

EDN: KEIFNP
УДК 81'246.2

The Role and Importance of Zoomorphisms in the Education and Development of Bilingual Children Ethnocultural Self-Awareness

Zhansaya Sh. Aden*, Akbop N. Akhmet,
Nursulu Zh. Shaimerdenova and Sandugash K. Sansyzbayeva

*Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan*

Received 20.12.2024, received in revised form 16.01.2025, accepted 27.01.2025

Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of zoomorphisms at different stages of ethno-cultural self-awareness in bilingual children. The zoomorphism dog is presented as culturally significant and the most frequent in textbooks of Russian language and in the everyday communication of schoolchildren.

The objectives are analysis of the cultural symbolism of the dog in different linguistic traditions (Kazakh and Russian); determination of the peculiarities of the perception of zoomorphism by bilingual language groups. In the context of bilingual education, it becomes necessary to take into account the cultural characteristics of the Kazakh and Russian languages, including the peculiarities of the perception of the zoomorphism dog, which may differ significantly in different cultures. The correct understanding of texts with the image of a dog in multi-system languages, the use and interpretation of the animal's name being a part of paremiological and phraseological constructions contribute to effective intercultural communication, the development of linguistic and cultural competences of bilingual students. Taking into account the approach of cognitive anthropology, the analysis of such texts deepens the understanding of cultural values, mental patterns and worldviews of different peoples, which, in turn, increases the level of intercultural competence and enhances successful interaction.

Keywords: zoomorphism, bilingual personality, ethno-cultural significance, dog, intercultural communication, language learning, language acquisition, mythology, linguistic anthropology, cognitive anthropology.

This research has been funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Grant № AP23486380 “Turkic languages of Kazakhstan in the conditions of spiritual modernisation of society: from graphics to epic text”).

© Siberian Federal University. All rights reserved

* Corresponding author E-mail address: iserv.iserv@mail.ru

ORCID: 0000-0003-0289-6288 (Aden); 0000-0001-6403-657X (Akhmet); 0000-0002-2830-8336 (Shaimerdenova); 0000-0003-3741-2589 (Sansyzbayeva)

Research area: Theory and History of Culture, Art (Cultural Studies). Bilingual Education. Linguistics.

Citation: Aden, Zh. Sh., Akhmet, A. N., Shaimerdenova N. Zh., Sansyzbayeva S. K. The Role and Importance of Zoomorphisms in the Education and Development of Bilingual Children Ethnocultural Self-Awareness. In: *J. Sib. Fed. Univ. Humanit. soc. sci.*, 2025, 18(2), 356–366. EDN: KEIFNP



Роль и значение зооморфизмов в обучении и развитии этнокультурного самосознания у билингвальных детей

**Ж.Ш. Аден, А.Н. Ахмет,
Н.Ж. Шаймерденова, С.К. Сансызбаева**

*Казахский национальный университет имени аль-Фараби
Республика Казахстан, Алматы*

Аннотация. Статья посвящена исследованию зооморфизмов на этапах формирования этнокультурного самосознания у билингвальных детей. В качестве объекта анализа рассматривается зооморфизм *собака*, который выступает культурно значимым и наиболее частотным как в учебниках русского языка и литературы, так и в повседневном общении школьников.

Задачи исследования включают: анализ культурной символики собаки в различных языковых традициях (казахской и русской) и выявление особенностей восприятия данного зооморфизма билингвальными языковыми группами. В условиях двуязычной среды Казахстана возникает необходимость учитывать культурные особенности казахского и русского языков, включая специфическое восприятие образа собаки, которое имеет существенные отличия.

Правильное понимание текстов с образом собаки в разносистемных языках, использование и интерпретация этого животного в составе паремиологических и фразеологических конструкций способствуют не только эффективной межкультурной коммуникации, но и развитию языковых, культурных и страноведческих компетенций учащихся-билингвов. С учетом подхода когнитивной антропологии анализ таких текстов позволяет углубить понимание культурных ценностей, ментальных моделей и мировоззренческих особенностей разных народов, что, в свою очередь, повышает уровень межкультурной компетентности и способствует успешному взаимодействию в мире.

Ключевые слова: зооморфизм, билингвальная личность, этнокультурная значимость, собака, межкультурная коммуникация, языковое обучение, усвоение языка, приобретение языка, мифология, лингвистическая антропология, когнитивная антропология.

Статья подготовлена при поддержке Министерства науки и высшего образования Республики Казахстан в рамках научного проекта [ИРН AP23486380] «Тюркские языки Казахстана в условиях духовной модернизации общества: от графики к эпическому

тексту» (по Программе грантового финансирования научных и научно-технических проектов на 2024–2026 годы).

Научная специальность: 5.10.1. Теория и история культуры, искусства. 5.6.4. Этнология, антропология и этнография. 5.8.7. Методология и технология профессионального образования.

Цитирование: Аден Ж. Ш., Ахмет А. Н., Шаймерденова Н. Ж., Сансызбаева С. К. Роль и значение зооморфизмов в обучении и развитии этнокультурного самосознания у билингвальных детей. *Журн. Сиб. федер. ун-та. Гуманитарные науки*, 2025, 18(2), 356–366. EDN: KEIFNP

Introduction

Current research shows that bilingual children face significant cultural and cognitive challenges as they learn two language systems and conventionally two cultural paradigms. Developing ethno-cultural awareness in these children is important to maintain their connection to their cultural identity, as well as to develop their ability to recognise and accept cultural diversity. Zoomorphisms or animal images play a relevant role in this process, being a common cultural element in folklore, mythology and literature. With the help of zoomorphisms these systems convey national character traits, cultural values and worldviews.

Zoomorphism, as one of the central elements of cultural codes, plays a major role in the formation of worldview and linguistic perception of the world. In different cultures, animal images not only reflect human relations with nature, but also become ethno-cultural symbols used in communication, training and education.

The name of the animal *dog* has become a constituent of a large number of phraseological expressions, proverbs, sayings, fairy tales, riddles, legends and is firmly embedded in the language. The metaphorical meaning of the zoomorphism *dog* has been described in the works of various researchers such as B. A. Uspensky, N. D. Arutyunova, A. E. Beldiyan, Z. V. Belkina, K. M. Gyulumyants, O. N. Trubachev, S. B. Bektemirova, F. R. Akhmetzhanova and others.

The aim of this article is to investigate the ethno-cultural significance of the zoomorphism *dog* in teaching a bilingual person, who in the process of learning his/her native

and second language acquires new knowledge, which is essential in the conditions of intercultural communication.

The objectives of the article are to describe the role of the dog image in the cultural traditions of Kazakh and Russian peoples when teaching Russian to bilingual Kazakhs. At the same time, it is important to find effective ways of teaching Russian as a second language taking into account ethno-cultural peculiarities of Kazakhs.

The study is based on the analysis of literary sources, the use of cultural and comparative methods, as well as on the observation of learning indicators of schoolchildren learning Russian in a bilingual environment.

Ethno-cultural aspects of the language play a key role in the formation of linguistic personality, while the zoomorphism *dog* as an expressive means embodies a wide range of meanings and symbols: from loyalty and devotion to aggression and defence.

Discussion and results

Most cultural zoomorphisms lack substantial symbolic meanings, but they reflect values, worldviews and norms of behaviour. For example, the fox in Russian folk tales often represents cunning and wiliness, while the wolf symbolises strength and courage. In Asian cultures, the dragon and the tiger represent the power of nature and might, as well as traditional ethical notions of good and evil. Bilingual children, when confronted with such images, begin to perceive the world through the prism of symbols associated with the culture.

The use of zoomorphisms in the learning process of bilingual children allows them to in-

ternalise cultural codes and develop a two-way understanding of culture. Thus, zoomorphisms help bilinguals perceive and understand cultural values while creating their own emotional connections to elements of national identity. The animal Russian and Kazakh images recommended for consideration stimulate comparison and comprehension of the linguistic and cultural environment. For example, the wolf in Slavic cultures can be perceived as a dangerous but fair animal, whereas in Western culture, it often denotes cruelty. At the same time, in Kazakh culture, the wolf symbolises valour and honour, strength and ancestral spirit.

Through figurative and emotionally rich zoomorphisms, children are introduced to ethnic identity and gradually begin to associate themselves with the culture of their own people, and in doing so they are enriched with ideas about the symbols and traditions of the Russian and Kazakh peoples. Zoomorphisms help children to realise their cultural identity and influence their perception of the world in the context of bilingual education (Staszak, 2020).

Bilingual education is a process aimed not only at mastering two languages, but also at integrating cultural elements of two societies. Their inclusion in the educational process opens up opportunities for deeper immersion in the cultural traditions of the contacting nations.

Zoomorphisms stimulate not only language development, but also emotional perception of cultural outcomes and activate cognitive processes. Children more easily perceive images based on familiar symbols and having vivid emotional references, which make such images especially useful in teaching bilinguals. The development of empathy and emotional intelligence is evident in the fact that children exposed to cultural symbols often begin to associate themselves with them, which fosters the variable emotional perception of different cultural paradigms. For teaching bilinguals it is important and necessary to emphasise the development of associative thinking, which occurs through the comparative study of cultural images of animals, when children are able to recognise similarities and differences in the perception of the same symbols in different cultures, resulting in flexibility of thinking.

The use of fairy tales with zoomorphic characters to convey cultural norms and behavioural patterns characteristic of the two language communities is one of the important game techniques in teaching bilingual children. Let us turn to the ethno-cultural symbolism of the dog. The analysed material shows that in cultural and linguistic tradition the zoomorphism *dog* varies according to ethnicity and geographical area. In Western cultures, the dog is often associated with loyalty, protection and devotion. In the mythology of the ancient Egyptians, the dog is *Anubis*, the god of the dead who guards the passage to the afterlife. In the culture of nomadic peoples, for example in Kazakh beliefs, *the dog* is one of the seven fortunes, symbolising wealth, abundance and happiness.

Thus, the symbolism of the dog can vary significantly across cultures, and this diversity becomes an important aspect in the study of languages and cultures. For bilingual individuals who are at the intersection of two or more language systems, animal images such as the *dog* can become a bridge for understanding and interpreting different cultural codes. For instance, bilingual learners in schools are confronted with different interpretations of the *dog* image, which sometimes leads to cognitive dissonance and complicates intercultural communication.

It should be noted that *the dog* metaphor in the languages under consideration carries both negative and positive connotations. For example, in Russian, although the dog can carry negative connotations (e.g. the expressions “dog’s life” or “a dog barks, the wind carries it”), it also has strong positive associations associated with loyalty and devotion, e.g. the phrases “a dog is man’s best friend” or “faithful as a dog” reflect positive traits. However, the connotations “evil”, “rude”, “grumpy”, “predatory”, “despicable”, etc. are widespread as well. There are so-called “dog” metaphors, reflecting similarities in the behaviour of a human and a dog, for example, in Russian these are *to dog* (meaning “to quarrel”), *to snap*, *to growl*, *to whine*, etc.; in Kazakh – *arpyldau*, *ulu*, *talasu*, *zharalu*.

Consequently, a dog, in the view of the Russian and Kazakh peoples, is a mean, dirty,

rude, evil, predatory, unfit, despicable, vile person. *To pester someone like a dog* means “to harass, bother with questions, reproaches, moralising”; *to live like a dog* – “in extreme poverty, deprivation, loneliness, persecution and persecution”; *to bark like a dog* – “to talk rudely, swear”; *to bite like dogs* – “to quarrel, fight”; *to look at someone like a dog* – “with insulting contempt and arrogance”, etc.

In the Kazakh language there is a number of phraseological expressions, proverbs, sayings, where the lexeme *dog* conveys negative connotation, for example: *auzyna ak it kirip, qara it shykty* in the sense of “to swear with obscene words”; *it aytaktau* in the sense of “set someone to quarrelling”; *it bolu* – “to lose all positive qualities, traits”, literally it means “to turn into a dog”; *yt zhandy* means “tenacious”; *yt zhyny ustady* is used in the sense of “got angry”; *yike syyek karyzdar* means “beggar”, literally “owes a dog a bone”; *itten de kop* in the sense of “a lot”, similar to the Russian phraseological phrase “like a lot of dogs, more than enough”; *it minez* is used in the sense of “bad, irascible, irreconcilable character”; *itten zharalgan, ittin balasy* means “dog’s son”, and others; *itshe kyrkysu* means “to enmity, to harm each other”; *kabaghan itshe kabu/kutyrgan itshe kabu* (lit.: like a rabid dog) – “to behave maliciously, cruelly towards someone” (Sansyzbaeva, 2000).

The use of the lexeme *dog* as part of phraseological expressions and proverbial expressions has a close connection with the cultural traditions of the Russian and Kazakh peoples, their history. According to O.N. Trubachev: “the dog is the most ancient first domestic animal almost everywhere”. However, it “came close to man as a parasite, eating rubbish near human camps” (Trubachev, 1960). Despite this, many Indo-European peoples treated it as an animal with divine power and therefore gave it all kinds of honours. Hence, ethnographer E. A. Kreinovich, describing the role of the first domesticated animal in the life of the Gilyaks, notes that “the dog is the guardian of the Gilyaks not so much from visible as from invisible enemies. It guards the house, children, teeth, the soul of a dead person, the entrance to the afterlife from evil spirits” (Kreinovich, 1930).

According to the representations of this people, the dog has the ability of thinking, speech, and soul. The image of a dog in Slavic beliefs, according to V. A. Maslova, “is found in myths in connection with the motifs of the earth and the afterlife, because it accompanies the souls of the dead to the lower world, besides, it is a watchman at the gates of hell” (Maslova, 1997). The role of the dog in human life has determined people’s attitude to it. For example, a long-standing trade of the Russian people was hunting, in which a dog played an essential role. People in villages kept a dog hungry so that it would be meaner and hunt better, hence the associations that were preserved in the language: *hungry like a dog, angry like a dog*, etc.

Thereby in the Russian language, on the one hand, the dog is associated with a good course, which is reflected in the language: *dog devotion, dog loyalty, dog affection, dog obedience* (about a loyal, devoted person); *to eat a dog* (about an experienced person); *dog’s sniff* (about a keen sense); *dog’s eyes* (expressing loyalty, obedience); *to follow someone like a dog* (to follow everywhere by virtue of loyalty and affection), etc.

In the Kazakh language zoomorphism *it* has a positive connotation in proverbs: *it – yrys* (a dog is happiness); *auylga zhakyndaganda it ozady* (approaching an aul (a village), a dog overtakes a traveller); *zhaksy it olimti-gin korsetpeidi* (a good dog does not show its corpse); *it te iesine tartady, it te iesin korgaidy* (a dog is like its master; a dog protects); *it – jeti kazyynanyn biri* (a dog is one of the seven treasures).

It should be remarked that the *dog* in the languages under study is a symbol of various, sometimes contradictory characteristics. Negative characteristics include such qualities as greediness, voracity, stupidity, ingratitude, imposition, impudence, inconsiderateness, cowardice, etc. Positive characteristics include loyalty, devotion, defence, protection, security, dexterity, and skilfulness. For bilingual pupils, the perception of these symbols may differ depending on their cultural environment and linguistic background. All these connotations form in pupils the corresponding associations that arise when they encounter phraseological

expressions, proverbs and sayings, images of the *dog* presented in literature and in communication with native speakers. This can cause cognitive dissonance, making it difficult to build a unified ethno-cultural identity and complicating intercultural interaction of bilinguals in the school environment.

In this manner the zoomorphism *dog* in the languages under study includes both positive and negative connotative signs, reflecting the influence of this animal on the characteristics of personality, behaviour, appearance and living conditions of a person; all these facts should be taken into account when teaching the Russian language and literature to the Kazakh bilinguals.

It follows from the above that the zoomorphisms *dog/it* belong to the most widespread zoomorphisms characterising humans in both

Russian and Kazakh languages. This fact is confirmed by the coincidence of the following connotative features in the metaphors in Russian and Kazakh languages: *bad, rude, hungry, tired, lonely, living a difficult, unbearable life* (see Table 1).

As mentioned above, *dog/it* metaphors in Russian and Kazakh languages with negative and positive connotations are particularly vividly reflected in phraseological expressions: *dog loyalty, dog devotion, etc., it iesine tartady, it – yrys, etc.* Professor M.M. Kopylenko describes this phenomenon and, referring to other languages, points out that “one of the strongest insults in the Arabic world is “dog!” (Kopylenko, 1990).

Not only is language acquisition important for bilinguals, but also awareness of cultural differences in the use of zoomorphisms. When teaching bilingual learners, such nuances must

Table 1. Connotative attributes of zoomorphisms *dog/it* in Russian and Kazakh languages

Negative attributes		Positive attributes	
Russian	Kazakh	Russian	Kazakh
Person's character			
vicious predatory bad grumpy rude annoying cruel heavy	hostile dumb rude insolent bad ignoramus hateful beggar unreliable sycophant coward resentful secretive	loyal faithful obedient skilled skilful proficient in some business keen	inoffensive addressing of peers to each other or to younger people
Physical condition of the person			
hungry frozen tired battered oppressed	tired hungry	----	----
Human living conditions			
poor lonely neglected outcast buried hastily hard, unbearable life	hardscrabble difficult life lonely buried without proper rites and rituals	-----	-----

be taken into consideration to help them develop a deeper understanding of language through cultural symbols. In the process of learning Russian, bilinguals need to understand the cultural contexts of zoomorphisms, which can be achieved through the integration of national characteristics into teaching materials. Learning different cultural contexts with children absorbing the meanings of animals and their symbolism contributes to the formation of a flexible ethnic and cultural identity (Zhang, 2021).

Russian language textbooks for Kazakhstani schoolchildren contain various works which have the image of a *dog*. Among them are “The Myth of Actaeon. Dogs of Actaeon”, “Mumu” by I. S. Turgenev, “White Bim, Black Ear” by G. N. Troepolsky, “Bread for a Dog” by V. F. Tendryakov, “Arstan, I and a Cello” by M. Kabanbaev.

During the lessons in the 7th grade, we worked on revealing the image of the dog Arstan in the story “Arstan, I and the Cello” by M. Kabanbaev. The characterisation of the dog begins with the words of the author “People, trees, houses can be found in all cities, but not every house, street, not every city can have Arstan!” In analysing the text, middle grade students answered a number of hard and easy questions, including “Why was the puppy named Arstan?”, “What qualities of a lion did the dog’s owners want to see in it by giving it such a nickname?”, “How does the main character feel about the dog?”, “What do you know about Arstan’s appearance and character?”, “How did the puppy behave when listening to music?”, “What does the expression ‘a dog is a friend of a man’ mean?”, “Do you have a dog? What can you tell about it?” Then they wrote out the descriptions of the animal’s appearance and character given in the story: “a black huge shaggy dog”, “very humble”, “it thinks that all living creatures, except cats, are relatives, friends-buddies”, “the dog is ready to tear off its tail for me”, “it starts to spin joyfully on the spot, rushing to my chest”, “it yelped and started jumping on the spot on all four paws to the rhythm of the melody”, “I appreciate Arstan’s devotion”, “Arstan is surprisingly understandable”, etc. Schoolchildren appreciated the image of the dog as a true and loyal friend of

Asan, which tried to “make amends” for growling at the portrait drawn by the boy, dispersing sparrows and chasing another man’s calf out of the yard. The conclusion was made that in the view of both Kazakhs and Russians, the dog has not only negative connotations associated with anger, ferocity, onslaught, but also deeply positive ones: courage, sensitivity, loyalty, emotionality, wit. At the end of the analysis, pupils wrote an essay on the theme “The significance of the dog in the national culture”.

1. Word-formation possibilities of zoomorphism *dog*

The material we extracted from various dictionaries testifies to the diversity of prefixal-suffixal zoomorphic formations, as well as to the appearance of new zoomorphic verbs. Thus, in the word-formation dictionary of A. N. Tihonov the following verbs are found based on the stem “sobaka”: *prisobachivat’sia* (to become attached), *nasobachit’sia* (to become adept at smth), *sobachit’* (to call someone names), *sobachit’sia* (to quarrel) (Tihonov, 1985), N. A. Yanko-Trinitetskaya noted a rare zoo-verb *obessobachit’sia* (to get rid of) (Yanko-Trinitetskaya, 2001).

Kazakh zoomorphic verbs derived from the word *it* are represented by a number of derivatives. Based on the representations of Kazakhs, as mentioned in the previous section, the *dog* metaphors have mainly negative connotative meanings, which is undoubtedly reflected in the semantics of derived zoomorphic verbs. In lexicographic sources, verbs derived from the zoomorphism *it* are recorded in the following meanings: *ittenu* means “to become extremely unscrupulous, to earn distrust and disrespect”; *ittesu* is used in the meaning “to enmity”; the zoo-verb *itshileu* appears in the meaning “to experience difficulties, hardship”; close to it is the zoomorphic verb *ityryktau* in meaning “to be tired to the point of exhaustion”; *ittekteu* means “to walk with an ugly gait”; the verbs *itinu*, *itarshylanu* have the meaning “to beg, to pester, to sycophantise”.

Transformation, as is known, is one of the ways in which secondary linguistic structures arise as a result of changes in nuclear structures. Transformation in analysing zoomorphic verbs can also be considered as a method of

transforming a primary model into a secondary one, cf. *dog barks* – *man ‘barks’* – *man dogs* in Russian; in Kazakh: *it salpaqtaidy* – *adam salpaqtaidy* – *itshe salpaqtau* – *itshileu*.

The universal transformation model, on the basis of which zoomorphisms and zoomorphic verbs are formed, is as follows (Fig. 1).

Some zoomorphisms, from which zoo-verbs are formed, can also combine positive and negative connotative attributes, which manifest themselves in a kind of opposition in emotional evaluation, cf.: *nasobachit’sia* “to learn to do smth deftly, to gain experience in smth” has a positive evaluativity, *prisobachit’* “to do in a bad way, unscrupulously, to fix, to attach in an unreliable way” is used in a negative form and *rassobachit’sia* “to come on the loose” also expresses a negative evaluativity. Another example: Kazakh zoo-verbs, derived from the name of the animal *it*, also abound with contradictory connotative features: cf.: *ittenu* – “to earn disrespect, distrust by one’s behaviour” is negatively evaluative; also, the zoo-verb *ittesu* – “to live in enmity, quarrel” has negative evaluative connotation. However, the verbs *ityryktau* and *itshileu* are used with a neutral emotional colouring, if not in a positive evaluative sense, as the zoo-verb *ityryktau* means “to be tired to exhaustion”, *itshileu* means “to experience hardship and deprivation”, the use of the latter also contains an element of pity.

2. Mythological and religious motifs of meanings of zoomorphism *dog*

The origin of many metaphors with the component *dog*, related to the culture of peoples also have certain religious motifs. For example, the bilingual environment should make allowance for the role of the *dog* in Islam, because the *dog*, according to theologians, influences the ritual purity of a Muslim. Based on spiritual rules, Muslims do not keep dogs at home, except for service or hunting dogs. This explains the fact that most Kazakhs do not understand the culture of dog care in urban living conditions. At the same time, mercy, which is at the heart of any religion, is represented in Islam through stories of people whose sins were forgiven because of their humane treatment of animals, particularly the *dog*.

When teaching children Russian, it is necessary to explain to schoolchildren also the religious motifs associated with the image of the *dog*. It should be mentioned that in Islam it is allowed to have a *dog* for the purpose of guarding, hunting, farming, using animals to serve blind people as guides. And it is necessary to make a reservation that the living space of a human and a dog should not overlap, this is the peculiarity in the culture and religious ideas of bilingual Kazakhs studying Russian language and literature.

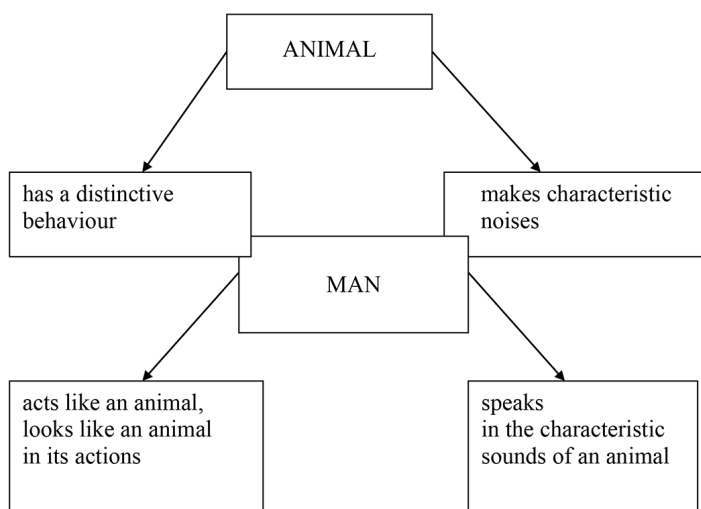


Fig. 1. Transformational model of zoomorphic verbs

3. Zoomorphism *dog* in bilingual learning
Zoomorphic metaphors related to the dog are often found in both language systems of bilinguals. For example, there are phraseological expressions referring to dogs in both Kazakh (“syekke talaskan ittei”, “itshe zhagynu”) and Russian (“dog’s life”, “work like a dog”). These expressions, while similar in external form, may have different cultural connotations, which requires careful study for successful bilingual acquisition.

We have carried out the work on revealing the symbolic image of zoomorphism *dog* in the representation of modern bilingual schoolchildren. Schoolchildren studying in 7–9 grades of Kazakh and Russian-language schools were asked to answer the questions of the questionnaire, which were related to the meaning of the *dog* in their native and studied cultures: the connection of characteristics with national and cultural traditions; students’ perceptions of myths, art works, fairy tales and the role of *dogs* in them; the symbolism of the *dog* in cultural, religious traditions; emotional connection with animals and many others.

When asked about the role of the *dog* in people’s lives, most respondents said that the *dog* has always been perceived as a faithful animal, a friend, a helper in everyday life and hunting, used to protect livestock and homes.

Among the most common character traits of a *dog*, the students emphasised bravery and loyalty. It can also symbolise wisdom and intuition. Many drew attention to the special role of the dog in the life of ancient nomadic Kazakhs, with its protective and guarding functions. In this regard, schoolchildren demonstrated knowledge of a special hunting dog breed – *tazy*, which is associated with hunting, calm temperament and loyalty, valued for its speed, endurance and ability to track game. The breed of dog *töbet*, used since ancient times as guards of livestock and faithful assistants of the shepherd, was also singled out, and all schoolchildren, irrespective of their nationality, knew this information, while for bilinguals these facts about dog breeds were meaningful and more understandable than those of such breeds as *bulldog*, *dachshund*, and *toy terrier*, which only in recent years have arrived with the re-

locatees and have become part of modern Kazakh culture.

The survey showed how in a bilingual environment there happens a dialogue of cultures, expansion of country studies knowledge and understanding of the essence of phraseological phrases, which are not peculiar to the native culture, but are important in teaching second and third languages. Schoolchildren in the questionnaire also pointed out that in Kazakh myths, for example, “Kumai-Tazy”, “Altynshash” and fairy tales “It pen kaskyr”, “How a man-made friend with a cat and a dog” *dogs* are often portrayed as faithful companions of heroes, intelligent and loyal creatures, and admitted the changes in the attitude to animals in the process of their education and in general in the modern world. The questionnaire survey also showed that the perception of the image of the *dog* varies depending on the composition of student groups. There are children with varying levels of proficiency in Kazakh and Russian, which they start learning in Grade 1, and in 2022 English was included in the educational process as a third language of instruction. There are also Kazakh repatriates (under the programme for the return of compatriots to their historical homeland) in the classes, for whom the image of the *dog* differs depending on the place of settlement (Mongolia, China, Russia).

The questionnaires of schoolchildren demonstrated that while in the past *dogs* were perceived as working animals, now they have become full-fledged family members living in homes and bringing joy to their owners. For example, in the questionnaires it was written that in Russian folk tales a *dog* often helps the hero, symbolising loyalty and ingenuity. It was observed that hunting scenes with *tazy* dogs are depicted in traditional paintings and sculptures and *dogs* play an important role in hunting events such as *tazy* competitions, which continue in modern Kazakhstan. At the same time, through literary sources, pupils learn about traditional hunting with dogs, especially greyhounds, which was popular in Russia in the past. And, turning to the realities of modern society, they give examples of cynological exhibitions and competitions.

Concerning the emotional connection between animals and people, pupils noted that an animal causes joy and peace, modern society is alarmed about the social problems of stray dogs, their capture and keeping in shelters. Bilingual pupils cited proverbs and phraseological expressions both in Russian and Kazakh languages, for example, “a dog in the manger”, “it yredi, keruen koshedi” (“a dog barks, a caravan goes”).

The study of zoomorphisms in the bilingual context helps learners to develop skills in critical thinking about cultural differences. Teaching bilingual programmes with a focus on ethno-cultural images of animals such as the dog allows learners to integrate their knowledge of different cultures into a common linguistic worldview. Zoomorphism can be particularly useful in early language learning when children are beginning to internalise cultural symbols and associations. For example, stories about *dogs* in children’s literature and folktales can serve as an important tool for introducing cultural features through the prism of animal symbols.

Conclusion

Zoomorphisms play a crucial role in the process of formation of ethno-cultural identity in bilingual children. Through animal images, bilingual students gain access to the values, norms and worldviews of two cultures, which contributes to the formation of ethnic identity. Zoomorphisms not only enrich cognitive development but also create a cultural representation. They focus the attention of bilingual learners on explaining the mental sides of the native and learner cultures, which is important for cognitive anthropology.

As the study has shown, for a bilingual individual, understanding cultural symbols such as the *dog* is of great importance for successful intercultural communication and integration in the natural environment of Kazakh-Russian bilingualism. Practical use of zoomorphism in educational programmes of oral folk art and

children’s literature for bilingual students both in their native language and in second and third languages contributes to the development of their linguistic and cultural competences.

The study of the ethno-cultural significance of *dog* zoomorphisms for teaching bilinguals has shown that the *dog* serves as a link between different cultural systems, influencing the bilingual’s perception of the world. Prospects for further research include the development of additional techniques and exercises that focus on specific aspects of bilinguals’ perception of zoomorphisms in different languages. To integrate ethno-cultural knowledge about zoomorphisms into educational programmes that have been developed using the example of the *dog* requires further development of special teaching materials focusing on cultural differences. This will improve inter-ethnic communication and develop ethno-cultural competence of bilingual learners. In this regard, the issues of creating bilingual dictionaries of zoomorphic metaphors are relevant.

As a result of the study, it was confirmed that the use of zoomorphism as a cultural symbol in teaching bilinguals helps to effectively develop learners’ intercultural competence skills. Knowledge of different interpretations of zoomorphisms ensures a better understanding of national images and teaches children to distinguish national-cultural specificity of Kazakh and Russian languages. The use of zoomorphic images in the educational process not only contributes to the enrichment of the vocabulary, but also forms students’ linguistic competence, develops their ability to intercultural communication. Zoomorphisms, as part of the ethno-cultural worldview, create unique opportunities for in-depth study of languages and cultures, which is especially important in the context of globalisation and the growing need to involve materials, in particular zoomorphisms, in order to form bilingual personalities capable of understanding representatives of different cultures and effectively interacting with them.

References

- Dal V.I. *Interpretive dictionary of the living Great Russian language in 4 vols.* 1985. 576. Dictionary of the Russian language in 4 vols. Moscow, 1981–1984.
- Hadis 8. Hadith 8. Dishes that have been licked by a dog should be washed seven times. *Muslim Spiritual Authority in Russia*. Published 29.04.2014. Available at: <https://www.muslimpress.ru/raznoe/xadis-8-posudu-kotoruyu-oblizala-sobaka-sleduet-pomyt-sem-raz.htm> (accessed 1 October 2024).
- Kopylenko M.M. On the motivation of giving animal names in Turkic languages. In: *Problems of etymology on Turkic languages*, 1990, 395.
- Koran, Sura al'-Maida*, ayat 4. Available at: <https://quran-online.ru/5:4> (accessed 15 September 2024).
- Kreinovich E. A. Gilyak dog breeding and its reflection in religious ideology. In: *Ethnography*, 1930, 4, 21–25. DOI: <http://kronk.spb.ru/library/etnogr.htm>
- Maslova V. A. *Introduction to linguistic and culture studies*. Moscow, Nasledie, 1997, 205.
- Mohammad's hadiths translation*. Available at: <https://hadeethenc.com/ru/browse/hadith/8950> (accessed 15 September 2024).
- Sahih al-Bukhari. *Mohammed's hadiths*, 59:17, 3320. Available at: <https://isnad.link/book/sahih-al-buhari/59-kniga-nachala-tvoreniya-hadisy-3190-3325/17-glava-esli-muha-upadyot-v-pityo-kogo-nibud-iz-vas-pust-on-snachala-pogruzit-eyo-v-eto-pityo-polnostyu-a-potom-vytashit-eyo-ottuda-ibo-poistine-na-odnom-eyo-kryle-bolezn-a-na-drugom-iscelenie> (accessed 8 October 2024).
- Sansyzbaeva S. K. The linguistic and cultural concept of “dog” in the linguistic worldview. In: *Bulletin of KazNU*, 2015, 153(1), 184–189. DOI: <https://philart.kaznu.kz/index.php/1-FIL/article/view/1546/1482>
- Staszak J. Zoosemiotics and Bilingual Education: Cultural Symbols and Cognitive Models in Multilingual Contexts. In: *Journal of Anthropological Linguistics*, 2020, 42(3), 124–146.
- Tikhonov, A. N. *Educational dictionary of Russian language in 2 vols*, 1985. 1744.
- Trubachev O. N. *The origin of pet names in Slavic languages (etymological research)*. Moscow, USSR Academy of Science, 1960, 104.
- Uspensky B. Mythological aspect of Russian expressive phraseology. In: *Language and culture*, 1996, 103–119
- What animals can be kept at home? *Muslim Spiritual Authority in Kazakhstan*. Available at: <https://www.muftyat.kz/ru/articles/islam-and-society/2014-02-25/21500-kakih-zhivotnyih-mozhno-derzhat-doma/> (accessed 1 October 2024).
- Yanko-Trinititskaya N. A. *Word Formation in Modern Russian Language*. Moscow, Indrik, 2001, 503.
- Zhang X., Miller P. Animal Metaphors in Bilingual Education: Bridging Linguistic and Cultural Borders. In: *International Journal of Bilingualism and Education*, 2021, 34(4), 210–229.