ABSTRACT

of the dissertation work of Gulden Bakytkazyevna Tlegenova titled "Research of the religious-mythological code of Kazakh onomastics", submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty "6D021300 – Linguistics"

Relevance of the research topic. The relevance of modern Kazakh onomastics is directly connected with the processes of national revival, the state program Digital Kazakhstan, and the strategic directions outlined by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in his Address of September 8, 2025, titled "Kazakhstan in the Era of Artificial Intelligence: Current Challenges and Their Solutions through Profound Digital Transformation". In his address, the President emphasized the need to develop educational programs on the fundamentals of artificial intelligence for school students and to form teachers' skills in mastering AI technologies. This initiative aims not only to improve the quality of education but also to reduce digital inequality and strengthen the national intellectual potential.

The directions set by the Head of State open opportunities for Kazakh onomastics to rise to a new qualitative level. In the era of digital transformation, the task of Kazakh onomastics is not limited to recording or describing proper names; rather, it should evolve into a digital source preserving national identity, historical memory, and cultural code. The national onomastic code is a unique sign system that embodies the spiritual heritage, worldview foundation, and cultural memory of the people. Its revitalization and study represent an important direction that defines the essence of national identity.

The spiritual code of the Kazakh people finds expression within the onomastic space. Studying and transmitting this code system to future generations is an effective mechanism for preserving national identity. Under the current conditions of social and cultural transformation, special importance is attached to the study of implicit cultural information embedded in the religious and mythological layers of onomastic codes. Such research contributes to safeguarding national identity and transmitting cultural heritage in digital form in the age of Digital Kazakhstan.

Kazakh mythology is a cultural phenomenon that reflects the spiritual world, historical memory, and worldview system of the nation. Defining the semantic structure and codal nature of religious and mythological onyms constitutes a relevant area within modern anthropocentric linguistic research. As a complex semiotic structure at the intersection of language, culture, and consciousness, the onomastic code transmits the historical experience, ethical, and spiritual values of the people from generation to generation.

Language is the principal channel that preserves the spiritual genome of an ethnos. The concept of national code is regarded as a universal category encompassing the genesis, language, mentality, religion, and historical memory of a people. The onomastic code, in turn, represents the linguistic manifestation of that national code – a cultural sign system that defines the distinct identity of the nation. Through this system, a nation preserves its history, worldview, and values via linguistic naming.

At the present stage, the digital-level study of onomastic and cultural data has become a core direction of digital humanities, a field formed at the intersection of the humanities and modern technologies. Analyzing the religious and mythological code within the onomastic space through digital methods enables the reinterpretation of national culture within a new scientific paradigm. This approach contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural, symbolic, and cognitive systems of Kazakh onomastics and forms the methodological foundation for comprehensive studies aimed at preserving national heritage.

Object of the research: mythological and religious onyms in Kazakh onomastics.

Subject of the research: the reflection of religious beliefs and mythological perception in Kazakh onyms, the structure of the religious and mythological code, its national-cognitive content, and cultural semantics.

Purpose of the research: to establish the theoretical basis of religious and mythological codes within the Kazakh onomastic space, to consider the sacred code as a cultural-linguistic phenomenon, to conduct a comprehensive analysis of onyms, and to propose a digital technology for representing religious and mythological onyms in the National Corpus of the Kazakh Language.

Research objectives:

– to theoretically substantiate the definitions and statements given to the concepts of national, cultural, onomastic, and religious-mythological code in linguistics;

– to identify the mythological-cognitive meaning of mythocosmonyms and mythoastronyms, as well as the cultural information embedded in the system of folk knowledge;

– to determine the sacralization of livestock (tört tülik mal), mythozoonyms, mythoornithonyms, mythophytonyms, mythotoponyms, and mythooronyms; to reveal the mythological nature of mythodemonyms through their semantics within the system of ancient beliefs;

– to define the linguistic representation of theonyms, hagionyms, and spiritonyms, and to identify precedent names, saints, and patron figures from symbolic and cognitive perspectives;

– to incorporate mythonyms, theonyms, hagionyms, and spiritonyms into the "National Corpus of the Kazakh Language" within the framework of "Digital Humanities," and to determine the folk cognitive image of onyms through experimental analysis.

Research methods and approaches. In the dissertation research, mythological concepts and sacred names were defined, and the methods of collecting and systematizing scholarly views on national, cultural, and onomastic codes were employed in conducting a mythological and religious analysis. The method of mythological interpretation was applied to the analysis of mythocosmonyms; the classification method was used in systematizing mythozonyms, mythophytonyms, and mythoornithonyms; and the semantic method was employed to reveal the inner content of mythodemonyms and the characteristics of ancient beliefs.

For identifying the linguistic representation of mythotoponyms and anthroponyms, the linguocultural analysis method was applied. The descriptive and comparative methods were used to determine the symbolic and semantic content of precedent names and saintly figures. The corpus and statistical methods were utilized in incorporating mythonyms, theonyms, and hagionyms into the National Corpus of the Kazakh Language. Digital methods were also used to interpret cultural and linguistic onyms and to present them in digital format. Public perceptions of religious mythonyms were determined through online surveys, and the responses were subjected to contextual analysis.

Research sources and materials. The study is based on materials from the following works: S. Kondybai's Mythology of Proto-Kazakhs (4 volumes), Kazakh Mythological Tales, Word of the Ancestors (100 volumes), Kazakh Fairy Tales, Phraseological Dictionary of the Kazakh Language, Dictionary of the Literary Kazakh Language (15 volumes), Linguocultural Dictionary of the Kazakh Language: Ethnosemantic Analysis, the encyclopedia The Traditional System of Ethnographic Categories, Concepts, and Names of the Kazakhs (5 volumes), Islamic Encyclopedia, among others. Data from the National Corpus of the Kazakh Language were also analyzed. The research materials included cultural and linguistic data collected from samples of oral folk art, myths, texts of religious dastans, phraseological and Islamic dictionaries, as well as academic works. The 300 linguistic units selected for the study served as the basis for classifying them into thematic groups and for determining their semantic, cultural, and religious-mythological aspects.

The theoretical and methodological foundation of the research, in accordance with its object, is formed by the scientific concepts and ideas of Kazakhstani and foreign scholars. In particular:

− the general understanding of the concept of "code," as well as the theoretical foundations of cultural-linguistic, onomastic, national, and religious-mythological codes in linguistics (C. Lévi-Strauss, M. Eliade, E. Meletinsky, J. Frazer, D.B.Gudkov, Yu. M. Lotman, N. B. Mechkovskaya, A. V. Superanskaya, V.V.Krasnykh);

− the study of Kazakh mythology and folklore in the interrelation of language and culture (Sh. Ualikhanov, A. Margulan, A. Qaidar, S. Qasqabasov, A. Seidimbek, R. Berdibayev, Sh. Ybraev, E. Tursunov, S. Qondybai, Zh. Mankeeva, P.Auesbayeva);

− the theory and methodology of Kazakh onomastics (Gh. Qonqashpaev, E.Qoyshybayev, A. Abdirahmanov, T. Zhanuzakov, N. Uali, B. Tileuberdiev, E.Kerimbayev, G. Madiyeva, Q. Rysbergen, Q. Aronov);

− the mythological and religious methodological foundations for decoding ethnocultural information encoded in religious onyms and mythonyms, as well as determining their place and function within the onomastic system (K.Zhubanov, N.Uali, B.Sagyndyquly, Q. Gabithanuly, B. Akberdieva, S. E. Kerimbayeva, B.Suyerqul, G.Kortabayeva);

− methods for incorporating and describing theonyms, hagionyms, and mythonyms as meaningful structural units of the national language corpus (A.Zhubanov, E. Suleimenova, G. Madiyeva, A. Zhanabekova, A. Fazylzhanova).

The theoretical and practical significance of the study lies in the examination of the people's life experience and traditional worldview reflected in mythological

codes, which made it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the national spiritual heritage and to reinterpret onomastic and folkloric data. In this respect, the research expands the theoretical content of the concept of code in Kazakh linguistics and contributes to university-level disciplines such as *Kazakh Onomastics*, *Linguo-Folkloristics*, and *Turkic Mythology*, among others, in accordance with higher education curricula. The inclusion of onyms in the national corpus not only enables a deeper understanding of the cultural and literary context but also enriches the scientific database of corpus materials, contributes to the systematic expansion of the linguistic fund, the compilation of a mythological dictionary, and the development of onomastic methodological tools.

Scientific novelty of the research:

The study of the religious and mythological code of Kazakh onomastics determines the novelty of this work, since this topic has not yet been explored in a specialized and comprehensive manner.

– the national, cultural, and religious-mythological code has been comprehensively and theoretically substantiated within the space of Kazakh onomastics;

– the encoded system of folk knowledge represented in mythocosmonyms and mythoastronyms has been analyzed from a cultural perspective;

– the semantics of names associated with livestock, mythozoonyms, mythoornithonyms, mythophytonyms, mythotoponyms, mythooronyms, and mythodemonyms has been interpreted and studied in correlation with the system of ancient beliefs;

– the theonyms, hagionyms, spiritonyms, precedent names, saints, and spiritual patrons within the national worldview have been explained from symbolic and cognitive perspectives;

– a methodological model for incorporating mythonyms, theonyms, hagionyms, and spiritonyms into the "National Corpus of the Kazakh Language" within the framework of "Digital Humanities" has been proposed, and the results of the experiment conducted to identify folk cognition reveal the vitality and cultural significance of mytho-religious onyms in modern Kazakh society.

Main theses submitted for defense:

1. The onyms of the Kazakh language reflect the cultural heritage and religious-mythological worldview of the Kazakh people. Their analysis allows the identification of national worldview features and provides a deeper understanding of the religious and mythological aspects connected with totemism and the cult of ancestors (*Ұмай ана, Жаратушы, Қызыр баба, Ғайып ерен қырық шілтен*), as well as with Islamic culture and religion, represented through the names of Allah, prophets, and spiritual patrons. The mythological code, expressed through mythic onyms, reveals a folk worldview that interlinks Tengrist beliefs and Islamic traditions.

2. The mythocosmonymic and mythoastronymic worldview developed in close connection with the traditional calendrical system of the Kazakhs, becoming a practical mechanism for regulating the lifestyle and economic activities of the ethnos. Linguistic units conveying folk knowledge about celestial bodies – *Ай, Күн, Жетіқарақшы, Темірқазық, Есекқырған, Ақбозат, Көкбозат, Құс жолы, Тұлқатын, Үркер* and

others – express the Kazakh people's perception of the cosmos and nature as a whole. Astral names are recognized as reflections of the Kazakh people's cosmological model of the world.

3. Mythozonyms (*Айдаһар, Әбжылан, Көк бөрі, Таутайлақ*), patrons of domestic animals (*Қамбар ата, Ойсылқара, Зеңгі баба, Шопан ата, Сексек ата*), mythophytonyms (*Бәйтерек, Адыраспан*), and mythoornithonyms (*Самұрық, Қарақұс, Көкқұс*) preserve the archaic substrata of mythological concepts linked to ancient beliefs. Mythodemonyms (*Албасты, Мыстан, Жезтырнақ, Үббе, Көнаяқ*, etc.) are rooted in ancient faiths and oral folklore, while mythotoponyms such as *Жеруйық, Жиделібайсын, Әулиекөл, Қазығұрт, Сайрам, Түркістан, Отпантау* function as codes preserving archetypal and sacred information of historical and cultural significance.

4. The theonyms (*Көк Тәңірі, Ұмай ана, Алла, Құдай*), as well as the hagionyms, spiritonyms, and other cultic names (*Арыстан баб, Қожа Ахмет Ясауи, Шопан ата, Бекет ата, Ғайып ерен, қырық шілтен, Баба Түкті Шашты Әзіз*), which emerged at the intersection of Sufi tradition and the cult of sainthood, are regarded as sacred figures of high symbolic value representing the spiritual and religious essence of Kazakh culture.

5. The inclusion of mythonyms, theonyms, spiritonyms, and hagionyms in the database of the "National Corpus of the Kazakh Language" contributes to the development of the field of "Digital Humanities." The results of the experiment aimed at identifying the image of onyms in folk cognitive consciousness reveal the vitality, cultural significance, and continuity of mytho-religious onyms in contemporary Kazakh society.

The main results of the research have been published in the form of 11 scientific articles in domestic and international journals. Among them are one article in a journal indexed in the Scopus database, five articles in publications included in the list of the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Sphere of Science and Higher Education of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CQAHE), and five articles in the proceedings of international scientific and theoretical conferences.

Structure of the research. The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of references, and an appendix.