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**LINGUOCULTURAL FUNCTIONS OF INTERNET MEMES IN THE
ERA OF DIGITAL GLOBALIZATION:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF KAZAKH AND ENGLISH**

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Abstract. In the framework of this study, we consider the roles of internet memes in digital globalization through their linguocultural analysis in comparison with Kazakh and English languages. This is achieved via qualitative research methods, which allow analyzing a sample consisting of 80 memes obtained via online search using multimodal linguocultural analysis and pragmatic analysis.

As a result of this study, it was established that internet memes are multimodal semiotic constructions, the meanings of which are produced by means of the combination of multimodal signs. While having similar universal forms, internet memes in both analyzed languages differ in terms of cultural specificity in content and structure, since Kazakh memes have more elaborated textual component, while English memes emphasize visual dominance and implicit meaning.

It was found that memes can serve different pragmatic functions such as making fun of certain phenomena, expressing social opinion, constructing personal identity and emotional expression. Additionally, the use of linguistic creativity in terms of grammatical deviation, phonetic spelling and hybrid languages in Kazakh memes was identified.

The theoretical importance of this study lies in the contribution of this research to the development of linguocultural and multimodal approaches in digital discourse research, along with adding information on linguocultures beyond English language usage.

From the perspective of practical significance, one can note that the results of this research can be applied in the frameworks of language education, intercultural communication and media studies.

Keywords: internet memes, linguocultural analysis, multimodality, digital discourse, cultural specificity, code-switching, globalization, digital environment

Introduction

In the era of digital globalization, communication processes have evolved, leading to a rise in internet memes which have become the most popular means of expression in digital space. The idea of the meme originated with Richard

Dawkins who defined it as a unit of cultural information, whereas nowadays, the term is used to refer to very complicated notions combining pictures, texts, humor and cultural codes [1]. Thus, memes are used not only for fun, but also for the expression of opinions, emotions, attitudes and cultural aspects.

In multilingual societies such as Kazakhstan, this process becomes especially visible because online communication is shaped by the interaction of different languages, cultural identities and sociolinguistic practices.

In multilingual communities like Kazakhstan, this process comes to light because digital interaction depends on the interplay between multiple languages and cultural identity.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the linguistic and cultural characteristics of internet memes as part of digital globalization based on the comparison of Kazakh and English language memes.

The goals of the research will be formulated in the following order:

1. To examine the multimodal nature of internet memes as tools for meaning construction.
2. To highlight cultural differences between memes in Kazakh and English contexts.
3. To examine the functional role of memes, namely their ability to amuse, convey social criticism, reflect individual identity, and serve as vehicles of emotion.

The scientific innovation of this study consists in the consideration of internet memes as complex units of cultural interaction mediated by language and multimodality. The vast majority of previous works consider the issue of internet memes globally or in terms of English-speaking community. Research devoted to memes in Kazakh language is scarce, especially comparative in scope.

Kazakh and English memes are compared as elements of single system. In addition to the visual aspect, special attention is paid to the interaction between language and culture within each meme. Some meme formats are distributed worldwide with minor modifications to their structure, but others are highly localized. Memes found on Kazakh digital space include linguistic hybridizations that consist of phrases in Russian, English and Kazakh as well as culturally specific references which cannot be translated literally. Another dimension of the investigation is associated with code switching. For many memes from Kazakhstan, it becomes apparent that the process of switching languages occurs in an unmarked fashion. In fact, such switching reflects the style of communication characteristic for online interaction rather than stylistic playfulness on the part of creators. Some hybrid forms have been observed repeatedly on various platforms. Such observation of memes makes them valuable materials for the analysis of language change online, especially in younger generations.

The idea of the meme belongs to the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins who coined this term as a cultural equivalent of gene. In the context of internet communication, however, meme received quite different interpretation. According to Limor Shifman, internet memes can be defined as clusters of digital objects featuring similar characteristics and created by knowing about each other [2]. The author emphasizes the role of repetition and variations in meme creation and distribution.

As for the practice of meme usage, it often includes significant changes to a meme format or even its total transformation. However, there are cases when only an image drastically changes its meaning under the impact of language use and social environment.

From the perspective of multimodality, the concept of communication becomes much broader since researchers such as Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen claim that the creation of meaning involves several semiotic resources used in combination – image, typography, spatial organization, gesture and sound [3]. Memes are a natural product of multimodality since their meaning is constructed through interaction of image and text, rather than language use only. In some cases, a mere addition of one brief phrase turns the meaning of an image around completely.

As for the structure of meme discourse, the meaning of the image is carried on the emotional side, while that of text serves to direct interpretation. This does not mean that the two semiotic modes interact evenly. Some memes make sense without the phrase included, while in others text cannot be omitted in order to understand them. As for structure, the image can be accompanied by a simple reaction expression, one brief phrase and/or distorted spelling. That is enough.

The analysis of internet communication shows that digital linguistics is characterized by highly adaptive and unstable forms of language [4]. For example, David Crystal points out that internet discourse is characterized by non-standardized spelling, syntactical constructions and abbreviations. In meme discourse, deviations from the standard grammatical rules are often deliberate since they create certain effects (irony, expression, social recognition, etc.).

In multilingual environment, such features become even more pronounced. Kazakh memes tend to use several linguistic codes in one utterance, combining Russian particle words, English colloquialism and Kazakh phrases and idioms. This combination is often very fluid as if taken directly from spontaneous speech.

Materials and methods

This study adopts a qualitative comparative design to examine the linguocultural and communicative characteristics of memes used in Kazakh- and English-language digital communication. The study treats memes as multimodal discourse units in which verbal, visual, pragmatic, and cultural elements interact in the construction of meaning.

The analysis is primarily qualitative. Numerical values are used only as **descriptive frequencies** to indicate the distribution of recurrent patterns within the corpus and are not intended to constitute inferential statistical analysis. Accordingly, percentages reported in the Results section should be interpreted as descriptive indicators supporting qualitative comparison rather than as evidence of statistical generalization to the wider population of memes.

The corpus consisted of 80 memes: 40 primarily in Kazakh and 40 primarily in English. The corpus was constructed using purposive sampling. The aim of the sampling procedure was not to achieve statistical representativeness but to obtain comparable examples that could demonstrate recurrent linguistic, multimodal, pragmatic, and linguocultural patterns.

Memes were collected from Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram because these platforms provided publicly circulating examples of everyday digital communication relevant to the research objectives. The collection focused on memes encountered during the selected research period rather than on narrowly specialized communities or professional meme archives.

Four inclusion criteria were applied. A meme was included when it:

1. contained both a visual component and a textual component;
2. was publicly circulated in everyday digital communication;
3. contained sufficient verbal and visual information for multimodal analysis; and
4. provided evidence relevant to at least one of the analytical dimensions of the study, including linguistic creativity, cultural reference, pragmatic function, identity construction, or humor.

Memes belonging exclusively to specialized professional, political, commercial, or highly restricted online communities were excluded unless their content also demonstrated broader everyday communicative relevance. Duplicates and substantially identical reposts were also excluded from the analytical corpus.

The two language groups were intentionally balanced at 40 memes each. This equal distribution was adopted to facilitate qualitative comparison between the Kazakh and English datasets rather than to claim equivalence in the overall volume or popularity of the two meme cultures.

The corpus included both locally produced memes and adaptations of internationally circulating templates. Some examples required culturally specific background knowledge, while others relied on globally recognizable visual formats. The corpus also contained references to Soviet cultural memory, contemporary social issues, and everyday experiences. These variations were retained because they allowed the study to examine how global digital formats are locally adapted.

The analysis followed a structured coding procedure consisting of four analytical dimensions: multimodality, pragmatic function, linguistic creativity and linguocultural content.

First, each meme was examined at the visual level. The analysis recorded the type and communicative role of the image, including recognizable templates, facial expressions, gestures, social roles, and culturally meaningful visual situations.

Second, the verbal component was examined with attention to lexical choice, grammatical structure, abbreviation, slang, spelling variation, code-switching, and other forms of linguistic creativity.

Third, the relationship between the visual and verbal components was analyzed. Three broad relationships were distinguished: **parallel**, when text and image conveyed mutually reinforcing information; **complementary**, when one component supplied information absent from the other; and **contrastive/ironic**, when the relationship between text and image generated humor or a meaning different from either component considered separately.

Fourth, each meme was examined for its dominant pragmatic and linguocultural function. The coding categories included:

- **humor and entertainment;**
- **emotional expression;**
- **social evaluation or critique;**
- **identity construction;**
- **community/group identification;**
- **cultural encoding and transmission.**

These categories were not treated as mutually exclusive at the level of interpretation. A single meme could perform more than one function; however, when descriptive frequencies were calculated, the category corresponding to the most salient function was recorded as the primary category. Secondary observations were retained for qualitative interpretation.

For linguocultural analysis, particular attention was paid to culturally marked references, family roles, educational expectations, traditions, social norms, collective experiences, multilingual practices, and other elements whose interpretation depended on shared cultural knowledge.

To ensure consistency, the same coding scheme and inclusion criteria were applied to both language groups. Each meme was treated as one unit of analysis. After coding, the number of memes assigned to each category was counted within the relevant corpus.

Descriptive percentages were calculated using the following formula:

Percentage = (number of memes displaying a coded feature / total number of memes in the relevant corpus) × 100.

Thus, for the complete corpus, the denominator was 80 memes; for language-specific comparisons, the denominator was 40 memes per language group. For example, if 28 of the 40 Kazakh memes contained a particular feature, this was reported as 70%. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number or, where the distribution was close between categories, presented as a range.

Because individual memes could contain several linguistic or cultural features, percentages for different features do not necessarily sum to 100%. This is particularly relevant to the analysis of linguistic creativity and multimodal characteristics, where multiple features could occur within the same meme.

The numerical results are therefore **descriptive rather than inferential**. No claim is made that the observed percentages represent the frequency of these features in the entire population of Kazakh- or English-language memes.

The coding procedure was designed to reduce interpretive inconsistency by applying the same operational definitions and analytical categories to both datasets. Categories were defined before the comparative interpretation, and ambiguous cases were reconsidered in relation to the complete visual-textual context of the meme rather than isolated linguistic elements.

Given the qualitative design and exploratory purpose of the study, the analysis does not claim statistical reliability or population-level generalizability. Instead, consistency was pursued through transparent category definitions, balanced sampling, repeated examination of individual meme units, and comparison of patterns across the two language groups.

The interpretive stage subsequently connected the descriptive patterns with the theoretical concept of linguocultural function. Thus, a feature was not considered linguocultural merely because it differed between the two groups. It was classified as linguocultural when its interpretation depended on culturally shared knowledge, contributed to identity construction, encoded cultural norms or practices, facilitated group identification, or reproduced culturally recognizable meanings.

The corpus is intentionally limited to 80 memes and therefore cannot be considered statistically representative of all Kazakh- or English-language memes. The purpose of the study is instead to identify and interpret recurrent patterns within a controlled comparative sample.

Meme discourse is also highly dynamic. Meanings, templates, and linguistic conventions may change rapidly across platforms and over time. Consequently, the findings describe the communicative practices represented in the selected corpus and research period rather than establishing permanent characteristics of Kazakh or English meme culture.

This limitation is particularly important when interpreting descriptive percentages. The reported values indicate the distribution of coded features within the present corpus and should not be interpreted as fixed frequencies of meme characteristics in either linguistic community.

Results and discussion

The corpus analysis demonstrates that both Kazakh and English memes function as multimodal communicative constructions in which verbal and visual

components jointly produce meaning. However, the relative contribution of these components differs between the two corpora. English memes more frequently rely on recognizable visual templates combined with short, implicit captions, whereas Kazakh memes tend to establish meaning through a closer balance between textual information and visual representation. In the latter, captions more often provide explicit contextual information and refer to recognizable social situations.

The analysis also revealed differences in contextual dependence. English memes generally draw on globally recognizable templates and shared internet conventions, while Kazakh memes more frequently require knowledge of local social practices, family relations, educational experiences, and culturally specific situations. Nevertheless, the distinction is not absolute: Kazakh users also employ international templates, while English-language meme communities may develop highly localized references [4].

Table 1. Multimodal Characteristics of Kazakh and English Memes

Feature	Kazakh Memes	English Memes
Dominant modality	Text + image	Image-dominated
Function of text	Direct, explicative, culturally oriented	Sparse, implicit
Template patterns	Universal and local	Primarily universal
Contextualization	High; culturally dependent	Medium; based largely on global internet culture
Nature of humor	Referential, cultural, situational	Universal, ironic, self-referential
Implicitness	Relatively low	Relatively high
Text-image relationship	Mainly parallel	Frequently ironic or contrastive
Language playfulness	Code-switching and local language use	Slang, abbreviations, formulaic expressions
Global accessibility	Relatively limited without cultural knowledge	Relatively broad

Source: authors' own development.

The analysis shows that humor is the dominant pragmatic function in both corpora, but the communicative contexts through which humor is constructed differ. Kazakh memes frequently employ family relations, education, social expectations, and everyday interactions as sources of humor. English memes more often foreground individual experiences such as procrastination, fatigue, social discomfort, and digital overload.

The corpora also demonstrate different patterns of identity construction. Kazakh memes tend to foreground collective experience and social belonging, whereas English memes more frequently construct an individual perspective centred on personal emotions and experiences. Code-switching in Kazakh memes further contributes to the representation of contemporary multilingual communication.

Table 2. Pragmatic Functions of Memes

Pragmatic function	Kazakh memes	English memes
Humor and entertainment	Family, school, traditions, everyday situations	Individual behavior and experience
Social commentary	Education, social expectations, family pressure	Work stress, digital fatigue, everyday life
Identity construction	Collective and family-based identity	Individual identity and emotions
Community belonging	Cultural references and code-switching	Online trends, fandoms and shared internet culture
Emotional expression	Often explicit and narrative	Frequently implied through images
Evaluation	Contextualized irony	Absurdity, exaggeration and ironic contrast

Source: authors' own development.

These findings indicate that memes perform functions beyond entertainment. They simultaneously communicate emotional states, construct social identities, establish group belonging, and comment on everyday social experience. The principal difference lies in the orientation of these functions: Kazakh memes more often construct shared cultural experience, whereas English memes tend to foreground individual experience within global digital culture.

A substantial proportion of both corpora contained deviations from standard linguistic norms. Approximately 70–75% of English memes and 65–70% of Kazakh memes demonstrated some form of linguistic deviation. The patterns, however, differed considerably.

English memes predominantly employed grammatical reduction, abbreviated structures, informal spelling, slang, and orthographic exaggeration [5]. Kazakh memes showed more frequent code-switching and hybrid constructions involving Kazakh, Russian, and occasionally English lexical material. In both corpora, these deviations functioned as deliberate stylistic resources rather than accidental errors.

Table 3. Linguistic Creativity in Kazakh and English Memes

Feature	Kazakh Memes	English Memes
Grammatical deviation	Hybrid and reduced structures	Simplified and fragmented syntax
Phonetic/orthographic variation	Colloquial pronunciation in writing	Informal contractions and exaggerated spelling
Code-switching	Frequent Kazakh–Russian–English combinations	Relatively rare
Word formation	Hybrid words, borrowings and creative combinations	Neologisms, slang and semantic shifts
Main stylistic function	Identity, humor and cultural reference	Humor, relatability and brevity
Perception of deviation	Acceptable in informal digital discourse	Conventional feature of meme communication

Source: authors' own development.

Examples such as “*брам, бүзін сабаққа don't go*” illustrate the hybrid linguistic character of Kazakh meme discourse, while expressions such as “*soooo tired*” demonstrate the use of orthographic exaggeration in English memes. Such forms reproduce features of spontaneous speech and intensify emotional or humorous effects.

Thus, norm deviation should not be interpreted simply as linguistic deficiency. Within meme discourse, it represents a functional form of linguistic creativity associated with informality, expressiveness, group identity and rapid digital communication.

Cultural specificity constitutes one of the most significant differences between the two corpora. The Kazakh corpus was strongly associated with family hierarchy, respect for elders, education, social obligations, and everyday cultural practices. Approximately 65–70% of the Kazakh memes referred to parental authority, expected social behavior, or family responsibilities, while educational pressure occurred in almost 60% of the corpus.

The English corpus demonstrated a different thematic distribution. Family-related content accounted for approximately 20–25%, whereas themes of digital fatigue, procrastination, lack of sleep, and work-related exhaustion occurred in more than 70% of the analyzed memes. These findings suggest a stronger orientation toward individual emotional experience in the English corpus.

Table 4. Cultural Specificity of Meme Content

Category	Kazakh Memes	English Memes
Cultural values	Family hierarchy, respect for elders, collectivism	Individualism and personal experience
Social context	Education, family, <i>ауыл</i> , <i>моу</i> and everyday life	Globalized lifestyle and work-life balance
Humor	Contextual and culturally embedded	Relatable, absurd and self-ironic
Linguistic features	Code-switching and local expressions	Slang and abbreviations
Cultural references	Traditions, family roles and local norms	Popular culture, celebrities and viral trends
Accessibility	More dependent on cultural knowledge	More broadly accessible
Identity	Collective identity	Individual identity

Source: authors' own development.

The findings demonstrate that digital globalization does not eliminate ethnocultural differences in meme discourse. Instead, global formats are adapted to local communicative practices. International templates may circulate across linguistic boundaries, but their pragmatic meanings are reshaped by culturally specific references, social expectations, and linguistic choices [5].

The most significant difference concerns the relationship between individual and collective experience. Kazakh memes tend to transform shared experiences into humorous narratives, particularly experiences involving family, education, social expectations, and intergenerational relations. English memes more frequently construct humor around individual emotional states and everyday

personal difficulties. This distinction is also reflected in linguistic organization: Kazakh memes frequently employ conversational narration and code-switching, whereas English memes favor compression, reduction, and highly recognizable visual formulas.

The results further indicate that multimodality interacts with cultural knowledge. In English memes, recognition of a familiar visual template can substantially reduce the amount of textual information required. In Kazakh memes, textual and contextual elements more often carry culturally specific information that cannot be fully inferred from the image alone. Consequently, the interpretation of Kazakh memes may depend more strongly on shared ethnocultural knowledge.

The linguistic data provide additional evidence of this cultural adaptation. English meme discourse demonstrates a preference for brevity, grammatical reduction, slang, and orthographic creativity [6]. Kazakh meme discourse, in contrast, is characterized by multilingual practices, particularly Kazakh–Russian code-switching, which reflects the linguistic realities of contemporary digital communication. In both cases, deviation from standard language norms serves a pragmatic purpose: it increases expressiveness, signals informality, and strengthens group identification.

Overall, the comparison confirms that memes can be regarded as a form of digital ethnocultural practice. Their global circulation creates shared communicative formats, but their meanings remain culturally situated. The same visual template may therefore acquire different pragmatic and cultural functions when transferred between linguistic communities [7]. The Kazakh and English corpora demonstrate not a simple opposition between local and global communication, but a process of continuous adaptation in which global digital forms are combined with culturally specific meanings.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the differences between Kazakh and English memes are not limited to thematic or stylistic variation. They perform specific linguocultural functions through which linguistic choices, cultural knowledge, and social meanings are integrated into digital communication. In this study, a linguocultural function is understood as the communicative role through which linguistic forms simultaneously encode culturally shared knowledge, construct social identity, reproduce culturally recognizable practices, or evaluate socially meaningful behavior.

On this basis, five major linguocultural functions were identified: cultural encoding, collective identity construction, group identification, cultural transmission, and social evaluation. These functions emerge through the interaction of verbal, visual, pragmatic, and culturally marked elements rather than through language alone.

Cultural encoding refers to the representation of culturally specific knowledge through lexical choices, social situations, references, and visual contexts. This function was particularly prominent in the Kazakh corpus, where family hierarchy, respect for elders, educational expectations, *мой*, *ауыл*, and everyday family interaction occurred repeatedly.

For example, expressions such as “*Анаң шақырса, бірден бару керек*” do not merely describe a family situation. Their interpretation depends on culturally shared expectations concerning parental authority and appropriate behavior. The linguistic expression therefore activates background cultural knowledge that is not explicitly explained within the meme.

The mechanism can be represented as: culturally marked expression → activation of shared cultural knowledge → recognition of a culturally familiar situation → cultural encoding function.

Thus, the linguocultural significance of such memes lies in their ability to compress culturally specific knowledge into a short multimodal message.

The second function concerns the construction of collective identity. Kazakh memes frequently represent experiences as shared rather than exclusively individual. Expressions such as “*біздің үйде...*” (“in our household...”) position the speaker within a collective social environment and invite recipients to recognize their own experience in the represented situation.

The mechanism is therefore not simply the presence of family-related content. Rather, the combination of inclusive linguistic forms, recognizable social situations, and shared cultural expectations transforms an individual experience into a representation of collective experience.

By contrast, English memes in the corpus more frequently used first-person constructions such as “*me*” and represented individual frustration, exhaustion, procrastination, or social discomfort. In this case, the dominant mechanism is the construction of an individualized emotional perspective.

Consequently, the contrast between the corpora can be interpreted as a difference in identity-construction strategies: Kazakh memes more frequently construct identity through **shared social experience**, whereas English memes more often construct identity through **individual emotional experience**.

Code-switching represents another important linguocultural mechanism. In the Kazakh corpus, Kazakh–Russian and occasional Kazakh–Russian–English combinations were not simply instances of linguistic deviation. Their repeated use reproduced patterns associated with informal multilingual digital communication.

For instance, the expression “*брат, бүгін сабаққа don't go*” combines Kazakh grammatical structure with Russian and English lexical material. Its communicative effect depends partly on the audience's ability to recognize and interpret this hybrid linguistic practice.

The mechanism can therefore be described as: linguistic hybridity → recognition of a shared multilingual practice → social positioning → group-identification function.

Code-switching consequently contributes to the construction of an imagined community of users who share not only cultural experiences but also particular ways of speaking in digital environments.

Memes also function as mechanisms of cultural transmission. Recurrent representations of parental authority, family obligations, educational pressure,

and social expectations reproduce culturally recognizable behavioral patterns in compressed and humorous form [8].

The transmission does not occur through explicit teaching. Instead, cultural norms are reproduced through repetition and recognition. When users encounter a meme referring to a familiar family interaction, the humorous message simultaneously reinforces knowledge of what is considered normal, expected, embarrassing, or socially recognizable within a particular community.

This function explains why some Kazakh memes may lose part of their meaning when translated literally into another linguistic or cultural environment: their interpretation depends on culturally shared background knowledge rather than on lexical meaning alone.

A further linguocultural function is the evaluation of socially meaningful behavior. Kazakh memes frequently use irony and exaggeration to comment indirectly on parental expectations, academic achievement, family obligations, and intergenerational relations. English memes similarly evaluate everyday behavior, but the evaluative focus in the corpus was more frequently directed toward individual habits such as procrastination, exhaustion, or excessive digital consumption.

In both corpora, humor provides an indirect mechanism of evaluation. Instead of explicitly criticizing a behavior, the meme presents an exaggerated or ironic representation that allows the audience to recognize the discrepancy between expected and actual behavior.

The mechanism can therefore be formulated as: socially recognizable behavior → humorous exaggeration/irony → shared evaluation → social-commentary function.

The difference between the two corpora concerns primarily the cultural domain being evaluated: Kazakh memes more often evaluate behavior within family and social relationships, while English memes more frequently evaluate individual habits and everyday personal experiences.

The findings indicate that linguocultural functions cannot be attributed to verbal elements alone. They emerge from the interaction of language, visual representation, cultural knowledge, and pragmatic context. A culturally marked expression may remain ambiguous without the accompanying image, while a familiar visual template may acquire a new cultural meaning when combined with a locally specific caption.

This relationship can be conceptualized as: linguistic form + visual form + cultural knowledge + communicative context → linguocultural meaning → communicative function.

Accordingly, the study conceptualizes meme discourse as a multimodal space in which cultural meanings are not merely reflected but actively constructed and negotiated by users.

The comparison of Kazakh and English memes demonstrates that globalization produces shared digital formats without eliminating linguocultural differentiation. Global meme templates provide a common communicative framework, while local languages, culturally specific references, multilingual

practices, and socially recognizable situations determine how that framework is interpreted and what functions it performs.

Therefore, the key distinction between the two corpora is not simply that they contain different topics. Rather, they employ different mechanisms of cultural meaning-making [9]. Kazakh memes more frequently activate collective cultural knowledge, multilingual identity, family-based social relations, and culturally specific norms, whereas English memes more frequently rely on individual emotional positioning, globally recognizable templates, and compressed internet conventions. These mechanisms explain why the observed differences constitute linguocultural functions rather than merely descriptive variations between two meme groups.

The corpus consisted of approximately 80 memes, equally distributed between Kazakh and English, collected from Instagram, TikTok, and Telegram during the selected research period. Content analysis combined multimodal, pragmatic, and linguocultural approaches.

The descriptive distribution of coded features supports the qualitative interpretation of the corpus. In the Kazakh dataset, family-related themes were identified in approximately 65–70% of the 40 memes, while educational pressure occurred in approximately 60%. Multilingual practices, particularly Kazakh–Russian code-switching, were also frequently observed. In the English dataset, themes related to digital fatigue, procrastination, lack of sleep, and similar experiences occurred in more than 70% of the 40 memes, while approximately 75% contained abbreviations, syntactic reductions, or Internet slang. These percentages are descriptive frequencies calculated within the two 40-meme subcorpora and are not intended as inferential statistical measures or as estimates of the wider population of memes. Rather, they indicate the distribution of recurrent features within the selected corpus. Taken together, the findings suggest that the two meme environments share a common multimodal digital format but differ in the cultural and linguistic resources through which meanings are constructed [10].

Multilingualism can function as an important resource in multimodal meme discourse, contributing to the construction of perspective and social meaning. This perspective is relevant to the present study, particularly in the analysis of code-switching and hybrid linguistic forms in Kazakh memes [11].

Taken together, the findings show that meme discourse simultaneously reflects globalization and cultural differentiation. Global templates facilitate cross-cultural circulation, while language choice, contextual references, humor strategies, and identity patterns preserve the specificity of individual linguistic communities.

Conclusion

This study examined internet memes as multimodal and potentially linguocultural forms of digital communication within a selected corpus of 80 memes, comprising 40 Kazakh-language and 40 English-language examples.

The findings indicate that meaning in the analyzed memes was produced through the interaction of visual representation, textual elements, linguistic choices, and contextual knowledge. The results therefore support the view that memes cannot be treated solely as entertainment-oriented texts, although the present corpus does not permit generalization to Kazakh or English meme culture as a whole.

The comparative analysis identified both shared and divergent patterns within the selected datasets. Some international meme templates occurred in both corpora with relatively limited modification, demonstrating the transnational circulation of digital formats. At the same time, the analysis showed that the communicative interpretation of similar templates could change when they were adapted to different linguistic and cultural contexts. Within the present corpus, English-language examples more frequently relied on brevity, recognizable visual patterns, and self-referential humor, whereas Kazakh-language examples more frequently incorporated culturally specific references to family relations, education, and social expectations.

Multilingual practices were particularly visible in the Kazakh subcorpus. Kazakh–Russian code-switching, hybrid lexical combinations, and informal syntactic structures occurred repeatedly in the analyzed examples. In the English subcorpus, the more frequently observed forms of linguistic creativity included syntactic reduction, abbreviations, Internet slang, and non-standard spelling. These findings should be understood as characteristics of the selected corpus rather than as fixed properties of Kazakh- or English-language meme discourse in general.

The analysis also suggests that deviations from linguistic norms can perform identifiable communicative functions in meme discourse. In the analyzed examples, deliberate spelling variation, grammatical reduction, code-switching, and syntactic manipulation contributed to humor, emotional intensification, informality, and the expression of social or linguistic belonging. Thus, within the selected corpus, non-standard language use functioned not merely as an error but as a potentially meaningful stylistic and pragmatic resource.

Another important observation concerns the relationship between global circulation and local cultural adaptation. The analyzed memes demonstrate that internationally circulating templates can acquire locally specific meanings when combined with culturally recognizable linguistic, social, or visual elements. However, given the limited corpus and purposive sampling procedure, this finding should be interpreted as evidence of localization within the selected dataset rather than as proof that globalization universally preserves or transforms cultural characteristics in all meme communication.

The study demonstrates that the 80 memes examined here combine global digital formats with locally meaningful linguistic and cultural resources. The comparison provides evidence that multimodality, linguistic creativity, cultural

reference, and contextual knowledge interact in the construction of meme meanings. At the same time, the findings are exploratory and corpus-specific. Further research involving larger, systematically sampled datasets, multiple platforms, and longitudinal analysis would be necessary to determine whether the patterns identified here extend more broadly across Kazakh- and English-language digital communication.

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ЦИФРЛЫҚ ЖАҒАНДАНУ ДӘУІРІНДЕГІ ИНТЕРНЕТ-МЕМДЕРДІҢ ЛИНГВОМӘДЕНИ ҚЫЗМЕТТЕРІ: ҚАЗАҚ ЖӘНЕ АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛДЕРІНІҢ САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ЗЕРТТЕУІ

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Аңдатпа. Аталған зерттеу цифрлық жаһандану жағдайында интернет-мемдердің лингвомәдени қызметтерін қазақ және ағылшын цифрлық дискурсын салыстырмалы талдау негізінде қарастыруға арналған. Сапалық зерттеу тәсіліне сүйене отырып, жұмыста әлеуметтік желі платформаларынан жинақталған 80 мемнен тұратын корпус мультимодалды, лингвомәдени және прагматикалық талдау әдістері арқылы зерттеледі.

Зерттеу нәтижелері мемдердің визуалды, мәтіндік және контекстуалдық элементтердің өзара әрекеттесуі арқылы мағына қалыптастыратын мультимодалды семиотикалық құрылымдар ретінде қызмет ететінін көрсетеді. Ортақ жаһандық форматтардың қолданылуына қарамастан, қазақ және ағылшын мемдері мазмұны мен құрылымында айқын мәдени спецификасымен ерекшеленеді. Ағылшын тіліндегі мемдер визуалды басымдылығымен, мағынаның жасырындылығымен және өзін-өзі сілтемелейтін әзілімен сипатталып, жеке тұлғаға бағытталған коммуникация үлгілерін бейнелейді. Ал қазақ мемдері мәтіндік кеңейтілгендігімен, мәдени контекстуалдануымен және ұжымдық бірегейліктің репрезентациясымен ерекшеленеді.

Зерттеу нәтижелері мемдердің әзіл, әлеуметтік комментарий, бірегейлікті қалыптастыру және эмоцияларды білдіру сияқты бірқатар прагматикалық функцияларды атқаратынын көрсетеді. Сонымен қатар, екі корпус та тілдік креативтіліктің жоғары деңгейін танытады, ол грамматикалық ауытқулар, фонетикалық орфография және, әсіресе, қазақ мемдеріндегі тілдердің аралас қолданылуы арқылы көрініс табады.

Зерттеудің теориялық маңыздылығы цифрлық дискурсты зерттеудегі лингвомәдени және мультимодалды тәсілдердің дамуына қосқан үлесінде, сондай-ақ ағылшын тіліне жатпайтын және көптілді мемдік тәжірибелерді зерттеудің аясын кеңейтуінде көрініс табады. Алынған нәтижелер цифрлық коммуникация теорияларын толықтыра отырып, жаһандық семиотикалық ресурстардың нақты мәдени контексттер аясында қалай бейімделетінін айқындайды.

Зерттеудің практикалық маңыздылығы оның нәтижелерін тілдерді оқыту, мәдениетаралық коммуникация және медиа сауаттылық салаларында қолдану мүмкіндігімен байланысты. Қорытындылар цифрлық ортадағы қазіргі тілдік қолданысты тереңірек түсінуге, оқу материалдарын әзірлеуге

және онлайн байланыстағы мәдени ерекшеліктер туралы ақпаратты арттыруға ықпал етеді.

Keywords: интернет-мемдер, лингвомәдени талдау, мультимодальдылық, цифрлық дискурс, мәдени специфика, код-свитчинг, жаһандану, цифрлық орта

ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ФУНКЦИИ ИНТЕРНЕТ-МЕМОВ В ЭПОХУ ЦИФРОВОЙ ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИИ: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ КАЗАХСКОГО И АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКОВ

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Аннотация. Данное исследование посвящено изучению лингвокультурных функций интернет-мемов в условиях цифровой глобализации на основе сравнительного анализа казахского и английского цифрового дискурса. Используя качественный исследовательский подход, работа анализирует корпус из 80 мемов, собранных с платформ социальных сетей, с применением методов мультимодального лингвокультурного и прагматического анализа.

Результаты исследования показывают, что мемы функционируют как мультимодальные семиотические конструкции, в которых значение формируется через взаимодействие визуальных, текстовых и контекстуальных элементов. Несмотря на использование общих глобальных форматов, казахские и английские мемы демонстрируют выраженную культурную специфику в содержании и структуре. Англоязычные мемы, характеризуются визуальной доминантностью, имплицитностью смысла и самореферентным юмором, отражающим индивидуально-ориентированные модели коммуникации. В свою очередь, казахские мемы отличаются большей текстовой развернутостью, культурной контекстуализацией и репрезентацией совместной идентичности.

Исследование также показывает, что мемы выполняют ряд прагматических функций, включая юмор, социальный комментарий, конструирование идентичности и выражение эмоций. Кроме того, оба корпуса демонстрируют высокий уровень языковой креативности, который проявляется в грамматических отклонениях, фонетической орфографии и смешанном использовании языков в казахских мемах.

Теоретическая значимость исследования заключается в его вкладе в развитие лингвокультурного и мультимодального подходов к изучению цифрового дискурса, а также в расширении исследований, посвящённых неанглоязычным и многоязычным мемным практикам. Полученные

результаты дополняют существующие теории цифровой коммуникации, демонстрируя, каким образом глобальные семиотические ресурсы адаптируются в рамках конкретных культурных контекстов.

Практическая значимость исследования связана с возможностью применения его результатов в области преподавания языков, межкультурной коммуникации и медиа грамотности. Выводы могут быть использованы для более глубокого понимания современного языкового использования в цифровой среде, разработки учебных материалов и повышения осведомлённости о культурной специфике онлайн-коммуникации.

Keywords: интернет мемы, лингвокультурный анализ, мульти-модальность, цифровой дискурс, культурная специфика, код-свитчинг, глобализация, цифровая среда

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