of fate”, whereas in English, the metaphors revolve around “path”, “flower”, “light”, “choice”, and “product”. The survey was conducted in Almaty and East Lansing, with responses from 30 Kazakh-speaking and 30 English-speaking participants. The interview questions focused on the personal and cultural perceptions of happiness. The semantic dominants, motivational characteristics, and cultural associations of the concept differ significantly between the two languages. The methodological framework of the study includes interpretive-phenomenological analysis, conceptual metaphor theory, as well as comparative and discourse-based linguistic approaches. The research material consisted of data from literary texts, proverbs, idioms, and natural discourse. The entire text and survey response data were plotted with Python in the Jupyter Notebook.

Keywords: concept of happiness; cognitive model; qualitative research; expressions; metaphors

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**ҚАЗАҚ ЖӘНЕ АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛДЕРІНДЕГІ
«БАҚЫТ» ҰҒЫМЫНЫҢ КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИЯСЫ**

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақалада «*бақыт*» концептісінің қазақ және ағылшын тілдеріндегі ұлттық-мәдени ерекшеліктері салыстырмалы-лингвомәдени және когнитивтік тұрғыдан талданады. Зерттеу сапалық парадигмаға негізделіп, тіл мен мәдениет арасындағы өзара байланысты, ұлттық дүниетаным ерекшеліктерін анықтауға бағытталған. Зерттеудің мақсаты – қазақ және ағылшын тілдеріндегі «*бақыт*» ұғымының концептуалдық құрылымын, мағыналық өрісін, метафоралық модельдерін және ұлттық-мәдени репрезентацияларын анықтау. Талдау үш негізгі бөлімді қамтиды: этимологиялық шолу, паремиологиялық, тұрақты тіркестерге негізделген лингвомәдени талдау, және жартылай құрылымдалған сауалнама нәтижелерінің интерпретациясы. Этимологиялық тұрғыдан, қазақ тіліндегі «*бақыт*» сөзі көне түркі «*бақ*» ұғымымен байланысты, рухани, мистикалық және тағдыршыл сипатқа ие. Ағылшын тіліндегі «*happiness*» сөзі бастапқыда сәттілік, тағдырмен байланысты болса, қазіргі қолданыста ішкі қанағат, психологиялық жайлылық, жеке еркіндікке негізделеді. Паремиологиялық талдау барысында қазақ тілінде «*бақыт*» ұғымы көбінесе

сырттан келетін сый, құт ретінде сипатталады («бақыт құсы», «бағы жану»), ал ағылшын тілінде «*happiness*» — адамның әрекетімен қалыптасатын, таңдауға негізделген күй ретінде көрініс табады («*Happiness is a choice*», «*Happiness blooms from within*»). Метафоралық модельдер қазақ тілінде — «нұр», «құс», «құт», «тағдыр сыйы», ал ағылшын тілінде — «жол», «гүл», «жарық», «таңдау», «өнім» ретінде танылды. Сауалнама Алматы және Ист-Лансинг қалаларында жүргізіліп, 30 қазақ және 30 ағылшын тілді респонденттердің жауаптары талданды. Сұхбат сұрақтары «*бақыт*» ұғымының дербес және мәдени қабылдануына бағытталды. Талдау нәтижесінде қазақ респонденттері үшін бақыт — отбасы, ата-ана разылығы, Құдаймен үйлесім сияқты сыртқы және рухани факторларға негізделсе, ағылшын респонденттері үшін бақыт — еркіндік, өзін-өзі дамыту, ішкі үйлесім сияқты ішкі, психологиялық факторларға байланысты. Мазмұндық доминанттар, уәжділік сипат пен мәдени ассоциациялар екі тілде де түбегейлі ерекшеленеді. Жобаның әдіснамалық негізіне интерпретациялық-феноменологиялық талдау, концептуалдық метафоралар теориясы, салыстырмалы және дискурстық лингвистикалық әдістер енді. Зерттеу материалы ретінде көркем мәтіндерден, мақал-мәтелдерден, қанатты сөздер мен табиғи дискурстардан алынған деректер пайдаланылды. Барлық мәтіндік және сауалнамалық деректер Jupyter Notebook платформасында Python көмегімен визуализацияланды.

Тірек сөздер: бақыт концептісі, когнитивтік модель; сапалық зерттеу; тұрақты тіркестер; метафоралар

Сілтеме жасау үшін: Кульманова З.Б., Гримм А. Қазақ және ағылшын тілдеріндегі «бақыт» ұғымының концептуализациясы. *Tiltany*, 2025. №3 (99). 61-73-бб. (ағыл. тілінде)

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КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИЯ ПОНЯТИЯ «СЧАСТЬЕ» В КАЗАХСКОМ И АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

Аннотация. В данной статье проводится сравнительно-лингвокультурный и когнитивный анализ национально-культурных особенностей концепта «*счастье*» в казахском и английском языках. Исследование основано на качественной парадигме и направлено на выявление взаимосвязи между языком и культурой, а также особенностей национального мировоззрения. Целью исследования является определение концептуальной структуры, семантического поля, метафорических моделей и национально-культурных репрезентаций понятия «*счастье*» в казахском и английском языках. Анализ включает три основных раздела: этимологический обзор, лингвокультурный анализ, основанный на поговорках и фразеологических единицах, а также интерпретацию результатов полуструктурированного опроса. С этимологической точки зрения, казахское слово «*бақыт*» восходит к древнетюркскому «*бақ*», связанному с духовностью, мистикой и судьбоносностью. Английское слово *happiness* первоначально обозначало удачу, везение, но в современном употреблении акцент смещен в сторону внутреннего удовлетворения, психологического комфорта и личной свободы. Паремнологический анализ показывает, что в казахском языке «*бақыт*» воспринимается как внешнее, посланное свыше благо («*бақыт құсы*» — «птица счастья», «*бағы жану*» — «везение»), тогда как в английском языке *happiness* трактуется как результат выбора и действий индивида («*Happiness is a choice*», «*Happiness blooms from within*»). Метафорические модели также различаются: в казахском языке счастье ассоциируется с понятиями «свет», «птица», «благодать», «дар судьбы», а в английском — с «путём», «цветком», «светом», «выбором», «продуктом». Опрос был проведён в городах Алматы и Ист-Лансинг (США) и охватил 30 казахоязычных и 30 англоязычных респондентов. Интервью были направлены на изучение личного и культурного восприятия понятия «счастье». Результаты анализа показали, что для казахских респондентов счастье в первую очередь связано с внешними и духовными факторами — семьёй, родительским благословением, гармонией с Богом. В то время как для англоязычных респондентов счастье определяется внутренними, психологическими факторами — свободой, самореализацией, внутренним покоем. Содержательные доминанты, мотивационные особенности и культурные ассоциации в двух языках существенно различаются. Методологическая основа исследования включает интерпретационно-феноменологический подход, теорию концептуальной метафоры, сравнительно-лингвистические и дискурсивные методы. Все текстовые и опросные данные были визуализированы с использованием платформы Jupyter Notebook и библиотек Python.

Ключевые слова: концепция счастья; когнитивная модель; качественное исследование; выражения; метафоры

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Introduction

The concept of happiness has been at the center of philosophical, psychological, and societal thinking throughout the whole extent of human history. It's a fine, highly intimate experience that lies at the intersection of inner contentment, joy, and a feeling of purpose of life. As Anna Wierzbicka (2004)

states, “happiness is a culturally shaped concept that cannot be fully understood without reference to the worldview and social norms of a specific community” (Wierzbicka, 2004: 36). That is, although happiness appears to be a global emotion, its very definition and expression could be quite unexpectedly disparate in terms of cultures and languages.

Each culture borrows upon its unique history, social order, and value system to inform its conception of happiness. Language most frequently documents and recalls this conception, passing it from generation to generation as a shared cultural heritage. Language, therefore, does more than simply define happiness. Language influences the way human beings experience and seek happiness. Although Kazakh “*baqyt*” and English “*happiness*” do sound somewhat similar on the surface, their application in colloquial language, the cultural connotations that surround them, and the affective implications that attach to them can be quite distinct. That is why this research is significant. It examines what causes people to become happy through the merging of linguistic, cultural, and cognitive methods. Being aware of how feelings are expressed in language in such fields as psycholinguistics and intercultural communication is extremely helpful because it makes us aware of how people from different backgrounds feel and express their feelings.

In almost every respect, what happiness is a matter of national conception and values, and what that is can vary with cultural context. Investigating this relationship between language and culture provides us with a means to observe how various societies describe and think about happiness. And while investigating how abstract concepts such as happiness are cognitively organized, it provides us with a glimpse into how they belong in an extended conceptual scheme of a culture.

This research aims to investigate the structure and development of happiness meaning in Kazakh and English, and identify their differences at the cultural level by a comparative, linguocultural approach. The research is concerned with how happiness exists in each of the vocabulary, idioms, and proverbs of both languages, and also investigates its cognitive models, metaphors, metonymies, and conceptual domains. Interviews are also employed in an attempt to know more about how individuals from the two cultures perceive and discuss happiness in the contemporary era.

Through the convergence of the knowledge of linguistics, psycholinguistics, and cultural studies, this research seeks to contribute to our knowledge of how and why emotions are deployed in language, how those expressions are culturally determined, and how ideas about happiness are lived differently everywhere. It's hoped that this research may bridge some of those cultural divides and promote a greater appreciation of the values and worldviews that cause people to live and create a happy life.

Materials and methods

This study is grounded in a qualitative research paradigm. A qualitative method was used because it provides a deep analysis of the studied phenomenon, its inner structure, sense layers, and cultural background. For this particular instance, a linguocultural and cognitive-comparative analysis was deemed most suitable. Employed research data are linguistic forms of Kazakh and English literature, oral folkloric tradition, proverbs, and natural, spontaneous oral and written speech (survey). The Kazakh resources encompassed the writings of writers like Abai, Shakarim, and Muqagali, as well as about 60 folk proverbs of Kazakh oral literature. English-language resources encompassed classical writers like William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, and George Orwell, as well as some of the writings of modern writers. The qualitative data were treated according to conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), and the model showed key metaphors employed to convey the concept of happiness in the two languages. In addition, proverbs and quotes from English-language culture (e.g., “*Happiness depends upon ourselves*”) were treated as valuable textual data for understanding cultural attitudes toward happiness.

A survey method was also employed during the research. Young people aged 20-30 who could speak Kazakh and English were interviewed. There were 30 Kazakh-speaking and 30 English-speaking participants (60 participants). The interviews were unstructured questions like: “*What does happiness mean to you?*”, “*Describe a time when you felt happy*”, and “*What does it take to be happy?*”. These questions were intended to give respondents a small opportunity to say for themselves regarding their views, cultural referents, and personal experience. Thereby offering greater insight into how the construct of happiness was cumulatively constructed through each national worldview.

The project was performed on the Jupyter Notebook platform, which provided an environment for interactive writing and running of Python (version 3.9+) code and data visualization. The text and

interview data collected were interpreted using interpretive-phenomenological analysis. It allowed the researcher to elicit from each participant unique experiences, feelings, and cultural understandings. Repeating themes, symbolic metaphors, and coded cultural language items occurred in the interview texts, which were subsequently categorized into cognitive domains and semantic fields.

Literature review

Although the concept of *happiness* is perceived differently across cultures, it has been widely studied from the perspectives of cognitive linguistics, intercultural communication, and psycholinguistics, particularly in terms of its meaning and conceptual structure. There have been a few studies that attempted to reveal the universal and cognitive basis of happiness as a meaning. Some of the most prominent work in this area includes the work of Anna Wierzbicka, Cliff Goddard, and Zhengdao Ye. Anna Wierzbicka is one researcher who has conducted comparative studies on the concept of happiness in languages. Based on the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) theory, she contends that the English term happiness lacks semantic equivalents in numerous other languages. In her view, “*What English speakers call ‘happiness’ is not a universal human concept; it is culturally constructed and shaped by individualistic ideology*” (Wierzbicka, 2004: 36). Her work highlights the culturally embedded nature of emotional concepts and emphasizes the limitations of assuming universal definitions across linguistic boundaries. Building on the same NSM framework, Cliff Goddard and Zhengdao Ye have conducted comparative studies on the representation of emotional concepts such as “*happiness*” and “*pain*” in various languages. Their research includes semantic explications in English, Chinese, French, Malay, and other languages, offering detailed cross-cultural comparisons of how these deeply personal experiences are expressed and understood (Goddard & Ye, 2014).

Happiness in the “*baqyt*” sense in the Kazakh language is deeply ethnolinguistic in origin and reflects national values. It is often strongly associated with communal, familial, and traditional cultural values. In her works, S. Abdramanova highlights the strong connection between the concept of “*baqyt*” and the Kazakh worldview. She analyzes the notion of happiness through commonly used metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and proverbs, noting: “*In the Kazakh understanding, happiness is linked to spiritual harmony, inner peace, and well-being... This is reflected in the semantic fields of words like ‘heart’, ‘luck’, and ‘fate’* (Abdramanova, 2022). In her 2023 monograph published by Brill, Abdramanova further explores the concept of “*heart*”, revealing its semantic and conceptual ties to *happiness*, *joy*, and the *inner world*. Similarly, B. Suiyerkul and A.K. Chakyroglu offers a comparative ethnolinguistic analysis of the verbal representations of *happiness* and *unhappiness* in Kazakh proverbs and sayings (Suiyerkul, Chakyroglu, 2014).

In contrast, within English-speaking cultures, *happiness* is more often associated with psychological well-being, personal achievement, and self-actualization. R. McLellan and colleagues (McLellan et al., 2022) have examined youth perceptions of happiness in Kazakhstan using both emic (culture-specific) and etic (universal) frameworks. Likewise, E.B. Hajdukova and her co-authors have studied cross-cultural understandings of happiness, analyzing how the concept evolves and is interpreted within specific cultural contexts (Hajdukova, Winter, McLellan, 2017).

Research into the concept of *happiness* is also active in Russian linguocultural studies. Karaulov introduced the idea of the *conceptosphere*, emphasizing that every culture maintains key concepts through language (Karaulov, 1987). E.A. Stefanova has also contributed to this field by examining the metaphorical representations of *happiness* in Russian and English, identifying notable cultural differences in how the concept is expressed and understood (Stefanova, 2019).

Results and discussions

I. *The Concept of “Baqyt” in Kazakh*. The Kazakh word “*baqyt*” (happiness) is part of the Turkic languages' lexical stock. It is based on the Old Turkic root “*baq*” with the productive suffix “-yt/-it”, which is a noun-forming one. In Old Turkic, “*baq*” conveyed meanings such as “*blessing, luck, abundance, success, and divine favor*”. According to Severtian (1974), the term “*baq*” was used in ancient Turkic to refer to “*goodness, fortune, blessing, and prosperity*”. In the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions (8th century), the word appears with meanings like “*the prosperity of the state*” and “*the grace of Heaven (Tengri)*”. In the inscriptions of Tonyukuk and Bilge Qaghan, the concepts of “*baq*” and “*qut*” (grace, sacred fortune) are presented as closely linked, often appearing together. The suffix -yt is a productive nominalizing affix in Turkic languages. In Turkic awareness, the concept of “*baq*” was not

limited to individual happiness, but to the prosperity of the whole kingdom, khaganate, state, and generations. One fundamental assumption in this system is that blessings issue from a supernatural source: “*baq*” is imparted by Tengri (God, Heaven). Moreover, it is connected to moral and ethical behavior: only those who live righteously are considered worthy of lasting “*baq*”. This is reflected in expressions such as “*qutty meken*” (blessed homeland), “*qut darygan zher*” (a place graced with fortune), and “*baq qongan shañyraq*” (a home visited by fortune). The word “*baqyt*” and its equivalents appear in many Turkic languages: in Kyrgyz, “*baktuluu*” means “happy” and “*bakyt*” means “happiness”; in Tatar, “*bähet*” and “*bähetle*” carry the same meanings. In modern Turkish, the word “*baht*” (influenced by Arabic and Persian) refers to “fate” or “luck”, while “*mutluluk*” is the contemporary Turkish equivalent of “happiness”. It is interesting that in contemporary Turkish, “*baht*” should most reasonably be understood to imply fate or destiny, and “*mutluluk*” to personal achievement and inner happiness. In mythological and poetical uses, Turkic mythology commonly has phrases such as “*baq qonu*” (arrival of fortune), “*baq ushu*” (departure of fortune), and “*baqtan airylu*” (loss of fortune). In these cases, “*baq*” is imagined as a living, autonomous entity. For example, the proverb “*Baq qongan er oñalar, baq taigan er tonalar*” (A man blessed with fortune prospers; a man abandoned by fortune is stripped of everything) reflects this view. The concept of “*baq*” is often mentioned alongside mythic and spiritual figures like *Qyzyr Ata*, *Arwaq* (ancestral spirit), and *Kieli qut* (sacred blessing), indicating that in Kazakh culture, “*baqyt*” (happiness) is not only a material state, but also a form of sacred or spiritual energy. Expressions such as “*Baq qonu*” (*Fortune arrived on its own*), “*Baq taidy*” (*Fortune turned away*), or “*Baq bermeidi*” (*Was not granted divine favor*) reinforce the idea that happiness is something bestowed from beyond – a gift that lies outside of one’s full control. Other expressions like “*Baqty zhan*” (*A fortunate / happy person*) or “*Baqty ashlydy*” (*His / her fortune opened*) suggest a state of spiritual or social harmony.

In Kazakh phraseology, “*baqyt*” is frequently depicted as a mystical and unpredictable force. Consider the following examples: “*Baqyt qusy qondy*” (The bird of happiness has landed – *a stroke of luck*), “*Baqyt köktemgi bult siyaqty, Ol körgen tüstei, ushqan qustai öte shyğady*” (Happiness is like a spring cloud – like a dream, like a flying bird, it quickly passes), “*Baqyt shybyn siyaqty – Birde gülge qonady, birde köñge qonady*” (Happiness is like a fly – sometimes it lands on a flower, sometimes on dung), “*Baq adassa, batpaqqa qonady*” (If fortune is lost, it lands in the mud), “*Baq tazdyñ basyna, Pushyqtyñ murnyna qonady*” (Fortune lands on a bald man’s head or a crooked nose), “*Baqtytyñ közi soqyr: ne tazğa, ne aqyly azğa qonady*” (Happiness is blind – it may land on a fool or someone undeserving), “*Baq keide taiyp qonady, keide auyp qonady. Taiyp qonsa, eskertedi, auyp qonsa esirtedi*” (Sometimes fortune finds the right place and teaches; sometimes it goes astray and deceives). These metaphors enhance the illusion of “*baq*” as a capricious, ephemeral power, a grace of fate, rather than a promise of effort. The insistence on using the bird again and again is a potent symbol of the fleeting, fragile quality of happiness. It may crash upon one, but equally as easily dissipate in a moment.

These phraseological expressions also suggest that happiness is something that cannot be firmly held or preserved. Phrases like “*Baq taidy*” (Fortune turned away) or “*Baq bermeidi*” (Was not granted fortune) portray happiness as a temporary, fate-dependent state, governed by a higher power. Such expressions tend to attribute happiness not to individual actions but to “*zhazмыш*” (destiny) – something predetermined or divinely written. In contrast, the expression “*Baqtyñ tapy*” (found happiness) implies that the individual has attained life balance, a suitable spouse, or meaningful work. Here, happiness appears as something that can be discovered, yet remains a rare and valuable achievement. The study of paremiological material (proverbs and sayings) allows for a deeper understanding of national worldviews and the cultural encoding of concepts. Proverbs serve as essential linguocultural sources where the cultural code of a concept is preserved. Comparing Kazakh and English paremias reveals that the concept of happiness is represented through different lenses in each culture. In Kazakh examples, such as “*Baqyt bailyqta emes, birlikte*” (Happiness is not in wealth, but in unity), we see a clear preference for collectivist values: happiness is not rooted in material prosperity but in social harmony and communal cohesion. Other expressions, such as: “*Baq qonsa – baqyr tastan nur shashar*” (If fortune arrives, even dull stone will radiate light), “*Baq qongangá – dauys times*” (No misfortune will strike one who has been blessed), “*Qūdai baq bergenge, aqyl da, dāulet te qonady*” (To the one whom God has granted fortune, wisdom and wealth will follow) – represent “*baq*” as a sacred gift (*qasiet*) bestowed by divine forces.

In Kazakh culture, “*baqyt*” is often metaphorized as a mystical power, a gift of fate, or a form of

spiritual equilibrium. Based on the analyzed textual and paremiological material, several cognitive models of “*baqyt*” have been identified.

1. *Cognitive Model: Happiness as “Qut” or “Näsip”*. In the Kazakh worldview, happiness is frequently conceptualized through the notions of “*qut*” (sacred grace) and “*näsip*” (divine provision or allotment). These terms represent spiritual-material blessings granted by a higher power, often perceived as divine gifts of sacred origin (Samuratova, et al., 2015). For example: “*Baq qaida barasyñ? – Baғы zhañgañga baramyn*” (Where are you going, happiness? – I go to the one whose fortune has risen) – reflects the belief that happiness is selective, drawn toward those with moral worth. “*Quty bar zhititiñ isi oñ bolar*” (The man blessed with grace will succeed) – suggests that happiness is inherent to one’s nature or destiny. “*Baq qonsa, tas ta söileidi*” (When fortune arrives, even stone will speak) – implies that with happiness, even the impossible becomes possible. “*Qutty qonaq kelse, qoi egiz tabady*” (When a blessed guest arrives, even sheep give birth to twins) – depicts happiness in the form of a sacred guest, bringing abundance and prosperity. “*Täñir bergen baqty pende tartyp ala almaidy*” (No one can take away the happiness given by God) – emphasizes divine ownership and agency. “*Asqan sulıyqtan az gana baqyt artyq*” (A little happiness is worth more than great beauty), “*Taudai talap bergenshe, barmaqtaı baq ber*” (Better a fingertip of fortune than a mountain of ambition) – both portray happiness as a rare gift of destiny, greater than talent or desire. In this model, the individual plays a passive role – a receiver or expectant, rather than an active seeker. Happiness is not something earned, but something bestowed, often unexpectedly, from a divine source.

2. *Cognitive Model: Happiness as “Light” or “Radiance”*. In most literary books, happiness is symbolically described as light, glow, or radiance. Paradigm perceives happiness as an inner force that lights up the soul and raises the spirit. For instance: “*Közime baqtyñ nury (zhasy) úirildi*” (Tears of happiness welled in my eyes), a poetic expression illustrating the emotional lightness of happiness. “*Baqyt degen – nurlı köñil, arym taza ömirim*” (Happiness is a radiant soul and a life of pure conscience) presents happiness as spiritual clarity and moral integrity. “*Baqyttyñ shuağyna böleñdi*” (Bathed in the radiance of happiness) suggests that happiness is a source of warmth and light, a transformative and nurturing force. In this model, happiness is measured not through external achievements but through inner peace. At the same time, it carries an aesthetic dimension. It is something beautiful, bright, and deeply poetic.

3. *Cognitive Model: Happiness as “Mūrat / Asu / Climbing to Heights”*. In some texts, happiness is conceptualized through the imagery of climbing a mountain, conquering great peaks, or reaching one’s life goal (*mūrat*). In this model, “*baqyt*” (happiness) is associated with spiritual ascent, noble aspirations, and long-term life purpose. For instance, “*Baqyt – qol zhetpes shyñ emes, zhūrekpen tabatyn shyñ*” (Happiness is not an unreachable peak, but one found with the heart) portrays happiness as something that requires emotional depth rather than physical achievement. “*Baqyt asuyn ekinin biri bağyndyra almaidy*” (Not everyone can conquer the peak of happiness) frames happiness as a process-driven, aspirational state that must be earned. While this model emphasizes personal striving and progress, “*baqyt*” is still portrayed as something external to the self, a distant goal rather than an internal state.

4. *Cognitive Model: Happiness as “Health, Family, and Material Wealth”*. A widely accepted cognitive model in Kazakh culture presents happiness through the triad of health, family, and material well-being. One of the most well-known proverbs states: “*Birinshi bailyq – densaulyq, ekinshi bailyq – aq zhaulyq, úshinshi bailyq – on saulyq*” (The first wealth is health, the second wealth is a pure spouse [symbolized by the white headscarf], and the third wealth is livestock), positioning health as the foundation of happiness, followed by family harmony and material security. Another proverb says: “*Törteui tūgeldin töbesinde üi bar, törteui tūgel bolmasa – küi bar*” (One whose four values are complete lives in harmony; if not, they suffer). Here, the “*four values*” are often interpreted as wisdom, health, children, and property (sometimes also as a faithful spouse, contentment, health, and faith). These values together form the holistic image of happiness in traditional Kazakh society. Family is often at the center of this understanding. For example: “*Ata – asqar tau, ana – bauyryndaғы bulaq, bala – zhağasyndaғы quraq*” (The father is a lofty mountain, the mother a spring beneath it, and the child the reeds along its banks) illustrates the familial hierarchy and emotional roles: the father as a protector, the mother as compassion, and the child as a future hope. “*Bala – adamnyñ bauyr eti*” (A child is the flesh of one’s being) expresses the deep emotional and cultural value placed on children. “*Baq qonatyn*

adamnyñ uly epti, qyzy körikti bolady” (The one blessed with fortune will have a clever son and a beautiful daughter) shows that prosperous offspring are seen as signs of divine favor. Even physical well-being is metaphorically equated with happiness in poetic traditions. The *zhyrau* (traditional Kazakh poets) expressed this vividly: “*Eki köziñ oınaşa – Zhaqút emei nemene? // Eki qolyñ oınaşa – Baqyt emei nemene?!* ” (If your eyes are lively – is that not a jewel? // If your hands are healthy – is that not happiness?!) equating the vitality of one's senses and body with true happiness. In this model, “*baqyt*” is grounded in the tangible aspects of life: physical health, familial harmony, and material sufficiency – all seen as blessings that shape a fulfilling human existence.

5. *Cognitive Model: Happiness as “Mutual Respect and Unity”*. In Kazakh traditional oratory, “*baqyt*” (happiness) is typically described in terms of interpersonal harmony, respect, and social concord. It is more of a mood shared in public than an internal state. A well-known folk saying illustrates this beautifully: “*Baqyt – qolğa qongan qus. Bailyq – qolğa ұстаған muz. Qus ұshyp ketedi, Muz erip ketedi, Dúnieniñ qyzyғы – siz ben biz*” (Happiness is a bird that lands in your hand. Wealth is ice you hold in your hand. The bird flies away, the ice melts, but the true joy of life is you and me), portraying happiness not in possessions or status, but in meaningful relationships between people. Other proverbs emphasize this collective, relational nature of happiness: “*Zhyrtyq zherdi zhel tabar, Shyn baqty el tabar*” (The wind finds the torn cloth, true happiness finds the community) suggests that true happiness resides in national unity and social harmony. “*Yntymaq bar zherde baqyt bar*” (Where there is unity, there is happiness), “*Tatu úidiñ baqyty tasar, Araz úidiñ yrysı nashar*” (A peaceful home is full of happiness; a quarrelsome home lacks prosperity). These sayings reflect the deeply rooted belief that happiness is sustained through “*yntymaq*” (unity), “*syilastyq*” (mutual respect), and collective well-being. In this model, *baqyt* is a product of the community and shared values rather than individual pursuit.

II. *The English Word “Happiness”*: Etymological Origins and Historical Context. The English term happiness is from the happy root, which is from the Old English noun hap, “*luck*” or “*fortune*” (Oxford Etymological Dictionary, 2021). The noun “hap” itself is from Old Norse — specifically, from the word happ, which meant “luck” or “chance.” This etymological borrowing is a fine demonstration of the impact that Viking (Scandinavian) languages exercised on English development during the early Middle Ages. Examples of words derived from the hap root are:

- «*Hap*» (Middle English) – event, occurrence, or chance — (neutral: positive or negative)
- «*Hap+hazard*» – random or disorderly – literally from hap (chance) + hazard.
- «*Mis+hap*» – bad luck, misfortune – from mis- (wrong, bad) + hap (chance).
- «*Per+haps*» – possibly, maybe – from per (through) + haps (occurrences), i.e., “*through each chance*” or “*by chance*”.

Thus, the starting point hap has generated a cluster of words all emphasizing the role of chance, randomness, or destiny. Happiness in the past was also associated with external events or fortune turns of fortune more than with an inner state of mind. Over time, however, its meaning has shifted towards a more psychological and personal idea, a shift explained in later sections of this discussion.

In English, the concept of “*happiness*” is generally understood as an internal emotional state, the result of personal actions, and something that can be consciously controlled by the individual. Analysis of the British National Corpus shows that the word is often used alongside notions like *success*, *freedom*, and *life satisfaction* (Goddard, Ye, 2014). During the study, several conceptual models and metaphors for happiness in English were identified:

1. *Cognitive Model: “Happiness is a Reward or Treasure”*. In this model, happiness is seen as the outcome of one's good actions, inner purity, and self-discovery. It's not something you chase as an achievement in itself, but rather something that comes as a result of living rightly or meaningfully. Examples include: “*True happiness is the reward for being yourself*”, “*Happiness is the hidden treasure of a grateful heart*”, “*Happiness is the prize of a peaceful mind*”, “*Those who give without expecting receive happiness in return*”, “*Kindness brings unexpected happiness*”. These metaphors suggest that happiness is a consequence of character and spiritual growth. One must be worthy of happiness to receive it. This model reflects a moral and ethical view that happiness isn't just a random gift, it's something earned.

2. *Cognitive Model: "Happiness is Energy or Sunshine"*. In this model, happiness is compared to light, warmth, or sunlight, all forms of energy. Happiness lights up a person's inner world and radiates outward. For example: *"Let happiness light up your soul like sunshine"*, *"Her happiness radiated through the room"*, *"Joy is the sunshine of the heart"*, *"Happiness warms the coldest days"*, *"A smile is a spark of happiness"*. Here, happiness is seen as a kind of emotional energy that not only fills the individual but also spreads to those around them. It's something bright and warming, a positive force that influences the atmosphere and connects people.

3. *Cognitive Model: "Happiness is Balance or Harmony"*. This model views happiness as a state of balance between body and soul, inner thoughts and outer actions, being and doing. It's the harmony within a person and between their internal and external worlds. For example: *"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony"* – Mahatma Gandhi. *"Happiness is the balance between doing and being"*, *"Find harmony within to discover happiness without"*, *"When body and soul align, happiness flows naturally"*. In this view, happiness isn't tied to one moment or achievement. It's a steady state that comes from inner peace and alignment. It reflects an emotional and spiritual equilibrium, and this way of thinking is very close to Eastern philosophies like Buddhism and Hinduism.

4. *Cognitive Model: "Happiness is a Journey"*. In this, happiness is not a destination, but constant discovery and transit on the journey of life. Happiness is not a destination, it's a direction. Joy is not a point of arrival; it's a process. *"Happiness is a journey, not a destination"* – that saying acknowledges that joy is in the journey, not in the destination. *"The road to happiness is paved with self-acceptance"* – self-acceptance is where the journey to happiness starts; inner peace is deemed to be a requisite precondition. *"Happiness is found along the way, not at the end"* – happiness emerges not only at the finish line, but in the ongoing process. *"Each step in life brings its own happiness"* – every step of life contributes its own form of joy. *"Enjoy the little stops on your happiness journey"* – this suggests appreciating the small moments along the way. Happiness, in this case, does not lie in the attainment of a goal. Instead, it is a process, an affective state that happens in the middle of things. The difference between "journey" and "destination" confuses the very subtle observation of happiness as something that we do, instead of something that we reach.

5. *Cognitive Model: "Happiness is a Choice"*. Happiness, in this system, is not a consequence of external attributes like wealth, status, or achievement. Rather, it is a foregone consequence of will and conscious choice. Happiness doesn't happen to you. You choose it. Examples of metaphorical and aphoristic expressions include: *"Happiness is a choice, not a result"*, *"You choose to be happy every day"*, *"Create your own happiness"*, *"Choose joy over fear"*, *"You are one decision away from happiness"*. This model is deeply rooted in Western individualist thinking. It emphasizes that a person's life and happiness are in their own hands, not determined by society or external conditions, but by personal responsibility and inner conviction. This view is also widespread in existentialism and positive psychology, where the person is seen as the subject who gives meaning to their life. Commonly used words in these expressions include: *choice, decide, choose, create, make, empower, own* – all of which encourage action and self-agency. Words like *joy, happiness, peace, and freedom* describe the internal emotional state. According to the *"Happiness is a Choice"* model, the individual is an empowered subject who actively shapes their happiness. Freedom, responsibility, and conscious effort are central, making the person not just a seeker of happiness, but its creator.

III. *Analysis of Survey Findings: Cultural and Psychological Connotations*. The results of the survey portrayed the cultural and psychological differences in the Kazakh-speaking and English-speaking participants' perceptions regarding the notion of happiness. It was administered in Kazakhstan as well as the USA, with 30 participants in each country, totaling 60 participants. The participants were young teachers and university students (between 20 to 30 years old). The surveys were built around the following guiding questions: *"What does happiness mean to you?"*, *"Describe a time when you were really happy"*, *"What do you think is required to be happy?"*. The answers were coded according to content, conceptual form, and cultural semantics.

Question 1: *"What does happiness mean to you?"*

Table 1 – Definitions of the Concept of “Happiness” in Kazakh and English
 Кесте 1 – «Бақыт» ұғымының қазақ және ағылшын тілдеріндегі көрінісі
 Таблица 1 – Определения понятия «счастье» в казахском и английском языках

№	Kazakh Respondents	English Respondents
1	Happiness is inner peace, parental blessings, and health.	Happiness is personal freedom and mental balance.
2	Happiness is family, having children, and harmony.	Happiness is achieving goals and self-fulfillment.
3	Happiness is a blessing that comes from God.	Happiness is something you create.
4	Happiness is harmony with society and unity.	Happiness is psychological comfort and work-life balance.

For Kazakh interviewees, happiness is being in harmony with family and spirits, parents' well-being, peaceful existence, and good health. That is, a condition depending on one's environment and relationships.

For English-speaking interviewees, happiness equals personal independence, self-improvement, freedom of choice, and procedure of accomplishing goals, concepts that are primarily individualistic in nature.

Question 2: “Describe a time when you were really happy”.

Most commonly reported incidents by the participants were those involving family members, observing a child smiling, being blessed by parents or coming back home, and emphasizing those incidents occurring within the framework of a society or community.

English participants, by contrast, remembered instances of personal success, for example, having been able to decide on a career path, doing a gap year with voluntary work, being helpful to others, or taking responsibility as a member of society. These responses are focused on self-actualization and personal satisfaction.

Question 3: “What do you think is required to be happy?”.

Kazakh respondents listed parental blessings, health, peace, patience, family, and God's support as essential factors. Their responses show deep religious and cultural values. Happiness is likely to be associated with spiritual well-being, close family relationships, and divine will. For instance: “*Baqyt – bul ata-anamnyn amandyǵy men dúǵasy*” (Happiness is the well-being and prayers of my parents), “*Naǵyz baqyt – bala kúlisi men otbasymnyn zhymysy*” (True happiness is my child's laughter and my family's smiles), “*Baqyt – Allannyn maǵan bergen nesibesi*” (Happiness is the blessing that God has given me).

Representation of the concept “*happiness*” in the Kazakh and English languages is rooted in the historical development, worldview, and national psychology of both nations. The notion is treated as a most precious ideal in Kazakh and English languages as well, but according to qualitative research, its linguistic expression, semantic structure, and conceptual models are much different. The ontological knowledge (cognitive foundation) of happiness varies from culture to culture. In Old Turkic inscriptions (as in the Orkhon-Yenisei texts), “*baq*” meant “*kut*” (divine grace), state felicity, or God's grace. Next, the study identified seven distinct cognitive models of “*happiness*” in Kazakh and English, based on the analysis of proverbs, idioms, common expressions, and culturally embedded phrases. In the Kazakh worldview, happiness is perceived as a divine, spiritual, and mysterious gift. It is often associated with fate, “*qut*” (divine blessing), and sacred power. Here, the subject is primarily seen as a recipient rather than a creator. In the Kazakh language, happiness is considered something that comes from outside, from God, fate, or destiny. It is described as something that visits, may leave suddenly, and carries a mystical and unstable nature. Happiness is seen as: *light, blessing, a bird, a guest, a gift of fate, and abundance*. Emphasis is placed on collectivism, tradition, and spiritual values: *family, unity, health, descendants, and divine blessing are central*. In the Kazakh cultural concept, a person must be worthy of happiness, but cannot control or attain it by will. Happiness is a spiritual reward conditioned by moral and ethical behavior.

“*Baqyt*” (happiness) in Kazakh is a very spiritual, mystical, and transcendent category. It is often considered a gift from God (*qut*) from the Creator, society, or ancestral origin. It is often seen as a sacred

blessing (qut) granted by the Creator, society, or ancestral lineage. In many cases, “*baqyt*” is not something a person creates, but something that arrives with divine permission or societal acceptance. Meanwhile, “*happiness*” in Kazakh society can also be attributed to status, power, or prestige. Here, happiness is that which enhances one's status, gives one power over others, and commands respect and authority. In this case, the subject becomes powerful by possessing happiness, which is normally perceived as a privileged and lucky gift. This dual understanding reflects a blend of spiritual-moral values and social-collective orientation characteristic of traditional Kazakh thinking (Baissydyk, 2024).

In the English worldview, happiness is the result of a person's inner freedom and active efforts. “*Happiness*” is a state created through conscious choice and one's own power. The subject is creative and active. In English, happiness originates from within and is a state within a person's control. It is a process that is made, grows, and develops. English metaphorical expressions, such as happiness as a journey, sunshine, choice, a flower, and a product, are popular. English-speaking culture prefers individuality, realism, and development by oneself, such as self-realization, freedom, and responsibility. An individual is accountable for becoming happy by himself / herself in the English approach. Happiness is understood as an intuition, a choice, and the result of work and knowledge. The concept of “*happiness*” in English is rational, individual, and a psycho-emotional state, a result of a person's internal actions and free will. The development path of the English understanding of happiness has been identified as follows:

Table 2 – The evolution of the Concept of “Happiness” in English

Кесте 2 – Ағылшын тіліндегі «бақыт» ұғымының даму үрдісі

Таблица 2 – Эволюция понятия «счастье» в английском языке

Period	Word Form	Meaning	Language
12th–13th centuries	<i>Hap</i>	luck, fate, chance event	Old Norse
Middle Ages (English)	<i>Hap</i>	fortune, chance, event	Middle English
Later (14th–15th c.)	<i>Happy</i>	fortunate, lucky, in a good state	Late Middle English
Modern English	<i>Happiness</i>	joy, emotional comfort, well-being	Modern English

Initially, the word happy meant “*fortunate*” or “*favoured by fate*”. That is, someone who experiences good fortune or is lucky in life. Happiness refers to possessing favorable conditions and blessings, things given by fate or external circumstances. Today, however, happiness is being increasingly linked with internal emotional states and subjective well-being like “*psychological well-being*”, “*life satisfaction*”, and “*subjective fulfillment*”. This is a reflection of the expanding hegemony of the individualistic worldview in Western society. Particularly, destiny is no longer what has the determining power. It was recognized in the 18th century by thinkers like John Locke, Jeremy Bentham, and Thomas Jefferson as “*individual freedom*”, “*rights*”, and “*public good*”. The phrase “*the pursuit of happiness*”, which appears in the U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776), codifies this doctrine: happiness depends on man. To that end, contemporary theories of linguistics and psychology increasingly subscribe to such ideas as: “*Happiness is a choice*” polemics on the fact that happiness is dependent upon individuals' volition, “*Inner happiness*” – the theory that happiness finds its sources in concord within and emotional compatibility. They are all part and parcel of the larger cultural change in terms of conception and pursuit of happiness in contemporary English-speaking cultures.

The difference reflects the disparate worldview directions and mental models of the two cultures. In Kazakh culture, happiness will be more of an overall, fate-related, and spiritual ideal, whereas in English-speaking culture, it is more frequently tied to psychological states, interior processes, and individual taste.

IV. Survey results are summarized in the following table:

Table 3 – Comparative Analysis of the Concept of “Happiness”

Кесте 3 – «Бақыт» ұғымының салыстырмалы талдауы

Таблица 3 – Сравнительный анализ понятия «счастье»

Analytical Aspect	Kazakh Respondents	English Respondents
Source of Happiness	External factors (family, God, society)	Internal factors (freedom, personal decisions)
Dominant Themes	Family, parents, children, peace, fate, abundance	Freedom, self-realization, balance, motivation
Motivational Basis	Based on tradition, religion, and social responsibility	Based on individualism, pragmatism, and psychology
Value System	Collectivism, spirituality, fatalism, harmony	Individualism, autonomy, goal orientation
Understanding of Time	Measured not by the present, but by long-term spiritual peace	Measured by present and near-future emotional comfort
Agent of Happiness	Society, family, God – forces outside the individual	The individual themselves – a responsible subject of their own happiness
Path to Happiness	Patience, parental blessing, loyalty to values	Self-fulfillment, freedom of choice, psychological balance
Semantic Field (Associations)	“Amandyq” (well-being), “bereke” (abundance), “ata-ana” (parents), “tağdyr” (fate), “nesibe” (destiny/gift), “qanağat” (contentment)	“Freedom”, “control”, “goals”, “peace of mind”, “balance”
Metaphorical Models	Happiness = peace + family + divine provision	Happiness = purpose + freedom + inner equilibrium

This table clearly illustrates how the Kazakh worldview frames happiness within a collective, spiritual, and fate-driven context, while the English worldview emphasizes personal responsibility, emotional autonomy, and inner development. The findings of the survey were also visualized using Python in the Jupyter Notebook environment. The information was thematically categorized and depicted on a comparative bar chart using the Pandas and Matplotlib libraries. It allowed for having an easily understandable visual image of the psychological and cultural differences of Kazakh- and English-speaking respondents' understanding of the phenomenon of “*happiness*”.

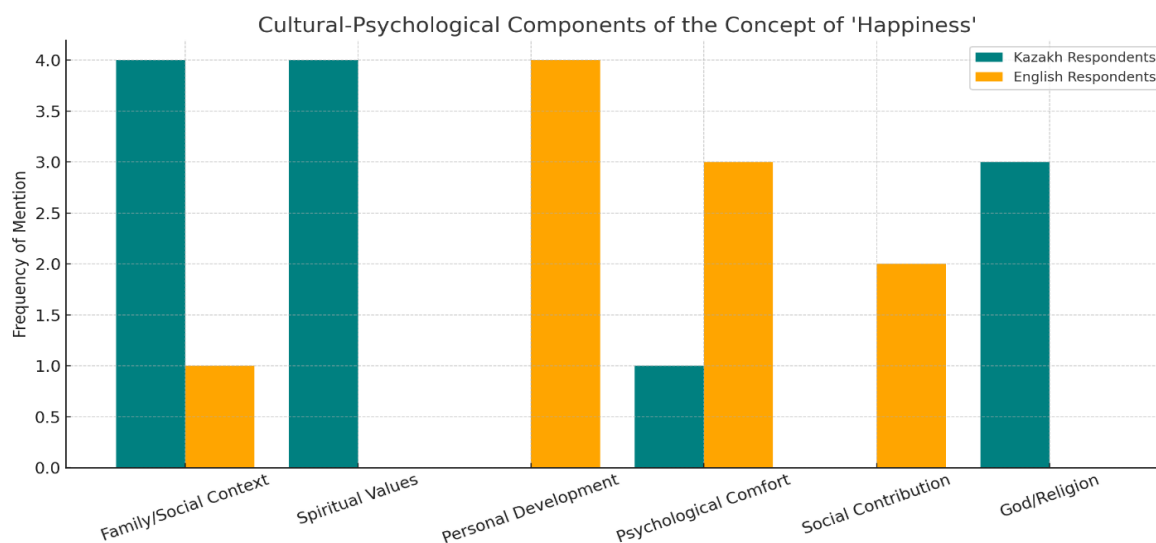


Diagram 1 – Evaluation of the Survey
 Диаграмма 1 – Сауалнама көрсеткіші
 Диаграмма 1 – Оценка опроса

The above diagram shows the frequency analysis of cultural and psychological differences in perception of the concept of “*happiness*” between Kazakh and English-speaking respondents. According

to content analysis, comparative visualization reflects the common themes within each group of respondents. Family / Social Context: This occurs much more often amongst Kazakh respondents (4 times more), which reflects a collectivist cultural orientation. Spiritual Values: Present strongly in Kazakh participants (n=4), but completely absent in English participants, highlighting religious and customary values as central in Kazakh culture. Personal Development: Present only with English participants (n=4), as expected from individualistic strategies of Western cultures. Psychological Comfort: Present among both groups, but differently interpreted: for Kazakhs as an indicator of inner peace; for English speakers, more in terms of work-life balance. Social Contribution: Observed exclusively in the English group, associated with volunteering and assisting others, reflective of concern for worthwhile social activity. God / Religion: Cited by Kazakh respondents only (3), showing a religiously orientated and God-focused worldview. The diagram navigates effortlessly and effectively the semantic and psychological differences between the two cultural groups within the concept of “happiness”.

For Kazakh respondents, happiness is strongly associated with religious and spiritual values, and religious and family values, like approval by parents, being at peace, and God's favor. English-speaking informants used the concepts of “harmony with society” and “peace of mind”. English-speaking informants quoted more egocentric and utilitarian values such as “personal growth”, “psychological balance”, “achievement of goals”, and “being useful to society”. Spiritual and cultural elements came into play only in responses of Kazakh informants, with utterly zero words in this context ever being given by English informants. Although psychological comfort was known by both groups, it was interpreted differently: with Kazakhs, it was translated as inner peace; with English speakers, it was imposing a work-life balance.

Conclusion

While the concept of “*happiness*” is universal, its structure and definition are manifold, yet one more observation of utmost value, both linguocultural and cognitive. Within Kazakh culture, the concept of happiness emerges from nomadic existence and religious-philosophic consciousness. It is closely connected with cooperation with nature, acceptance of destiny, spiritual maturity, and faith in an omnipotent power. To Kazakhs, happiness is not an atmosphere, nor a self-achievement. It is an embedded state of existence, a life in harmony with nature, elders, and the divine. In contrast to English-speaking cultures' logical, egotistical understanding of happiness, wherein happiness usually implies personal freedom, self-expression, and teleological accomplishment, Kazakh happiness is more concerned with collectivism, heritage, and religious relinquishment to destiny. These are not only reflections of language forms but also of deeper layers of historical, social, and philosophical experience.

As studies have demonstrated, language and culture are interrelated, and a concept presented in one language cannot be completely realized or comprehended in another. As a result, in intercultural communication, these linguistic and conceptual differences must be recognized to heighten mutual understanding, guarantee clear translation, and honor national worldviews (Sagatova, Nurligenova, 2020). The research in this field has basic scientific and applied value not just for linguistics, but also for cultural studies, translation studies, and international relations.

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