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Symbolism of the Sacred Dog: A Mytholinguistic Approach in Kazakh and English

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ABSTRACT

The image of a dog holds a special place in the culture and mythology of many peoples. This study examines how the dog became a sacred symbol associated with the afterworld, ancestral land, and subterranean realms. Using mythological texts, archaeological data, and linguistic analysis, the research identifies unique cultural and universal patterns in stable expressions about dogs in Kazakh and English. The study employs S. Qondybay's mytholinguistic method and comparative analysis to uncover the sacred and symbolic meanings of these expressions. The findings reveal that the dog is often seen as a guardian of the afterlife and a protector of human souls. The research highlights how specific cultural and linguistic features—unique to certain ethnic groups—are preserved in language. It also demonstrates the continuity of ancient mythological beliefs in modern expressions and rituals. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the connection between language, culture, and mythology, offering new perspectives for mytholinguistic and cultural research.

Keywords: Sacred Animal; Afterlife; Mythology; Phraseological Analysis; Cultural Symbolism

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1. Introduction

The word *kieli* (sacred) is defined in the “Explanatory Dictionary of the Kazakh Language” as “sacred” or “holy”. This dictionary describes *kie* (sacredness) as a protective or guardian force associated with a person or object^[1]. The meaning of the stable expressions like ‘kiesi atty - qargysyna ushyrady’ means cast a curse or *kiesine zholykty (ushyrady)* – ‘kesapaty tidi’ means get into terrible trouble. Therefore, a sacred object can be a specific object with special holiness (such as earth, a bird, a color, etc.), a sacred animal, the sacred subterranean world, an image of a dog, or stable expressions.

The Latin equivalent of the word is *sacrum*, in Russian is *sacred, holy*. In theology, sacredness is ‘subordinate to God’. That is, in religion, the concept of sacredness is associated with the Absolute (omnipotence, holy ghost etc.)^[2]. The ancient Turkic name is *Ugan* (the Absolute)^[3]. The prayers, desires, and rituals performed in the sacred places should be considered as dedicated to the Advowee. However, according to V. Toporov, the concept of sacredness is combined not only with the concept of God, but also with the phenomenon of the natural environment. He writes in his book “Sacredness and saints in Russian culture”: *Orthodox light* (etymology) is etymologically closely related to *the saint*, because it had such meanings as ‘to increase’, ‘to swell’, ‘to flourish’, ‘to ripen’, ‘to rise’ (for example, sacred mountains). Nature (cosmic space, the Earth) acquires great value for us if we believe that it contains the sacred^[4]. In our opinion, the assignment of a sacred character to a particular object is primarily related to the omnipotent (the Absolute). In R. Guenon’s works, these concepts are described through the concepts of causation (the Absolute, God)^[5]. Secondly, the concepts related to the human environment are sacred. For example, the concept of the four corners of the world can be found in any national concept. However, the fact that these areas have a sacred significance and become a sacred object depends on the nature, culture, history, etc. of each nation.

Due to the distinction and respect for these phenomena, the East was considered a sacred place for the Turks. Since the sun rises in the East, the Turks bowed to the Sun. In this regard, they considered the Sun to be powerful, and its origin was regarded as a sacred direction^[6, 7].

In the worldview of any people, there are universal sim-

ilarities and idioethnic features. Universal similarities are mainly reflected in myths and fairy tales, while idioethnic features are observed in the way of life, profession, and art of the people^[8, 9]. In this article, based on mythical, archaeological, ethnographic, and linguistic data, we will show that the sacred nature of the image of a dog is associated with the afterworld and the concept of ancestral land.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Mythological Model of the World

According to this method, mythical cognition divides the world into three levels: the upper world, the middle world, and the lower world. The dog is associated with the lower level of this model, representing the subterranean world and the afterlife. This division reflects not only the mythical structure but also the worldview of different cultures, where each level of the world has its specific entities and roles.

2.2. Mythological Sources

These ideas are supported by the mythical narratives found in the “Encyclopedia of Myths of the Peoples of the World”^[10]. This encyclopedia contains mythological plots from various cultures and provides detailed information on gods, spirits, demons, epic figures, as well as basic mythological motifs and images. Some articles in the encyclopedia explore scientific theories of mythology, the role of myth in the history of culture, and the manifestation of mythological images in literature and art.

For instance, myths about the dog are often associated with the themes of guardianship, protection, and the guide to the afterlife, reflecting the role of the dog as an intermediary between the living and the dead, symbolizing transition and protection.

2.3. Archaeological Data

The myths of the dog included in this collection are closely linked with the concept of the subterranean world and the afterlife. Findings from Kazakhstani archaeologists also confirm that the dog was regarded as a mythological guardian of the afterlife. Archaeological evidence, such as depictions and artifacts, illustrates how in different cultures, the dog

was associated with posthumous existence and served as a protector in the afterlife.

2.4. Procedure

Qondybay's method of mythical-linguistic analysis enabled the identification of how these mythological motifs manifest in language. To this end, a card index of 52 stable expressions featuring the "dog" component was created using the method of continuous selection. This method allowed for the systematic collection and classification of linguistic data, revealing the symbolic meanings tied to the dog in both English and Kazakh.

Finally, through mythical-linguistic analysis, the symbolic implications of certain stable expressions with the "dog" component in both English and Kazakh were revealed. This analysis uncovered how mythological images and motifs are embedded in language and continue to influence the creation of idiomatic expressions and phrases linked to the dog. As such, the mythological component remains embedded in language, shaping the cultural symbolism of the dog across different societies.

2.5. Comparative Method

The comparative method was employed to identify both national-specific and universal features of zoonyms in English and Kazakh. This approach highlighted the similarities and differences in the perception of the dog as a mythological figure across cultures. For example, in Kazakh mythology, the dog is often depicted as a protector, while in Western myths, it may be associated with danger or a harbinger of death.

2.6. Mythical-Linguistic Analysis Method

In line with the primary objective of this article, we employed S. Qondybay's method of mythical and linguistic interpretation. This method involves the collection of mythical, linguistic, and archaeological materials, followed by the revelation of their sacred and symbolic meanings^[8, 9, 11]. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of the inter-relationship between myths and language, addressing not only linguistic content but also cultural and symbolic aspects inherent in the mythical motifs.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Image of a Dog in Mythological Texts

The dog is considered a 'sacred animal' in the worldview of many peoples. When reviewing mythical characters in the Encyclopedia of Myths of the World's Peoples, some are associated with the dog^[10]. For example, the Egyptian god of the dead, Anubis, is depicted as a wild dog. Anubis's main function was to prepare the human body for embalming and mummification. The Egyptians also worshiped the star Sirius, known as the 'Dog Star'. The appearance of this star in the sky marked the beginning of the year. It coincided with the flooding of the Nile River when the star appeared in the sky. During this time, the Egyptians celebrated a two-week holiday, as it was impossible to work on both sides of the Nile. This holiday later became known as *kanikuly* (vacation). The Latin word *canicula* literally translates to 'dog days,' a term that originated with the rising of the Dog Star Sirius during the flooding.

In general, if we take the ancient concepts of the dog, it turns out that it is connected with the *afterlife, subterranean world*. For example, the three-headed main monster dogs of the *subterranean world* God in Greek mythology named Kerber (Cerberus), a typological parallel of Aid in Indo-Aryan mythology, the dogs of Yama (Sharbars) are depicted as watchdogs of the afterlife. In the autumn a five-day festival called Tihar will be held in Nepal. The second day is dedicated to Yama, the God of the dead, and dogs. During the holiday, the animals are decorated with various jewelry and fed. The Nepalese believed when a person dies, animals help bring the soul (spirit) to heaven. An analogue of these is that the 'first man', 'the first king', and 'the first dead man' in the Avesta myth also had a dog (four dogs).

In Aztec culture in central Mexico, the dog holds a special place. The dog-shaped Xolotl is depicted as the god of the dead. Local people believed that a dog protected individuals from cruel ghosts and guarded them from harm. Dogs were buried with their masters, as it was believed that, even after the owner's death, the dog would continue to protect them and guide them to the subterranean world.

The second day of the Chinese horoscope is considered the birthday of all dogs. On that day, it is customary to take special care of dogs, feed them and show love.

Among the religions, the dog is highly respected in

Zaostrism. In Zaostrism, a dog was equal to a man. It was a custom to bury a dog just like a human. The dog was not beaten. The person who killed the dog was beaten with a whip. And up to nine grandfathers were cursed, and when he died, he was confronted with the devil, and it was believed that the dog would not help him. That's why people throughout life respected the dog and gave it good food

The dog is also mentioned in the Quran in Surah Al-Qahr (Cave), a dog named *Kitmir*. Seven Muslims try to escape from the infidels and hide in a cave. It turned out that one of the seven people took a dog with him. The other six were afraid that the dog would bite and take them to the enemy. Then the dog stuck out its tongue and said "I love everyone in the way of Allah. Therefore, sleep without worries, I will guard your sleep". Allah put people on the Straight Path to sleep for 309 years, and the dog guarded their sleep for so many years. Here, too, the entrance of a man into a cave, guarded by a sleeping dog, signified a certain initiation. The surah in the Quran is also a variation of the old ritual.

In English folklore there is a mythical animal called "hellhound". It is an analogue of Cerber. It was described as a giant black, sometimes with brown spots, red or yellow eyes, very strong and fast, capable of speech hell-hound. They had to enter the world of the dead or perform rituals associated with death.

In Kazakh mythology, "after world" motives associated with a particular dog, mythological concepts were not preserved, but some elements of the language and customs were present in the ancient Kazakh notion^[12].

3.2. Analysis of the Survey Results

For the first time on the territory of Kazakhstan, a very large number of osteological materials were found in the Botai settlement, which dates back to the Eneolithic period (IY-III BC). Most of them were more than 70,000 horse bones. There were also bones of *bison, turtles, moose, deer, bears, dogs, foxes, camels*, etc. The burial rites and a number of symbolic objects in this settlement testify to the existence of totemism and ghost worship. It is especially common to bury a dog on the threshold of a dwelling^[13].

The bones of dog on the territory of the settlement is reflected in a number of monuments dating back to the Bronze Age. In the works of Akynzhanov et al.^[14], some information is given on the basis of osteological materials obtained

from archaeological monuments of the North and Central Kazakhstan. The analysis is based on the research of scientists like A.H. Margulan, A.M. Orazbayev, M.K. Kadyrbayev, Zh.K.Kurmankulov, K.B. Zdanovich and others.

In the monograph of Margulan^[15] about the culture of Begazy-Dandybai in Central Kazakhstan, there is enough material upon the topic. For example: Atasu I, Bugly I monuments.

In Chernikov^[16] was the first scientist who studied the Baty monument in 1948, *where a dog was buried with a man* during a funeral near the village of Baty, Samara district, East Kazakhstan region. In the western part of the Stone Box No. 28 of the Baty Mound Group, which belongs to the Kula-zhorga (sorrel horse) period (III - I centuries BC), the bones of a large breed of dog were found. The diameter was 5 m, the height was 30 cm; the depth was 40 cm, a spot of a grave pit was discovered. There was the skeleton of a dog with outstretched legs at a depth of 1.2 m in the pit. There were the human legs, hips, and vertebrae beneath the dog's skeleton in anatomical order. This phenomenon was also common to the Early Iron Age monuments. In 2004, as a result of research conducted by the East Kazakhstan archeological expedition of the Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi, a dog's skull was found in the № 1 burial mound of the Chiliky-3 burial mound^[17].

In addition, a man and a dog were buried in the burial mound №17 of the Allebastrova-2 group of mounds in the West Kazakhstan, which is typical of the Sarmatian period. As a result of the excavations carried out by the archaeological expedition of the Ural Pedagogical Institute, it was possible to get detailed information about No. 17, which was located in the middle of the mound group. The diameter of the mound was 10 m, the height was 0, 26 m. The mound was covered with large and small stones. The placement of the stones in a certain order was not clear. 1.5 m to the North of the center of the mound. There was a mound of yellow soil excavated during the excavation of the tomb. Its area was 1.5x0.8 m, thickness - 0.1 m. Length - 2.6 m, width - 2.1 m. A man's body is buried in the grave. The head of the man was lying to the west. A cow bone was found on the right side of the corpse, and two ribs of a horse were found on the left elbow. Above *the human skeleton was a dog bone* with the head below the waist, facing northwest. 12 bronze arrowheads, a bone spoon, a broken iron spearhead and an

iron dagger were found in the grave pit^[18].

Such ceremonies continue in the Middle Ages and strengthen the network of cultural continuity. In 2003-2004, *the skeletons of four dogs* were found in an excavation in Saraishyk. Two dogs in a row were buried in a ceramic chamber, and two more were buried separately (XIY-X centuries)^[19].

Moreover, in Kazakh stories about the construction of Akmeshit in Bert, there was evidence of the laying of a dog on the wall of Akmeshit^[12].

3.3. The Mythological Meaning of Phraseological Units with the Component Dog

The fact that the dog has a sacred character in many people is directly related *to the afterworld, to the subterranean world*. Mythologist Qondybay in his 4th book “Argykazakh mythology” writes “the guard of the dog, in the course of the forgetfulness and primitivization of ancient, these concepts acquired a ‘low-World’ character”^[12].

The Kazakh people have a special respect for dogs. They were considered to be one of the seven treasures. The newlyweds are fed to the dog from the hem of the bride’s dress, according to the ritual of being strong (bring forth the young). A pregnant woman was forbidden to tell a dog “go away” until she would give birth to child. People put oil in the mouth of the old dog, turned its head to the West killed the animal, and buried it. The Kazakhs have a ritual like wearing “it koylek” (word for word “dog shirt” this is a shirt (it koylek) that a child wears, starting from birth until the withdrawal of forty days.), it kymes (word for word “dog does not enter” – the door of the yurt) “dog tease” etc. These rituals show the great status of the dog. That is, in the Kazakh perception a dog is a sacred. And its sacred nature, as mentioned above, is directly related *to the afterworld, to the subterranean world*. Some elements of this are also reflected in stable expressions

The fact that the dog guarded the sanctuary, the abode, the ancestral land on a mythical level made it a sacred animal in some peoples. In this article, we also describe the meaning of the word “dog” component words, stable expressions, and myths in a mytholinguistic context.

The dog is respected and revered by many people. Their remains and element are also preserved in the language. For this purpose, we analyzed stable expressions of two lan-

guages (Kazakh and English) with the word dog. Stable expressions are one of the means of transmitting the psychology and culture of the nation from century to century^[20, 21]. It was also found that stable expressions have universal phenomena. In the paper, 25 stable expressions from English and 25 from Kazakh were used for analysis.

The semantic features of stable expressions in English are as follows:

- 1) Reliability. *Every dog is a lion at home*. Literally: Every dog feels like a lion at home.
- 2) Caution. *It is ill to waken sleeping dogs*. Literally: Do not wake sleeping dogs.
- 3) Stop something. *To call off the dogs*. Literally: Calling dogs.
- 4) Empty, in vain. *The dogs bark, but the caravan goes on*. Literally: The dog barks, the caravan moves.
- 5) Danger. *Dumb dogs are dangerous*.
- 6) Respect. *Love me, love my dog*.
- 7) Selfishness. *Dog eats dog*.
- 8) Place (status) in society. *The top dog*. Literally: Head is a dog.
- 9) Elegant, tactful, capricious. *Scornful dogs will eat dirty puddings*. Literally: A disgusting dog has to eat dirty pudding
- 10) Praise. *A good dog deserves a good bone*.
- 11) Experience. *The old hound is best when all is said*.
- 12) Old age. *An old dog will learn no new tricks*.
- 13) Greed. *Too much pudding will choke the dog*.
- 14) Hostility. *Two dogs over one bone seldom agree*.
- 15) Rudeness. *A dirty dog*.
- 16) Pride (arrogance). *Dog on put. important*;
- 17) Diligence. *The dog that trots about finds a bone*.
- 18) Profit. *Help a lame dog over a style*.
- 19) Joy, good luck. *Every dog has its day*.
- 20) Suffering. *It is a dog’s life*.
- 21) Change the situation for the worse - go to the dogs (“die”, “swallow”, “fall into poverty”).
- 22) Pride. *Like a dog with two tails*.
- 23) Doing other people’s work. *Keep a dog and bark oneself*.
- 24) Focus on the unimportant. *The tail wagging the dog*.
- 25) Formality. *Dressed up like a dog’s dinner*.
- 26) Fatigue, being a dog. *Dog-tired*.

27) Poverty. *Dog poor.*

In the analysis of the internal form of stable expressions in English, it is observed that the zoonymic component plays an important role in the formation of phraseological meaning, marking the national and cultural features. The units (lexemes) that make up stable expressions affect the connotation of zoonyms and become the main factor determining the relationship of their meanings in a particular lexical unit. Thus, representatives of English-speaking culture, on the one hand, treat the dog with respect (reliability, efficiency, experience, help), on the other hand, they also describe negative qualities through the word dog: rudeness, greed, selfishness, arrogance, hostility, futility, formality.

As a result of the denotative analysis of stable expressions of Kazakh language, the following parts were identified:

1) Native Land. *Ar eldin zany baska, itteri kara kaska* (The law of each country is different, dogs have black eyebrows).

2) Human assistant. *It adamnyn – kulagy* (A dog is a human ear).

3) Indication of the person's location. *It uirgen zherde auyl bar* (There is a village where the dog bites).

4) Wealth. Dog is a prosperity. *It – zheti kazynany biri* (A dog is one of the seven treasures).

5) Friendship. *Elsizde it te zholdas* (A dog is also a friend in the desert).

6) Organization. *Auyl iti ala bolsa da, bori kelgende birigedi* (Even if the dog is spotty in the village, it will unite when the wolf comes).

7) No burden. *Zhaksy it olimigin korsetpeidi* (A good dog does not show its mortality).

8) Labor. *It zhurse suiek tabady* (When a dog walks, it finds bones).

9) Empty, in vain. *It uiredi, keruen koshedi* (The dog barks, the caravan moves).

10) Pride, arrogance, selfishness. *It atasyn tanymas* (The dog does not recognize its father).

11) Laziness. *It itti zhumsaidy, it kuirygun zhumsaidy* (The dog consigns the dog, the dog consigns the tail).

12) Rudeness. *It ittigin istemei koimaidy* (The dog plays dirty tricks).

13) Deception. *Undemegen it kabar* (Silent dog bites).

14) Distrust. *Itke artkan kos dalada kalady* (If you trust

the dog you will be left with dick in hand).

15) Cowardice. *Korykkan it ush kun uredi* (The frightened dog barks for three days).

16) Old age. *Kartaigan it zhatyp uredi* (An old dog is lying down and barking).

17) Lack of shame. *Kazannan kampak ketse, itten uiat ketedi* (If the lid is removed from the pot, the dog will be ashamed).

18) Weakness. *Kushi zhok it zhugirmes* (A weak dog does not run).

19) Far away. *It olgen zher; it arkasy kiada* (The place where the dog died; the dog's back is far away).

20) Ungrateful. *It bailasa turgysyz* (If the dog is tied up, it is useless).

21) Wasted. *It zhem boldy* (The dog was baited).

22) No Joy. *It zhurek* (Dog's heart).

23) Not very high, rounded ground. *It zon* (not high).

24) Loss of dignity, lose prestige. *It kyldy; it kylyu* (Made a dog; abase oneself).

25) Thick (forest, grove). *It zhynys* (Dense forest).

When analyzing the stable expressions with the “dog” component in Kazakh, we found that the internal form had positive and negative connotations. The presence of a positive color in kazakh language is closely linked with the environment and culture of the Kazakh ethnos. The Kazakhs have long been engaged in animal husbandry. Depending on the time of year, it was necessary to choose the most suitable conditions for keeping livestock. The dog helped a person to graze cattle and protect his house, which can be seen in the following stable expressions: A dog is a prosperity, a dog - human ear, where the dog barks, there is a village. In addition, the dog is a symbol of negative qualities: evil, deceit, arrogance, cowardice, insecurity, laziness, lack of shame. Thus, the internal form of stable expressions with the “dog” component in both languages has universal and national meanings. Undoubtedly, idioethnic differences predominate depending on the living environment of each nation. We noticed it in the above phrases. And the universal character is very rare. A number of stable expressions in English and Kazakh have the same meaning. For example, in the case of laziness: *keep a dog and bark oneself*, that is, do the work of a subordinate. *To put on the dog*. “Show arrogance”. Stable expression “work like a dog” and the proverb “When a dog walks, it finds bones” show that both

the English and Kazakhs associate the flexibility work with a dog and appreciate the dog skills. However, these similarities do not indicate that the dog is a sacred animal and do not associate it with the place of death. It requires further analysis of the issue. The main reason why we put forward archeological, mythological and folklore data was to show the dog as a sacred animal. However, it is difficult to notice from the stable expressions of the two languages that a dog is an animal connected with the afterworld. In Kazakh mythological science this issue was studied by S. Qondybay. He revealed the mythical meaning of the stable expressions with the “dog” component and showed that the cult of the dog existed in the ancient Kazakhs.

3.4. Cultural and Mythological Contexts in Stable Expressions

In Kazakh myths and fairy tales, the connection of the dog with the world of the dead (ancestral land) is not clearly reflected. However in Kazakh language stable expressions have a universal worldview. According to S. Qondybay, “a dog is an afterlife type, the soul of a dead person”. This is evidenced by the following stable expressions: the place where the dog died (far), the dog’s back is far away, dog’s shirt (dress worn on the newborn, the seam facing outwards) (uninhabitable; uncomfortable), The dog was baited (wasted; there was a reserve), the dog’s heart (no interesting joy), tease dog (gift from the husband), “dog does not enter” (part of a yurt bone, felt door, pendulum), etc.

A place where a dog does not live is a place where the modern meaning means “a place that is unfavorable for human existence, climate, nature”, but the mythical meaning of this word is “afterworld where a person cannot live, that is, the world of the dead”. In the same way, the place where the dog died, the back of the dog, means “too far away”, which is also “the world of the dead, the afterworld”^[12]. That is, at the mythical level, the land of the ancestors is a distant world. A sacred place where the dog’s beak does not sink. The meaning of “far away” is related to the concept of a guardian of the underworld.

The mythological basis of *it koylek* (the dog shirt) is as follows: until the baby is forty days old, it was believed that ‘he has not yet been born; he is still living in the afterworld’. When the baby turns forty days old, it is considered that he is truly born. The involvement of the “dog” in this ritual

is significant because: a) the dog is the personification of the unborn human soul; b) the dog is a worldly guardian; c) the dog is the protector of the world. The fact that the shirt a baby wears from birth is called *it koylek* (dog’s shirt) and that the shirt is tied around the dog’s neck is an ethnographic expression of three interconnected concepts. This shared tradition is preserved among the Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Tatar peoples. When the baby reaches forty days, sweets are placed in this shirt, and it is tied around the dog’s neck before being sent away. This ritual is called “dog chasing”. It seems that there is a saying, ‘A dog is a child’s soul’. This ritual symbolized the child’s symbolic rebirth. In this context, the dog serves as the initiator. This is a clear indication that in ancient myths, the role of the dog as the transmitter of the human soul is preserved in Kazakh tradition.

There is a mythological basis in the Kazakh tradition of *itkyrmes* (dog does not enter), *it yryldar* (dog barking), which is similar to this tradition. *Itkyrmes* was called by the Kazakhs as a yurt door, and according to the custom of *it yryldar*, the groom gave gifts to the bride before entering the house where the bride was staying. According to the custom, a dog was barking behind the door. In this regard, the guy prepared his own souvenir. This is also related to the initiation ritual, which we are talking about. It is not for nothing that this ritual is called *it yryldar* (dog barking). In contrast to the motif of giving a gift to the bride (mythical parable: guard dog) for the groom to cross the threshold, and only then moving to the bride’s room (according to mythology: to the afterworld), it is a repetition of the above mythologems (consider the role of the dog as a transmitter).

In Kazakh language *it zhandy* (dog soul), *it zhandy* dog soul is the concept of “afterlife”. According to Qondybay^[12], “A dog is the personification of the human soul, that is, in ancient Kazakh there was a concept that the soul of a dead person takes the form of a dog”. A similar interpretation exists in the “Avesta” and in Iranian Zoroastrian religion: when a person dies, it seems that his soul is devoured by a dog. “Videvat’s” XIII fargar says: “Killing a dog is killing one’s soul until the ninth generation”. Therefore, the dog should not be killed. One of the inscriptions on the wall of the mausoleum of Ahmet Iasawi contained the words: “the world is the grave and the dogs trampled it”. Similarly, the image of “a dog-Tiger and a human soul shining through it” depicted on the portal of the Shir-Dor madrasa in Samarkand

also means “a predator that devours human souls”^[19].

Staying *it zhemedede kalu* (in the dog’s den) means “to be useless, to waste one’s work”, which further meaning is “not to be buried”. That is, when a person dies, his “soul” is eaten by a dog, non-burial means “the soul of the deceased cannot go to the afterlife because the body is not buried”.

There are negative connotations about dogs in Kazakh language. Dog life, to play dirty tricks etc. In our opinion, the concept of dog life has a negative meaning on the basis of secondary motivation. There is such a phrase (*It is a dog’s life*) in both English and Russian (dog life). It means a suffering life. *It omir* (a dog’s life) is a life of humiliation^[1]. In addition, there are the following phrases in Kazakh language: *it keshuge saldy* (suffered); *it korlygyn korsetti* (suffered, showed difficulty). According to vertical cognition, it means the lower world, that is, because the dog is connected with the lower World, firstly, the concept of the afterlife as a result of primitivism is not only far away, but also the place where a person does not live *it bailasa turyssyz* (even a dog won’t live), second, the concept of the underworld and the concept of an afterlife together mean poverty and misery. Vertically shows the lower level represents poverty, misery. It is symbolized by black color. As an example, we can cite such phrases as *it omir* (dog life), *it bolu* (to be a dog). *It bolu* (to be a dog) means inhuman, humiliated; offended^[1]. At the mythical level, vertical represents the lower side in cognition. It is known that the lower part is associated with subterranean world, which creates a negative association. The meaning of low world can be attributed to the stable expressions used in English language *a dirty dog* (dirty dog – *doreki* (rude)) to describe a person with low morals.

4. Conclusions

The dog is a sacred animal. Many people have a special respect for dogs. The dog’s high status is associated with the mythical *ancestral land*, *the concept of the afterlife*. The fact that the dog was buried together at the funeral shows that it served as a security guard in the afterlife. The dog is a character associated with the underworld. In some nations the concept of the afterlife has a positive meaning, in others it has a negative connotation. Sometimes a change in the worldview of a people, the primitiveness of the mythical concept creates a negative meaning of the sacred object. We have seen this in stable expressions with a dog component.

For example, the land of mythical ancestors is sacred for the Kazakhs^[22]. Because the culture of ghosts has a special place in Kazakh culture. In ancient times, the burial of a dog with a man proves that a dog is an animal with a special status. The dog is the guardian of the afterlife; the protector of the human soul in the afterlife; it is a bearer from one world to another. The concept of a dog is associated with the afterlife, the first motive for the stable expression with the “dog” component also originated in the land of the mythical ancestor. The land of ancestors is a distant sacred place. The expression “*it olgen zher*” (the place where the dog died) means far away is associated with the concept of the *afterlife*, *subterranean world* means a low level of vertical cognition. In the process of primitiveness, there were negative connotations: the dog’s life, and so on. Comparing the phraseological systems of the two distant languages (Kazakh and English), we can say confidently that the universal concept is more preserved in Kazakh phrases than in English. It is known that stable expressions reflect idioethnic features. In English and Kazakh, the word dog is used to describe the situation around them. However, the universal meaning of the sacred “object” is more reflected in the phraseology of Kazakh language.

This research reveals the potential of the mytholinguistic approach for exploring cultural and linguistic phenomena. It may be valuable for:

- further investigation of the role of sacred zoononyms in the mythology and linguistic traditions of other peoples;
- studying universal and ethnically unique features of sacred images in comparative mythology;
- analyzing the influence of ancient mythological images on contemporary linguistic practices.

Future studies could expand the comparative analysis to include stable expressions from other languages, providing deeper insights into how mythology shapes the worldview and cultural memory of different peoples.

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These ideas are supported by the mythical narratives found in the “Encyclopedia of Myths of the Peoples of the World” (Tokarev, 1988). This encyclopedia contains mythological plots from various cultures and provides detailed information on gods, spirits, demons, epic figures, as well as basic mythological motifs and images. Some articles in the encyclopedia explore scientific theories of mythology, the role of myth in the history of culture, and the manifestation of mythological images in literature and art.

For instance, myths about the dog are often associated with the themes of guardianship, protection, and the guide to the afterlife, reflecting the role of the dog as an intermediary between the living and the dead, symbolizing transition and protection. The myths of the dog included in this collection are closely linked with the concept of the subterranean world and the afterlife. Findings from Kazakhstani archaeologists also confirm that the dog was regarded as a mythological guardian of the afterlife. Archaeological evidence, such as depictions and artifacts, illustrates how in different cultures, the dog was associated with posthumous existence and served as a protector in the afterlife.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors stated that there are no conflicts of interest.

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