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ARTICLE

Metaphors in the Poetry of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a comprehensive cognitive-linguistic, cultural-linguistic, and conceptual analysis of metaphorical structures in the poetry of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly. The main objective is to characterize metaphors not merely as poetic devices but as symbolic codes that reflect national consciousness and a spiritual worldview. Through metaphor, the poet conveys complex relationships between man and God, spirit and ego, people and rulers, knowledge and ignorance—using deep symbolic imagery rooted in Kazakh cultural and religious tradition. The article examines conceptual metaphors such as "spring's source," "boat," "river," "stallion," and "the boat of trust" from both poetic and epistemological perspectives.

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Mystical and religious metaphors are analyzed to reveal the presence of Sufi poetics and an Islamic worldview in Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly's writings. Folklore-based metaphors like "ram and herd" are interpreted in the context of social hierarchy and leadership within Kazakh society. The study concludes that metaphors in Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly's poetry function not only as aesthetic elements but also as representations of national spirituality, historical memory, moral values, and philosophical thought. This research contributes to contemporary discourse in Kazakh linguistic anthropology and cultural linguistics. By offering an innovative methodological lens for interpreting metaphor, the article demonstrates how national worldview is encoded in poetic language.

Keywords: Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly; Metaphor; Conceptual Metaphor; Cognitive Linguistics; Cultural Linguistics

1. Introduction

Metaphor is one of the most ancient and powerful semiotic tools in human language^[1]. It functions not only as a poetic ornament but also as a manifestation of cognitive and conceptual processes, drawing the attention of linguistics, cognitive science, and philosophy. Through metaphor, individuals express their inner world, spiritual searches, and worldview using figurative language. Thus, the study of metaphor is a means of exploring not only linguistic phenomena but also national worldview, spirituality, and cultural codes.

Metaphor, as a fundamental mechanism of human cognition and language, plays a vital role in shaping our understanding of abstract concepts through concrete imagery. Since the groundbreaking work of Lakoff and Johnson [2], metaphor has been increasingly interpreted not merely as a stylistic device but as a cognitive tool that structures thought and experience. Recent developments in cognitive linguistics [3–5] and cultural linguistics [6] have further deepened the study of metaphor as a culturally embedded phenomenon, especially in non-Western literary traditions.

Although the study of metaphor in Kazakh linguistics began to gain momentum in the second half of the 20th century, contemporary research explores metaphor beyond literary expression, incorporating cognitive, semiotic, and cultural-linguistic perspectives. These approaches allow researchers to understand metaphor not simply as a stylistic feature. Rather, it is seen as a cognitive category reflecting the deep connection between language and thought, culture and text. Most scholars now regard metaphor as a product of conceptualization in language and worldview, a perspective initiated by the seminal works of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson [2]

and further developed in the context of national cognition and ethnocultural space.

In the work of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly, metaphors bear a unique stylistic and cognitive load. Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly (1858-1931) was a prominent Kazakh poet, historian, philosopher, and religious thinker. He is known for his deep engagement with Islamic mysticism (Sufism). Kazakh oral traditions, and national identity. His poetic works blend folklore, theology, and philosophical reflection, making him one of the most influential figures in Kazakh intellectual history. Mashkhur Zhusip's writings are characterized by rich metaphorical language, spiritual symbolism, and socio-political critique. His legacy continues to shape modern Kazakh cultural consciousness. The poet expresses the essence of existence, the transience of life, and the relationship between society and time through deep and rich symbolic imagery. His poetic language reflects the national spirit, religious and cultural traditions, historical memory, and identity. The metaphors found in his works are not mere literary devices but poetic reflections of national worldview, truth, social reality, and Sufi spirituality.

Mashkhur's metaphors operate on multiple levels. First, they serve as tools of social critique. Second, they function as symbols of Sufi spiritual understanding. Third, they represent Kazakh identity and traditional thinking. For example, metaphors in the poem "The Source of the Spring" illustrate the pursuit of knowledge and spiritual perfection; in "The Incurable Illness", the poet depicts moral decline and spiritual crisis as a metaphorical disease. In "The Artist", metaphors such as "journey," "river," and "boat" portray the intellectual and existential struggle of an individual seeking knowledge. These poetic images reflect the author's philosophical worldview.

While rooted in folk poetics, the metaphors in Mashkhur Zhusip's poetry transcend traditional oral forms to acquire deeper authorial meanings. The poet transforms Kazakh poetic clichés by linking them to contemporary issues, social realities, and spiritual matters, turning metaphor into a language of national spiritual crisis. This convergence of poetry and social critique underscores that Mashkhur's metaphors must be understood not only as stylistic tools but as conceptual expressions of national consciousness.

Moreover, many of his metaphors are closely tied to religious and philosophical symbolism. Widely used in Sufi doctrine, concepts such as "path," "city," "light," "darkness," and "guide" are reinterpreted in his poetry to convey the complex relationship between man and God, spirit and ego, truth and falsehood. These poetic devices do not merely offer aesthetic pleasure, but inspire spiritual awakening and intellectual reflection.

Metaphors also function as cognitive codes in Mashkhur's worldview. Imagery such as "sea," "boat," and "ship" reflects his philosophical understanding of human life, destiny, and the path of knowledge. These concepts resonate with the traditional Kazakh worldview, offering unique models of national mentality. Through this, Mashkhur Zhusip emerges not only as a poet but also as a national philosopher and spiritual-cultural figure.

Thus, analyzing metaphorical structures in his poetry corresponds to major trends in Kazakh linguistics, including cognitive, cultural, and semantic approaches. This type of research opens new avenues for understanding the inner semantic potential of the national language, its aesthetic system, and conceptual universe. In Mashkhur's poetry, metaphor is not just a linguistic element but a reflection of national cognition, belief systems, and value frameworks.

This article aims to examine the metaphors in Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly's works from structural-semantic, conceptual, and functional perspectives. Its relevance lies in treating metaphor as a reflection of national identity and conceptual thought. The significance of this research lies in its interdisciplinary contribution to metaphor studies by offering a culturally grounded analysis of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly's poetic language through the lens of cognitive linguistics. While numerous studies have explored metaphor in Kazakh folklore and classical literature, few have applied conceptual

metaphor theory to a Sufi-influenced poetic figure such as Mashkhur. This study not only bridges gaps between linguistic anthropology, Islamic poetics, and national identity but also introduces a new methodological perspective for understanding how metaphors shape and reflect the spiritual and cultural worldview of the Kazakh people.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach, which combines conceptual metaphor theory, cognitive linguistics, and Islamic Sufi poetics to analyze the metaphorical structures in the works of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly. While metaphor has been examined in Kazakh literature broadly, this study is among the first to systematically explore Mashkhur's metaphors as cognitive, spiritual, and cultural constructs, thus contributing to the understanding of Kazakh national consciousness through poetic discourse.

Thus, the research addresses the following objectives:

- To identify and classify conceptual metaphors in selected poems of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly;
- To analyze the cognitive and cultural meanings of these metaphors within the framework of conceptual metaphor theory;
- To demonstrate how poetic metaphors encode moral, spiritual, and epistemological structures of Kazakh traditional thought.

By bridging traditional poetic forms with contemporary metaphor theory, this study contributes to the broader field of linguistic anthropology, Islamic poetics, and Kazakh cultural linguistics.

2. Literature Review

The phenomenon of metaphor has become a multifaceted subject of research at the intersection of linguistics, literary studies, philosophy, and cognitive sciences. Since the second half of the twentieth century, there has been a growing tendency to interpret metaphor not merely as a rhetorical device but as a reflection of cognitive processes in human consciousness. In this regard, both foreign and Kazakh scholars have contributed foundational theoretical frameworks.

In international scholarship, the conceptual metaphor theory was pioneered by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their seminal work Metaphors We Live By^[2]. This

study systematized the idea that "our conceptual system is largely metaphorical," proposing that metaphor is a cognitive mechanism that allows humans to understand abstract domains through concrete experience. Foundational metaphorical models such as "Life is a journey" or "Time is a valuable resource" illustrate how people conceptualize the world. Lakoff and Johnson thus shifted the focus from metaphor as a linguistic tool to metaphor as a structure of thought.

The cognitive dimension of metaphor continued to be central in subsequent studies. Scholars such as C. Kennedy, G. Fauconnier, and M. Turner examined its psycholinguistic, cultural, and pragmatic aspects. Fauconnier and Turner^[7] introduced the theory of "conceptual blending," explaining how meaning emerges from the fusion of two distinct mental spaces. This framework is highly applicable to understanding the complex metaphoric imagery in the poetry of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeev.

Metaphor has also been studied in relation to culture and ethnolinguistic worldviews. Scholars such as S. Tsung [8] (2004), M. Black [9] (1993), and Z. Kövecses [3,4] emphasized that the metaphorical systems of different nations are shaped by their respective cultural frameworks and collective consciousness. In these works, metaphor is treated as a cultural code that conveys national identity, traditional worldview, and collective memory.

In Kazakh linguistics, the interest in metaphor can be traced back to the works of A. Baitursynuly and K. Zhubanov. Baitursynuly [10] defined metaphor as a form of figurative meaning and analyzed its aesthetic function as a linguistic category. In later periods, scholars such as R. Sydyk, Z. Akhmetov, B. Abilkassymov, B. Shalabay, G. Smagulova, A. Zhubanov, and Zh. Mankeyeva have explored metaphor as a key marker of poetic discourse.

Z. Akhmetov^[11] provided a structural analysis of figurative imagery in Kazakh poetry, treating metaphor as a medium for conveying profound poetic meaning beyond stylistic ornamentation. R. Syzdyk^[12] conducted an in-depth linguistic analysis of metaphor in Abai's poetry, revealing its conceptual scope. These approaches offer valuable theoretical foundations for analyzing metaphoric structures in the works of Mashkhur Zhusip.

The studies by Zh. Mankeyeva^[13] highlight a linguocultural approach to metaphor, focusing on how metaphors reflect national consciousness, mentality, and spiritual values. She examines metaphorical symbols as part of the national "conceptosphere" shaped by Kazakhstan's cultural and spiritual heritage. This framework is particularly effective for analyzing the conceptual worldview embedded in the poetic language of Mashkhur Zhusip.

In recent years, cognitive linguistics has gained momentum in Kazakhstan. Researchers such as K. Rysbergen, A. Kazhybayeva, G. Nurgaliyeva, and S. Imanberdiyeva have applied cognitive linguistic methods to study conceptual metaphors in the Kazakh language. These scholars have addressed the mental structure, conceptual field, and cultural embodiment of metaphors through a variety of journal articles and dissertations.

S. Imanberdiyeva^[14], for example, systematized conceptual metaphors related to themes such as life, destiny, time, and human nature, highlighting their national-cultural meanings. K. Rysbergen's^[15] study The National Essence and Linguistic Consciousness analyzed metaphor as a cognitive tool that reflects ethnic identity and worldview. These findings serve as a bridge between traditional Kazakh poetics and modern cognitive linguistics.

However, dedicated metaphorical analyses of Mashkhur Zhusip's poetry remain relatively limited. Scholars such as Zh. Dadabaev^[16], S. Kaskabasov^[17], and Sh. Ybyraev^[18] have examined his work from folkloric, Sufi, and philosophical perspectives^[19], but metaphor as a linguistic-cognitive construct has not been thoroughly explored. Similarly, while B. Abilkassymov^[20] and B. Shalabai^[21] focused on poetic structure and stylistic features, they did not extensively analyze metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon.

In conclusion, both foreign and Kazakh studies provide a solid theoretical basis for the comprehensive investigation of metaphor in Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeev's works. Yet there remains a need to conceptualize metaphor not only as a stylistic device but also as a linguistic manifestation of national identity, spirituality, historical memory, and philosophical worldview. This literature review lays the foundation for analyzing the structure, function, and conceptual content of metaphorical models in Mashkhur's poetry. Also, in Sufi philosophy, the metaphorical system is deeply intertwined with spiritual development. Key concepts include nafs (the lower self or ego), tariqat (the spiritual path), sabr (patience), tawakkul (trust in God), and ma'rifa (spiritual knowledge). These ideas form the conceptual background

of many metaphors used by Mashkhur Zhusip. Sufi poetry often portrays the soul's journey toward divine union through images of travel, suffering, purification, and enlightenment.

3. Methodology

3.1. Materials

The primary material for this study comprises the poetic works of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeev. Specifically, the following poems were selected for analysis: "Bulaq Kozi" ("The Source of the Spring"), "Dauasyz Dert" ("An Incurable Illness"), "Önerpaz" ("The Skilled One"), "It Dunie" ("This Dog-like World"), "Togai boiynda Edige balasy Beisenge bireudiń aitqany" ("What Someone Said to Edige's Son Beisen by the River"), and "Meshit Zary" ("The Lament of the Mosque"), among others. The selection of these poems was guided by three key criteria:

- (1) the density and diversity of metaphorical expressions,
- (2) thematic coverage of central conceptual domains such as religion, morality, cognition, and society, and
- (3) the availability of reliable textual versions for accurate transliteration and analysis.

These works also reflect different phases of Mashkhur Zhusip's thought and serve as representative samples of his overall metaphorical system.

3.2. Collection

The primary data for the study consist of selected poems by Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly drawn from authoritative collections published by Kazakh literary archives and academic publishers. Specifically, 25 poems were chosen from the poet's religious-philosophical corpus, with an emphasis on texts rich in metaphorical and symbolic language. The selection was guided by purposive sampling, focusing on poems that exhibit strong spiritual, epistemological, and moral themes.

The main criteria for selection included:

Presence of symbolic imagery related to Islamic mysticism (Sufism);

- Frequent use of culturally embedded metaphors (e.g., spring, ram, boat, light);
- Reflection of core values of Kazakh traditional worldview such as faith, knowledge, and leadership.

3.3. Procedure

- 1. Metaphors were identified at the lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels.
- 2. The extracted metaphors were classified based on their typology (e.g., religious, conceptual).
- Each metaphor was interpreted within its poetic context to reveal its cultural-national meaning and underlying worldview.
- The connection of metaphorical expressions with religious and Sufi symbols was explored through comparison with Islamic terminology and Qur'anic references.

3.4. Data Analysis

The identified metaphors were subjected to structuralsemantic analysis and interpreted through cognitive modeling. Conceptual categories were visualized via diagrammatic tables to illustrate the metaphoric associations. Linguocultural methods were employed alongside the conceptual metaphor theory proposed by G. Lakoff and M. Johnson^[2] to assess the cognitive and cultural functions of metaphorical structures. In this study, metaphors were not treated as isolated stylistic devices but as conceptual constructs embedded in poetic discourse^[3-5]. A total of 40 metaphorical expressions were selected from the poet's major works. Each metaphor was first identified based on its syntacticsemantic structure, then assigned to a conceptual domain (e.g., fate, cognition, society, spirituality). These were analyzed through a three-stage framework: (1) literal meaning and figurative projection, (2) cultural-religious context (e.g., Sufi symbolism), and (3) cognitive function (e.g., journey = life, illness = ignorance). For instance, the metaphor "bulaq közi" ("spring's source") was interpreted as the cognitive origin of knowledge, while "itjyğys" ("deadlock") illustrated social stagnation. This analytical procedure allowed us to reveal both the linguistic form and the deeper epistemological function of each metaphor within the Kazakh worldview.

4. Results

4.1. Typology and Functions of Metaphors

In the poetry of Mashhur Zhusip Kopeuly, metaphor holds a prominent role as a cognitive, aesthetic, and axiological device. It is not only a stylistic form of expression, but also a means of conveying deep spiritual experiences and societal dilemmas in a figurative manner. Through metaphors, the poet depicts social, religious, and moral categories in symbolic language, transforming national worldview and personal reflections into poetic formulas.

One of the most recurrent structures in his poetry is the religious-philosophical metaphor. For instance, in the line:

"Iman – qo1, aqyl – qo1shy, näpsi – böri" ("Faith is a sheep, reason is the shepherd, and the nafs is a wolf")

– the three layers of human nature are articulated metaphorically. Here, iman (faith) is depicted as the submissive and weak "sheep," aqyl (reason) as the guiding "shepherd," and näpsi (carnal desire) as the inner enemy, symbolized by a predatory "wolf." This metaphor aligns with the traditional imagery of Islamic-Sufi poetics. Such metaphors enable the reader to grasp the complex spiritual processes taking place within the human self.

Moreover, the poet metaphorically reflects social relations. In the line:

"Qwaryp qwrai bolyp, qalma köktei" ("Don't wither into a dry reed, remain like spring grass")

– the unique stages of human life are compared to natural cycles. Here, qwrai (dry reed) symbolizes old age and inactivity, while köktei (spring grass) serves as a metaphor for youth and vitality. This usage clearly illustrates the transient nature of life and the consequences of passivity. Considering that such biological-natural metaphors are deeply embedded in Kazakh folklore, the poet continues this tradition while adding his own distinctive touch.

Socio-critical metaphors also occur frequently in his poetry. Lines such as:

"Kisini körse bıler bır dawlasqan" ("When they see a man, the judges immediately start arguing")

and

"Moldalar paıdalı iske wağızdamaı, kerekcis üsaq sözben baqaslasqan"

("Mullahs do not preach about useful deeds, but argue over petty matters")

subtly critique representatives of authority and religion through indirect language. In these examples, metaphors serve more of a publicistic than an aesthetic function, transforming poetry into a platform for social discourse. Through such usage, the poet not only expresses the flaws of his era but also offers the reader space for critical evaluation.

In Mashhur Zhusip's poetic language, social hierarchy and human character are also constructed through metaphor. For example:

"Maida bol, jigit bolsañ, tal jibektei"
("Be gentle, young man, like fine silk")
and
"Jaqsy emes qattı bolw tikenektei"
("Being harsh is no good, like a thorn")

where character traits such as gentleness and harshness are symbolized through softness and sharpness, "silk" and "thorn." This imagery is based on binary oppositions (good-evil, soft-hard, beautiful-harsh), which are typical of the Kazakh worldview.

Overall, the metaphors in Mashhur Zhusip's poetry primarily serve as figurative tools for conveying national concepts such as aqyl (reason), iman (faith), erlik (bravery), märttik (nobility), and näpsi (carnal desire). These metaphors not only reflect the spiritual state of Kazakh society but also serve as instruments for reflection, moral instruction, and education. Hence, the poet's metaphors must be evaluated not only as aesthetic categories but also as cognitive and axiological phenomena that shape thought, values, and national consciousness.

4.2. Poetic Metaphors and National Worldview

In Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly's poetry, metaphors are not merely stylistic devices—they are symbolic structures that vividly express the spiritual being of the people, their historical experiences, and worldview. The poet's metaphors are closely tied to Kazakh cultural conceptions of space, nature, mythology, and ethics. Through these poetic images, he encodes national ideals and moral values in figurative language.

Typically rooted in traditional culture, these metaphors possess layered semantic complexity.

For instance, in the line:

"Közine köringennen ğibrat alsañ, ğalamğa boldıñ öziñ Edil-Zhauq."

("If you derive wisdom from what you have seen, then you yourself are the Volga-Ural to the world.")

Here, Edil-Zhanq (Volga–Ural rivers) represents more than waterways—they are symbols of national history and spiritual depth. By equating the individual with Edil–Zhanq, the poet measures personal spiritual elevation against the vast national landscape. The geographic names acquire metaphorical life, serving as poetic symbols.

A recurrent image in his poetry is the falcon (suńqar). Examples:

"Uıada suńqar tületken, qiıada suńqar tületken."

("In the nest the falcon raised young, in the heights the falcon raised young.")

"Aq sunqar-day tülegen, toıatty onın qanğan son."

("Like a white falcon it fledged, having sated its hunger.")

The falcon symbolizes loftiness, spiritual elevation, and heroism. In Kazakh poetry, a falcon traditionally stands for bravery, nobility, and freedom. Mashkhur expands this image with mythopoeic resonance: qua (height) is spiritual altitude, and the falcon is the soul that ascends. Through this metaphor, national ideals are poetically embodied.

Another profoundly semantic motif is the tulpar (legendary steed). In the line:

"Suityp qoigan tulpary." ("His tulpar grew cold.")

—the stillness of the tulpar symbolizes a diminution of societal and spiritual momentum. It evokes a clash between Soviet modernity and traditional national consciousness. As a national poetic archetype, the tulpar here becomes a metaphor for the loss of past glory and present decay.

Art and learning are also depicted metaphorically. Consider:

Ónerpaz qara jerge salar qanq.

(The virtuoso casts a boat upon the dark soil)

Here, qara jer (earth) signifies existence or the larger world; the qauq (boat) symbolizes the artist's intellect and quest—the vessel through which one explores the world. The ónerpaz (artist) becomes an active traveler: art as journey, person as traveler. This reflects typical Sufi poetic worldview.

Another key image is the river:

river, swelling without end?)

river-depicting intellectual maturation.

Tamshydan tama berse, dariya bolar, ketpey me aqırında bir molayıp?!
(If drop after drop gathers, can it not become a

Here, the river (dariya) denotes depth, infinity, spiritual expanse. Each drop (tamsha) stands for incremental learning. Over time, personal curiosity leads to a vast spiritual

In his joqtau (mourning) poems, metaphoric constructs reference heroic tradition:

Aıdarlyğa aıdatqan, tulymdığa bailatqan. (Adorning the helm, binding the sword belt)

Here, aidar and tulym evoke epic heroism—symbols of youthful warrior identity. Through these images, the poet not only laments the fallen hero but also revives the era's spiritual-ethical framework.

In lines like:

Quzğyndai qyzyl körse barar jetip. ("If it sees red like a raven, it will go, satiated)

-the raven (quzýn) represents the greedy and cunning individual, reddened by avarice (qyzyl). This metaphor criticizes social injustice and opportunism, as within national folklore the raven is an ill omen.

Similarly,

Jaqsy emes qattı bolw tikenekteı. (Being hard is not good, like a thorn)

-where softness and hardness symbolize moral character: soft like silk (tal jibek), hard like a thorn (tikenek). This metaphor echoes the national ideal of gentle, humble virtue.

Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly's poetic metaphors enable conceptualization of space, time, nature, and historical consciousness. While grounded in folklore, they bear his unique spiritual-philosophical imprint. Geographic references such

as Edil, Zhanq, Altai, and Arka transform into mnemonic cultural loci. Through metaphors, the poet moves from mere words to intellectual and philosophical reflection—every metaphor becomes a coded representation of national being, destiny, time, and space.

Thus, his metaphors function as artistic manifestations of traditional worldview-amalgamating aesthetic, ethical, historical, and philosophical layers into visualized poetic constructs. With his thoughtful wordcraft, Mashkhur encodes national spirit into language; his metaphors breathe life into the abstract.

4.3. Religious-Mystical Metaphors and Islamic Cognition

At the core of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeyev's literary worldview lies a system of cognition deeply rooted in Islamic belief. The poet's religious lexicon and symbolism are intimately linked with Sufi thought and a discursive tradition grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith. This section offers a structural-semantic analysis of the religious-mystical metaphors in his poetry, highlighting their philosophical depth and their role in shaping Kazakh spirituality.

The religious metaphors in Mashkhur Zhusip's works often portray the bond between the Divine and the human, the transience of the world, the struggle between faith and the nafs, and the innate weakness of mankind. These metaphors closely resemble the symbolic system of Sufi poetry. Common Sufi metaphors include the path (tariqat), the traveler (sālik), the nafs (shaitan, wolf), and faith (light, sheep).

Mashkhur uses religious metaphor to express the dichotomy between the worldly and the eternal. In his poem "It Dünie" ("Worldly Dog-Life"), the transitory and deceitful nature of life is vividly rendered:

> It dünie, sen bir säurik ayğyrdaysan, Eşkımni öz betiñmen bay qylmaysıñ. (Oh deceitful world, you are like a wild stallion,

You never make anyone rich on your own)

Here, the world is described through two negative images – a dog and a wild stallion, both symbolizing untrustworthiness and unrestrained desire. These images echo Qur'anic metaphors, such as in Surah Al-Hadid (57:20), where the world is likened to an illusion.

Another notable metaphor is:

Biz mindik Täuekel'diñ qayığına (We boarded the boat of Tawakkul (trust in God).

Here, tawakkul represents spiritual reliance during worldly trials. In Islamic thought, this concept reflects full trust in divine decree. The boat metaphor, common in Sufi poetry, symbolizes one's spiritual journey and resilience. The philosopher Al-Ghazali wrote, "Tawakkul is to rely not on causes, but on the Creator of causes." Thus, this metaphor artistically manifests a deep theological principle. The concept of tawakkul (complete reliance on God's will) is central to Sufi doctrine, where the believer is expected to surrender all worldly concerns in pursuit of divine trust.

Mashkhur also uses personification to render divine critique without directly naming God. In "Meshit Zary" ("The Mosque's Lament"), the mosque itself speaks:

Meshit pen medrese tur bolyp kärip, Barady söylemesem işti jaryp. (The mosque and madrasa stand in misery, If I don't speak, my heart shall burst)

In these lines, the mosque and madrasa appear as living beings suffering spiritual degradation. This personification reflects a loss of sacredness in society, aligning with Islamic concepts of societal decline as a consequence of neglecting divine symbols.

The poet further embeds theological terms with deep symbolic meaning. In the line:

Ğalamda on segiz mıñ jalğız Alla, Buryñğı zamanımız qayda qaldy? (In this universe of eighteen thousand worlds, only One God, Where has our former time gone?)

The phrase "eighteen thousand worlds" derives from Islamic cosmology, signifying all creation, while "One God" expresses tawhid (monotheism). The fusion of metaphor and dogma reflects both aesthetic and epistemological coherence.

On the topic of mortality, the following metaphors are significant:

Quwarıp quray bolyp, qalma köktey! (Do not wither like dry grass, stay vibrant like spring!) Tappasañ dertke dawa, ğazizlarym, Nadandyq dawasy joq awyr derttey! (If you find no cure for your pain, my dears, Ignorance is a disease without remedy).

Quray (dry reed) symbolizes frailty and uselessness, while köktay (spring) suggests vitality and enlightenment. Life, death, ignorance, and salvation are layered metaphorically and convey moral urgency.

In Mashkhur's poetry, images like näpsi, dünie, meshit, and iman function across multiple contexts and symbolic layers. For example:

Jeñe almas eşbir shaitan, jın men peri (No demon, jinn, or devil can overcome it)

This line metaphorically implies that only faith and piety can overcome the nafs. His metaphor for divine dependence is also artistically framed:

Biz mindik Täuekel'diñ qayığına (We boarded the boat of trust in God)

Here, the boat signifies the soul navigating the sea of existence, with tawakkul as its spiritual engine, alluding to Qur'an (Al-Imran, 3:159).

In another example:

Jar bolsa jalğız Täñirim, boq ta qylmas! (If my only Lord is with me, even filth won't taint me!)

Though coarse, the word boq (filth) symbolizes sin and baseness. The metaphor critiques worldly judgment and affirms divine justice.

Similarly:

Jar bolsa jalğız Täñirim eşteñe etpes! (If the One Lord is by my side, nothing can harm me!)

Here, Jar (Beloved) alludes to the Sufi tradition of divine love, evoking the image of the soul's intimate bond with God.

Other metaphors like:

Dünieniñ közim jetpes ğayıbyna (To the unseen mysteries of the world my eye cannot reach)

convey mystical dimensions. Ğayıb (the Unseen) is central in

Islamic epistemology and denotes belief beyond perception.

Metaphors such as "Kestiñ jeldey" ("I passed like the wind"), "İt dünie" ("Dog-world"), and "Sen bir säurik ayğyrdaysan" ("You are like a wild stallion") resonate with classical Islamic poetic traditions found in Hafiz, Sa'di, and Ibn al-Farid. These images portray the world as deceitful, untamable, and ultimately hostile to the soul.

Religious metaphors in Mashkhur's poetry do not merely depict human frailty and worldly corruption—they also highlight values such as iman (faith), ümit (hope), sabr (patience), and tawakkul (trust in God). Lines like:

> Joq edi bul köpirge qylğan qasym (I had done no wrong to deserve this bridge) Quḍay-aw, kez keltirdiñ qanday sorğa (O God, why did You expose me to such misfortune?)

demonstrate poetic fatalism blending Kazakh sensibility with Islamic concepts of divine decree (qadar).

In conclusion, Mashkhur Zhusip's religious-mystical metaphors function as cognitive and spiritual instruments. They reflect not just personal expression, but a cultural-theological dialogue embedded in metaphor. His poetic language acts as a vehicle for disseminating spiritual knowledge and preserves the philosophical essence of Islamic civilization within the Kazakh poetic tradition.

4.4. Mashkhur's Conceptual Metaphors: Cognition and Spirituality

The conceptual metaphor is not merely an artistic device, but a cognitive tool that allows one to comprehend abstract concepts through concrete and experiential images^[22–25]. This notion was thoroughly described in the foundational work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By^[2], which posits that "human beings understand life through metaphors and live accordingly.

Distinctive Features of Conceptual Metaphors in the Works of Mashkhur Zhusip:

1. Cognitive Dimension:

The metaphors reflect not only the poet's worldview but also the mentality and spiritual values of the Kazakh people. For instance, "bulaq közi" (spring source) symbolizes the source of knowledge, while "dariya" (river) represents the path of life.

2. Multilayered Meaning:

Each metaphor consists of at least two or three semantic layers—lexical, cultural, and philosophical.

3. Connection to Sufism:

Images such as the opening of the inner eye of cognition, "nadandyq" (ignorance) as spiritual illness, and "jol" (the path) as the route toward Truth echo Sufi notions in Islamic philosophy.

4. Rooted in Kazakh Folklore and Epic Tradition:

The image "Serke – qoy bastağan kösem" (The ram is the leader of the flock) stems from oral tradition, yet it has been conceptualized. It illustrates the phenomenon of leadership.

5. Means of Social Critique:

Metaphors such as "itjyğys" (dogfight), "qatyn bolu" (to become a woman), and "ört janyu" (the fire ignites) serve as expressive methods of revealing societal afflictions.

6. Dynamic Imagery:

Metaphors are not static images but convey ideas that call the reader to action. For example, "ärip üyrenu – tamshynyñ dariyaga aynaluı" (learning a letter is like a drop becoming a sea) is an invitation to continuous self-development.

The metaphors in the works of Mashkhur Zhusip Köpeev are not merely artistic devices; they represent the poetic code of an entire epistemological system. In his language, the metaphor becomes a philosophical form of understanding the relationship between the self and the world, the soul and the body, society and the individual. These metaphors may rightly be defined as "conceptual metaphors" because they reflect not an individual concept but a whole mode of thought–Kazakh mentality, spiritual orientation, and life philosophy.

In his poem "Önerpaz" (The Artist), human life is portrayed as a journey, cognition as a river, and the individual as a boat:

Dariyadan köz jetkisiz ötkizetin:

Bolasyñ öziñ keme, öziñ qaiyq."

(You will cross the invisible reaches of the

You are yourself the ship, yourself the boat)

In this context, keme (ship), qaiyq (boat), and dariya (river) are not mere similes, but conceptual metaphors. The direction of human life is a foggy, deep, endless dariya (river), and the person who self-improves, gains knowledge, and sets a goal becomes the keme (ship) that crosses it. Through this metaphor, Mashkhur articulates the notions of spiritual maturation and purposeful living. This correlates with the traditional Kazakh concepts of "jol" (path), "sapar" (journey), and "jüru" (to walk), which have served since ancient Turkic texts as symbols of a person's life mission and destiny. Mashkhur's poetry continues this tradition with profound meaning.

Furthermore, in the line:

Önerpaz qara jerge salar qaiyq
(The artist lays the boat on the black earth)

Here, qara jer (black earth) symbolizes the reality of life, while qaiyq (boat) represents the spiritual vessel of the individual. The poetic image conveys the idea that through knowledge and art, one can navigate life's storms and depths.

In the poem "Bulaq közi" (The Spring's Eye), the poet likens cognition and knowledge to a spring, the source of life:

Mysaly ğılym tappaq sol sekildi: Bulaqtyñ bitip jatqan közın açqan. (To seek knowledge is like this: Opening the eye of a spring that is just emerging)

The bulaq közi (spring's eye) is metaphorically the origin point of cognition. Behind this artistic construction lies a profound philosophical premise: every person has an inner spiritual source, which requires seeking, education, and inspiration to be revealed. This corresponds to the Islamic concept of opening the eye of the heart and resonates with the Sufi concept of "kökirek közi" (inner eye). A spring provides life, purification, and energy; similarly, knowledge and science offer enlightenment and benefit to the surrounding world. The one who opens this spring shares light and prosperity.

Mashkhur continues:

Jigitke talaptanğan jüz mıñ raqmet, Ärqai'da sen bilgeniñ yrzyq şaşqan. (Hundred thousand blessings to the aspiring youth,

Your knowledge has scattered divine provision everywhere)

The line "bilgeniñ yrzyq şaşqan" (your knowledge has spread rizq) conceptualizes knowledge as rizq—the divine provision granted by God. Connecting knowledge with sustenance highlights the unity of cognition and divine grace, reflecting the Islamic concepts of 'ilm (knowledge) and rizq (provision). The poet characterizes cognition not merely as an outcome of intellect but as a gift from the Creator.

In the following verses, the poet proclaims:

Jigitke talaptanğan jüz mıñ raqmet,

Ärqaıda sen bilgeniñ yrzyq şaşqan.

(Hundred thousand blessings upon the striving youth.

Your knowledge has scattered divine provision everywhere)

Here, "bilgeniñ yrzyq şaşqan" (your knowledge has spread rizq) is not a simple reflection but a conceptual stance: knowledge is presented as an infinite source of divine blessing. Rizq (provision) is traditionally understood in Islamic theology as sustenance granted by God. Linking it with knowledge signifies a unity between cognition and divine grace—an idea rooted in the Islamic epistemological union of 'ilm (knowledge) and rizq (provision). For Mashkhur, cognition is not merely a product of the intellect, but a sacred gift from the Creator.

In the poem "Dawasyz dert" ("Incurable Illness"), Mashkhur presents one of his deepest philosophical reflections on national and spiritual degeneration through layered metaphors:

> Nadandyq dawasy joq awyr derttey! (Ignorance is like a grave illness with no cure!)

Here, nadandyq (ignorance) is not merely the absence of education but a metaphor for spiritual weakness and inner darkness. Dawasy joq (incurable) does not express despair but serves as a poetic warning-highlighting the depth of the ailment affecting collective spiritual life.

Mashkhur continues:

Ömiri itjyğyspen bara jatyr, Belgilep birin-biri jeñe almaydı. (Life continues in endless deadlock, No one can truly overcome the other)

Itjyğys (dogfight) symbolizes perpetual, unresolved conflicts among individuals and factions. This metaphor portrays a society lost in discord, lacking unity and collective purpose. It is not merely a rhetorical device but a conceptual framework: the spiritual condition of the people is defined by internal conflict rather than peace or direction.

Arada buzyqşylyq örti jansa, Quysa da toparn suyn, söne almaydı. (If the fire of discord erupts among us, Even a flood will not extinguish it)

Buzyqşylyq örti (fire of strife) signifies internal decay, while topan su (flood) implies external interventions—be it reforms or coercion. Yet the metaphor suggests that without internal purification, no external remedy will suffice. The poet implicitly proposes that true social recovery requires spiritual renewal.

In his epic-style poem "Toğai boiyynda Edige balasy Beisenge bireudiñ aitqanı" ("Someone's Words to Beisen, Son of Edige by the Forest"), Mashkhur invokes the traditional metaphor of leadership:

> Serkedey qoy bastağan kösem edim, Qairan jurt, qalamysyñ qoydaı shuılap?! (I was a leader like the ram at the head of the flock,

> Oh my poor people, have you become like sheep bleating without a guide?!)

Here, serke (lead ram) metaphorically represents the leader, while qoy (sheep) symbolizes the people. This metaphor, rooted in Turkic poetic tradition, expresses the rupture between the nation and its leaders. The absence of a moral guide results in the disorientation and helplessness of the community.

Further in the same poem, Mashkhur writes:

Päleniñ qalai desem bolar atyn, Jatyrmyn qolğa tüsip, bolyp qatyn. (What name should I give this misfortune? Here I lie, having been captured, turned into a woman)

The metaphor "bolyp qatyn" (to become a woman. Note: In Kazakh heroic epics and lamentations, "qatyn bolu" metaphorically conveys defeat, not feminine identity. It reflects the speaker's acknowledgment of being overpowered—psychologically or spiritually—by a greater force) in the line "Here I lie, having been captured, turned into a woman" does not reflect a literal or derogatory attitude towards women. In traditional Kazakh oral discourse, such expressions are culturally coded to symbolise the loss of willpower, emasculation, and spiritual submission. This poetic transformation reflects the collapse of inner resistance, rather than gender identity. For Mashkhur, cognition and spirituality are not static. They are processes achieved through action and discipline. In "Önerpaz" (The Artist), he writes:

Jürgennen tipti qaraq paidalyraq, Bir ärip söz üyrenseñ, kitap jaıyp. (Far more useful than wandering aimlessly, Is learning a single letter and opening a book)

Here, "bir ärip" (a single letter) and "kitap jaiyp" (spreading a book) are metaphors for the pursuit of knowledge. Even the smallest unit—one letter—opens up a world of cognition. The book symbolizes expanding one's intel-

lectual and spiritual horizons. This resonates with Islamic reverence for the pen, knowledge, and reading (e.g., "Iqra" in the Qur'an).

Similarly, he writes:

Tamshydan tama berse, dariya bolar, Ketpei me aqyrynda bir molaiyp?! (If a drop keeps falling, it will become a sea—Will it not eventually grow abundant?)

The tamshy (drop) metaphorizes small, consistent efforts in knowledge acquisition, while dariya (sea) represents accumulated wisdom. This expresses the concept of incremental cognition—the idea that persistent learning ultimately leads to deep understanding. The poet underscores the value of endurance and continuity in one's intellectual and spiritual growth.

This diagram (**Figure 1**) classifies the key conceptual metaphors used by Mashkhur Zhusip and illustrates their connection to major philosophical categories such as selfhood, society, cognition, and spirituality:

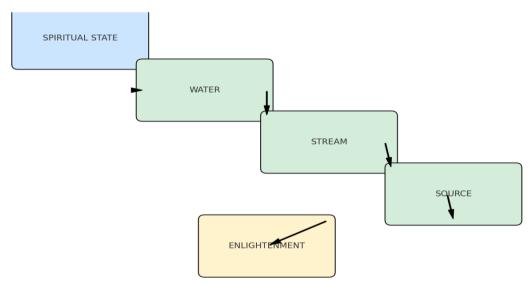


Figure 1. Spiritual insight is a flowing source.

This diagram illustrates the metaphorical progression from spiritual state through water imagery (stream, source) to enlightenment. Each conceptual node corresponds to a symbolic layer frequently used in Kopeuly's poetry.

Mashkhur Zhusip's conceptual metaphors constitute one of the most profound examples of spiritual-philosophical poetics in Kazakh literature. The poet does not simply depict individual images; rather, he elevates them into conceptual systems, offering readers not just aesthetic pleasure but cognitive and ethical orientation.

- Keme (ship), qaiyq (boat), dariya (sea) metaphors of life and fate.
- Bulak kozi (spring source) metaphor for the origin of cognition and knowledge.

- Dert (illness), dawasyz dert (incurable disease) metaphor for the spiritual condition of society.
- Serke (leading ram) and qoi (sheep) traditional metaphor of the leader and the people.
- Tamshy (drop) and dariya metaphor of continuous growth and learning.

Through these metaphors, the poet urges the reader to remain spiritually alert and to appreciate the value of homeland, knowledge, and faith. Thus, Mashkhur Zhusip's conceptual metaphors are not merely artistic symbols of Kazakh spiritual consciousness but constitute a poetic code that harmonizes cognition and spirituality.

5. Discussion

The metaphorical system in the poetry of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly is not only a stylistic mechanism but a deeply layered cultural, philosophical, and epistemological construct. In this section, we discuss the interpretative meanings and broader implications of the metaphors identified in the poet's work through cognitive, cultural, and religious lenses. These metaphorical structures illuminate the inner landscape of Kazakh national consciousness, Islamic spiritual thought, and poetic world-building.

One of the most dominant patterns observed in Kopeuly's metaphors is the projection of spiritual concepts onto natural and physical phenomena. For example, the metaphor "Bulaq közi" ("the spring's source") is not merely a reference to nature but symbolizes the origin of divine knowledge and the purity of the soul. Within conceptual metaphor theory, this aligns with the SOURCE DOMAIN: NATURE \rightarrow TARGET DOMAIN: SPIRITUAL KNOWL-EDGE model.

This mapping is a common feature in Sufi literature, where divine truth is often hidden in earthly manifestations. However, Kopeuly's approach is uniquely Kazakh, as he integrates familiar elements of nomadic life—such as springs, rivers, or animals—into metaphors of faith, creating a poetic language deeply rooted in his native landscape. The river metaphor frequently connotes the journey of the soul, mirroring the Islamic concept of sirat al-mustaqim (the straight path), which is the path toward divine unity.

Another core aspect of Kopeuly's metaphor system is his use of socially and emotionally charged metaphors to depict moral and psychological struggle. The much-discussed metaphor "qatyn bolu" ("to become a woman") has been interpreted controversially in contemporary discussions. However, in Kopeuly's context, it symbolically refers to emasculation, inner defeat, and surrender of spiritual will. It must not be read as a literal gender-based insult, but as a culturally coded metaphor for collapse of masculine spirit and loss of leadership.

When paired with "qolğa tüsü" ("to be captured"), the metaphor constructs a conceptual field where loss of freedom = loss of moral strength. This symbolic field echoes the historical trauma of colonization and moral enslavement that Kopeuly witnessed during the Russian imperial era. Thus, these metaphors extend beyond individual psychology and reflect collective historical anxieties.

The metaphor of "senim qayığı" ("the boat of trust") reveals a complex network of values such as sincerity, reliability, and divine guidance. Boats are not merely physical vessels in Kopeuly's poetics; they are moral carriers that allow one to cross the turbulent sea of life. This metaphor aligns with broader Islamic traditions where safina (ark or boat) represents salvation, as in the story of Noah (Nuh).

However, Kopeuly recontextualizes this religious motif in the Kazakh experience, associating it with amanat (trust) and ethical leadership. Thus, the boat becomes both a personal and political metaphor–traversing both the soul's journey and society's moral navigation.

The metaphors of "qoshqar" (ram) and "küyrek ayu" (dominant bear) are drawn from Kazakh folklore and traditional narratives of tribal leadership. In Kopeuly's poetry, the ram does not simply represent strength, but symbolizes the sacrificial nature of true leadership. In one of his poems, the line "Bastiñdi bir qoshqarğa ber" ("Entrust your head to a single ram") implies the necessity of unity, sacrifice, and the burdens of leadership in nomadic society.

These metaphors resonate with oral heroic epics (batyr zhyraular) where animal imagery is frequently used to encode ethical codes. By embedding such imagery into spiritual-philosophical poetry, Kopeuly not only preserves Kazakh symbolic traditions but also elevates them into universal moral categories.

Kopeuly often employs dual metaphors to construct dialectical relationships—light vs. darkness, spring vs. drought, trust vs. betrayal—creating a binary framework that reflects both Sufi thought and Turkic cosmology. For example, the contrast between "nūr" (divine light) and "kūngi saq" (dark shell) is not merely moralistic; it dramatizes the soul's journey from ignorance to enlightenment.

This binary structure reflects not only Islamic theology (e.g., light as a symbol of Allah in the Qur'an, An-Nūr, 24:35) but also Kazakh oral cosmology, which divides the world into aq jol (white path) and qara jol (black path)—conceptual frames of righteous and immoral behavior. Thus, metaphor in Kopeuly's work becomes a cosmological grammar that frames human existence.

While many of Kopeuly's metaphors have universal cognitive structures (e.g., 'Life is a journeyl), their expression is deeply culture-specific. His poetic system exemplifies what Sharifian [6] terms "cultural conceptualizations"—shared knowledge systems encoded in language through metaphor.

For instance, the horse/stallion metaphor ("basqaru arģaģy") conveys both freedom and control, reflecting the Kazakh nomadic ideal of leadership as horsemanship. This cultural embedding of metaphor adds to its symbolic density, making Kopeuly's work an exemplary case of cognitive-cultural interaction in metaphor usage.

Beyond aesthetic function, Kopeuly's metaphors serve as epistemological models, reflecting how knowledge, truth, and faith are conceived. The "bulaq" (spring) is not just a natural source but a metaphor for original wisdom, uncontaminated by worldly interests. Likewise, "bilek" (arm) and "tilek" (wish) emerge as metaphors for action and intention in his moral universe.

These metaphorical constructs help the reader decode the poet's conceptual world model, where language becomes a vessel of truth transmission, not mere ornamentation. In this sense, Kopeuly's metaphors are closer to religiophilosophical aphorisms than poetic embellishments.

The metaphors in Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeuly's poetry function as cognitive, cultural, and spiritual blueprints of Kazakh identity. They reflect a deeply rooted worldview informed by Sufi mysticism, nomadic ethics, and historical memory. By exploring these metaphors through modern linguistic theories, this discussion highlights the poet's mastery in embedding complex philosophical and theological ideas in accessible poetic imagery.

His metaphors are more than literary tropes; they are conceptual frames, moral signposts, and cultural archives. They articulate an epistemology where metaphor is a language of both the heart and the intellect—bridging the mundane and the metaphysical.

6. Conclusions

The literary legacy of Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeyev represents a profound artistic and philosophical heritage rooted in the spiritual foundations of Kazakh culture. This study has explored the conceptual nature of metaphorical imagery in the poet's works, analyzing its cognitive, religious-mystical, and spiritual dimensions from a linguistic and scholarly perspective. For Mashkhur Zhusip, metaphor is not merely a poetic device, but a primary mode of expressing his worldview, metaphysical reflections, and spiritual quests.

Throughout the analysis, the poet's metaphors were shown to operate on multiple semantic levels: religious-mystical metaphors reflecting inner states of the soul and the struggle between the nafs and iman; conceptual metaphors symbolically representing cognition, science, spiritual pursuit, and the value of art and education. Metaphoric constructs such as bulak kozi (spring of knowledge), dawasyz dert (incurable illness), qaiyq (boat), dariya (sea), and tagdyr qaiygy (boat of fate) constitute a complex system of images echoing Kazakh cultural codes, Islamic cosmology, and Sufi philosophy.

This research demonstrated the significance of analyzing Mashkhur Zhusip's metaphors through a cognitive-linguistic lens. Identifying the structural and semantic content of his metaphors, as well as their cognitive load, allows for a deeper understanding of the Kazakh linguocultural space and facilitates the representation of national worldview through linguistic evidence. This approach offers a tangible contribution to the development of conceptual metaphor theory within contemporary Kazakh linguistics.

Furthermore, the findings of this study provided insight into how the Kazakh people's spiritual code, cultural memory, and belief systems are encoded in language. It also revealed how historical consciousness and social tensions are conveyed through poetic expression. Mashkhur Zhusip's metaphors emerge not merely as figurative expressions, but as markers of national identity, collective memory, and the emotional-psychological condition of society.

In general, the exploration of the national-cultural con-

tent and cognitive depth of the poet's metaphors aligns with the current anthropocentric paradigm in Kazakh linguistics, as well as with trends in linguoculturology and cognitive linguistics. Within this context, Mashkhur Zhusip's artisticcognitive metaphors offer a unique perspective for exploring the expressive potential of the Kazakh language, the interaction between language and consciousness, and the linguistic representation of national identity.

For the future expansion of this research direction, the following avenues are proposed:

- A systematic analysis of Mashkhur Zhusip's metaphors from frame-semantic and conceptual approaches;
- Examination of the poet's metaphorical language within the contexts of religious discourse, Sufi thought, and psycholinguistic perspectives;
- Typological comparison of Mashkhur's metaphors with those found in the poetry of Abai, Shakarim, and Ybyrai;
- Characterization of the poet's linguistic personality based on the principles of anthropocentric linguistics.

In conclusion, the metaphors in Mashkhur Zhusip Kopeyev's works constitute a unique linguistic phenomenon that reveals the imaginative capacity of the Kazakh language and conveys the poetic code of national consciousness and spirituality. Their systematic study contributes meaningfully to the development of Kazakh linguistic science, literary criticism, and cultural studies.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Z.S. (Zaure Sovetova) and A.Z.; methodology, Z.S. (Zaure Sovetova); software, A.Z.; validation, A.A., G.Y. and Z.S. (Zhanakul Sametova); formal analysis, G.T.; investigation, K.K.; resources, A.Z.; data curation, A.Z.; writing—original draft preparation, Z.S. (Zaure Sovetova); writing—review and editing, A.Z.; visualization, Z.S. (Zaure Sovetova); supervision, A.Z.; project administration, A.A., G.Y. and Z.S. (Zhanakul Sametova); funding acquisition, A.Z. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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