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Representations of the Turkic Worldview in Kazakh Essay Writing: Cultural Memory and Spiritual Continuity

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Abstract This study examines the representation of the Turkic worldview in contemporary Kazakh essay writing through three objectives: identifying dominant cultural codes and their linguistic realization, situating findings within the broader Turkic intellectual tradition via comparison with Turkish essayists, and tracing historical foundations through semantic continuity with the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions. A qualitative-interpretive analysis of 15 Kazakh essays identified five interconnected cultural codes: historical memory, sacred space, historical figures, national identity, and spiritual continuity, which were realized through seven linguistic strategies, including toponyms, first-person plural forms, anthroponyms, and metaphors. The findings revealed that the essay genre functions as an active discursive space where Turkic cultural values are reinterpreted through authorial reflection. Comparison with Turkish essayists and the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions demonstrates that these cultural codes are grounded in a shared Turkic worldview adapted across historical periods. The study contributes to understanding how cultural memory and national identity are linguistically constructed and preserved in contemporary literary discourse.

Keywords: *Turkic worldview, Kazakh essay writing, cultural continuity, national values, cultural memory*

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1. Introduction

One of the contemporary trends in the humanities is the study of historical continuity, spiritual values, and the cultural memory of nations through literary texts. From this perspective, exploring the relationship between the Turkic worldview and Kazakh literature is of particular significance. The Turkic worldview constitutes a multifaceted cultural and philosophical system encompassing historical consciousness, cultural experience, spiritual values, and ethnic identity that have evolved over centuries. The shared historical memory and spiritual heritage of the Turkic peoples continue to shape contemporary literary discourse and are manifested across various literary genres, including the essay. Within Kazakh

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literature, essay writing provides a significant medium for reinterpreting historical figures, national values, spiritual heritage, and cultural codes. The theoretical foundations of the Turkic worldview have been extensively examined in Turkic studies (Barthold, 1928; Klyashtorny & Sultanov, 1992), cultural studies (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Lotman, 1990), and literary criticism (Akhmetov, 1973; Qabdolov, 1992), providing a solid basis for investigating its artistic representation in contemporary Kazakh essay writing. The cultural specificity, worldview, and spiritual values of the Turkic peoples have been extensively examined in previous scholarship (e.g., Kelimbetov, 2010; Zholdasbekov, 2013). Their studies emphasize that the Turkic worldview is founded on historical memory, national identity, spiritual continuity, moral values, and cultural heritage. These principles continue to shape contemporary Kazakh literature, including the essay as a literary genre. The essay has developed dynamically in Kazakhstan during the period of independence and has become an important subject of literary scholarship (Kakishev, 2008; Maitanov, 2010). Although the Turkic worldview, national identity, cultural memory, and spiritual continuity in Kazakh literature have been extensively studied, their interconnected representation and the mechanisms of cultural continuity in Kazakh essay writing have not yet been comprehensively investigated. Previous studies have primarily examined these phenomena within the frameworks of folklore, prose, and mythological systems, while the essay genre has rarely been explored as a space in which historical memory and spiritual values are revitalized through authorial reflection. Consequently, examining the manifestation of Turkic cultural codes, historical memory, and national values in essayistic texts remains a relevant scholarly task.

The purpose of this study is to identify the artistic and ideological manifestations of the Turkic worldview in Kazakh essay writing, to determine its role in preserving cultural continuity, and to reveal its significance in representing the national spiritual heritage. To achieve this aim, the study addresses the following objectives:

1. To identify the dominant cultural codes in contemporary Kazakh essay writing and analyze their linguistic realization through seven distinct discursive strategies.
2. To situate the Kazakh essayistic representation of Turkic values within the broader Turkic intellectual tradition by comparing them with the conceptual frameworks of Turkish essayists.
3. To trace the historical and conceptual foundations of the cultural codes identified in Kazakh essays by examining their semantic continuity with the ancient Turkic worldview preserved in the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions.

2. Theoretical Framework

The spiritual foundations of Turkic civilization are preserved in the ancient Turkic inscriptions, oral traditions, epic literature, and the literary and philosophical works of the Islamic period. The Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions emphasize historical consciousness, the concept of statehood, devotion to the homeland, and the unity of the Turkic people. The ancient Turkic worldview was founded on the principle of harmony among humanity, society, and nature (Kossymova et al., 2024). In recent years, the concept of the cultural code has become an important analytical framework in cultural and literary studies. It is generally understood as a system of symbols, meanings, and values that preserves the historical experience, worldview, collective memory, and cultural identity of a particular people. Comparative research on national and cultural codes in the Kazakh and Turkic languages has demonstrated that these codes function as a universal cultural mechanism through which a people's worldview, mentality, and value system are expressed and transmitted (Kurmangali et al., 2025).

The cultural code, as a system of symbols and values, finds one of its most vivid expressions in the realm of colour perception, which bridges abstract worldview principles with tangible linguistic and emotional experience. The physiological perception of colours in the Kazakh language is closely associated with cognitive, conceptual, and emotional experience. Colour terms encode personal, social, and psychological meanings that shape the linguistic expression of emotions (Pansat et al., 2023). Colour symbolism constitutes a distinctive cultural code in the Turkic worldview, encoding essential spiritual, social, and ideological values. In the Orkhon inscriptions, the colours *white, black, blue,* and *green* represent not only natural phenomena but also broader cultural meanings (Tazegul & Nakhanova, 2020). The authors argue that the colours *white, black, blue, and green,* as represented in the Orkhon

inscriptions, symbolize not only natural phenomena but also spiritual, social, and ideological values. Just as colour symbolism encodes spiritual and ideological values within the Turkic cultural code, so too does historical memory function as a parallel mechanism for preserving and transmitting the collective worldview across time.

Historical memory constitutes another fundamental component of the Turkic worldview. In contemporary humanities, it is understood as a social and cultural mechanism through which knowledge of the past, collective experience, and a nation's spiritual heritage are transmitted across generations. A distinctive feature of historical memory in the Turkic tradition is its preservation through both written sources and oral forms of cultural expression, including epic traditions, folklore, and symbolic systems. Recent research has demonstrated that rock art and petroglyphs across the Turkic cultural space functioned as repositories of collective memory and cultural knowledge (Bayrak, 2025). These symbolic and cultural forms continue to preserve and transmit the historical experience of the Turkic peoples, reinforcing cultural continuity and collective identity. This enduring significance has, in turn, made historical memory and cultural continuity focal points of modern Turkic studies. Scholars argue that cultural continuity ensures the preservation and transmission of a people's spiritual values, historical experience, and intellectual traditions across generations. The shared cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples is reflected in literature, folklore, and historical texts, thereby contributing to a common cultural identity (Kurmanbay, 2019).

This cultural continuity is sustained not only through texts and symbols but also through the enduring veneration of key historical personalities, whose lives and deeds embody the values and collective experiences of the Turkic peoples. Prominent personalities such *as Kul Tigin, Tonyukuk, Bilge Khagan, Korkyt Ata,* and *Khoja Ahmed Yasawi* occupy a central place in the collective memory of the Turkic peoples and serve as enduring symbols of national identity. The veneration of these historical figures contributes to the preservation of collective memory and functions as an important mechanism of cultural continuity. Contemporary studies regard narratives and literary representations of historical figures as symbolic resources that shape and reinforce cultural identity (Omorov et al., 2025).

Closely connected to the veneration of historical figures is the concept of national identity as another fundamental value of the Turkic worldview. The ancient Turkic inscriptions place particular emphasis on the unity of the people and the integrity of the state. The Orkhon inscriptions present national unity as a prerequisite for political stability and social cohesion (Tekin, 1995). Contemporary scholarship demonstrates that the cultural unity of the Turkic peoples is sustained through shared historical memory, common linguistic heritage, and spiritual values (Abdullina et al., 2026; Mukhamedzhanova et al., 2026; Omorov et al., 2025). The concepts of national identity, unity, and spiritual integrity constitute central elements of Turkic literary traditions (Kurmanbay, 2019). Spiritual heritage represents one of the enduring foundations of the Turkic worldview. It encompasses historical experience, literary traditions, folklore, religious and philosophical thought, and cultural symbols that collectively preserve the intellectual and spiritual legacy of the Turkic peoples. Contemporary scholarship regards cultural memory as a mechanism through which historical experience is preserved, and collective identity is maintained (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995; Erll, 2022; Rigney, 2021).

This spiritual heritage, preserved through cultural memory, finds one of its most tangible expressions in the symbolic systems and naming traditions of Turkic folklore (Bayrak, 2025). The functioning of anthroponyms in oral folklore has long been of particular interest to researchers, often due to the fact that the anthroponymic system of each ethnic group developed over a long period of time under unique historical, geographical, and linguistic conditions. The theoretical basis for studying anthroponyms in epic works is based on a synthesis of several methodological aspects, such as historical and etymological analysis, linguacultural interpretation, semiotic hermeneutics, and the poetics of oral folklore (Shakirova et al., 2026). The folklore of the Turkic peoples likewise serves as one of the principal repositories of cultural memory. Recent studies have demonstrated that proverbs, sayings, and other forms of oral tradition function as cultural texts that preserve a community's worldview, value system, and historical experience (Dautuly, 2026). Alongside proverbs and sayings, the poetic and literary traditions of the Turkic peoples serve as equally vital repositories of spiritual heritage and cultural memory. Research on the Turkic-Kazakh poetic tradition emphasizes that poetry and literature

function as important repositories of spiritual heritage and cultural memory (Privratsky, 2001; Reichl, 2000).

The study of the Turkic worldview in Kazakh essays extends beyond describing the national values reflected in literary texts. Contemporary cognitive linguistics makes it possible to examine how concepts such as *homeland, ancestral home, ancestors, cultural memory, trust, honour,* and *nobility* are linguistically constructed and conceptualized. From this perspective, grammatical structures, conceptual metaphors, metonymic expressions, evaluative vocabulary, categorization strategies, and models of spatial conceptualization are regarded as the principal mechanisms through which Turkic cultural meanings are created and communicated (Langacker, 1986; Sharifian, 2017).

This active, meaning-constructing function of the essay finds its theoretical justification in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity. According to this perspective, language is not simply a neutral means of naming objects and phenomena but a cognitive system through which members of a cultural community perceive, categorize, and evaluate reality. People's perception of reality is fundamentally shaped by historically developed linguistic practices, as reflected in the observation that "the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group" (Sapir, 1929, p. 209). Consequently, linguistic units such as *ata qonys* (ancestral homeland), *kara shanyrak* (ancestral family home), *zheti ata* (seven generations of ancestors), *amanat* (entrusted legacy), *kiye* (sanctity), *kut* (blessing), and *ar-namys* (honor and dignity) found in Kazakh essays do more than preserve cultural knowledge. They organize reality according to the traditional Turkic worldview and reinforce the individual's perception of self through interconnected notions of homeland, kinship, ancestry, and collective historical experience. A similar perspective is reflected in the statement that "Every language is a vast pattern-system, different from others, in which are culturally ordained the forms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but also analyses nature" (Whorf, 1956, p. 252). This view highlights that every language embodies its own culturally specific system of classifying reality and organizing human experience.

The theoretical framework that best accounts for this dynamic, meaning-constructing process is cognitive linguistics, which views linguistic meaning as inseparable from human conceptualization. Cognitive linguistics regards linguistic meaning not as fixed or immutable but as a dynamic process of conceptualization through which individuals perceive, categorize, and interpret reality. Within Cognitive Grammar, "meaning is equated with conceptualization," and grammatical structures function as symbolic units that organize conceptual content (Langacker, 1986, p. 1). This principle makes it possible to examine the Turkic worldview in Kazakh essays not only through lexical meaning but also through the linguistic perspective from which authors construct cultural reality. For example, first-person plural expressions such as *our land*, *our ancestors*, and *our people* connect the individual narrator with the collective identity of the nation. Likewise, culturally significant expressions such as *ata qonys* (ancestral homeland), *tuğan zher* (native land), and *babalar zholymen* (following the path of the ancestors) establish a conceptual link between personal identity and historical-cultural space. From this perspective, grammatical structures are not merely formal linguistic devices but cognitive mechanisms through which the concepts of homeland, ancestry, historical memory, and national identity are constructed within the Turkic worldview.

While cognitive linguistics illuminates how grammatical structures construct cultural meaning, Conceptual Metaphor Theory extends this analysis by revealing how abstract cultural concepts are understood through figurative mappings from embodied experience. Conceptual Metaphor Theory provides an important framework for explaining how cultural meaning is constructed in Kazakh essays. The ordinary human conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical, with metaphor defined as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3). Accordingly, conceptualizations such as *Mother Earth, historical roots, ancestral blood, spiritual heritage, the continuity of generations,* and *life as a journey should* not be interpreted merely as literary images or stylistic devices. Rather, they function as conceptual models through which abstract cultural concepts are understood in terms of embodied, familial, and spatial experience.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus

The primary research material consisted of a corpus of 15 Kazakh essays published between 2001 and 2018 (see Table 1). The corpus included essays by Kekilbayuly, Zhurtbay, Magauin, and Murtaza that address themes of national identity, historical memory, ancestral heritage, homeland, sacred space, and spiritual continuity. The texts were selected according to the following criteria: their classification as essays, their engagement with the national and Turkic worldview, the predominance of authorial reflection and historical-cultural analysis, and the presence of linguistic units, symbols, and spatial images that express cultural memory.

Table 1
Corpus of 15 Essays and Essayistic/Reference Texts

No.	Original Kazakh title	English translation	Author	Date	Source type
1	Qazygurt – kieli besyk	Kazygurt – The Sacred Cradle	Sherkhan Murtaza	2008	Primary material
2	Kimdiki durys?	Who Is Right?	Sherkhan Murtaza	2008	Primary material
3	Tumar-iis	Tumar-iis (The Scent of Tumar)	Sherkhan Murtaza	2008	Primary material
4	Duananyn zhiren kaskasy	The Dervish's Chestnut Horse	Sherkhan Murtaza	2008	Primary material
5	Kadyrly Hasen aga!	Dear Khasen Aga!	Abish Kekilbayuly	2012	Primary material
6	Talagy Taraz	Ancient Taraz	Abish Kekilbayuly	2002	Primary material
7	Shandoz	Shandoz	Abish Kekilbayuly	2004	Primary material
8	Adilettin algauy	The Blessing of Justice	Tursyn Zhurtbay	2018a	Primary material
9	Qaiyrymnyn qormalu	The Guardian of Kindness	Tursyn Zhurtbay	2018b	Primary material
10	Begim	Begim	Tursyn Zhurtbay	2018c	Primary material
11	Ultynyn kok semsery	The Nation's Blue Saber	Tursyn Zhurtbay	2018d	Primary material
12	Alemdegi en suly	The Most Beautiful in the World	Mukhtar Magauin	2012	Primary material
13	Abish ekeuimiz	Abish and I	Mukhtar Magauin	2017a	Primary material
14	Ilyas Aga Yesenberlin	Ilyas Aga Yesenberlin	Mukhtar Magauin	2017b	Primary material
15	Men	I	Mukhtar Magauin	2002	Primary material
16	Turkshulugun Esasları	The Principles of Turkism	Ziya Gokalp	2024	Supplementary material
17	Turkshenin Sırları	The Secrets of Turkish	Nihat Sami Banarli	2001	Supplementary material
18	Kul Tigin Yazıtı	Kul Tigin Inscription	Yollug Tigin (attributed)	732	Thematic reference material
19	Bilge Kagan Yazıtı	Bilge Qaghan Inscription	Yollug Tigin (attributed)	735	Thematic reference material
20	Tonyukuk Yazıtı	Tonyukuk Inscription	Tonyukuk (attributed)	716	Thematic reference material

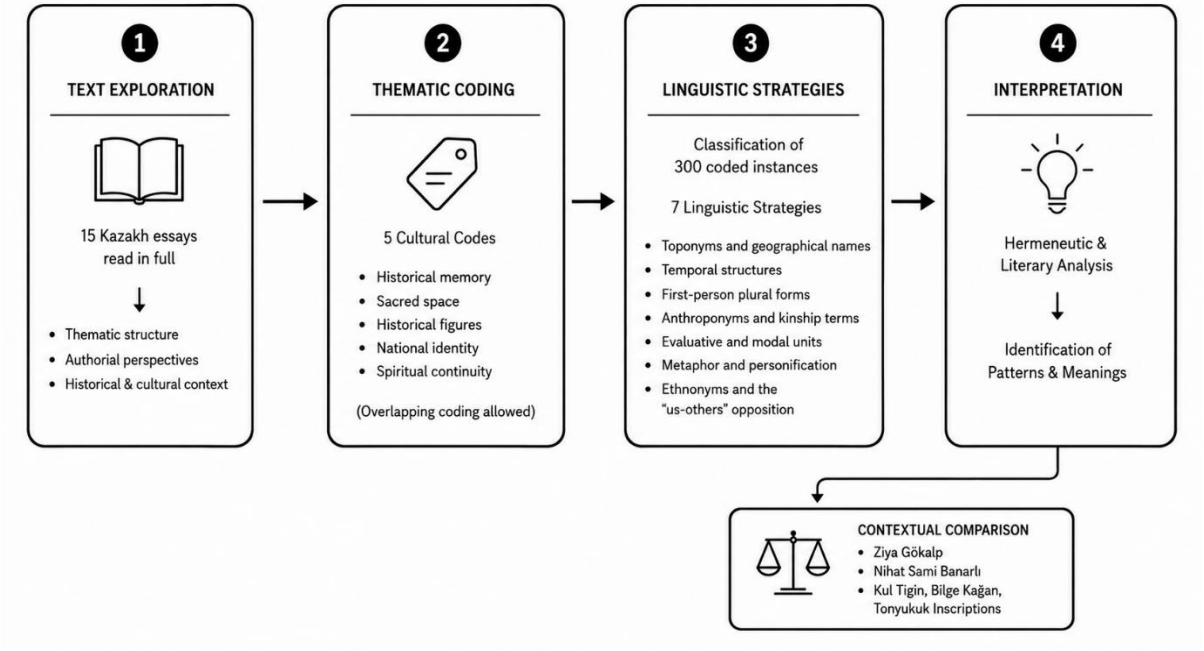
The relatively small size of the corpus enabled a holistic reading of the texts, close analysis of linguistic and stylistic units within their immediate contexts, and a detailed examination of each author's worldview. The corpus comprised 15 Kazakh essays and essayistic works, while essays by Ziya Gokalp and Nihat Sami Banarli addressing Turkic identity, national culture, history, language, and spiritual heritage were used as supplementary materials. As these texts differ substantially from the Kazakh corpus in terms of genre, historical context, size, and analytical scope, they were not treated as an independent comparative corpus but rather as contextual materials for interpreting the cultural concepts

identified in the Kazakh essays within the broader framework of the Turkic intellectual tradition. As these texts differ substantially from the Kazakh corpus in terms of size, historical context, and analytical units, they were not treated as an independent comparative corpus. Instead, they served as contextual material for interpreting the cultural concepts identified in the Kazakh essays within the broader framework of the Turkic intellectual tradition. In addition, lexical and conceptual units related to *homeland*, *land*, *rulership*, *ancestors*, and *generation* in the Orkhon–Yenisei inscriptions (i.e., Kul Tigin, Bilge Qaghan, and Tonyukuk inscriptions) were used as thematic reference points to trace the historical and cultural foundations of the concepts of historical memory, sacred space, homeland, and intergenerational continuity represented in the Kazakh essays.

3.2. Procedure

The study was conducted within a qualitative-interpretive framework and consisted of four interrelated stages. Figure 1 illustrates the analytical framework.

Figure 1
The Analytical Framework



In the first stage, 15 Kazakh essays were read in full to identify their thematic structure, authorial perspectives, historical contexts, and recurring cultural concepts. In the second stage, the texts were thematically coded according to the five extracted cultural codes: historical memory, sacred space, historical figures, national identity, and spiritual continuity. These five cultural codes were identified based on recurring semantic units that emerged during the thematic analysis of 15 Kazakh essays. The historical memory code included units referring to ancestors, historical events, genealogical traditions, collective experience, and the cultural past; the sacred space code encompassed concepts such as homeland, native land, the ancestral home, burial sites, mausoleums, sacred places, and historical toponyms; the historical figures code included personal names represented as carriers of cultural memory; the national identity code comprised ethnonyms, cultural boundaries, and shared values; and the spiritual continuity code included units expressing connections between the past and the present, ancestors and descendants, and the transmission of traditions. When a single textual excerpt simultaneously represented more than one code, overlapping coding was permitted. In the third stage, the 300 identified coded instances were classified according to seven linguistic strategies: toponyms and geographical names, temporal structures, first-person plural forms, anthroponyms and kinship terms, evaluative and modal units, metaphor and personification, as well as ethnonyms and the "us-others" opposition. In the fourth stage, the identified patterns were interpreted through hermeneutic and

literary analysis and contextually compared with the supplementary works of Ziya Gokalp and Nihat Sami Banarli, as well as the Kul Tigin, Bilge Kagan, and Tonyukuk inscriptions.

The coding process was iterative rather than linear. The essays were reread several times, and the coding categories were refined and expanded as new semantic patterns emerged. When a textual fragment conveyed multiple meanings, it was assigned to more than one analytical category. For example, references to a family burial site were interpreted simultaneously as manifestations of historical memory, sacred space, and cultural symbolism, reflecting the continuity of generations. This iterative coding strategy preserved the multidimensional character of cultural meanings and prevented their reduction to a single interpretive category. Hermeneutic analysis served as the principal analytical method, enabling linguistic and symbolic elements to be interpreted within the author's biographical background, historical context, and national cultural tradition. Literary analysis was applied to examine genre characteristics, compositional organization, narrative reflection, imagery, and artistic devices. A historical-comparative approach was employed to compare the cultural models identified in Kazakh essays with the Orkhon–Yenisei inscriptions (Kul Tigin, Bilge Kagan, and Tonyukuk inscriptions) and with selected essays by Ziya Gokalp and Nihat Sami Banarli. The comparison focused on shared representations of homeland, land, ancestry, language, and intergenerational responsibility rather than on direct historical influence.

4. Results

The results are presented in three interconnected subsections. Section 4.1. presents the empirical findings from the primary corpus analysis, identifying five dominant cultural codes (i.e., historical memory, sacred space, historical figures, national identity, and spiritual continuity) and examining their linguistic construction in Kazakh essays. Section 4.2. provides comparative contextualization by situating these findings within the broader Turkic intellectual tradition through the works of Turkish essayists Ziya Gokalp and Nihat Sami Banarli. Section 4.3. offers historical grounding by tracing the conceptual foundations of these cultural codes to the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions, revealing their deep roots in the ancient Turkic written tradition. Together, these subsections move from empirical description to comparative and historical depth.

4.1. Linguistic Representation of Turkic Cultural Codes in Kazakh Essays

4.1.1. Definitions of Cultural Codes and Core Concepts

Before presenting the findings of the analysis, it is necessary to define the five cultural codes extracted from the corpus and their core conceptual components. These definitions provide the interpretive framework for the subsequent analysis of linguistic patterns and author-specific variations (Table 2).

Table 2
Definitions of Cultural Codes and Their Core Concepts

Cultural Code	Definition	Core Concepts and Linguistic Indicators	Linguistic Means of Representation	Primary Cognitive Models
Historical Memory	The reconstruction of past events, ancestral experience, and collective history in the author's contemporary consciousness.	ancestors; genealogy; ancient artifacts; old cemeteries; historical toponyms; the past; collective experience	past-tense verb forms; temporal expressions; toponyms; historical anthroponyms; first-person plural possessive forms; metonymy	Toponym is a marker of collective memory
Sacred Space	The transformation of a natural or historical place into a source of spiritual, moral, and cultural value.	homeland; ancestral land; burial grounds; cemeteries; mausoleums; sacred places; ancestral home; Mother Nature	spatial vocabulary; demonstrative pronouns; possessive constructions; epithets; personification; conceptual metaphors	Sacred place is the center of national memory; nature is mother

Historical Figures	The representation of historical figures not merely as individuals but as cultural symbols embodying a historical era, statehood, or national values.	emperor; ruler; warrior; traditional judge; historical leader; mother; elder	anthroponyms; titles; kinship terms; possessive constructions; evaluative modifiers; metonymy	A historical figure is a symbol of a national era
National Identity	The recognition of oneself as a member of a particular nation, country, linguistic community, and historical tradition, with this sense of belonging explicitly constructed in the text.	Kazakh; people; nation; homeland; community; language; horde; our land; our people	ethnonyms; first-person plural forms; possessive pronouns; affirmative and negative constructions; evaluative vocabulary	The nation is a community united by a shared history
Spiritual Continuity	The transmission of the spiritual and cultural experience of previous generations to later generations as a legacy, moral obligation, covenant, or trust.	legacy; moral duty; testament; heritage; generation; descendants; ancestral path; tradition	modal expressions of obligation; imperative forms; purposive constructions; kinship terms; conceptual metaphors	Cultural heritage is a sacred trust

Analysis of the corpus identified five dominant cultural codes in Kazakh essays: historical memory, sacred space, historical figures, national identity, and spiritual continuity. These codes function as interconnected rather than discrete categories, with individual text fragments often expressing multiple codes simultaneously. For example, a family burial site may represent historical memory, sacred space, and intergenerational continuity at the same time, illustrating the integrated nature of cultural meaning in the corpus.

4.1.2. Overview of Cultural Codes and Their Distribution

The analysis of 15 Kazakh essays identified the five cultural codes defined above through thematic coding (Table 3). A total of 300 coded instances representing the five cultural codes were identified across the corpus. Their distribution was uneven. The code of historical memory was the most prominent, appearing in 12 of the 15 essays (80% of the corpus) and comprising 78 coded instances. Although the code of national identity was identified in 13 essays, it accounted for fewer coded instances than historical memory, with a total of 66 occurrences. The code of spiritual continuity was identified in 11 essays (59 occurrences), followed by sacred space in 10 essays (54 occurrences) and historical figures in 9 essays (43 occurrences).

Table 3

Frequency of Occurrence of Cultural Codes and Their Distribution across Texts

Cultural Code	Essays n=15	Corpus Coverage	Coded Instances	Share of Total Instances
Historical Memory	12/15	80.0%	78	26.0%
Sacred Space	10/15	66.7%	54	18.0%
Historical Figures	9/15	60.0%	43	14.3%
National Identity	13/15	86.7%	66	22.0%
Spiritual Continuity	11/15	73.3%	59	19.7%
Total	-	-	300	100.0%

Note. Because multiple cultural codes may occur within the same essay, the cumulative percentage of essays exceeds 100%. The share of total instances indicates the proportion of each cultural code among the 300 coded instances identified in the corpus.

The distribution of cultural codes also varied across authors, reflecting differences in thematic emphasis rather than mutually exclusive patterns (Table 4). Most authors employed several cultural codes within a single essay, although the frequency and prominence of individual codes differed according to each author's interpretive focus.

Table 4
Distribution of Cultural Codes by Author

Cultural Code	Kekilbayuly	Zhurtbay	Magauin	Murtaza	Total
Historical Memory	24	15	17	22	78
Sacred Space	18	9	10	17	54
Historical Figures	10	11	12	10	43
National Identity	14	12	18	22	66
Spiritual Continuity	16	10	13	20	59
Total	82	57	70	91	300

Table 4 indicates that the prominence of cultural codes varied across authors. In the essays of Kekilbayuly, the most prominent codes were historical memory and sacred space. Magauin's essays placed greater emphasis on historical figures and national identity, whereas Murtaza's works were characterized primarily by national identity and spiritual continuity.

4.1.3. Linguistic Strategies for Representing Cultural Codes

The 300 coded instances were subsequently classified according to their linguistic characteristics, resulting in the identification of seven principal linguistic strategies: toponyms and place names, tense structures, first-person plural forms, anthroponyms and kinship terms, evaluative and modal expressions, metaphors and personification, and ethnonyms together with *we–other* oppositions (Table 5).

Table 5
Distribution of Linguistic Strategies Used to Represent Cultural Codes

Linguistic strategy	Coded Instances	Share of Total Instances	Cultural Codes Primarily Associated
Toponyms and Place Names	58	19.3%	Historical Memory; Sacred Space
Evaluative and Modal Expressions	49	16.3%	Spiritual Continuity; Sacred Space
Anthroponyms and Kinship Terms	45	15.0%	Historical Figures; Historical Memory
First-Person Plural Forms	42	14.0%	National Identity; Historical Memory
Metaphors and Personification	38	12.7%	Sacred Space; Spiritual Continuity
Temporal structures	34	11.3%	Historical Memory; Spiritual Continuity
Ethnonyms and «We–other» oppositions	34	11.3%	National Identity
Total	300	100%	—

According to Table 5, the highest frequency of toponyms and place names was found in the works of Kekilbayuly (18 instances). These include toponyms such as *Kyzyltam*, *Kazygurt*, and *Aksu Zhabagly*, as well as nominations referring to villages and tribal settlements. Toponymic units appeared 16 times in the texts of Murtaza, 14 times in Magauin, and 10 times in Zhurtbay.

Evaluative and modal units included the use of the words "sacred," "holy," and " worthy." This strategy was recorded 16 times in the texts of Murtaza and 15 times in the works of Kekilbayuly. The remaining 18 instances were found in the texts of Magauin and Zhurtbay.

Anthroponyms and kinship terms accounted for 45 coded instances across the corpus. These linguistic forms were used to refer to historical figures while symbolically positioning them within the contemporary national community. Representative examples include *Tumar Anamız* (Mother Tumar), *Dalamız* (Our Steppe), *Khasen Ağa* (Khasen Elder), *Berdimbet Baba* (Berdimbet Elder), and *Künikey Ana* (Mother Künikey).

First-person plural forms accounted for 42 coded instances. Typical examples include expressions such as *Dalamız* (Our steppe), *Anamız* (Our mother), and *Yelimiz* (Our homeland/our people). The recurrent use of first-person plural forms constructs a shared collective identity and reinforces the cultural code of national belonging.

Metaphors and personification accounted for 38 coded instances. Representative examples include the depiction of nature as a mother, an ancient sycamore tree as a guardian, and the land as a historical text or ancestral heritage. Similarly, in Zhurtbay's (2018d) essay "Ultynyn kok semsery" (The Nation's Blue Saber), the metaphor "the blue sword of his nation" is used: "He realized from a young age that he would become the voice of his people," declaring:

> I am twenty-six years old now ... The history of the nomadic peoples has not yet been fully explored. Therefore, without hesitation, I make the following statement at this very moment: without knowing Turkic history, it is impossible to explain the unknown aspects of the history of the peoples whose names have been recorded in ancient written sources ... Poets are obliged to awaken the people's sense of honor and dignity and to give them spiritual strength. (p. 100)

In this example, the author compares the essay's protagonist to a sharp sword, emphasizing his strength, determination, and role in the historical fate of his nation. These figurative expressions reinforce the cultural meanings associated with sacred space and spiritual continuity.

Temporal structures accounted for 34 coded instances. They were expressed through references to different temporal dimensions, including the past, the present, and the future, as well as lexical units such as *ancestors*, *past generations*, *future generations*, and expressions denoting historical continuity across centuries. In Kekilbayuly's (2012a) essay *Kazygurt – The Sacred Cradle*, the author writes: "The life paths and activities of Korkyt Ata and Oghuz Khagan are intertwined with the history of our land" (p. 75). Through references to historical figures, this metaphorical conceptualization establishes a sense of continuity between past generations and the contemporary land, linking collective historical memory to a specific sacred space. Similarly, Kekilbayuly (2012a) writes: "The lives of the renowned Kazakh khans Khaknazar, Esim Khan, Taukel, Tauke, Zholbarys, and Abylai, as well as great figures such as Tole Bi, Kazybek Bi, and Aiteke Bi, among others, are directly connected with Kazygurt" (p. 75). By connecting the lives of several generations of historical figures with Kazygurt, the author constructs a representation of historical continuity across centuries. Kazygurt thus functions not merely as a geographical location but as a cultural and symbolic space that preserves collective historical memory and connects different generations.

Ethnonyms and *we–other* oppositions were also identified in 34 coded instances. These linguistic forms distinguish the national community from external groups and contribute to the construction of collective identity through references to ethnic affiliation and cultural boundaries. For example, in Zhurtbay's (2018d) essay *The Nation's Blue Saber*, the ethnonym "Kazakh" is combined with the pronoun "our," as in the expression "our Kazakh people": "How is it that among our Kazakh people, there is no bad person among the dead, yet no living person is free from slander?" (p. 104). Here, "Kazakh" functions as an ethnonym, while the possessive pronoun "our" positions the author and the Kazakh community within a shared social and cultural group. Thus, a collective identity based on the conceptual equation "we = Kazakh people" is constructed. A more explicit *we–other* opposition can be observed in the statement "we will write it." Zhurtbay (2018d) states:

> Without knowing Turkic history, you cannot explain the obscure aspects of the histories of peoples whose past has been recorded in written sources. Ultimately, I am convinced that a 'True History,' based on factual truth, will emerge, and, God willing, we will be the ones to write it. Our generation is gradually being selected. (p. 104)

Here, "we" refers to a community engaged in studying Turkic history and seeking to reconstruct historical truth. At the same time, the use of "you" establishes a discursive boundary between the author's collective "we" and an external "other." The opposition therefore constructs a distinction between those who actively engage with and reconstruct Turkic history and those positioned outside this interpretive community. The clearest *we–other* opposition is expressed through the contrast between "one's own nation" and "the enemy." Zhurtbay (2018d) writes: "He never sought an enemy either outside his own nation or within it. His enemies were 'the barbarians who, after every shot they fired, could render culture mute for a moment'" (p. 105). In this example, the expression "his own nation" marks an in-group based on national belonging, whereas "the enemy" represents an opposing out-group. The contrast constructs a strong boundary between collective national identity and an external hostile force, reinforcing the cultural conceptualization of the nation as a community united by shared historical and cultural values.

Overall, it was revealed that, first, cultural codes were typically constructed through the interaction of multiple linguistic strategies rather than a single linguistic unit. For example, passages coded as historical memory frequently combined toponyms, temporal structures, and the dependent first-person plural within the same context. Second, cultural codes consistently overlapped. Historical memory and sacred space co-occurred in eight essays, historical memory and spiritual continuity in nine essays, and national identity and historical figures in seven essays, indicating that these categories functioned as interconnected rather than isolated meaning-making structures. Third, individual authors employed different linguistic strategies to represent the same cultural code. Kekilbayuly predominantly expressed historical memory through toponyms, material culture objects, and place names, whereas Murtaza relied more frequently on the dependent first-person plural, temporal conjunctions, and evaluative-modal expressions. In contrast, Magauin's essays were characterized by the frequent use of historical anthroponyms and markers of national identity. Fourth, the dependent first-person plural emerged as a recurring grammatical device linking the author's personal perspective with collective historical experience. Forms such as *ours*, *our ancestors*, *our mother*, and *our generation* appeared systematically across three cultural codes (i.e., historical memory, national identity, and spiritual continuity), reinforcing the collective orientation of cultural representation in the corpus.

4.1.4. Illustrative Examples

The following excerpt from Murtaza's (2008) essay *Kazygurt – The Sacred Cradle* illustrates the interaction of historical memory, sacred space, and spiritual continuity:

> The Blue God created humanity, and then, seeing that people had abandoned their repentance, completely transcended their capabilities, and become unbelievers, became angry and sent a flood. To create a new, pure world, Noah's Ark contained pairs of people, animals, flying birds, and plants, striving to preserve pure seeds. When the flood subsided and the waters receded, Noah's Ark landed on the summit of Mount Kazygurt. Jews say the ark came to rest on the summit of Mount Sinai. Armenians say it came to rest on the summit of Mount Ararat. And they greatly revere Sinai and Ararat and consider them divine. I don't know if there is any folklore dedicated to Sinai and Ararat. Thousands of years ago, the Kazakhs fell in love with Kazygurt and created a wonderful epic poem that begins: "In the beginning, Kazygurt had a ship. Otherwise, why would it be so wonderful?!" There are many poems and legends about Kazygurt. Moreover, there are many mountains. Not all of them have received such attention and love from the people. Kazygurt is now the subject of many different works of art. The fact is, not all of this is in vain. (p. 76)

- *Historical Memory:* Historical memory is represented through legends about Kazygurt, references to oral tradition, and allusions to the Great Silk Road. The legend of Noah's Ark landing on Mount Kazygurt is presented as a collective cultural memory preserved across generations. The folk verse,

"In the beginning, Kazygurt had a ship, otherwise why would it be so wonderful?" illustrates the transmission of historical and mythological knowledge through oral tradition, while the author's remarks emphasize the enduring cultural significance of this legend.

- *Sacred Space:* Kazygurt is portrayed not merely as a geographical location but as a sacred place within the Kazakh worldview. Expressions such as *Kazygurtty kie tutyp* ("revering Kazygurt as sacred") and *Kazygurttyn kiesy* ("Kazygurt – The Sacred Cradle") linguistically construct its sacred status.

- *Historical Figures:* This code is represented through references to the Prophet Noah and Tole-bi, whose names connect the narrative to both religious tradition and national history.
- *National Identity:* National identity is expressed through the collective attachment to Kazygurt as a symbol of the homeland and shared historical heritage. The repeated use of the first-person plural in expressions such as *our land* and *our people* constructs a collective national perspective and strengthens the sense of belonging.
- *Spiritual Continuity:* Spiritual continuity is reflected in the preservation and reinterpretation of ancient legends and cultural traditions in contemporary society. References to Kazygurt in literature, art, and proposals for its preservation as a national heritage site demonstrate the transmission of cultural values across generations.

Overall, the excerpt demonstrates that the five cultural codes function as an integrated system. Historical memory provides the narrative foundation, sacred space establishes symbolic meaning, historical figures connect the past with collective memory, national identity reinforces communal belonging, and spiritual continuity ensures the preservation and transmission of these values across generations.

Another clear example can be found in Kekilbayuly's (2012b) essay *Kadyrly Khasen Aga!* (Dear Khasen Aga!), where the author writes: "Perhaps it is not without reason that this place is called Qyzyltam" (p. 375). This statement suggests that the toponym preserves traces of forgotten historical events and collective experience. In this context, *Qyzyltam* functions not merely as a geographical designation but as a mnemonic marker that reconnects the present with the historical past. The subsequent description of ancient mausoleums, stone sculptures, manuscripts, and traditional household objects transforms the locality into a cultural landscape in which material manifestations of memory are preserved. These objects are interpreted not simply as archaeological artefacts but as components of a shared ancestral heritage. Consequently, the author's recollections extend beyond individual memory and reconstruct the historical experience of the local community across successive generations. Murtaza (2008) constructs the code of historical memory through a different set of linguistic strategies. In the essay *Who Is Right?* the land is represented as an ancestral heritage that "our ancestors protected for hundreds of years" (Murtaza, 2008, p. 49). The first-person plural possessive construction *our ancestors* establishes a direct relationship between past and present generations by integrating the narrator into a collective historical identity. At the same time, the temporal expression *for hundreds of years* conceptualizes the protection of the land as a continuous historical process rather than an isolated event.

In Kazakh literature, historical figures are used not only as names conveying biographical or background information but also as cultural symbols summarizing an entire historical era and national values. In Murtaza's (2008) essay *Tumar-iis*, Tomiris is referred to as *Tumar anamyz* (Our Mother Tomiris) (p. 49). The Kazakh phonetic rendering of the anthroponym reintroduces the historical figure from a foreign historiographical name into the national linguistic space. The first-person plural suffix in the word *"anamyz"* identifies Tomiris not as a distant queen, but as the spiritual mother of modern society. Thus, historical distance is reduced through the nomination of kinship. Information about a person's military and political activities is combined with their maternal status in national memory. Magauin and Murtaza form a code of historical figures using different linguistic strategies.

4.2. Comparative Contextualization of National-Cultural Models in Turkish and Kazakh Essays

To provide a broader interpretation of the linguistic and cultural foundations of the Turkic worldview represented in Kazakh essays, the present study draws on the works of Ziya Gokalp and Nihat Sami Banarli as comparative material. Their writings on national identity, language, culture, and historical

heritage complement the primary corpus of Kazakh essays by placing it within the wider intellectual tradition of the Turkic world. Whereas Gokalp's (2024) *Türkçülüğün Esasları* conceptualizes national culture as an integrated system of linguistic, social, and spiritual values, Banarli's (2001) *Türkçenin Sırları* emphasizes the role of language in preserving historical memory and maintaining cultural continuity across generations. Together, these works demonstrate that concepts such as the ancestral homeland, native land, ancestors, language, historical memory, cultural heritage, and spiritual continuity are not unique to Kazakh literature but constitute fundamental components of a shared Turkic cultural worldview. The distinction between culture and civilization is expressed in the statement: "If culture is national in character, civilization is international" (Gokalp, 2024, p. 68). Within this framework, culture is conceptualized as the harmonious unity of a nation's religious, moral, legal, linguistic, aesthetic, economic, and intellectual life, whereas civilization refers to institutional and social achievements shared across different societies (Gokalp, 2024). According to Gokalp, culture represents the harmonious unity of a nation's religious, moral, legal, linguistic, aesthetic, economic, and intellectual life, whereas civilization encompasses institutional and social achievements shared by different peoples. National culture, therefore, is not passively borrowed from external sources but develops through a people's historical experience, language, worldview, and value system. This theoretical perspective closely corresponds to the representation of homeland and historical memory in Kekilbayuly's essays. While Gokalp formulates these ideas within a sociological framework, Kekilbayuly expresses them through literary reflection on homeland, ancestry, and cultural responsibility. Banarli (2001) likewise views language as one of the principal foundations of national identity. As he observes, "Just as nations have a history, words also have a history"(p. 24). This statement emphasizes that words preserve the accumulated experience of thinking, feeling, and interpreting reality across generations.

According to Banarli (2001), lexical units gradually become embedded not only in the phonological system of a language but also in the historical memory, aesthetic values, and cultural identity of the community that uses them. Consequently, the significance of a word cannot be explained solely by its etymology; its cultural meaning derives from the collective historical experience it embodies. This perspective provides an interpretive framework for understanding culturally significant expressions frequently encountered in Kazakh essays, including *ata qonys* (ancestral homeland), *kara shanyrak* (ancestral household), *amanat* (sacred trust), *kiye* (sacred power), *kut* (blessing or life-giving fortune), and *ar-namys* (honour and dignity). These lexical units extend far beyond their dictionary definitions. For example, *kara shanyrak* (ancestral household) symbolizes family continuity, ancestral heritage, and the unity of generations rather than merely referring to a physical dwelling. Similarly, *amanat* represents an ethical responsibility transmitted from previous generations, while *ar-namys* functions as a cultural principle regulating an individual's moral obligations to family, community, and homeland. In this way, these culturally embedded concepts become linguistic codes through which the Turkic worldview is expressed and transmitted.

4.3. Historical Grounding: Cultural Continuity with the Ancient Turkic Written Tradition

To explore the semantic foundations of the concepts of historical memory, sacred space, ancestry, and homeland in Kazakh essays, the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions were used as comparative materials. These texts present an integrated cultural and political system in which concepts such as *il* (state or homeland), *bodun* (people), *törü* (customary law), *ečümapam* (my ancestors), and *Ötüken* (the sacred political and spiritual centre of the Turkic world) are closely interconnected. Although these lexical units do not appear in identical forms in contemporary Kazakh essays, their semantic core is preserved through concepts such as homeland, *ataqonys* (ancestral homeland), *ata-mura* (ancestral heritage), *tarikhi zhauapkershilik* (historical responsibility), *kieli zher* (sacred place), and *urpaqaralyq sabaqtastyq* (intergenerational continuity). The Kul Tigin inscription presents the concept of homeland as the unity of the cosmos, political authority, and the collective identity of the Turkic people. The inscription states:

> When the blue sky was created above, and the dark earth below, humankind was created between them. Over humankind, my ancestors Bumïn Qağan and İstemi Qağan were enthroned. Having ascended the throne, they organized and governed the land and the people of the Turks (Ergin, 2006, pp. 8–9).

This passage constructs a hierarchical cosmological model in which Heaven, Earth, humanity, political authority, and collective identity are inseparably connected. Within this framework, the primary role of *Qağan* is not personal rule but the preservation of the homeland, social order, and the unity of the people. Consequently, the homeland is conceptualized not merely as geographical territory but as a sacred cultural space whose continuity depends upon political responsibility and collective solidarity.

The sacred character of place is expressed most clearly through the image of *Ötüken,* which occupies a central position in the Orkhon inscriptions. The Kul Tigin inscription states: "If you remain in the land of *Ötüken* and govern from there, your state will endure forever"(Ergin, 2006, pp. 4–5). Here, *Ötüken*is represented not simply as a geographical location but as the spiritual and political centre of the Turkic world. The conditional construction establishes a direct relationship between sacred space and the stability of the state, suggesting that the preservation of the homeland depends upon maintaining its cultural and spiritual centre.

A similar conceptual model appears in Murtaza's (2008) essay *Who Is Right?* where the land is described as a heritage that "our ancestors defended for hundreds of years" (p. 49). The first-person plural possessive expression "our ancestors" establishes continuity between past and present generations, while the temporal phrase "for hundreds of years" conceptualizes the protection of the homeland as a continuous historical process rather than an isolated event. Consequently, land is represented not as an economic resource but as an ancestral trust preserved for future generations. Although the Orkhon inscriptions portray *Ötüken* as the political centre of the Turkic state and Murtaza approaches the concept through literary reflection, both texts share the same cognitive model in which homeland is understood as a sacred inheritance rather than private property.

The relationship between sacred space and historical memory is equally evident in Kekilbayuly's (2012b) essay *Kadyrly Khasen Aga!* (Dear Khasen Aga!) where the author recalls ancient graves, stone sculptures, manuscripts, and historical artefacts preserved in *Qyzyltam*, arguing that the place name itself "should not be forgotten" (p. 375). In this context, both the toponym and the surviving material objects function as mnemonic signs that preserve collective historical memory. Whereas *Ötüken* symbolizes the political continuity of the Turkic state, *Qyzyltam* represents a cultural landscape in which historical experience is transmitted through material and symbolic forms. In both cases, the significance of place derives not from its physical characteristics but from the collective memory embedded within it. Respect for ancestors constitutes another important point of continuity between the Orkhon inscriptions and Kazakh essays. The expression *ečüm apam* (my ancestors) repeatedly appears in the inscriptions as a source of political legitimacy and cultural authority. The Kul Tigin inscription records that *İlteriş Qağan* restored the Turkic people according to "the traditions of my ancestors" (Ergin, 2006, pp. 12–13). Here, ancestry functions not simply as remembrance but as a normative foundation for restoring social order.

5. Discussion

Regarding the first objective, the analysis identified five dominant cultural codes: historical memory, sacred space, historical figures, national identity, and spiritual continuity, and examined their linguistic realization through seven discursive strategies. The results showed that these codes are interconnected in Kazakh essays and collectively form an integrated value structure of the Turkic worldview. This finding is consistent with studies suggesting that the Turkic worldview is grounded in historical consciousness, national identity, spiritual values, and cultural heritage (Kelimbetov, 2010; Kossymova et al., 2024; Kurmanbay, 2019; Zholdasbekov, 2013). The overlapping of codes within the texts also corresponds with the view that cultural memory reconstructs past experience in accordance with contemporary sociocultural contexts (Assmann & Czaplicka, 2011; Erll, 2011; Lotman, 1990).

While these cultural codes appear consistently across the corpus, their manifestation varies significantly depending on each author's individual perspective and creative approach. Kekilbayuly gives greater emphasis to historical spaces and toponyms, Magauin to historical figures and national identity, while Murtaza foregrounds spiritual continuity. These differences demonstrate that shared Turkic values are actualized through diverse authorial models. Literary works do not preserve cultural memory unchanged; rather, they renew it through processes of selection and reinterpretation (Rigney, 2018).

The generic flexibility of the Kazakh essay, which combines historical documentation, memoir, artistic representation, and philosophical reflection, also enables individual experience to be connected with national history (Adorno, 1991; Kakishev, 2008; Lopate, 1995; Maitanov, 2010).

Among the five cultural codes, historical memory emerges as the most prominent, as it is reconstructed through multiple intersecting strategies that transform space, place names, and historical figures into carriers of collective experience. Thus, space becomes more than a geographical entity; it becomes a cultural environment in which historical experience is accumulated and preserved. The function of such places as *Kazygurt*, *Kyzyl-Tam*, and other locations corresponds to Nora's (1989) concept of "sites of memory" and to theories concerning the material and symbolic carriers of cultural memory (Assmann & Czaplicka, 2011; Bayrak, 2025). Historical figures likewise function not simply as sources of biographical information but as symbols that encapsulate particular historical periods, national character, and moral values. Their association with kinship terms and first-person plural forms reduces historical distance and presents these figures as spiritual members of the contemporary national community (Omorov et al., 2025).

The reconstruction of historical memory in these essays is achieved through a range of linguistic strategies that operate across multiple levels of textual organization. Toponyms, temporal structures, first-person plural forms, anthroponyms, kinship terms, evaluative and modal units, metaphors, and the "us–others" opposition function as linguistic strategies that construct cultural meaning. Among these strategies, toponyms were the most frequently employed, reflecting the centrality of sacred places in the Turkic worldview. First-person plural forms connect the author's individual experience with the shared experience of the national community, corresponding to theories of conceptualization and group identification (Langacker, 1986; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; van Dijk, 1998).

In addition to these grammatical and referential strategies, metaphorical expressions further reinforce the cultural conceptualization of the Turkic worldview. Metaphors that represent the land as a mother, history as a root, and cultural heritage as a sacred trust explain abstract values through familial and spatial experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kovecses, 2010). Accordingly, units such as *ata qonys* (ancestral homeland), *qara shanyraq* (ancestral family home), *amanat* (sacred trust), *kie* (sacred power), *qut* (divine grace), and *ar-namys* (honour and dignity) function as conceptual markers that organize national experience (Wierzbicka, 1997; Kurmangali et al., 2025).

Turning to the second objective, the findings were contextualized within the broader Turkic intellectual tradition through comparison with the works of Turkish essayists Ziya Gokalp and Nihat Sami Banarli. Comparison with the supplementary materials made it possible to interpret the findings within the broader Turkic intellectual tradition. Gokalp's (2024) distinction between culture as a national phenomenon and civilization as an international phenomenon helps explain the formation of national identity through language, historical experience, and moral values. This perspective corresponds to the representation of ancestral homeland and historical memory in Abish Kekilbayuly's (2012b) essay *Kadyrly Khasen Aga!* (Dear Khasen Aga!). Banarli's (2001) argument that words also possess their own histories supports the understanding of linguistic units as cultural signs that preserve the experience of generations.

With respect to the third objective, the historical foundations of the identified cultural codes were traced by examining their semantic continuity with the ancient Turkic worldview preserved in the Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions. The concepts of the people, land, authority, ancestors, and responsibility toward future generations expressed in the Kul Tigin, Bilge Kagan, and Tonyukuk inscriptions provide a historical and cultural context for interpreting the representations of ancestral homeland and historical continuity in contemporary Kazakh essays (Ergin, 2006). These parallels are not interpreted as evidence of direct textual influence but rather as manifestations of shared Turkic cultural models that have been reinterpreted across different historical periods (Dautuly et al., 2026; Kurmanbay, 2019; Omorov et al., 2025).

The scholarly contribution of the study does not lie in identifying the five cultural codes as new categories but in systematically explaining the artistic and linguistic strategies through which the predefined categories are realized in Kazakh essays. The proposed approach considers the thematic

content, linguistic realization, authorial interpretation, and broader Turkic context of cultural codes as interconnected dimensions. From this perspective, the Kazakh essay is not merely a text that preserves traditional values but an active discursive space in which historical memory, national identity, and spiritual continuity are reinterpreted within changing sociocultural contexts.

Despite these contributions, the study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged and addressed in future research. First, the analysis is based on a relatively small corpus comprising essays by four authors, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, the corpus includes only essays by male authors. Although this reflects the predominance of male writers in Kazakh essay writing during the period examined, the findings do not capture the linguistic representation of the Turkic worldview in texts by female authors. Cultural codes related to family, motherhood, child-rearing, national traditions, and spiritual heritage may be conceptualized and evaluated differently in women's writing. Finally, the study's methodological approach is primarily based on qualitative interpretation, which may limit the reliability and reproducibility of the coding and analysis. Therefore, future research should expand the corpus to include works by a wider range of Kazakh essayists from the second half of the twentieth century to the present, including female authors, digital essays, and texts published on contemporary literary and journalistic platforms. In particular, the corpus could be expanded to include essays, memoirs, and other literary works by female authors, such as Kemelbayeva, Akhmetova, Nauryzbay, and Baktygereeva. Such comparative analysis would help determine whether author gender influences the selection, frequency, and linguistic realization of cultural codes, as well as the interpretation of Turkic values. Furthermore, comparative studies involving Kazakh, Turkish, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Azerbaijani, and Tatar essay traditions based on parallel corpora would provide a more comprehensive understanding of both shared and culture-specific Turkic cultural codes. Methodologically, future research could strengthen the reliability of the analysis through independent coding by multiple researchers, the calculation of inter-coder agreement, and the integration of qualitative interpretation with quantitative analyses of conceptual and linguistic frequencies. Finally, investigations of the relationship between Old Turkic texts and modern literary discourse should be grounded in historical corpus analysis of lexical, semantic, and discursive developments rather than assumptions of direct genetic continuity. Such an approach would provide a more nuanced understanding of how the Turkic worldview has been preserved, transformed, and adapted to changing sociocultural contexts in contemporary literary discourse.

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Data Availability

The data analyzed in this study are derived from publicly available literary texts and published essay collections. The corpus consists of selected Kazakh essays used for qualitative analysis. The materials analyzed in this study are available from publicly accessible literary and bibliographic sources.

Ethics Declaration

This study did not involve human participants, animals, personal data, or experimental procedures. Therefore, ethical approval was not required. All literary texts analyzed in the study are publicly

available, and the study complies with relevant academic and ethical standards concerning the use and citation of published sources.

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