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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section(s): *Literature, Linguistics & Criticism***Transforming national folklore in digital space: A case study of Internet memes in modern Kazakhstan**Zhanat Toqtarkyzy Saltakova¹, Almas Oralbek¹, Nassikhat Mursalimova¹, Kunimzhan Tynyshyqbekovna Kudaibergenova², Ainur Zinelovna Kenbayeva^{3*}¹Research and Innovation Department of Manuscripts and Textology, M.O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art, Kazakhstan²Department of Educational Program in Kazakh Language and Literature and Journalism, Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda University, Kazakhstan³Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Faculty of Philology, M. Utemissov West Kazakhstan University, Kazakhstan

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to contribute to the semiotic analysis of hybrid forms in digital communication. It aims to explore the transformation of Kazakh folklore in digital spaces through a case study of 236 Internet memes featuring Kazakh cultural elements drawn from digital platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, and Telegram. The study has a mixed-methods design and combines thematic and semiotic analyses to look at how traditional oral narratives transform into multimodal, or creolized, digital phenomena. It allowed identifying the main thematic and semantic features characteristic of digital folklore. The thematic analysis identified the most frequently recurring themes in Internet memes and an essential dominance of spiritual values reflecting national Kazakh identity combining Nomadic traditionalism and modernity. The semantic analysis identified the main semantic features of Kazakh digital folklore depending on the number of semiotic components used, the nature of creolization tools, the composition of visual components, the significance of components, the degree of component correlation, and the method of component correlation. The findings of the research emphasize the shift from sacred extended narratives in traditional folklore to compressed creolized texts, which allows referring Kazakh digital folklore to glocal folklore combining global meme formats with local Kazakh specificity. The study fills gaps in digital folklore investigations in Central Asian contexts and offers insights into creolized semiotics for non-Western contexts.

KEYWORDS: correlation, creolized text, culture, digital folklore, Internet meme**Research Journal in Advanced Humanities**

Volume 7, Issue 2, 2026

ISSN: 2708-5945 (Print)

ISSN: 2708-5953 (Online)

ARTICLE HISTORY

Submitted: 4 February 2026

Accepted: 30 March 2026

Published: 17 April 2026

HOW TO CITE

Saltakova, Z. T., Oralbek, A., Mursalimova, N., Kudaibergenova, K. T., & Kenbayeva, A. Z. (2026). Transforming national folklore in digital space: A case study of Internet memes in modern Kazakhstan. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.58256/txw8s555>



Published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global, an imprint of Royallite Publishers Limited

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1. Introduction

Being firmly grounded in oral storytelling and cultural symbols, folklore has traditionally functioned as a treasurer of a nation's past and identity, collective memory and cultural heritage (Pangereyev et al., 2023; Kaur, 2025), as well as a driver of societal advancement (Nugraheni, Andayani, & Eko Wardani, 2025). With roots in Nomadic traditions and enhancement through interactions with Persian, Russian, and Islamic cultures, Kazakh folklore has preserved national values, rituals, and conventions across generations of narrative transmission (Abdrakhmanova, Kurmanbaeva, Ibzharova, & Yesbulatova, 2025). The linguistic analyses of Kazakh folklore have revealed its unique conceptual features and culturally marked concepts, shining a spotlight on the Kazakh linguistic worldview (Aitova & Bakytkyzy, 2025).

In digital space, folklore has evolved from oral and written traditions to dynamic online transformations. According to Blank (2012), digital platforms like Facebook and Instagram have reshaped the processes of folklore creation, distribution, and transformation. Digital space serves a hybrid environment where national folklore undergoes more than simple digitization, being dynamically reinterpreted, challenged, and revitalized by online communities. Digital folklore, or folklore in digital space, has emerged as a fusion of traditional and modern elements and an essential product of the contemporary social situation (Wang, 2024), where users serve as active contributors shaping this dynamic cultural content.

Recently, there has been a growing interest in exploring Internet memes as a form of digital folklore. Internet memes are regarded as a complex phenomenon of Internet communication, which represents a holistic, complete unit in a square frame (Kanashina, 2017). Normally, they integrate diverse semiotic resources such as texts, pictures, and videos and function as multimodal discourses (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020) or creolized texts (Anisimova, 2003; Khustenko, 2022), with their meanings emerging from the interplay of these resources or components. Having several components working together to produce an expression, Internet memes serve visual representations of cultural elements in a humorous form (Rabeson, Denisova, Smirnova, & Steblovskaya, 2024) playing on a variety of cultural elements such as catchphrases from books and films, songs, customs, and behavioral norms. Being cultural artifacts, Internet memes serve as a means of exploring social phenomena like changes in migration flows (Guseynova, Dugalich, Lomakina, Neliubova, & Ebzeeva, 2022) and cultural trends expressed in contemporary digital discourse (Qing, 2025; Samreen, 2024). Analyzing them provides insight into how culture is reproduced and sustained within society (Pratiwi, Sulatra, & Dewangga, 2023).

Previous studies have looked at Internet memes from various perspectives. Some research based on content analysis has emphasized the critical role of Internet memes in conveying embedded meanings and generating engagement (Agrawal et al., 2024; Van, 2023). Other studies have analyzed Internet memes and their culturally specific meanings using semiotic frameworks, such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes' theories, and showed memes to rely on shared cultural knowledge to establish layered meanings (Lestari, Duwila, & Probawati, 2022; Samreen, 2024). The investigation conducted by Zenner and Geeraerts (2018) within the cognitive semiotics framework demonstrates how Internet memes comprise texts superimposed on images and thus form part of image macros. Drawing on Halliday's socio-semiotic theory, the investigation by Al-Issawi, Al Ahmad, and Awajan (2024) addresses Internet memes as a complex socio-semiotic phenomenon where the interaction of linguistic and visual elements serves to communicate meaning.

Despite numerous studies of Internet memes from various research paradigms worldwide, little attention has been paid to their semiotic organization and correlation between their components in the Kazakh segment of digital space. To the best of our knowledge, a similar study has been performed by Khustenko (2022) in relation to informal speech practices in the professional community of Russian lawyers in such social networks as VKontakte and Odnoklassniki. Her semiotic analysis suggests the presence of a distinct, informal discursive domain within the relevant professional discourse. Our study takes a cultural turn to focus on Internet memes as a form of digital folklore blending global meme formats with local Kazakh cultural and folklore elements to produce a unique expression. Through this case study, the current research seeks to contribute to the understanding of how national folklore adapts and transforms in digital space. In our investigation, semiotic analysis is complemented by thematic analysis, as studying Internet memes thematically reveals underlying cultural values and collective identities through recurring motifs. These two types of analysis are united to show how Internet memes work through various correlations between their components, and what they communicate about cultural values and change.

2. Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, this study builds on Anisimova's (2003) model of a creolized text, in which creolization creates pragmatic influence. Internet memes function as creolized texts by integrating verbal (textual) and nonverbal (visual, graphic, etc.) elements into a unified semiotic structure that conveys meaning beyond either component alone. Creolized Internet memes are described to have a homogeneous semantic system consisting of two different structural levels, being mainly linguistic (verbal) and visual (graphic, image, video), and sometimes sound (Kurmanbekova, Sarekenova, & Malikov, 2023). The functionality of elements in a creolized text is achieved not by simply "gluing" them together, but by creating a new, often humorous, meaning. The term "a creolized text" is closely related to the term "a multimodal text", which is more widely used in international linguistics. However, for the purpose of our analysis, we prefer to use the former term when dealing with the semiotic organization of Internet memes.

Being a semiotically complex entity that functions in the Internet environment, an Internet meme is a creolized text of a special kind. Internet memes diverge from traditional creolized forms such as advertisements and comics, where linguistic signs (words, phrases) and iconic signs (images, symbols) form a fixed single whole that can exert persuasive or emotional influence on recipients. Such texts normally maintain stable forms with predictable interactions, which are optimized for print or broadcast media. Yet, creolized Internet memes are uniquely shaped by online processes and undergo constant semantic transformation through remixing and rapid dissemination. According to Kanashina (2017), their unique nature is motivated by functioning on the Internet.

Creolization in internet memes can manifest itself in weak, partial, or complete forms (Anisimova, 2003). With weak correlation, the verbal component retains autonomy, but paralinguistic characteristics of the text are taken into account, such as font size and style, color, and the use of punctuation or mathematical symbols. In memes with partial creolization, the verbal component is relatively independent of the image, and autosemantic links arise between them. The image typically complements the text as an optional element, fulfilling aesthetic functions and depending on the genre features of the meme; it is not essential to the meaning and is easily replaced. With complete creolization, the verbal component is subordinated to the visual component, forming synsemantic relationships where the verbal text is oriented toward or refers to the image, and the visual component becomes an obligatory element. Together, the verbal and visual components form a holistic semantic unity, where meanings are not simply added together but integrated through conceptual fusion or opposition. Methods of component correlation include illustration, complementation, emphasis, combination, amplification, analogy, connotation, association, contrast, and juxtaposition (Anisimova, 2003). In illustration, the verbal and visual components maintain autonomy: the image optionally clarifies the text without adding new meanings and can easily be replaced by another. Complementation implies a hierarchy, where the verbal component dominates and the visual component is secondary. Emphasis focuses attention on a fragment of the verbal part through a corresponding image. Combination ensures the equal unity of the components in creating the meaning of a meme. Amplification suggests that the visual does not duplicate, but rather emphasizes a specific aspect of the verbal description. Analogy utilizes metaphorical transfer, interpreting a verbal phenomenon through a visual conceptual domain. Connotation arises when an allusive image to a cultural, literary, or historical reality enriches the verbal meaning with connotations. Association is built on a common feature (situation, emotion, intention, characteristics) that unites verbal and iconic elements. Contrast correlates the meanings of text and image by means of contrast, while juxtaposition correlates the two opposing images with corresponding verbal comments.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

The current research has a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative interpretative analysis of semantic organization and themes, and quantitative analysis of frequencies of semantic and thematic features. The research focuses on Internet memes circulating in the Kazakh segment of digital space, which are analyzed thematically and structurally based on Anisimova (2003) and Kanashina's (2017) theory of a creolized text. This design facilitates a detailed investigation into the specific features of Internet memes as digital folklore and enhances comprehension of how national folklore evolves within digital environments.

3.2. Data Collection

The materials for this research were collected using the method of purposeful sampling from digital platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, and Telegram. The search function on Instagram, Tik Tok and Telegram was used to collect memes with the appropriate hashtags such as #kzmeme, #kazakmeme, #kazakskimemder (Kazakh memes), #kazakhshamemdar (Kazakh memes), #kazakpostironiya (Kazakh postirony). The researchers carefully examined each meme in the feeds, selecting those relevant for the research. The main criterion for including a meme in the research sample was the presence of a cultural component in the meme, which allowed it to be attributed to Kazakh culture. The sample size was 236 memes.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed utilizing a qualitative research method, with the theory of creolized text analysis suggested by Anisimova (2003) and Kanashina (2017) serving as the foundation for analysis. In accordance with the proposed principles of semantic analysis, the polycode texts of internet memes containing components of Kazakh culture were analyzed based on the following parameters: the number of semiotic components used, the nature of creolization tools, the composition of visual components, the significance of components, the degree of component correlation, and the method of component correlation. Furthermore, to identify the fundamental values of Kazakh culture expressed through recurring motifs in Internet memes, a thematic analysis of creolized texts was conducted. The qualitative analysis of semantic organization and themes was complemented by the quantitative analysis of how frequently the identified semantic and thematic features occurred in the research sample. The combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses enabled a comprehensive description of the transformations being characteristic of digital folklore in modern Kazakhstan.

4. Results

4.1. Results of Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis yielded frequencies of recurring motifs reflecting Kazakh cultural values. These thematic features were grouped into two main value categories: material and spiritual. The frequencies of thematic features characterizing the research sample of Internet memes featuring Kazakh cultural elements are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of Internet Memes by Theme

Thematic Feature	Frequency	Percentage
<i>1. Material Values</i>	61	25.8%
Money	13	5.5%
Cars	13	5.5%
Show-off	12	5.1%
Food	23	9.7%
<i>2. Spiritual Values</i>	175	74.2%
Education	13	5.5%
Science, technology	11	4.7%
Kazakh language	36	15.2%
Identity	9	3.8%
Health	22	9.3%
Family	15	6.4%
Behavioral standards	11	4.7%
Strength of character	11	4.7%
Love of country	5	2%
Social habits	16	6.8%
Art	11	4.7%
Rituals	15	6.4%

Material and spiritual values in Kazakhstani internet memes reflect a complex post-Soviet identity, where the pragmatic attitudes of the Soviet legacy coexist with the traditionalism of Nomadic culture. The quantitative analysis of a corpus of 236 memes reveals a significant predominance of spiritual values (175 memes, 74.2%) over material ones (61 memes, 25.8%), demonstrating the persistence of a collectivist paradigm in Kazakh society, where spiritual values predominate over material consumption.

A detailed analysis of material values reveals the dominance of food (9.7%) as a fundamental cultural value and social ritual, rather than simply a material good. Kumys, beshbarmak, and other traditional Kazakh dishes function in memes as semiotic signs of hospitality and community, uniting the material and spiritual dimensions. Cars (5.5%) embody a post-Soviet status symbol inherited from the era of scarcity, while showing off (5.1%) becomes the object of self-critical humor about ostentation. In the research sample, money (5.5%) does not appear to be the central theme, although it is often the target of criticism in connection with financial debt.

Spiritual values form a stable hierarchy, in which knowledge of the native language (15.2%) occupies a dominant position. Figure 1 shows the internet meme “Multilingual SpongeBob” that depicts multilingualism as a component of Kazakh identity. The text of the meme contains three statements in the Kazakh language: 1) “Agylyshynsha bilemin” (“I know English”); 2) “Oryssha bilemin” (“I know Russian”); 3) “Kazakh tilinin dialektilerin onai azhyrata alamyn” (“I easily distinguish Kazakh dialects”).



Figure 1. Depicting Kazakh Identity through Multilingualism in an Internet Meme

The meme in Figure 1 displays a classic three-frame SpongeBob SquarePants template, where the character’s muscle mass increases from the first to the third frame, symbolizing growing competence. The visual exaggeration of strength directly correlates with linguistic hierarchy. The meme ironically deconstructs the multilingualism of post-Soviet Kazakhstan: the knowledge of English and Russian is the basic expectation of the urban elite, but fluency in Kazakh dialects is positioned as the peak of linguistic competence and authentic Kazakhness.

Internet memes act as a mirror of culture: humor at the expense of “a favorite” creates an affective connection with tradition through irony. Interestingly, the values cherished by Kazakhs are often not explicitly expressed. For example, love for the country has a relatively low frequency (2%), indicating an implicit identity lived through everyday life. At the same time, health and a healthy lifestyle (9.3%) are emerging values in Kazakhstan as a globalizing society. Furthermore, family (6.4%), rituals (6.4%), social habits (primarily hospitality) (6.8%), and education (13 memes) emphasize traditionalism as a core component of Kazakh culture, based on adherence to established rituals and social norms. The theme of hospitality is touched upon in the meme “In Kazakhstan, it’s called just drinking tea...” shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Depicting Hospitality in an Internet Meme

Figure 2 illustrates a massive festive table, literally piled high with traditional dishes (plov, boursaks, manti, fruit, etc.), above which is the text: “In Kazakhstan, it’s called just drinking tea...”. The visual exaggeration of abundance contrasts with the laconic verbal component. The meme exploits the cultural norm of Kazakh hospitality through euphemistic understatement: a massive dastarkhan is modestly referred to as “drinking tea”. The excess of food encodes the host’s moral obligation to offer more than the guest expects. In Kazakh tradition, hospitality is a code of honor (qonaqzhailyq), while tea represents a ritual of communion.

4.2. Results of Semantic Analysis

Internet memes, as contemporary digital folklore, exhibit a complex semiotic structure, where verbal and visual components interact through creolization. Below are the results of an analysis of the semantic organization of Internet memes in the research sample, based on the following parameters: the number of semiotic components used, the nature of creolization tools, the composition of visual components, the significance of components, the degree of component correlation, and the method of component correlation.

In terms of creolization, Internet memes in the study sample are represented by two types: paragraphemic and visual. Paragraphemic devices include the use of background colors, capitalization, graphic emoticons, text layout, font color, font size, and the juxtaposition of uppercase and lowercase letters. This type is the smallest in the sample, being represented by only two Internet memes (0.8%). In contrast, visual components are present in 234 Internet memes in our sample. Visual means of creolization are heterogeneous in nature and are characterized by a wide variety of features, which are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Visual Means of Creolization in Internet Memes

Visual Means	Frequency	Percentage
Posters	2	0.8%
Ideograms/Pictograms	6	2.5%
Photos of people	80	33.9%
Photos of animals	13	5.5%
Drawings	42	17.9%
Movie stills	35	14.8%
Cartoon stills	37	15.7%
Photos of objects, landscapes	19	8.1%

Table 2 reflects the distribution of visual elements in Kazakh Internet memes, emphasizing their semiotic role in creolization, i.e. the fusion of the verbal and visual to enhance humor and expressiveness. The overwhelming majority of Internet memes in the sample are photographs of people (33.9%). The predominance of photographs of people may be due to the fact that faces directly convey emotions, making these memes relatable and emotionally charged, thereby facilitating rapid audience engagement. Drawings (17.9%) provide abstraction and interpretation, possibly allowing for creative reinterpretation of reality. Cartoon stills (15.7%) enhance

satire through exaggeration, while film stills (14.8%) add intertextuality, referencing fragments of famous films as pop culture icons for recognition. Animal photos (5.5%) exploit anthropomorphism for irony, whereas photos of objects/landscapes (19, 8.1%) serve as a means of contextualization, creating a backdrop for the narrative. Rare ideograms/pictograms (2.5%) and posters (0.8%) are characterized by conciseness and didacticism, but are inferior to dynamic formats. The predominance of realistic photos indicates a focus on the everyday and emotional, which is typical of local digital folklore and contributes to the virality of memes in the Kazakh-speaking segment.

Based on the composition of their visual components, the Internet memes in our sample may be divided into three main groups: Internet memes containing a single image (141 occurrences, 59.7%); Internet memes containing multiple related images in a contrastive relationship (46 occurrences, 20.8%); and Internet memes containing multiple related images in a sequential relationship (49 occurrences, 20.8%). Internet memes consisting of a single image are characterized by a static image and constitute the overwhelming majority of memes in the research sample. Internet memes containing multiple related images in a sequential relationship are usually based on the development of a specific idea. Internet memes containing multiple related images in a contrastive relationship convey their main meaning through the depiction of a paradox or dilemma.

Regarding the importance of their components, two main types of Internet memes containing elements of Kazakh culture can be distinguished, depending on whether the verbal or visual component is the primary meaning-making component. In our sample, the verbal component forms the basis of 149 (63.1%) Internet memes. In these memes, the visual component serves as a frame and contributes to the formal organization of the utterance. A distinctive feature of such Internet memes is that the visual component is created according to a template and can be actively used in other memes with different verbal components. The visual component in our sample is represented by 87 memes (36.9%), in which the verbal component serves as a commentary that complements the meaning of the meme.

Based on the degree of component correlation, three types of internet memes with elements of Kazakh culture can be identified: weak creolization (2 occurrences, 0.8%), partial creolization (154 occurrences, 65.3%), and full creolization (80 occurrences, 33.9%). Internet memes with partial creolization significantly predominate in the research sample, indicating their widespread use in the Kazakh-speaking segment. This also confirms that the verbal component is dominant in most memes in our sample.

The quantitative analysis of the ways in which meme components are correlated in the Kazakh-speaking segment of Internet memes reveals that the most common are illustration (19.9%), where the image autonomously explains the text without introducing new meanings, and enhancement (13.6%), where the visual component enhances the verbal component, adding emotional depth. Frequently used correlation methods in our sample also include association (13.1%), which is based on a commonality of situation or emotion, and connotation (10.2%), which is based on allusions to cultural realities that enrich the Kazakh context. Slightly less common are addition (9.7%), which subordinates the visual component to the verbal text for contextualization, and combination (9.3%), which equalizes the contributions of both components to a single meaning. Even less common are emphasis (8.1%) with a metonymic focus on a fragment, juxtaposition (7.6%) with a binary structure of images and comments, contrast (5.5%), and analogy (3%) with metaphorical transfer. The frequency of these methods of creolization of verbal and visual components in our sample is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Means of Component Correlation in Internet Memes

Creolization Means	Frequency	Percentage
Illustration	47	19.9%
Addition	23	9.7%
Emphasis	19	8.1%
Combination	22	9.3%
Enhancement	32	13.6%
Analogy	7	3%
Connotation	24	10.2%

Association	31	13.1%
Contrast	13	5.5%
Juxtaposition	18	7.6%

5. Discussion

The mixed-methods analysis of Internet memes containing elements of Kazakh culture identified key features of their semantic and thematic organization. The thematic analysis of 236 memes revealed significant transformations of folklore in the modern digital environment. Being preserved in epics, proverbs, and fairy tales that encode cultural identity and social norms, traditional Kazakh folklore centers on epic heroism and nomadic values, featuring batyrs (heroes) battling evil forces, symbolizing resilience and justice (Aitova & Bakytzy, 2025). Common themes in traditional folklore include good versus evil, wisdom through tricksters, nature reverence, hospitality, family unity, and love for the homeland. In other words, spiritual values predominate in traditional folklore. The analysis of Internet memes also revealed a significant predominance of spiritual values over material ones. However, what distinguishes digital folklore from traditional folklore is the content of these spiritual values. Knowledge of the native Kazakh language emerged as the primary spiritual value in digital folklore and an important component of national identity, fully reflecting the state language policy in modern Kazakhstan (Kurnamova et al., 2023). Furthermore, for modern Kazakhs, family and hospitality remain core values, but instead of heroism and justice, frequent themes in Internet memes include the importance of education, science and technological development, health and a healthy lifestyle.

In terms of semantic organization, Internet memes represent multimodal digital folklore, where verbal and visual signs form a creolized semiotic system. The semiotic analysis of Internet memes with elements of Kazakh culture reveals the transformation of traditional folkloric mechanisms into modern communication strategies characteristic of modern digital spaces. In digital spaces, folklore is transformed from sacred, ritual narratives into everyday sign systems based on forms of digital folklore such as Internet memes. Traditional transmission through oral performance or ritual repetition gives way to compressed visual objects integrated into everyday humor. In this respect, digital folklore functions through compact, modular signs rather than expanded stories.

The transition from traditional folklore to digital media is characterized by such features as shifting from oral speech to a hybrid (creolized) text, combining verbal text and visual imagery; from a sequential narrative structure to a static recording of specific moments in images; from a predominantly lexical-semantic correlation to diverse methods of creolization (correlation) of verbal and visual components. Moreover, the transition to digital media necessitates a shift from the abstract allegories of traditional folklore to the predominantly facial images of contemporary visual culture, which facilitate the expression of various emotions, replacing descriptive language and thereby creating an economy of expression.

Finally, Kazakh folklore in digital space is shown to be hybridized. Internet memes demonstrate creolized semiotics, in which traditional symbols are recontextualized and made intelligible in global semiotic frameworks, while global visual codes are articulated through local linguistic traditions. Working together, these trends create a hybrid discourse of contemporary folklore studies, which can be referred to as glocal folklore. The term “glocal” refers to features that occur at a global and local level and involve homogeneity and heterogeneity (Robertson, 1995; Gritsenko & Aleshinskaya, 2023). Glocal discourse is shown to manifest itself through the adaptation and hybridization of local features within globalized frameworks and contexts (Aleshinskaya, 2020). Likewise, glocal folklore refers to the adaptation and hybridization of traditional local folklore within globalized digital and cultural contexts. Glocal folklore blends indigenous narratives with universal Internet formats such as Internet memes, where ancient stories transform through online circulation while retaining cultural specificity (Montal, 2025).

6. Conclusions

The mixed-methods research of Internet memes containing elements of Kazakh culture demonstrates how Kazakh folklore evolves from traditional oral and ritual forms into dynamic expressions in digital spaces. The qualitative and quantitative thematic and semiotic analyses of 236 Internet memes on digital platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, and Telegram reveals profound shifts in cultural transmission and meaning making.

Thematically, Internet memes are demonstrated to mirror Kazakh identity combining Nomadic traditionalism and pragmatic modernity, with spiritual values significantly dominating over material ones. In terms of semantic organization, Internet memes exemplify creolized texts containing visual components, in which, however verbal components perform a leading role in meaning making. The main types and means of correlating verbal and visual components are described. The findings of this research the main transformation of folklore in digital spaces from sacred epics to compressed glocal hybrids, where universal formats are infused with cultural specificity. This study fills gaps in research into Kazakh digital folklore by the extension of global meme semiotics to a non-Western, Central-Asian context. Kazakh Internet memes are demonstrated to revitalize folklore as participatory digital folklore that enables preserving national identity through humor. The study sheds light on local and global perspectives in Internet meme interpretation and enables a better understanding of how national folklore adapts and transforms in digital space.

Funding:

This research was funded by Scientific Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, grant number AP26100495 “Beliefs in the worldview of the Turkic peoples: Ethnofolklore aspect”.

Acknowledgments:

The authors extend their sincere gratitude to the scholars at the M. O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art for their expert guidance and insightful feedback. We also thank our colleagues and the broader academic community for their unwavering support, which greatly enhanced the quality of this research.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Disclaimer Statement

The views, opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated institutions, funders, or publishers.

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Authorship and Level of Contribution

Zhanat T. Saltakova was responsible for the conceptualization of the project and the research design, wrote the introduction and proofed the paper.

Almas Oralbek was responsible for conducting the thematic analysis and writing the corresponding part of the results section.

Nasikhat Mursalimova was responsible for performing the semantic analysis and writing the corresponding part of the results section.

Kunimzhan T. Kudaibergenova wrote the literature review and method sections.

Ainur Z. Kenbayeva wrote the discussion and conclusion sections of the manuscript.

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