

ABSTRACT

of the thesis on the topic “Humorous discourse in Kazakh and English linguocultures” submitted by Nurgul Arginbaevna Rysmagambetova for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) under the educational program “8D02304 – Philology”

Description of the thesis topic. Modern linguistic research is actively developing within the anthropocentric paradigm. People comprehend the culture of their nation through language and do not exist outside the linguistic environment. The emergence of the anthropocentric paradigm has contributed to the development of linguoculturology, a field that examines the dialogic interaction and mutual influence of language and culture. Humor occupies a special place in intercultural communication, functioning as a means of regulating relationships between the addresser and the addressee, reducing social tension, and expressing cultural identity.

This dissertation is devoted to a comparative analysis of the linguistic and cultural features of humorous discourse in Kazakh and English linguocultures. The study examines the ways in which humor is manifested through language, as well as its relationship with national worldview, mentality, and social values. It identifies the verbal means of expressing humor in Kazakh and English, examines its pragmatic characteristics, contextual conditioning, and communicative functions, and determines the role of humor in conveying cultural codes. In addition, based on linguistic data, the study describes the similarities and differences between the humorous models characteristic of the two linguocultures.

Within the framework of humorous discourse, an integrative model for analyzing the unit of short verbal humor / wit was developed and applied on the basis of a multilevel system of comparative analysis.

The theoretical foundation of the model is based on the interaction of several scholarly approaches. Semantic theory, grounded in script opposition, makes it possible to identify two planes of meaning underlying the comic effect. The General Theory of Verbal Humor provides a framework for characterizing a wit in terms of its script, logical mechanism, situation, target, narrative strategy, and linguistic realization. The linguopragmatic approach reveals the functioning of a witty joke as a speech act, including its target, the relationships it helps maintain, and the norms it either mitigates or violates. Linguocultural analysis focuses on identifying the national code, background knowledge, traditional patterns of communication, and boundaries of cultural acceptability represented in the joke. Cognitive analysis explains how the addressee shifts from one meaning structure to another.

Each witty joke is documented in a separate analytical profile. It specifies the language, the individual and speaker, the listener or other participants in the communication, the situation, the reason or occasion for the joke, the witty

response, the source, page or section, genre form, thematic domain, primary mechanism, and pragmatic function.

Following the multilevel analysis, a comparative description of the material is carried out. Although the Kazakh and English corpora are examined according to the same parameters, the ways in which the comic effect is organized in the two corpora are not identical.

The corpus findings provide a generalized picture of the comparison. The analysis identifies the dominant mechanisms for creating a comic effect, thematic fields, features of dialogic structure, the degree of dependence on background knowledge, pragmatic functions, and linguocultural codes. The value of corpus analysis is not limited to quantitative indicators. Its primary purpose is to determine how humor functions within each corpus, under what conditions it proves effective, and which linguistic and cultural resources it draws upon.

The experimental study of humor reception constitutes the final stage of model validation. The features identified in the corpus are compared with the respondents' perception results. The experiment makes it possible to determine the level of comprehension of humorous material, the difficulties involved in its interpretation, the presence of cultural asymmetry, and the degree of participants' sensitivity to humor.

The overall outcome of the model lies in integrating corpus analysis, comparative description, and receptive evaluation into a unified research system. The phenomenon of brief verbal humor / wit is examined in the unity of its linguistic form, pragmatic function, and linguocultural conditioning. Universal features, as well as the nationally specific characteristics of the Kazakh and English material, are explained on the basis of specific texts, specific communicative situations, and empirical data on their perception.

This determines the significance of the model within the study. It is used not only as a theoretical framework but also as a practical tool for corpus construction, data coding, comparative analysis, and the interpretation of experimental research findings.

Research relevance: Laughter based on humor and jokes is an integral part of human life and manifests itself in all spheres of human activity, from everyday life to politics. While being a universal human phenomenon, laughter also clearly reflects the mentality and cultural characteristics of each nation. In other words, the humor of each nation is shaped by the way of life, values, and worldview of that nation; therefore, a full understanding of the humor of a particular ethnic group requires a good knowledge of its national specificity and cultural background. Consequently, the study of humorous discourse from a linguocultural perspective is a relevant area of research that contributes to a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between language and culture, as well as to reducing misunderstanding in intercultural communication. The relevance of the research topic is determined by the significant role of humor among various forms of linguistic communication in modern society and by the importance of its analysis at the discourse level.

In contemporary linguistics, the concept of discourse is viewed as a broad form of communication encompassing the cultural and linguistic context of a particular period. Humorous discourse represents a specific type of discourse aimed at creating a comic effect in the process of communication; as a means of positive interaction, it reflects the linguistic consciousness of representatives of different cultural communities. Communication in the form of a joke or humor affects the emotions of the addressee, giving communication an informal and friendly character. Therefore, in different cultures, the same joke may be perceived differently, since humor reflects national stereotypes and values. In this context, a comparative study of humorous discourse in Kazakh and English linguocultures is an important step toward addressing current issues of intercultural communication.

A study based on the operationalization of corpus material comprising Kazakh and English jokes (*wit*) will make it possible to identify their linguocultural specificity, structural features, and linguopragmatic characteristics. Comparative analysis based on an integrative model will ensure the acquisition of results that have not only theoretical but also practical value. Thus, identifying similarities and differences in humorous discourse, namely *wit*, in the Kazakh and English languages represents a new area of research in linguistics, since humorous discourse (*wit*) has not previously been examined in Kazakh linguistics as a complex phenomenon.

Research aim a comprehensive study of the nature of humorous discourse (*қалжың* (witty jokes)) in Kazakh and English linguocultures. To achieve this aim, the following main research **objectives** were set:

1. To analyze the scientific foundations of the concept of humorous discourse and determine the content of the concepts of “discourse” and “humor” in contemporary linguistics;
2. To examine the semantic features, scope of meaning, and ways of using the concepts of *қалжың* in the Kazakh language and *wit* in the English language;
3. To develop a methodology for studying humorous discourse, an integrative model for analyzing units of humor, and to conduct a corpus analysis;
4. To conduct a comparative analysis of the similarities and differences in the traditions of humorous communication in Kazakh and English linguocultures based on the integrative model;
5. To identify and interpret intercultural features of the mechanisms of transmission and perception of humorous information using an experimental approach.

Research object – Humorous discourse, manifested as a specific form of linguistic communication in Kazakh and English societies. In particular, the study examines the use of Kazakh witty jokes and English *wit* units in communication within two distinct linguocultural environments.

Research subject – The subject of the study is communicative acts realized in the form of witty jokes within this discourse, as well as their linguocultural features, structural and semantic characteristics, and communicative functions in the Kazakh and English languages.

Theoretical and methodological background the theoretical foundation of the study is provided by national and international scholarly works on discourse theory, pragmalinguistics, linguoculturology, and humor theory. In particular, the study draws on the works of J. Habermas, T. A. van Dijk, and Vladimir Karasik, which address the concept of discourse and its various types.

In examining the relationship between language and culture, the study draws upon the linguocultural concepts of such scholars as E. Sapir, B. Whorf, W. von Humboldt, V. Vorshegan, and S. Kostomarov.

In explaining the nature of humor and distinguishing between such comic categories as joke, humor, irony, and sarcasm, generally accepted theoretical principles were employed. In particular, the study draws on Victor Raskin's Semantic Script Theory of Humor, based on script opposition, as well as Salvatore Attardo's General Theory of Verbal Humor. In addition, the findings presented in the works of Kazakhstan researchers A. Salikhova, B. Maulenova, G. Ibrayeva, S. Isakova, N. Kultanbayeva, and others were considered, particularly those addressing issues of comic discourse in Kazakh linguistics.

The study employed a comprehensive combination of general scientific and specialized linguistic methods, including the descriptive method, comparative-typological analysis, content analysis, and discourse analysis. In addition, such general scientific methods as data collection, systematization, generalization, and interpretation were applied, along with techniques of linguocognitive and linguocultural analysis. An important feature of the study is the combination of qualitative analytical methods with quantitative methods, particularly an experimental approach. A comparative corpus analysis was also conducted.

In particular, in order to identify the specific features of humor perception (witty jokes) in intercultural communication, a questionnaire survey and an experiment were conducted, and the results were subjected to statistical analysis. The application of this mixed-methods methodology made it possible to increase the reliability of the findings and provide a more well-grounded interpretation and greater specificity in the conclusions of the study.

Research sources. The source base of the study comprises theoretical works devoted to issues of discourse studies, linguoculturology, discourse theory and discourse analysis, text linguistics, comparative linguistics, cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and linguopragmatics, stylistics, as well as the methodology of studying humorous discourse. In addition, Kazakh witty jokes and English-language examples of wit were used and analyzed as research material. (Ахметова З. Әзіліңді сағындық. – Полиграфкомбинат. Алматы, 2019-132 б., Деген екен! Бесінші кітапша. Құрастырған М.Ниязбеков.- Алматы. Өнер. К.-1993.-64 б., Деген екен. Баянғали Әлжанов Астана, 2016 – 88 б. ISBN 978-601-7804-14-5, https://adebiportal.kz/kz/news/view/degen-eken-1__10199, <https://abai.kz/post/68153> Boswell J. Boswell's Life of Johnson, LL.D. Abridged and edited by C. G. Osgood. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1917. Project Gutenberg eBook No. 1564. эл. нұсқа, Twain M. Mark Twain's Speeches. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1910. Project Gutenberg eBook No. 3188. эл. вар., Nicolay H. The Boys' Life of Abraham Lincoln. New

York: The Century Co., 1906. Project Gutenberg eBook No. 1815. эл. бap., Franklin B. Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. Edited by F. W. Pine. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1916. Project Gutenberg eBook No. 20203. эл. бap.) The main corpus of the study comprises 100 units: 50 written witty jokes in Kazakh

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DzdsfnaJDsbm5CjEHWr47nbh9brt-5ji/edit?usp=sharing&oid=107551310207967028371&rtpof=true&sd=true>) and 50 wit units in English (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w4ad4uRP8luj63m2uyTvxYBdxixP93dS/edit?usp=sharing&oid=107551310207967028371&rtpof=true&sd=true>).

The research material comprised discourse units realized in communicative situations, namely, self-contained episodes and short dialogues that could be read independently. The total corpus consists of several thousand words, which is sufficient for reliably identifying the ways in which humor is linguistically realized in each of the subcorpora—the Kazakh and English subcorpora.

The research database also included questionnaire data obtained from 225 respondents. Each participant evaluated 10 stimuli. The questionnaire was conducted to identify the specific features of the reception of various comic mechanisms represented in these stimuli. (<https://forms.gle/wt8souJMenYc7TrMA>, <https://forms.gle/wh2TArVRD4ukmosW8>).

Research methods. In accordance with the aforementioned theoretical and methodological framework, a comprehensive set of methods was applied in the study.

The research work proposes a comprehensive methodology for the comparative analysis of humorous discourse from a linguocultural perspective. An integrative model for analyzing a unit of humor was also developed. The texts of brief verbal humor / қалжың (wit) as one of the types of humor in Kazakh and English linguocultures were analyzed using the comparative method, which made it possible to identify their common and distinctive features.

Based on the mixed-methods research methodology, qualitative corpus analysis and quantitative experimental analysis were conducted. The principles of corpus compilation were implemented: brief verbal texts were selected, and the corpus included 50 Kazakh and 50 English units. At the same time, anonymous humorous stories (anecdotes), random jokes from the Internet, stage monologues, visual memes, and fictional dialogues between characters from literary works were excluded from the corpus.

The study employed linguopragmatic and linguocultural analysis, as well as receptive assessment based on the SSTH and GTVH theories. On the basis of a psycholinguistic experiment, the results of a questionnaire administered to native speakers of Kazakh and English were analyzed in order to identify the specific features of humor perception.

The data were processed using the following software: the corpus was coded in a Microsoft Excel coding matrix, while the respondents' answers were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics 29.0 (2022).

Scientific novelty of the research work. As a result of the study, humorous discourse in Kazakh and English linguocultures was examined for the first time through a comprehensive comparative linguocultural analysis. The scientific novelty of the study is as follows.

First, based on the material of the two languages, the linguistic structure and functions of the humorous discourse of witty jokes were systematically described. This type of discourse has not previously been comprehensively examined in Kazakh linguistics.

Second, the semantic fields of the Kazakh concept қалжың and the English concept wit were compared, and their common and specific semantic components were identified.

Third, the mechanisms underlying the creation of a comic effect in Kazakh and English humorous texts were identified, including script opposition, linguistic triggers, jokes, and others, and the specific ways in which these mechanisms are manifested in each culture were demonstrated.

Fourth, Kazakh and English jokes were compared on the basis of an integrative model developed through a multilevel analytical system. Fifth, this model was implemented with reference to such parameters of the SSTH and GTVH theories as script opposition, logical mechanism, situation, target, narrative strategy, and linguistic realization, and was supplemented by linguopragmatic, linguocultural, and receptive levels. This made it possible to obtain new scientific findings concerning the relationship between language and culture.

In addition, based on the results of the experiment conducted in the course of the study, the specific features of joke perception by Kazakh and English audiences, their level of comprehension, difficulties of interpretation, and manifestations of cultural asymmetry were analyzed and confirmed by quantitative data.

A new integrative model for the analysis of humorous units was developed and proposed. The findings obtained complement discourse theory from a linguocultural perspective and contribute to the development of a new area of research in Kazakh linguistics.

Theoretical significance of the research. This study examines humorous discourse comprehensively by integrating approaches from contemporary linguistics in the fields of discourse theory, pragmalinguistics, linguoculturology, and intercultural communication.

Through a comparative corpus analysis of the linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic features of Kazakh and English witty jokes, the study contributes to revealing the national specificity of discursive communication. Furthermore, examining verbal acts in the form of jokes at the discourse level provides an opportunity to propose a new theoretical approach that describes the interrelationship between language and culture. The findings of the study contribute to the scholarly foundation for a deeper understanding of the communicative and cognitive nature of language and culture.

Practical significance of the research. The results of the study will be useful in teaching the Kazakh and English languages, in the field of intercultural communication and translation, as well as in theoretical and applied areas of general linguistics.

In particular, the findings of the study can be used as illustrative material in university courses such as “General Linguistics,” “Speech Culture,” “Pragmatics,” and “Text Linguistics.” The methodology for analyzing humorous discourse contributes to the development of learners’ communicative competence, particularly their intercultural pragmatic competence.

Furthermore, knowledge of the specific features of humor in two different cultural environments can be useful in translation from a foreign language, in informal communication, and in international business and diplomatic practice. The materials and findings of the study may serve as a basis for developing effective strategies for the use of humor in multilingual environments. Young researchers will be able to apply corpus analysis methods and quantitative statistical models that are currently developing in modern linguistics in their own research.

Thus, the practical significance of the study is determined by the fact that its results can be applied not only in the educational sphere but also in situations of intercultural interaction.

Main provisions submitted for defense. The main scientific findings and conclusions of the study are presented in the form of the following key statements:

1. Humorous discourse is a phenomenon that plays a special role in intercultural communication and reflects the national specificity of each people. On the one hand, humorous communication possesses universal features (incongruous situations, wordplay) inherent to all people; on the other hand, it reflects the unique life values and worldview of a particular nation. Through humor, it is possible to gain insight into national cultural codes, which is of great importance for the development of intercultural understanding.

2. The Kazakh concept қалжың and the English concept wit are similar in meaning; however, they differ in their semantic fields and pragmatic use. Kazakh қалжың is more often manifested as a friendly joke in an appropriate social environment, in the form of a brief and witty remark, thereby strengthening interpersonal relationships. English wit, by contrast, to a greater extent denotes quickness of mind and verbal skill based on clever wordplay. From a linguistic perspective, both қалжың and wit rely on cognitive mechanisms involving deviations from linguistic expectations (polysemy, irony, hyperbole, etc.); however, their social roles and evaluation differ in Kazakh and English cultures.

3. For the comparative study of Kazakh jokes and English wit units, a corpus of brief verbal jokes/wit was analyzed using an integrative model. The multilevel analysis revealed their specific features at the levels of script opposition, semantics, logical mechanism, linguistic realization, dependence on background knowledge and receptive evaluation, pragmatic function, as well as the linguocultural level. For example, at the semantic level, the relationship between the expected and transformed meaning plays an important role in both languages.

At the level of linguistic realization, Kazakh texts more often rely on dialogic organization, whereas English texts tend to rely on the form and structure of the word. At the pragmatic level, jokes in the Kazakh material are predominantly based on closeness and trusting relationships between the participants of communication. In the English material, wit and the witty response demonstrate the speed of verbal reaction, intellectual superiority, or the ability to overcome a situation of social pressure through irony.

4. Although the mechanisms of humor creation in Kazakh and English linguocultures are based on similar principles, they are characterized by national specificity in terms of their content. Universal and nationally conditioned mechanisms underlying the creation and perception of humorous discourse were identified (incongruity, intellectual code, emotional closeness, and cultural background knowledge). It was established that in Kazakh jokes, the comic effect is created through social roles, everyday situations, family and ritual relationships, as well as pragmatic implication, whereas in English wit units, the comic effect is more often realized through phonetic similarity, polysemy, ironic correction, and stylistic opposition.

5. In the context of intercultural communication, humor perception directly depends on the cultural knowledge and worldview of the participants. The results of the experiment showed that jokes translated directly from one language into another often lose their original effect or become incomprehensible. The main reason is that the successful impact of humor largely depends on the reader's or listener's level of knowledge about the culture of a particular people. Therefore, understanding humor from another culture requires knowledge of its linguistic and social norms, as well as its history and traditions. The experimental verification revealed differences in the perception of witty jokes by Kazakh-speaking and English-speaking respondents. The Kazakh-speaking group more often evaluated jokes with regard to social appropriateness, context, and role relationships, whereas the English-speaking group responded more quickly to brief linguistic wordplay and puns.

Research evaluation. The main findings and conclusions of the study were discussed at domestic and international research institutions and universities.

at the 19th International Scientific Conference “Youth, Science and Innovation” of young scientists, PhD doctoral students, master's students, and undergraduates (Aktobe, April 12, 2023); at the A. Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics and the Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University, at the International Scientific and Theoretical Conference “Structural, Communicative, and Anthropocentric Modules of the Development of National Linguistics” (Almaty, April 21, 2023); at the 19th International Scientific Conference of Students and Young Scientists «ĞYLYM JÁNE BILIM – 2024» (Astana, April 11, 2024 г.); at the international symposium “Türk Dünyasına Genç Bakışı” (“A Young View of the Turkic World”) (Ankara, April 25–26, 2024); at a traditional XI International Scientific Conference «Zhubanov's Legacy», dedicated to the 125th anniversary of K. Zhubanov (г. Актобе, 1 ноября 2024 г.); at the 21st International Scientific-Practical Conference “Youth, Science and Innovation”

(Aktobe, April 14, 2025). The research findings were presented in the form of reports at these events.

Research approval and publication:

Overall, 10 articles were published according to the topic of the dissertation, including, 1 articles in journals indexed on the Scopus scientific database, 3 article in publications recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 6 articles in the proceedings of international conferences.

Scientific articles published in journals indexed on the Scopus scientific database (Q1):

1. Role of humorous discourse in developing intercultural interaction: a linguacultural analysis//Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics (EJAL) , Vol.11, №2, 2025, 177-184. Percentile 79% Q1. Doi:<https://doi.org/10.32601/ejal.11214>
<https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/105009219147>

Articles published in publications recommended for disseminating results by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

1. Functional Discourse Analysis of Humor. // *Bulletin of the Abylai Khan Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages*. – 2023. – №4 (71). – 169-183 pp. <https://doi.org/10.48371/PHILS.2023.71.4.013>

2. The linguocultural Characteristics of Humorous Discourse (based on Kazakh and English materials) // *Bulletin of the Abylai Khan Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages*. – 2025. – No. 2(77). – 228–243 pp. <https://doi.org/10.48371/PHILS.2025.2.77.013>

3. Comparative linguistic and cultural analysis of humorous discourse (based on Kazakh and English materials) // A. Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics. TILTANÝM №3 (99) <https://doi.org/10.55491/2411-6076-2025-3-215-228>

Articles published in the proceedings of international conferences:

1. The Object of Linguocultural Studies // *XIX International Scientific Conference of Young Scientists, PhD Doctoral Students, Master's Students and Undergraduates "Youth, Science and Innovation", 12 April, 2023. Republic of Kazakhstan, Aktobe*. –102–104 pp.

2. Genre Features of Humorous Discourse // *Proceedings of the International Scientific and Theoretical Conference "Structural, Communicative, and Anthropocentric Modules of the Development of National Linguistics," organized by the Scientific Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the A. Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics, and the Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University., 2023*. –60-65 pp.

3. Genre Features of a Humorous Remark in Humorous Discourse // *Proceedings of the 19th International Scientific Conference of Students and Young Scientists "GYLYM JÁNE BILIM – 2024," L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University., 11.04.2024*. –3124-3126 pp.

4. Functions of Various Forms of Humor in Language // *International Symposium "Young View of the Turkic World" (Türk Dünyasına Genç Bakışı), 25–26 April, 2024. Turkey, Ankara*. 413–417 pp.

5. The Interrelationship Between Language and Culture // *Proceedings of the Traditional 11th International Conference “Zhubanov’s Legacy,” dedicated to the 125th anniversary of K. K. Zhubanov.* – Aktobe: K. Zhubanov Regional University, 2024. – 258–261 pp.

6. The Concept of Discourse // *Proceedings of the 21st International Scientific and Practical Conference “Youth, Science and Innovation.”* – Aktobe: K. Zhubanov Regional University., 2025. –326–328 pp.

The structure and scope of the research. The dissertation consists of an introduction, two sections, a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices. The total volume of the study is 43 tables, 7 figures, and 147 pages.

The dissertation research is conducted within the framework of current areas of linguistics, such as discourse theory, cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, and discourse studies, and is based on the following programmatic documents of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

– Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 914 of 16 October 2023. “On approval of the Concept for the Development of Language Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023–2029.”

– Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 659 of 13 September 2021. On measures to implement the Address of the Head of State to the People of Kazakhstan of 1 September 2021 “The unity of the people and systemic reforms are the basis of the prosperity of a strong nation” (with amendments of 17.04.2023).

Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 988 dated December 27, 2019, “On Approval of the State Programme for the Development of Education and Science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2020–2025” (section “Historical and Cultural Heritage and Spiritual Values of Kazakhstan. Commonality of History and Culture, Literature and Language, Customs and Values”).

PhD candidate’s contribution in the preparation of each research publication. The entire volume of the dissertation, the choice of the research method and the solution of the tasks for the purpose of the study, the preparation of publications on the study was carried out by the author independently. Assignment of tasks on the topic of the study and discussion of the obtained results were carried out jointly with scientific consultants.