





DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32523/2616-678X-2025-153-4-75-93>

IRSTI 16.21.27

Research article

K.U. Yessenova¹ , A.K. Abdikarimova^{2*} 
Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan
(E-mail: ¹ kalbike_65@mail.ru, ^{2*} ainagulr@mail.ru)

COMMUNICATIVE-PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF KAZAKH HUMOR: REFLECTION ON NATIONAL VALUES

Abstract. This study explores the role of humour in Kazakh social life, demonstrating how it facilitates the preservation and transmission of cultural knowledge. The main purpose of the study is to show that humor is not only entertainment but also a form of social interaction through which values, norms, and shared knowledge are passed from one generation to another. To address this question, the study relies on a set of different approaches. The material is read closely to see how certain stylistic features appear, the meanings hidden between the lines are examined, and the social purpose of each humorous example is considered. In addition, the Kazakh material is compared with humor from other cultures.

The analysis draws on a mixed set of materials. For this research, examples were collected from older oral humor as well as from online platforms where modern users post short, humorous remarks. Examining them side by side makes it clear that older humorous patterns still surface in online communication. These features allow speakers to comment on social issues in a subtle and culturally acceptable way. The novelty of the research lies in combining traditional and digital humor within one communicative-pragmatic framework, demonstrating how cultural codes remain stable even as modes of communication change.

Keywords: Kazakh humor, communicative-pragmatic aspects, metaphors, intercultural comparison.

Received: 15.02.2025; Revised: 08.12.2025; Accepted: 23.12.2025; Available online: 29.12.2025

Introduction

For many Kazakh speakers, humor becomes a tool that supports the exchange of ideas, reduces social tension, and helps interpret ordinary patterns of behaviour. Despite its widespread use, many of its communicative and pragmatic layers remain insufficiently studied. Although researchers such as Raskin (1985), Attardo (1994), and Chiaro (2010) view humor as a socially shaped communicative act, their frameworks do not encompass several features that set Kazakh humorous practices apart. In particular, these approaches do not fully account for the reliance on indirect suggestion or for the moral and value-oriented nuances that often characterise Kazakh humorous expression. Within Kazakhstan, most academic work has examined how humorous texts are structured linguistically or which stylistic tools they rely on. While Abikenova and Kabysheva (2018) outline several recurring linguistic features, the cultural and social context in which humor functions has received far less attention. Traditional narrative figures such as Aldar Kose and Khoja Nasreddin show that humor has long been used to address everyday concerns and to offer subtle commentary on social behaviour. More recent humorous content shared on digital platforms shows that these established methods continue to evolve in response to new communicative environments. When viewed together, material from both oral tradition and contemporary online spaces suggests that Kazakh humor moves seamlessly across different periods and technologies, preserving familiar patterns while adapting them to changing conditions.

Important gaps nonetheless persist. Limited attention has been given to the role of implicit meaning, moral commentary, and interactional strategies. The influence of punctuation, digital platforms, and online discourse on the interpretation of humor has also not been examined in depth. Current research does not yet offer an approach that treats older oral humor and modern digital humor as parts of the same cultural continuum. The present study seeks to address these gaps by examining how humor contributes to cultural continuity, reinforces social relations, and communicates nationally significant meanings. Through a combination of textual, semantic, pragmatic, and comparative analysis, the study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how traditional and contemporary humor function within the same communicative landscape.

Aim The study aims to investigate how Kazakh humor supports cultural continuity and conveys socially and culturally meaningful ideas across both traditional and digital contexts.

Objectives The research examines the textual, semantic, and pragmatic features of humorous discourse; identifies how metaphor, implicit meaning, and value-based commentary operate within humorous texts; compares oral and digital humor in order to determine elements of continuity and transformation; and analyzes how technological platforms and written markers influence humorous interpretation.

Hypotheses The first hypothesis proposes that Kazakh humor encodes national values through metaphor, implicit meaning, and socio-cultural critique. The second hypothesis proposes that shifts to digital media change the external shape of humorous expression but do not alter its core communicative and pragmatic roles.

Scientific novelty

The scientific novelty of this study lies in its attempt to examine Kazakh humor through several complementary analytical dimensions, including textual form, semantic content, and pragmatic function. By placing traditional oral examples alongside humorous material that circulates in digital spaces, the research treats these sources as parts of the same cultural field. This approach makes it possible to see how earlier humorous practices continue to shape, and in some cases

influence, the development of humor in online environments. The findings also suggest that pragmatic features—such as indirect meaning, evaluative tones, and communicative intent—play an important role in articulating themes related to national identity and in maintaining continuity between different stages of humorous expression.

Literature Review

Foreign researchers have made great contributions to understanding what a joke is and how a joke is constructed and understood in a certain society. Expanding on this, their research toward understanding the semantics of humor helps us see virtually everything said in a joke in a whole new light. Raskin's (1985) claim that "humor is often understood and produced in relation to specific societal conventions" is already taken care of by the evidence in the text. This is also true for Kazakh humor.

Chiaro (2010) points out another dependency of humor: people who appreciate the humor and the setting in which it was uttered. Both the entity and the concept depend significantly on the comprehension of language and intellect, along with the context of the socio-political and economic factors. For example, studies based on information from Egemen.kz claim that social media is slowly changing the coverage of various forms of inter-cultural humor (Egemen.kz, 2023).

Kazakh scholars have engaged comprehensively with the communicative and cultural aspects of Kazakh humor, arguing that it must be emphasized in identity politics. As indicated, Ilyasov (2012) argues that the use of ethnic jokes in modern debates requires new directions of information presentation. In other words, the world has communication models that evolve with time, which means new levels of creativity in communication design. Kazakh laughter grapples with social issues as explained: "This fosters social order while simultaneously promoting justice" (Rakhymzhan, 2020, p. 79). Kopen maintains that what is called a "fundamentally unsound practice" is used to instill morality and decorum in youngsters (Amirbek, 2015, p. 72). "The framing story of Kazakh humor is a stylized way of preserving the nation's values" (Abikeeva & Kabysheva, 2018, p. 25). Zhunis (2020) considers how communicative contexts of family discourse operate around interpersonal aspects and culture, observing: "Family-oriented humor is a smaller version of the comprehensive set of culture and social etiquette" (p. 123).

Yeskermessova (2017) notes that punctuation serves not only to organise text but also to shape the rhythm and emphasis that enhance humorous expression in writing. Following this view, Kalybaeva (2020) argues that humor remains culturally meaningful only when language practices evolve alongside contemporary usage while still reflecting traditional patterns. In Kazakh humorous expression, figurative devices such as metaphor, hyperbole, and various implied meanings are used extensively and add depth to the discourse. Lexical gaps also influence how Kazakh humor develops. The expression «Шапан жапты, жылық мінгізді» "encasing in a chapan and offering a horse" reflects long-standing ideals of generosity and respect in Kazakh culture. In humorous contexts, such phrases act as cultural signals that help maintain shared ethical and social values (Seilbek et al., 2018). Although these works shed light on important aspects of Kazakh humor, certain questions remain open, especially regarding how humor adapts to digital communication. BrandAnalytics.kz (2023) notes that online platforms now shape the circulation of humorous material, exposing it to broader audiences while preserving the cultural nuances embedded in it.

Taken together, the reviewed studies indicate that humor continues to play a meaningful cultural role in Kazakh society. It not only supports the transmission of values and offers

social critique but also blends traditional forms with newer expressions, allowing it to remain meaningful within contemporary society. Addressing the research questions already mentioned will provide a more coherent view of the evolving position of Kazakh humor in national and global society.

When foreign and Kazakh studies are viewed together, it becomes clear that each tradition approaches humor from a different perspective. Writers such as Raskin (1985), Attardo (1994), and Chiaro (2010) tend to rely on broad linguistic or communicative concepts when explaining how humor works. Their analyses often turn to semantic mechanisms, the contrast between different scripts in a joke, and the influence of context on interpretation. These ideas are useful for describing the general logic behind humorous expression, yet they do not always capture the finer cultural details that shape humor within specific communities. In contexts where humor depends on subtle implication, culturally shared references, or underlying moral messages, such general theories may overlook important ways in which humorous meaning is formed.

Kazakh scholars begin from a different place, treating humor as something closely tied to local traditions and everyday forms of social interaction. Abikeeva and Kabysheva (2018) draw attention to the stylistic and linguistic elements that shape the unique character of Kazakh humorous discourse. In his study of public communication, Ilyasov (2012) notes that ethnic humor reflects broader shifts occurring in everyday social relations. Focusing on the family sphere, Zhunis (2020) finds that humorous interactions within households reveal underlying cultural values and behavioural expectations. Research by Amirbek (2015) and Makulbekuly (1997) turns to traditional humorous narratives, suggesting that these stories help preserve cultural memory and convey moral understandings across generations. Taken together, this scholarship reveals that Kazakh humor is firmly rooted in the cultural environment that shapes it.

In addition, insights offered by Yeskermessova (2017) and Kalybaeva (2020) provide further perspectives that are particularly relevant to the present study. Yeskermessova (2017) investigates punctuation from a communicative-pragmatic perspective and demonstrates that written markers influence timing, emphasis, and interpretation in humorous texts, an area that receives little attention in foreign scholarship. Kalybaeva (2020), examining the stability and evolution of Kazakh orthography, argues that linguistic adaptability is essential for humor to remain meaningful in modern digital contexts. These contributions help explain how humor moves between older oral forms and emerging digital formats. Viewed together, the two strands of research offer insights that complement one another. Research from outside Kazakhstan tends to focus on the general principles that make humor work, while Kazakh scholars pay closer attention to forms of humor that reflect local cultural habits — for example, indirect ways of speaking, symbolic hints, or moral colouring. Taking both bodies of scholarship into account helps show how humor functions in Kazakhstan across different contexts, including traditional oral narratives and the digital modes that have recently become widespread.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to understand how Kazakh humor helps sustain cultural identity and passes national values from one generation to another. To address this aim, the research draws on a set of clearly defined objectives and uses materials selected for their relevance to the topic. The study approaches humor as both a theoretical concept and a methodological tool, building on the issues highlighted in earlier work (Abikeeva & Kabysheva, 2018).

The research addresses several questions related to the discourse and pragmatic analysis of humor in Kazakhstan. One of the issues explored at this stage concerns the parameters of metaphor, verbal irony, and hyperbole in Kazakh humorous discourse. Another aspect of the analysis focuses on how humor communicates and questions social values, with particular attention to the ways cultural norms and moral expectations appear either directly or through subtle implication in humorous texts (Ilyasov, 2012). The study also situates Kazakh humor alongside traditions from other cultures, allowing for a comparison that highlights which features are distinctly tied to Kazakh cultural experience and which align with broader patterns observed in earlier research (Attardo, 1994; Seiilbek et al., 2018).

The study relies on qualitative methodology and employs a range of analytical techniques appropriate to the material under consideration. In the textual analysis, attention is given to stylistic choices that influence humorous meaning, such as metaphor, exaggeration, and similar techniques (Raskin, 1985). The semantic analysis then focuses on the cultural meanings embedded in humorous expressions, especially those conveyed indirectly rather than stated outright (Attardo, 1994; Seiilbek et al., 2018). The pragmatic analysis turns to the social environment in which humor appears, paying attention to the speaker's purpose, how the audience responds, and the wider communicative functions humor can fulfil (Abikeeva & Kabysheva, 2018). Finally, the comparative stage examines Kazakh humorous practices alongside those from other cultural settings, noting where they diverge and where they share common ground (Aliakbarova, 2015).

The study relies on two main types of material. The first group includes traditional humorous sources such as oral stories, proverbs, and well-known tales associated with figures like Aldar Kose. These sources help show how humor took shape within the Kazakh cultural context and how, over time, it has been used to address social and moral themes (Abikeeva & Kabysheva, 2018). The other group of material comes from the digital environment and includes memes, short videos, and widely shared trends on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. These examples reveal how humor responds to new technological conditions and the cultural changes that accompany them (Egemen.kz, 2023). All conventional and digital materials were analyzed with sensitivity to cultural context (Duysebekova, 2019). Ethical considerations include the protection of user privacy and adherence to established guidelines for the use of online data, following principles outlined in recent studies on media research and digital communication (BrandAnalytics.kz, 2023).

Findings and Discussions

In Kazakh humorous forms, metaphors play an important role. Metaphors transform words into artistic depictions that can be applauded or appreciated. A good example of Khoja's is «Желді қуып, қалтама салып қойдым», "I chased the wind and put it in my pocket", which shows his exaggerated sophistry. This metaphor does more than describe everyday events; it encourages the listener to imagine reality in a more open and creative way.

Discussion:

Metaphors clearly reveal the figurative thinking characteristic of Kazakh culture, where indirect speech is highly valued. They condense complex experience into short, memorable images that are easy to recall yet rich in meaning. The expression «Желді қуып, қалтама салып қойдым», "I chased the wind and put it in my pocket" demonstrates the creativity and philosophical depth of the Kazakh worldview. Traditional figurative resources—such as metaphor and proverb—continue to support the preservation and transmission of cultural

values, even as humorous expression shifts into formats like memes and brief digital videos. Through these devices, Kazakh humor maintains its cultural grounding while adapting to the storytelling conventions found across contemporary online platforms. As humor spreads through platforms like TikTok and Instagram, these enduring elements continue to shape its resonance and contribute to the reinforcement of national identity (InfoHub.kz, 2022).

Exaggeration, together with other stylistic resources, forms another noteworthy strategy employed by Kazakh humorists. It stretches and amplifies some flaws and problems of society, making it more captivating to its readers. Hyperbole as a technique seeks to grab the focus of the audience, compelling them to query and analyze. Example: Aldar Kose’s remark «Сенің қойларыңды айдап әкеттім...» – “I drove off with your sheep...” playfully exaggerates the behaviour of the wealthy, turning greed into a comic image.

In such cases, hyperbole caricatures social traits, inviting listeners both to laugh and to reflect on how similar attitudes may appear in real life.

Discussion:

This strategy in Kazakh humor allows serious ideas to be presented in a playful form. Exaggeration draws attention to certain patterns of behaviour and encourages the audience to look more critically at everyday social reality. The targeted examination of metaphors, hyperboles, and implicit meanings demonstrates the communicative-pragmatic nature of Kazakh humor. These linguistic devices illuminate how jokes serve three key purposes: The structural components of humorous texts are the means of demonstrating the national ideals. These include metaphors and hyperboles, along with what serves their purpose so well. What these factors do is preoccupy the audience with fun in readiness for controversy. Textual analysis reveals and delves into the structural features of the humor of Kazakhs. Metaphors serve an aesthetic purpose, which is to portray truths, while hyperboles serve the purpose of critiquing and educating.

Table 1. Structural elements and communicative functions of Kazakh humor

Structural element	Example	Function
Metaphor	«Желді қуып, қалтама салып қойдым» – “I chased the wind and put it in my pocket.”	Delivering truths figuratively
Hyperbole	«Сенің қойларыңды айдап әкеттім...» – “I drove off with your sheep...”	Critiquing social inequality
Lexical peculiarity	«Шапан жапты, жылқы мінгізді» – “Wrapping in a chapan and gifting a horse.”	Representing national culture

Note. Adapted from Amirbek (2015, p. 68) and Yeskermessova (2017, p. 267).

Structural elements of humor are described in Table 1. These structural components serve to increase the impact of Kazakh humor on the audience and strengthen the tools for the expression of national culture.

Semantic Analysis

Objective: To analyze humor texts for underlying meanings and language-specific features, as well as their representation of culture.

Analysis Results.

Implicit Meanings. One of the most important aspects of the content of Kazakh humor is the

implicit meanings. They reveal certain truths without openly stating them, requiring the audience to think hard. Example: Understanding the phrase, «Қойларың көкке зар, бірақ жайылымға бармайды...», “Your sheep long for green grass but avoid pastures full of it,” deals with the greed and injustice of those who are rich. This type of humor is very implicit. The Kazakh people use such humor to mock and scorn societal inequality and injustice. Understanding a certain type of humor in its entirety means appreciating the meaning and the context behind it.

Discussion:

Implicit meanings allow listeners to have an alternative view of the perception of reality. They provide some distinctive features of the Kazakh mental picture and act as a technique for social criticism in an artistic manner.

Lexical Peculiarities.

The national lexicon used in humorous texts functions as a symbolic code of Kazakh culture. Many words and expressions in Kazakh humorous discourse are culturally grounded, helping to sustain traditional values and to express themes linked to national identity. The saying «Қойларың көкке зар, бірақ жайылымға бармайды...» – “Your sheep long for green grass but avoid pastures full of it” uses an indirect image to criticise greed and injustice in society, hinting at these problems rather than naming them openly (Attardo, 1994, p. 23). Through this kind of implicit meaning, humorous texts invite the audience to reconsider shared moral norms and to think more carefully about questions of fairness and responsibility. A related example is the expression «Шапан жапты, жылқы мінгізді» – “wrapping in a chapan and gifting a horse,” which encodes ideas of generosity, honour, and respect that are deeply embedded in Kazakh cultural tradition. Such phrases assist the audience in understanding the linchpin of the Kazakh culture. In addition, phrases such as «Жақсы адамның ізі қалады» ‘leaving a mark from a good person’ showcase the permanence and continuity of the national values’ pillars.

Discussion:

Lexical peculiarities are one of the most important factors in the intergenerational transfer of national values. These factors in humorous texts help blossom the spiritual and cultural treasure of the Kazakh people. They depict the history, traditions, and life values of the nation through the prism of language.

Table 2. Features and cultural significance of Kazakh expressions

Type of expression	Example	Feature	Cultural Significance
Implicit	«Қойларың көк шөпке зар...» «Your sheep long for green grass...»	Calling attention to social issues	Highlighting socio-economic challenges
National	«Жақсы адамның ізі қалады» «Leaving a mark from a good person»	Reflecting the cultural code of Kazakhs	Emphasizing moral values
Symbolic	«Шапан жапты, жылқы мінгізді» «Wrapping in a chapan and gifting a horse»,	Preserving traditional values	Celebrating cultural rituals
Proverbial	«Ең жақсы ұстаз — өз тәжірибең» “The best textbook is your own experience!”	Communicating practical knowledge	Transmitting life lessons

Note. Based on Amirbek (2015, p. 72) and Seilbek et al. (2018, p. 76).

Features and cultural significance of Kazakh expressions are presented in Table 2. «Analysis of the semantics stresses the importance of implicit meaning and lexical differences in the form of national identity. Such differences enrich the content of the Kazakh humor and give it the status of an educational and cultural aid. This table shall demonstrate the subject-specific characteristics of Kazakh humor and its importance within the framework of culture. For example, implicit meanings and national lexicon are essential in comprehending the socio-cultural ethos of the Kazakh people.

Pragmatic analysis: Humor in world culture

Objective: To consider the role of a humorous text, its influence on an audience, its educational benefit, and the social and communicative functions of such humor.

Emotional Impact. One of the key features of humor is its capacity to manipulate the audience's feelings by engaging and controlling their thought processes, shaping their opinions. Mynbai Aga (Uncle Mynbai) once humorously remarked, «Ең жақсы ұстаз — өз тәжірибең.» "The best textbook is your own experience!" – and this serves to prompt the audience to appreciate their life experiences and learn more from them. Such humor evokes emotional engagement towards essentialism, which encourages the audience to seek a much greater understanding of reality (Amirbek, 2015, p. 89).

Discussion:

Such remarks capture the audience's attention and inspire them to reconsider important aspects of everyday life. It demonstrates that humor is not simply an entertaining tool but can also be a source of inspiration. **Communicative Purpose:** humor is an important means to highlight socially controversial issues, disguised truths, and in the name of justice. **Example:** One popular humorous remark about education states that "Grades do not always reflect a student's real abilities," pointing to the gap between formal assessment and actual knowledge (Makulbekuly, 1997, p. 34)

Discussion:

Most people use humor not for making funny things out of life but for focusing the audience on the major problems existing in society. People tend to accept facts to which they are exposed when they are given cleverly disguised argumentation using humor, thus one can pay attention to the values of society.

Figure 1. Audience Perception of Humor

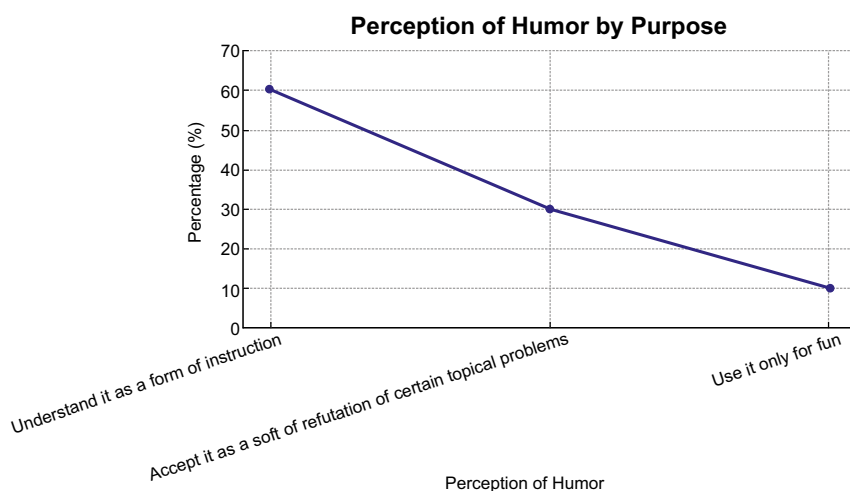


Figure 1 illustrates the degree to which Kazakh humor influences its audience: Note. Based on data from BrandAnalytics.kz (2023).

- 60% – Understand it as a form of instruction.
- 30% – Accept it as a sort of refutation of certain topical problems.
- 10% – Use it only for fun.

Conclusion of Analysis. The goal was to develop an understanding of Kazakh national humor from a pragmatic perspective. Humor serves not only to entertain people but also as an eye-opener that guides them in the seeking of truth. Emotional Impact: Humor captures the minds of people and arouses thoughts and personal evaluation. Communicative Purpose: Promote social concern and morality in society. It is this very fact that confirms the role of humor as a means of expressing the national idea and worldview of the audience.

Intercultural comparative analysis

Purpose: Let us compare and contrast the unique features of humor in Kazakhstan in relation to the rest of the world. Kazakhstanis seem to have a unique type of humor that is different from other cultures because of its metaphorical, implicit and educative qualities. This specialty enables Kazakh jokes to serve as a means of preserving the nation’s identity and developing relations between different cultures. The importance of Kazakhstan’s humor in world culture lies in the fact that it depicts issues common to all people without compromising the unique identity of the nation. Kazakhstan’s way of seeing the world, his way of life, and his values can be better understood through his humor.

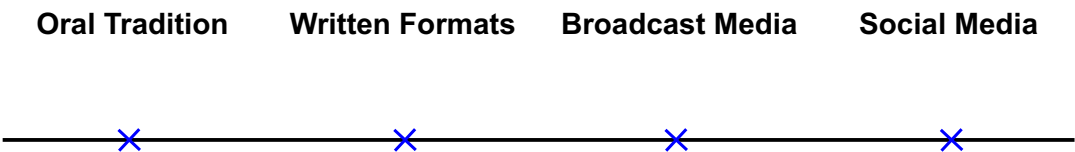
Table 3. Intercultural Comparison

Culture	Key Features of Humor	Difference from Kazakh Humor
Kazakh	Metaphor, implicit meanings	Rooted in national traditions
English	Sarcasm, irony	Often critical and direct
Japanese	Literary-poetic content, politeness	Focused on light humor

Note. Adapted from Attardo (1994, p. 45) and materials from *Martebe.kz* (n.d.). Kazakh humor has evolved over centuries, reflecting the cultural, societal, and technological transformations within Kazakhstan. Rooted in oral traditions, Kazakh humor initially relied on wit and storytelling to convey social critiques and preserve cultural values. In recent decades, technological advancements and globalization have significantly reshaped the formats and reach of Kazakh humor, transitioning it from spoken word to digital formats like memes, videos, and text-based jokes.

This study explores the evolution of Kazakh humor, focusing on its modernization through social media, its role in addressing social issues, and its significance in cultural preservation. Kazakh humor addresses societal norms and challenges through non-confrontational critiques, promoting reflection and progress.

Figure 2. Timeline of Kazakh humor evolution



Note. Based on information from *InfoHub.kz* (2022) and *BrandAnalytics.kz* (2023). The timeline highlights the shift from oral storytelling to digital platforms, emphasizing the adaptability of Kazakh humor to technological advancements. It was created by the author using Python-based visualization tools in 2025. Description: Figure 2 shows a horizontal timeline marking key milestones, starting from oral traditions to written formats, broadcast media, and social media. Purpose: To visually depict the historical trajectory of Kazakh humor’s development.

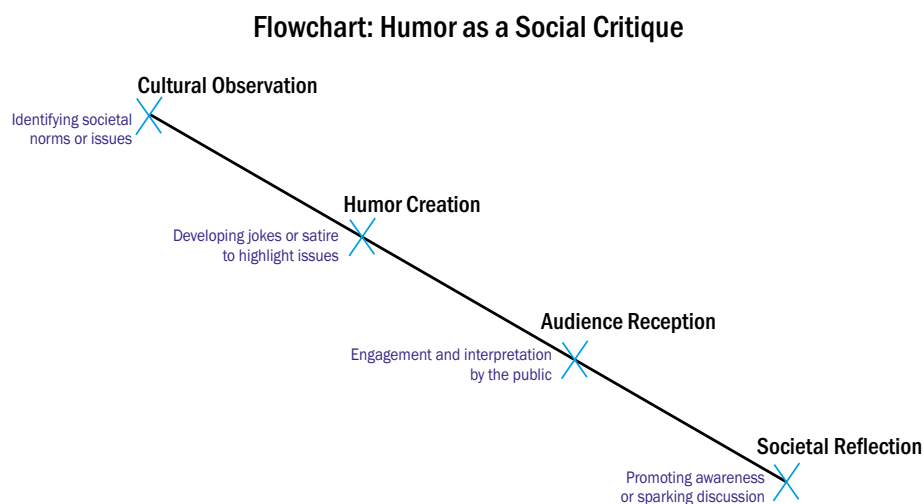
Figure 3. Modernized traditional character



Description: In Figure 3 Khoja Nasreddin depicted in traditional and modern settings, such as storytelling and engaging with smartphones or memes. Purpose: To illustrate the adaptation of classic humor figures to contemporary contexts.

Note: This Figure demonstrates how traditional characters are reimaged in modern scenarios, showcasing the fusion of heritage and modernity. The image was generated using DALL-E by the author of this article in 2025. **Note.** This section draws on ideas from Amirbek (2015), Attardo (1994), and Duisebekova (2019).

Figure 4. Humor as a social critique



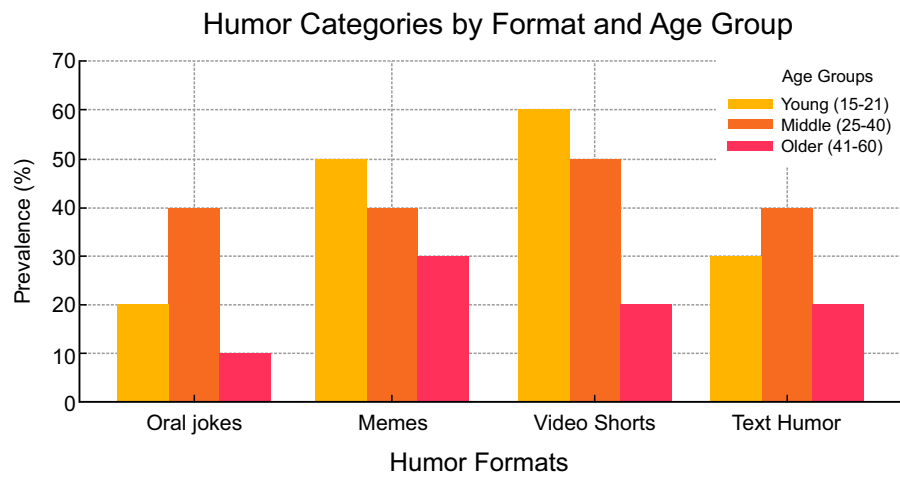
Description:

Figure 4 shows humor’s pathway—starting with cultural observation, humor creation, audience reception, and societal reflection.

Purpose: To explain how humor indirectly critiques societal issues.

Note: This flowchart depicts how humor deals with problems in society, captured in the process of reflection and conversation. The author made this using Python-based diagramming software in the year 2025. **Note.** Based on Raskin (1985), Zhunis (2020), and Aliakbarova (2015).

Figure 5. Humor categories by format



Note: The bar chart patterns show the relationship between age changes and humor preferences, indicating a change in cultural consumption patterns. It was constructed by the author using Python data visualization tools in 2025. According to materials from *Martebe.kz* (n.d.) and BrandAnalytics.kz (2023)

Description:

Figure 5 compares the distribution of oral jokes, memes, video shorts, and text jokes within various age groups. Purpose: To measure intergenerational variations of humor formats.

Table 4. Modern features of Kazakh humor

Feature	Examples	Modern Role
Impact of Technology	«Wi-Fi-сыз ауыл — нағыз қазақша тынығу!» «A village without Wi-Fi is true Kazakh leisure!»	Enabling wider dissemination through the internet
Tradition and Innovation	«Смартфонды түсінуге тырысқан Қожанасыр» «Khoja Nasreddin trying to understand a smartphone»	Adapting traditional figures to modern realities
Social Critique	«Қазақ тойында бәрі бар: махаббат та, драма да...» «Kazakh weddings have it all: love, drama...»	Critiquing social norms and everyday practices
Impact on Youth Culture	«Сабақ — спорт залындай...» «Classes are like a gym...»	Engaging youth and enhancing relatability

Note. Summarized from examples discussed in InfoHub.kz (2022) and BrandAnalytics.kz (2023).

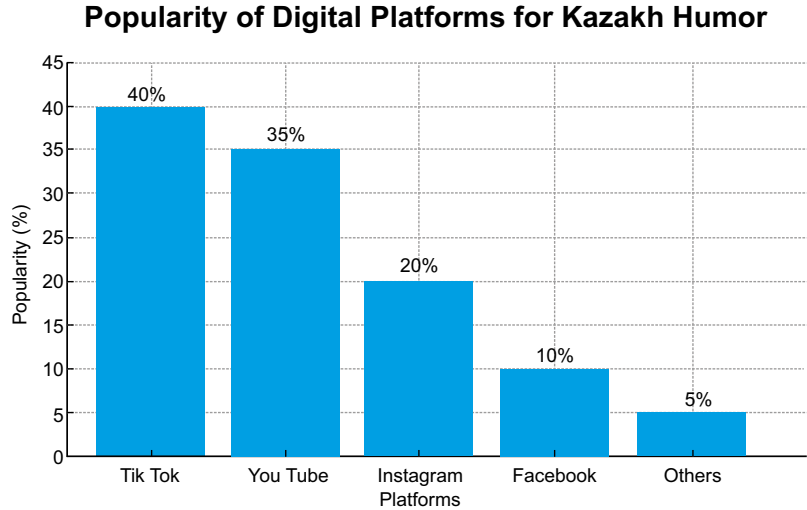
Description: Table 4, examples are provided with their modern roles, such as the impact of technology, the blend of tradition and innovation, social critique, and the influence on youth culture. The transformation of Kazakh humor underscores its adaptability and relevance

in addressing both cultural preservation and societal critique. By incorporating traditional elements into modern formats, humor continues to bridge generational and cultural divides, demonstrating its enduring significance. This study highlights the dynamic role of Kazakh humor in reflecting societal values, promoting cultural understanding, and engaging audiences both locally and globally. Modern Kazakh humor emphasizes a blend of the basic tenets of national culture with newfound contemporary practices, making it a unique work of art. Its content and structural features work towards promoting national values, addressing societal issues figuratively, and strengthening intercultural ties. New formats and approaches position Kazakh humor as more than just a form of entertainment. In a world dominated by globalization, it can now be used as an instrument to foster a sense of nationalism.

Digitization through multiple platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube has disrupted the way modern Kazakh humor is offered. Memes buttressing the sociocultural gap, like “A village without Wi-Fi is true Kazakh leisure!” serve the purpose of embedding modern-day concepts into a traditional custom. Videos on social media depicting Khoja Nasreddin fooling around with modern gadgets fall under this category too. They are an outstanding example of folk tales meeting digital humor. Viral videos are often not challenged since they are easily loaded with humor.

Technology has democratized humor, allowing individuals from both rural and urban areas to engage in its creation. For example, TikTok challenges based on Kazakh humor bridge geographical divides while promoting cultural resilience. As a result, humor plays an important role in recruiting and enthraling young people to the nation and giving them a sense of belonging.

Figure 6. Popularity of platforms



Note: This bar graph in Figure 6 illustrates the relative popularity of platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram in spreading Kazakh humor. It was created by the author using Python-based data visualization tools in 2025. Data trends were estimated from platform popularity insights reported by InfoHub.kz (2022) and BrandAnalytics.kz (2023).

In today’s world of endless possibilities, humor has become a powerful driver of youth culture and a means to maintain cultural traditions. School life codes intertwined with memes are almost revolutionary as they educate. The joke, “Classes are like a gym: you don’t want to

join, but when you do, you can see the effects,” helps bridge the intergenerational gulf that might otherwise discourage national traditions from being passed along during societal transitions.

- **Educational Initiatives:** Humor is increasingly utilized in campaigns that promote Kazakh language learning and cultural traditions. For instance, short videos or memes featuring everyday Kazakh phrases can engage students in a fun and accessible way.

- **Viral Trends:** Examples include Kazakh riddles (қапа сөз, жұмбақ) or proverbs popularized through social media challenges (e.g., TikTok or Instagram Reels), which encourage youth to explore and share their heritage with peers.

Impact Statement: Humor acts as a unifying force that encourages young people to take pride in their national identity while navigating a rapidly globalizing world. By appealing to the creative and social dimensions of youth culture, humorous content ensures that core Kazakh values and linguistic elements remain relevant and accessible to the next generation.

Comparative Perspective and Longitudinal Shifts in Kazakh Humor.

Comparing older generations’ recollections of traditional aitys (poetic duels) or Soviet-era satire with today’s digital meme culture reveals key transformations in what is considered humorous, who participates in humor creation, and how humor is shared. Through systematic data collection and generational analysis, scholars can identify turning points in the prominence of oral, broadcast, and now digital media, shedding light on how Kazakh humor continues to adapt to changing societal and technological contexts.

This holistic approach ensures that Kazakh humor is appreciated not simply as a contemporary internet phenomenon, but as a dynamic cultural practice deeply rooted in shared traditions and shaped by decades of social change.

Following on from the longitudinal and comparative approach above, Kazakh comedic content is produced and distributed using a variety of visual and multimedia channels. Modern creators use comics, memes, videos, and even virtual reality to tell their jokes, making it accessible to wider audiences. They include folk elements such as proverbs and avatars of Khoja Nasreddin using contemporary digital methods such as mobile editing applications, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR). In this way, they not only capture the interest of younger people but also foreigners who want to learn about Kazakhstan.

Immersive experiences: Some creators experiment with interactive narrative or VR-based expositions. This type of content allows the audience to «dive» into the world of Kazakh humor and helps people from different generations and regions connect. **Potential for growth:** Given the developments in AI and other multimedia tools, the surge of Kazakhstanis spreading their humor globally is plausible. This would only prove the culture’s uniqueness and adaptability in more creative ways.

In addition, humor assists intergenerational communication by allowing young people to express their identity more dynamically, while older generations relish the opportunity to share their heritage. Comedians have to endure many challenges, and as researchers venture into new territory—decade-long longitudinal studies on the shift of humor over time or comparing Kazakhstan to other Central Asian cultures—they are able to showcase more of the deep narrative of Kazakhstan’s multifaceted culture.

Conclusion

Humor holds a long-standing place in Kazakh culture, reaching far beyond simple amusement. It has grown out of the nation’s historical memory and the way people collectively understand

the world around them. For many generations, a short, witty remark or a light joke has often functioned as a small container of experience. Across generations, short humorous observations have often carried people's reflections about everyday life, shared moral understandings, and gentle reminders about how one ought to behave.

In ordinary conversation, Kazakh speakers seldom explain complex ideas in a blunt or literal way. Instead of doing so, they usually take a more expressive path, turning to imagery or figurative language. At times, speakers rely on a comparison or a metaphor not to spell out an idea, but to gently point the listener toward it. Kazakh speakers at times rely on mild exaggeration to soften statements that might otherwise appear overly direct, allowing listeners to grasp the intended point without discomfort. Referring to culturally meaningful images or symbols allows speakers to communicate ideas in a more nuanced manner than through direct wording, because such references draw upon understandings and associations shared within the community. In the context of Kazakh humor, hints, figurative language, and other indirect expressive techniques enrich the emotional tone of a statement and prompt audiences to consider several possible interpretations. These indirect approaches also make it easier to raise delicate topics in a careful manner, helping the interaction remain calm and preventing the conversation from turning confrontational.

Rakhymzhan (2020) points out that an indirect manner of expression allows humorous remarks to communicate social expectations in a discreet way, shaping how people understand appropriate behaviour, fairness, and the moral values shared within the community.

More recently, long-standing humorous traditions have begun to appear across numerous digital media platforms, where they reach increasingly varied and widespread audiences. Their active presence online demonstrates that humor operates as a fluid cultural practice rather than a static one. As patterns of communication evolve and digital communities grow more diverse, humorous expression changes as well, taking on new shapes and functions. A wide range of materials—such as jokes, short videos, memes, and spontaneous comments—now spreads rapidly across various online platforms, reaching individuals who may rarely encounter similar forms of humor in face-to-face settings. Within this digital environment, platforms like TikTok and Instagram function as particularly active sites where humorous content not only travels quickly but also interacts with ongoing societal discussions and contributes to the shaping of a shared cultural identity among users (InfoHub.kz, 2022).

Today, social networks have become the primary space where humorous content circulates, evolves, and reaches broad audiences. As Kazakh humor enters these digital environments, it adjusts to new interaction formats yet continues to carry the symbolic layers and cultural meanings that define it. Even within the fast-moving media landscape, these traditional elements remain visible and influential.

While Kazakh humor shares some common ground with global satirical traditions, it often follows a different trajectory. Satire in Western contexts tends to be more direct and confrontational, whereas Kazakhstani humor generally relies on suggestion, metaphor, or indirect comparison. Kazakh humorous discourse often touches on themes such as social inequality or moral behaviour by embedding them in allusive or understated forms. Through this indirect mode of expression, speakers are able to draw attention to sensitive issues while maintaining a non-confrontational tone (Attardo, 1994; Makulbekuly, 1997). A tendency toward indirect and allusive satire reveals underlying cultural values and provides a productive angle for exploring communication across different cultural settings.

At the same time, globalization's accelerating momentum brings both promising avenues and new difficulties for understanding the shifting place of humor in Kazakhstan's public life. As digital platforms blur established social and linguistic boundaries, the question of how humor helps maintain national identity online becomes increasingly important (BrandAnalytics.kz, 2023). Moreover, humorous discourse often prompts the public to reconsider various persistent social questions—from inequality to debates surrounding educational change—by offering commentary that is subtle enough to avoid direct confrontation yet accessible to a wide audience (Kalybaeva, 2020). In the classroom, humor has its own pedagogical value: it helps sustain students' interest and creates conditions in which cultural and linguistic material is absorbed more effectively (Aliakbarova, 2015).

The rise of humorology as an interdisciplinary field provides researchers with tools for comparing local and international humor systems. A wider analytical lens allows us to see more clearly how Kazakh humorous traditions preserve their culturally specific symbolic layers, even as they intersect with humor circulating in global media spaces. According to Attardo (1994, p. 28), humor becomes fully intelligible only when considered within the cultural context that shapes both its creation and its reception. Viewed from this perspective, Kazakh humor demonstrates how long-established comedic traditions adapt to contemporary modes of communication while still carrying the symbolic meanings shaped by culture. Such an approach helps clarify the ways in which Kazakhstan articulates and negotiates its cultural identity within an increasingly interconnected world.

Despite changes in communication channels, humorous expression remains a consistent marker of shared identity and cultural memory. In the present context, humor operates as a flexible medium through which people can comment on current social processes yet stay connected to familiar cultural frameworks. With the growing influence of digital media, humorous expressions circulate quickly across various online communities, encouraging reflection on how emerging formats may transform public attitudes and patterns of interpretation in the years ahead. Preserving and appreciating these humorous practices helps ensure that Kazakhstani humor maintains its richness and continues to support constructive cultural exchange.

Conflict of interests, acknowledgements and funding information

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Contribution of the authors. K.U. Yessenova collected, organized, and systematized the main materials and wrote the core part of the article. A.K. Abdikarimova analyzed the compiled materials, reviewed the relevant literature, and supervised the writing process; conducted material analysis, contributed to the supplementation, and participated in the article's formatting and finalization.

References

Абикеева, Г. Т., & Кабышева, Р. Б. (2018). Мәтінді зерттеудің коммуникативтік және прагматикалық аспектілері. *Қазақ Инновациялық Гуманитарлық-Заң Университетінің Хабаршысы*, 3(39), 22–25.

Алиякбарова, А.Т. (2015). Қазақ тілді студенттерге ағылшын тіліндегі сұраулы сөйлемдердің дауыс ырғағын оқыту. *Әл-Фараби атындағы ҚазҰУ хабаршысы. Филология сериясы*, 141(1–2), 37–42.

Амирбек, Қ. (2015). *Сөйле десең, сөйле: Естелік, эссе, сыр-сұхбат*. Алматы: Қаратау КВ LLP; Дәстүр.

Байланыс пен тілдің эволюциясы: Дамудың жаңа кезеңдері. (n.d.). *Martebe.kz*. 25 қазан 2024 ж. алынды: <https://martebe.kz>

Дүйсебекова, Ж. М. (2019). *Филология студенттерінің ауызша тіл жүйелері арқылы тіл мәдениетін қалыптастыру әдістемесі*. Алматы: Сүлейман Демирел университеті.

Головчун, А., Каримова, Б., Жүнісsoва, М., Оспанкулова, Г., & Мұхамади, К. (2017). Көптілділік жағдайында CLIL әдісін қолдану: Қазақстан тәжірибесі. *Astra Salvensis*, 11(1), 189–201.

Ескермессова, Г. А. (2017). Тыныс белгілерінің коммуникативтік-прагматикалық қызметі. *Man in India*, 97(7), 265–284.

Жүніс, М. (2020). Коммуникативтік контекст және оның отбасылық дискурста интерпретациялануы. *ҚазҰПУ хабаршысы. Филология сериясы*, 1(4), 122–129.

Ильясов, Е. (2012). Ішкі тілдік факторлардың әсерінен туындайтын жаңа қолданыстар. *ҚазҰУ хабаршысы. Филология сериясы*, 3(137), 45–47.

Қалыбаева, Қ. С. (2020). Қазақ жазуының тұрақтылығы туралы жаңа көзқарас. *ҚазҰПУ хабаршысы. Филологиялық ғылымдар сериясы*, 4(74), 94–98.

Мақұлбекұлы, С. (1997). *Отыз тістен шыққан сөз*. Тараз: [б.ж.]. (in Kazakh)

Рахымжан, О. (2020). Сәкен Жүнісов тілдік тұлғасының прагматикалық деңгейі. *Қазақстан кәсіпкері*, 1, 78–80

Сейілбек, С., Жүнісsoва, М., Көшекова, А., Қадыров, З., & Дүйсебекова, З. (2018). Ежелгі грек мәдениетіндегі шешендік өнер. *Opcción: Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales*, 34(86), 374–393.

Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baldwin, G. (2005). *The teaching–research nexus: How research informs and enhances learning and teaching in the University of Melbourne* [Report]. University of Melbourne. Retrieved on November 3, 2024, from <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au>

BrandAnalytics.kz. (2023). *Social networks in Kazakhstan*. Retrieved on November 25, 2024: <https://brandanalytics.kz>

Egemen.kz. (2023). *Social networks and youth: Where do Kazakhstani youth stand?* Retrieved on 25 July 2023: <https://egemen.kz>

InfoHub.kz. (2022). *The role of social networks in contemporary society*. Retrieved on 25 October 2024: <https://infohub.kz>

Raskin, V. (1985). *Semantic mechanisms of humor*. Berlin: Springer.

Қ.Ө. Есенова, А.Қ. Абдикаримова

Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан

**Қазақ қалжыңының коммуникативті-прагматикалық ерекшеліктері:
ұлттық құндылықтардың көрінісі**

Аңдатпа. Бұл зерттеу қазақ қоғамындағы юмордың әлеуметтік рөліне тоқталып, оның мәдени білімді сақтау мен таратуға қалай үлес қосатынын көрсетеді. Зерттеудің негізгі мақсаты — юмор тек көңіл көтеру құралы ғана емес, сонымен қатар ұрпақтан ұрпаққа құндылықтар, нормалар және ортақ білім жеткізілетін әлеуметтік өзара әрекеттесу

формасы екенін дәлелдеу. Осы мақсатқа жету үшін әртүрлі талдау тәсілдері қолданылады: мәтінді мұқият оқу арқылы стилистикалық ерекшеліктерді анықтау, жасырын мағыналарды ашу және әрбір мысалда кездесетін әлеуметтік қызметті талдау. Сонымен қатар, қазақ материалы басқа мәдениеттердің юморымен салыстырылады. Талдау әртүрлі материалдар жиынтығына негізделген. Бұл зерттеуге дәстүрлі ауыз әдебиетіндегі әзіл үлгілерімен бірге заманауи қолданушылар әлеуметтік желілерге жариялаған қысқа әзілдік мазмұндар енгізілді. Оларды қатар қарастыру дәстүрлі әзіл үлгілерінің қазіргі онлайн-коммуникацияда да сақталатынын көрсетеді. Мұндай ерекшеліктер сөйлеушілерге әлеуметтік мәселелерді ашық айтпай, астарлы әрі мәдени тұрғыдан қабылдауға лайық тәсілмен жеткізуге мүмкіндік береді. Зерттеудің жаңашылдығы — дәстүрлі және цифрлық юморды бір коммуникативтік-прагматикалық жүйе аясында біріктіре отырып, мәдени кодтардың коммуникация түрлері өзгерсе де тұрақты сақталатынын көрсету.

Түйін сөздер: қазақ юморы, коммуникативтік-прагматикалық аспектілер, метафоралар, мәдениетаралық салыстыру.

К.У. Есенова, А.К. Абдикаримова

Казахский национальный педагогический университет, Алматы, Казахстан

**Коммуникативно-прагматические особенности казахского юмора:
отражение национальных ценностей**

Аннотация. В исследовании рассматривается место юмора в социальном пространстве казахского общества и показывается, как он способствует сохранению и распространению культурных знаний. Основная цель работы — продемонстрировать, что юмор является не только средством развлечения, но и формой социального взаимодействия, через которую ценности, нормы и общее знание передаются из поколения в поколение. Для решения данной задачи используются различные аналитические подходы: тщательное чтение материала для определения стилистических особенностей, анализ скрытых смыслов и рассмотрение социальной функции каждого юмористического примера. Кроме того, казахский юмор сопоставляется с примерами юмора из других культур. Анализ опирается на смешанный корпус материалов. Для исследования были собраны образцы как традиционного устного юмора, так и цифрового контента — коротких юмористических высказываний, размещённых пользователями в онлайн-пространствах. Сравнение этих источников показывает, что старые юмористические модели продолжают проявляться и в современных цифровых коммуникациях. Эти особенности позволяют говорящим тонко и социально приемлемо затрагивать общественные проблемы. Новизна исследования заключается в объединении традиционного и цифрового юмора в единой коммуникативно-прагматической системе, демонстрирующей устойчивость культурных кодов при изменении форм коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: казахский юмор, коммуникативно-прагматические аспекты, метафоры, межкультурное сопоставление.

References

Abikeeva, G. T., & Kabysheva, R. B. (2018). *Matindi zertteudin kommunikativtik zhane pragmatikalyk aspektleri* [Communicative and pragmatic aspects of text analysis]. *Kazakh Innovatsiyalyk Gumanitaryk-Zan Universitetinin Khabarchysy*, 3(39), 22–25. [in Kazakh]

- Aliakbarova, A. T. (2015). *Kazakh tildi studentterge anglis tilindegi surauly soilemlerdin dauys yrygyn okytu* [Teaching intonation of English interrogative sentences to Kazakh-speaking students]. *Vestnik KazNU. Seriya filologicheskaya*, 141(1–2), 37–42. [in Kazakh]
- Amirbek, K. (2015). *Soile desen, soilein: Estelik, esse, syr-sukhbat* [If you want to speak, speak: Memoir, essay, conversation]. Almaty: Karatau KB LLP; Dastur. [in Kazakh]
- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic theories of humor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baldwin, G. (2005). *The teaching–research nexus: How research informs and enhances learning and teaching in the University of Melbourne* [Report]. University of Melbourne. Retrieved November 3, 2024, from <http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au>
- Baylanys pen tilding evolyutsiyasy: Damudyng zhanagy kezengderi. (n.d.). *Martebe.kz*. Retrieved October 25, 2024, from <https://martebe.kz> [in Kazakh]
- BrandAnalytics.kz. (2023). *Social networks in Kazakhstan*. *BrandAnalytics.kz*. Retrieved November 25, 2024, from <https://brandanalytics.kz>
- Duisebekova, Zh. M. (2019). *The methodology of forming philology students' speech culture through oral language systems and structures*. Almaty: Suleiman Demirel University.
- Egemen.kz. (2023). *Social networks and youth: Where do Kazakhstanian youth stand?* *Egemen.kz*. Retrieved July 25, 2023, from <https://egemen.kz>
- Golovchun, A., Karimova, B., Zhunisova, M., Ospankulova, G., & Mukhamadi, K. (2017). Content and language integrated learning in terms of multilingualism: Kazakhstanian experience. *Astra Salvensis*, 11(1), 189–201.
- InfoHub.kz. (2022). *The role of social networks in contemporary society*. *InfoHub.kz*. Retrieved October 25, 2024, from <https://infohub.kz>
- Ilyasov, E. (2012). *Ishki tildik faktorlarning aserinen tuyndaytyn zhana kolddanylardar* [New usages arising from internal language factors]. *Vestnik KazNU. Seriya filologicheskaya*, 3(137), 45–47. [in Kazakh]
- Kalybaeva, K. S. (2020). A new perspective on the stability of Kazakh writing. *Vestnik KazNPU. Seriya Filologicheskije Nauki*, 4(74), 94–98.
- Makulbekuly, S. (1997). *Otyz tisten shykkan soz* [A word that has passed thirty teeth]. Taraz: [n.p.]. [in Kazakh]
- Rakhymzhan, O. (2020). *Saken Zhunisov tildik tulgasynyn pragmatikalyk dengei* [Pragmatic level of Saken Zhunisov's linguistic personality]. *Qazaqstan Kasipkeri*, 1, 78–80. [in Kazakh]
- Raskin, V. (1985). *Semantic mechanisms of humor*. Berlin: Springer.
- Seilbek, S., Zhunisova, M., Kosheikova, A., Kadyrov, Z., & Duisebekova, Z. (2018). Rhetoric as art of eloquence in the ancient Greek culture. *Opción: Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales*, 34(86), 374–393.
- Yeskermessova, G. A. (2017). Communicative and pragmatic functions of punctuation. *Man in India*, 97(7), 265–284.
- Zhunis, M. (2020). *Kommunikativotik kontekst zhane onyn otbasylыk diskursta interpretatsiyalanuy* [Communicative context and its interpretation in family discourse]. *Vestnik KazNPU. Seriya filologicheskaya*, 1(4), 122–129. [in Kazakh]

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

Есенова Қалбике Өмірбайқызы. – филология ғылымдарының докторы, профессор, Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан. E-mail: kalbike_65@mail.ru, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9653-5189>

Абдикаримова Айна Қайратқызы – хат-хабар үшін автор, PhD докторант, Қазақ ұлттық педагогикалық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан. E-mail: ainagulr@mail.ru, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9580-6693>

Есенова Калбике Омирбайқызы – доктор филологических наук, профессор, Казахский национальный педагогический университет, Алматы, Казахстан. E-mail: kalbike_65@mail.ru, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9653-5189>

Абдикаримова Айна Қайратқызы – автор для корреспонденции, PhD докторант, Казахский национальный педагогический университет, Алматы, Казахстан. E-mail: ainagulr@mail.ru, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9580-6693>

Yessenova Kalbike – Doctor of Philology, Professor, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan. E-mail: kalbike_65@mail.ru, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9653-5189>

Abdikarimova Ayna – corresponding author, PhD candidate, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan. E-mail: ainagulr@mail.ru, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9580-6693>



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).