

Exploring the Functional and Semantic Features of Locative Set Phrases in Kazakh and Kyrgyz Languages

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Abstract

Locativity, a key concept in linguistics, refers to the expression of spatial relations. Phraseologisms with locative meaning are important linguistic units that reflect cultural and cognitive models of spatial perception. The purpose of this study is to conduct a functional-semantic analysis and comparison of locative phraseological units in Kazakh and Kyrgyz, thereby addressing the lack of comparative research in this area. The dataset consists of 30 locative phraseologisms compiled from phraseological dictionaries and literary works in both languages. In examining these, functional analysis, semantic description, and comparative-historical methods were applied to clarify their meanings, illustrate usage, and identify cross-linguistic similarities and differences. The systematic analysis shows that Kazakh and Kyrgyz share many locative phraseologisms due to common linguistic, historical, and cultural roots, while their differences reveal distinct national worldviews. These findings demonstrate how spatial expression is shaped by cultural experience and contribute to understanding the interplay between language, cognition, and culture. The study not only advances theoretical discussions in functional linguistics and phraseology but also provides practical insights for comparative linguistics and intercultural studies.

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Keywords: Locativity, Idioms (Phraseologisms), Functional Semantics, Kazakh Language, Kyrgyz Language.

Introduction

Since the mid-20th century till recent times, interest in the functional approach to linguistic research has grown considerably (Abramov & Abramova, 2017; Butler, 2008; Chetverikova et al., 2021; Dalrymple, 1999; Foolen, 2011; Halvorsen, 1983). Within functional-semantic research, linguistic units at different levels that share meaning and function are grouped and subjected to comprehensive analysis. Functional methodology thus aims to examine the meanings of linguistic units through conceptual-semantic categories. Functional analysis applies both the onomasiological approach (from meaning to form, from function to linguistic means)

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and the semasiological approach (from form to meaning, from linguistic means to function), with the former often playing a dominant role. The onomasiological approach enables researchers to determine the semantic potential of linguistic units by considering the interrelations of lexical, morphological, derivational, and syntactic systems (Blumczynski, 2023; Ouattara, 2022). One of the key objectives of the functional method is to identify the functions of linguistic units and their use in communicative acts.

Thus, functional linguistics primarily investigates the semantics of linguistic units, while also emphasizing the role of language as a means of communication. The study of meaning within this framework is grounded in extra-linguistic factors, concepts, and conceptual categories. In functional linguistics, such categories are conventionally denoted using Latin terms—for example, temporal (time), locative (space), causative (cause), qualificative (quality), and quantitative (quantity). These Latin terms serve as labels for semantic units, while in linguistic usage, conceptual categories are referred to as semantic categories.

One of the central notions in this field is the functional-semantic field (FSF). Bondarko (2011), a founder of the Russian school of functional grammar, was the first to introduce this term, define its structure, and systematically investigate it. According to Tayebianpour and Valipour (2019), a functional-semantic field is a bilateral, content-formal unit formed through the interaction of grammatical means (morphological and syntactic) with lexical, lexico-grammatical, and derivational elements belonging to a particular semantic group. The FSF thus provides a methodological framework for conducting semantic analysis.

A functional-semantic field typically consists of a core and a periphery. Bondarko (2011) argued that within any field, components are hierarchically unequal, making it necessary to distinguish between core and peripheral elements. The core comprises linguistic units that convey meaning directly and unambiguously, whereas the periphery includes units whose meanings are less distinct or more context dependent.

This article examines locative idiomatic expressions in Turkic languages, focusing in particular on Kazakh and Kyrgyz. To do so, it is first necessary to clarify the concept of locativity. Bondarko (2011) defined locativity as follows: “Locativity, as a category of thought, represents the linguistic interpretation of space and, as a functional-semantic field, encompasses various linguistic units that convey spatial relations.” In linguistics, locativity is expressed through grammatical, morphological, lexical, and syntactic units (Gao & Myrzaliyeva, 2023). In our study of the functional-semantic field of locativity in Kazakh and Kyrgyz, we found that the field’s core is monocentric and heterogeneous, comprising both morphological and lexical units. The morphological core includes case categories, auxiliary nouns, adverbs, pronouns, and verbs. The lexical component consists of lexemes from diverse thematic groups, including geographical terms, toponyms, religious-spatial vocabulary, and traditional measurement terms denoting space (Hasanova, 2025).

The periphery of the functional-semantic field in these languages is represented by phrases, idiomatic expressions, and full sentences. Figure 1 illustrates this structure:

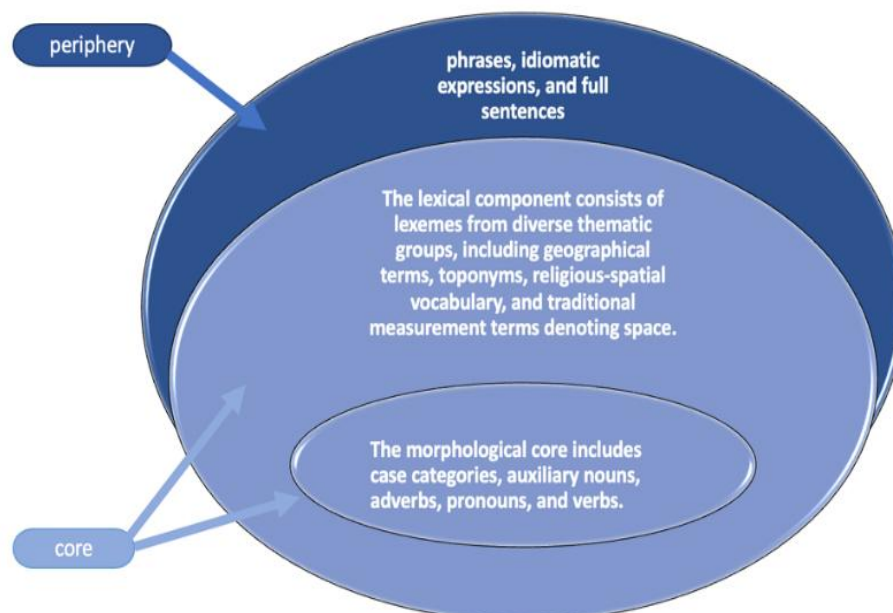


Figure 1: The functional-semantic field of locativity in Kazakh and Kyrgyz.

This article focuses specifically on locative idiomatic expressions situated in the periphery of the FSF. At present, the study of idioms with spatial (locative) meaning is of particular significance in linguistics. Such expressions function not only as artistic devices of language but also as reflections of a nation’s perception of space and cultural worldview.

Research on Kazakh and Kyrgyz from a functional perspective began to take shape only in the late 20th century, which means that functional linguistics is still a relatively new approach in the study of these languages. Until now, spatial meaning has predominantly been studied within a structural approach. Yet, no comparative work has brought together and analyzed locative expressions in Kazakh and Kyrgyz within the framework of functional semantics. Although locativity has been discussed in linguistic research (Gao & Myrzaliyeva, 2023; Jalilbayli, 2025), locative idiomatic expressions in Kazakh and Kyrgyz have not previously been subjected to comparative analysis. This article addresses this gap by examining these expressions from a functional-semantic perspective, thereby identifying their similarities and differences across the two related languages.

The primary aim of this research is to systematically compile fixed expressions denoting locative meanings in Kazakh and Kyrgyz and to conduct a comparative analysis of their semantic features. The study applies semantic and comparative-historical methods of analysis. The findings demonstrate that locative phraseological units in both languages are deeply connected to the national worldview and play a key role in shaping the conceptualization of space.

Literature Review

Since the 1950s, functional linguistics has become one of the most widely studied approaches in the field. Both foreign and domestic scholars have made significant contributions to its development. The earliest ideas can be traced to the works of Von Humboldt (2011), Potebnya (1958), Gabelentz (1883), and I. A. Baudouin de Courtenay. Drawing on the grammar of Chinese, Gabelentz (1883) described language as a movement from form to content and from content to form. Baudouin de Courtenay, in turn, focused on the diversity of linguistic means used to express the category of number in Russian (Rothstein, 1992). Bondarko (2011) later expanded upon his ideas in his six-volume series on theory of Functional Grammar.

In 1976, the Third International Seminar-Symposium on Functional Linguistics led to the founding of the International Society for Functional Linguistics, which coordinated research across countries and schools. Between 1974 and 1978, several functionalist forums were held in the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Greece. Functional approaches also developed within the Prague Linguistic Circle, as well as the French, English, and Dutch schools. The Prague school occupies a particularly prominent place in functional linguistics. Its representatives, V. Matejka, B. Havránek, V. Skalička, B. Trnka, R. Jakobson, and N. S. Trubetzkoy, among others, defined language as a functional system, that is, a system of means for expressing meaning.

In local scholarship, significant contributions have been made by Kazakh researchers. Among them are Z. K. Akhmetzhanova (Salkynbai, 2018), who relied on comparative corpus materials; (Zhambylkyzy & HUSAYNOV, 2017), who studied structural semantic and functional features of phrasal verbs in English and Kazakh languages (2017); (Salkynbai, 2018), who contributed to the understanding of the formation of functional and semantic stability of derivative words of the Kazakh language; (Karagulova & ALI, 2022), discovered new semantic units in the modern Kazakh language system; Mnaidarova, Mnaidarova et al. (2025), who made a historical survey of the anthroponyms in the Kazakh and Turkish languages, studying their structural features.

Contextually, Gao and Myrzaliyeva (2023) studied locatives as the main means of expression in the functional and semantic field of the place in the Russian and Chinese languages in their empirical comparative study based on Russian and Chinese corpora. Several recent dissertations have also addressed locativity in Turkic languages. Notable examples include Nevskaya (2014) who conducted a typological study of locative constructions in the Turkic languages of southern Siberia; Humnick (2009) studied pronouns in Kumyk discourse in a cognitive perspective in University of Minnesota; while I. F. Mirgalimov and several others popularize the doctrine of Locativity in the contemporary Tatar literary circles (Abylova, 2025; Akmatallyev, 2019). All these studies are empirical in nature, analyzing field and corpus data to uncover typological and functional features of locativity in different Turkic languages.

Kazakh scholars have also explored the semantic structure of idiomatic expressions and their role within the linguistic system. Important works include (Kildiroglu & Shakirova, 2023) on phraseological units with a somatic component in the Kazakh and Turkish languages; (Laude-Cirtautas, 1974), on fixed expressions of blessings and curses in Kazakh and in Kyrgyz; Syzdykov (2014) on contrastive analysis of proverbs; Smagulova (2008) on language policies of Kazakhization and their influence on figures of speech, language attitudes and use; and Mamaeva (2018) on comparative analyses of emotion verbalization with the help of interjection phraseological units (on the material of Russian and English idioms; and a few works on phraseological expressions like Kismetova and Ziyedenova (2025) discussing features of phraseological systems of English and Kazakh languages; (Bekeyeva et al., 2021), making a comparative study of phraseological expressions in the Turkic languages; (Smagulova, 2020). The linguistic worldview of the Turkic world in phraseologisms; and Veresh et al. (2023), who studied phraseological units in modern linguistics through systematization and semantic analysis.

For the Kyrgyz language, key sources include multilingual dictionaries and thesauruses and prominent works by authors like K. K. Yudakhin, K. Sydykov, A. Saparbaev, R. Egemberdiev, and Zh. Osmonova, among others. Recent comparative and empirical studies have further advanced this field, which includes works like (Jalilbayli, 2025; Karagulova & ALI, 2022; Mnaidarova et al., 2025) and (Kismetova & Ziyedenova, 2025), who examined English and Kazakh systems using authentic data, and Abylova (2025) studied locative phraseologisms in Russian and Kyrgyz. These works enrich functional and phraseological research by linking theory with empirical findings.

Methodology

Research Design

This study is a qualitative investigation of locative idiomatic expressions in Kazakh and Kyrgyz. The research involves classifying idiomatic expressions according to their spatial meanings and employs a functionally oriented (onomasiological) methodology, moving from meaning to form. The main objective is to identify the structure, semantic features, and usage of locative phraseological units in both languages.

Data Collection

The main sources for this study include the historical novel-epic trilogy *The Nomads* by Ilyas Esenberlin (2004) and the historical novel *The Broken Sword* by the Kyrgyz author Kasymbekov (1998). Additionally, phraseological dictionaries were consulted, including those by I. Kenesbayev, K. Sydykov, and Zh. Osmonova. A total of 30 idiomatic expressions with spatial meaning were identified and classified into semantic groups, such as those associated with animals, human body parts, and household objects. To establish and clarify their meanings, the study also relied on reference works, etymological dictionaries of the Kazakh Language, dictionaries of Kazakh traditional culture and Ethnographic categories and the Kyrgyz Explanatory Dictionary.

Data Analysis

The study employed two primary methods: functional-semantic analysis and the comparative-historical approach. The functional-semantic analysis method was used to examine the semantic features and functions of each linguistic unit, providing insight into how these units convey locative meaning. The comparative-historical method was applied to identify similarities and differences between Kazakh and Kyrgyz locative phraseological units. It also facilitated exploration of the historical and cultural foundations underlying spatial concepts in both languages.

Results

Functional-Semantic analysis of Locative Set Phrases in Kazakh and Kyrgyz languages

Idiomatic expressions, which have evolved over centuries and reflect the worldview of a people, constitute a distinctive type of fixed word combination. Such expressions often arise in connection with the lifestyle of a community or specific historical and cultural events, and their defining characteristic is their fixed form. Among the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples, whose traditional lives were closely linked to animal husbandry and largely conducted on horseback, many locative phraseological units are associated with domestic animals, including horses, camels, lambs, and dogs. In addition, numerous spatial expressions are derived from human body parts, concepts of spatial orientation, and everyday objects.

Based on the collected data, the study classifies locative expressions associated with domestic animals into the following categories: horses, camels, lambs, and dogs.

Locative Expressions Related to Horses in Kazakh Culture

At shaptyrym zher (A distance a horse can gallop): This expression denotes an approximate distance of 30-40 kilometres. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads* (2004) with literal translation: "From one edge to the other, the wide, silver-wave-covered plains of Akkol stretch a distance a horse can gallop, divided into green meadows like a horse's mane."

Qunan shaptyrym zher (A distance a young horse can gallop): This denotes an approximate distance of 3-4 kilometres.

Tai shaptyrym zher (A distance a foal can gallop): This refers to a relatively short distance. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads* with literal translation: "That day, the Cadet Corps of Omsk opened in a four-storey white building, whose length was about the distance a foal can gallop." In Kazakh terminology, a foal (*tai*) is a horse that has reached one year of age, whereas a *qunan* is a male horse between two and three years old. These age distinctions explain the differences in distance implied: a foal covers only a short distance, while a

qunan can travel several kilometres in the same amount of time.

Alystan at arytu (To ride a horse from afar) – to be utterly exhausted from a long journey. Example from Kasymbekov's *The Broken Sword* (1998): He recounted how he rode a horse from afar, saw the land, got to know the people, practiced noble words and beautiful melodies, and gradually learned them bit by bit, like silver dust.

At tu'yagy baskan zher (A place where a horse's hoof has stepped): This expression denotes a long or far distance. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "The Mongols' white-spotted horse's hoof has now stepped on the lands of Poland, the Czechs, and the Magyars"

Camel-Related Expression

Tuyenin tu'yagy tuser zher (A place where the camel's hoof would fall): This denotes a very distant place. The nomadic Kazakh lifestyle involved seasonal migrations between summer and winter pastures, often over long distances, with camels serving as the primary means of transport in arid conditions.

Lamb-Related Expression

Qozy koshindey zher (A place the flock of lambs would graze): This refers to a grazing area for lambs, located approximately 7–8 kilometres away. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "From this village, at a place where the flock of lambs would graze, a twenty-row hair rope was stretched to the foals of three thousand mares, deliberately tied for the guests."

Dog-Related Expressions

It arqasy qiyanda (At the dog's back in the wilderness): Denotes a very distant and remote place. Example (literal translation) from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "From that far-off at the dog's back in the wilderness, the Khan of the White House was forced to march with a large army".

It olgen zher (The place where the dog died): Denotes an extremely far-off place. Example (literal translation) from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "If you were not wise, would the Tsar of Russia send you from that far-off the place where the dog died to this empty steppe?"

It jekkenge aidatty (Sent to a dog-harness place): Refers historically to exile in remote regions. Example: "During the period of Russian colonial rule, individuals who committed serious crimes were punished by being sent to a dog-harness place in the remote regions of Northern Siberia."

Household Item-Related Expressions

Tayaq tastam zher (A stick-throwing distance): Denotes a nearby location within throwing distance, clearly visible and easily accessible.

Tas laqtyrym zher (A stone-throwing distance) means a short distance, whereas in Kyrgyz, «tash yrgytym zher». The verb «yrgytu» in Kyrgyz is used in the sense of "to scatter" or "to throw," whereas in Kazakh it functions as an action verb meaning "to jump" or "to throw." A similar expression is «tash menen ursa zhetkidey» which translated like a «as if hit with a stone or like being struck by a stone». Example sentence in kyrgyz from Kasymbekov's *The Broken Sword*: As if struck by stones, they were riddled by bullets fired at close range, and without exception, they all fell to the ground embracing it. The expressions a stick-throwing distance and a stone-throwing distance are synonymous, both conveying the meaning of a short or nearby distance.

Human Body Part-Related Locative Expressions (Somatisms)

Qol sozym zher (Within arm's reach): Denotes a very close area. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "Ahead of them was an open plain, and beyond it, within arm's reach, lay the foreign land to which they were fleeing".

Koz zhetpes zher (A place unreachable to the eye): Denotes a distant, far-off edge invisible to the eye. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "In front of them, the dense reed beds stretched alongside the lake, and they appeared to merge at a place unreachable to the eye, as if something dark had suddenly fallen there".

Koz ushynda (At the edge of eye): Refers to a distant or remote location. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "At the edge of the eye, like a blue falcon appearing as a tiny dot, his imagination had flown far, far away".

Koz aldynda (In front of the eyes): Denotes a short distance or immediately in front. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "Two of the Khan's attendants slaughtered the innocent, fresh-faced young beauty in front of the eyes of Isan-Bugha".

Koz korum zher (The distance visible to the eye): Denotes a distance within sight, a range that can be visually surveyed.

Iek astynda (Under the jaw): Refers to a nearby place or close distance. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "Once you cross that river and climb to the peak of Kurgaytas, the notable period is hitting under the jaw".

Ayaq zheter zher (A place reachable by foot): Denotes a nearby place accessible on foot.

Taban astynda (Underfoot). Example: "Look, the village lies shimmering right underfoot" (Lenins' Youth).

Koz kormes, qulaq estimes zher (A place unseen by the eye, unheard by the ear): Refers to a remote, distant place. Example: "The people of Esik are said to have become wealthy in this way. They would hide some things and stash others in a place unseen by the eye, unheard by the ear."

Spatial Locative Expressions

Ulyn Urymga, qyzyn Qyrymga (Send your son to Urym, your daughter to Krym): Denotes sending someone far and wide. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "The enemies plundered the once-mighty nation, sending your son to Urym, your daughter to Krym".

Audem zher (A faraway place): Denotes an audibly reachable or distant place. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "To the eagle attracted to the red fox, a six-day territory is near from a faraway place".

Zher tubi (The bottom of the land): Refers to a location at a great distance. Example: "Mayra's voice, too, like that, was heard from the bottom of the land to the dense Qarjas in the pasture".

Dunienñ tort burishy (The four corners of the world): Refers to all directions or the whole world. In the Kul Tigin inscription, the phrase "tört buluñ : qop : yayı ermis" (KT.5) appears. In the ancient Turkic worldview, the world was considered square-shaped, with spatial orientation linked to the movement of the sun (west-east) and actual geographical landmarks. Over time, expressions such as *dunienin tort burushi* (the four corners of the world), *tortkul dunya* (the whole world), and *shar tarap* (all directions) emerged. With the understanding of a round Earth, phrases like *dunya shar* (the globe) and *dunya dongelek* (the round Earth) appeared. These expressions are still actively used today.

Zaňgeldin bashynan (From the top of Zangel): Denotes coming from a very far distance. Example: "Having lost his saddle and tack, having neither girl nor kumys, moreover, having come from the top of Zangel, Beken was left unforgettable in his mind".

Mazar basyp kelgen (Came through the grave): Refers to arriving from a distant place. Example: "He is a man who came through the grave; if you want, take some," said the woman serving tea.

Phrases Expressing Location or Placement

Ata konys (The ancestral home): Refers to the place of birth, upbringing, original settlement, or ancestral land. Synonyms include *atameken* (ancestral land), *otan* (homeland), *tugan zher* (birthplace), *el* (nation). Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: The fortress later known as Sultan-Uays-Dag, the ancestral home of Sultan Uays.

Ak Orda (White Horde): Refers either to a large yurt or the house of a ruler. Historically, the khan's residence was a yurt; later, as cities developed, it became a grand palace. Example from Esenberlin's *Nomads*: "Let us unite, come together as a nation, and raise the banner of the Kazakh White Horde again".

Ulken uy (A big house): Refers to the dwelling of the eldest grandparents. The related term *Karashañyrak* denotes one's parental home or the house where one grew up. Among Kazakhs, the *Karashañyrak* was considered sacred, conferring prestige.

A Comparative Analysis of Locative Expressions in Kazakh and Kyrgyz

An analysis of the similarities and distinctions of locative expressions in Kazakh and Kyrgyz is warranted. As closely related Turkic languages, Kazakh and Kyrgyz exhibit numerous correspondences within their phraseological systems. However, the specific ways of life, natural environments, cultural features, and historical trajectories of each community have contributed to the development of certain divergences.

Structural and Semantic Similarities of Locative Phraseologisms

Locative phraseologisms in Kazakh and Kyrgyz predominantly exhibit similar structures, as they are largely based on shared Turkic roots (See [Table 1](#)).

These phraseological units are used with the same meaning in both languages; however, phonetic changes are observed, with vowel harmony being better preserved in Kyrgyz than in Kazakh. In studying the historical formation of locative idiomatic expressions in Kazakh and Kyrgyz, it is important to consider the linguistic features of Kazakh written heritage. This helps analyzing the consonant system in Kazakh written monuments from the late 19th to early 20th centuries. These texts exhibit significant differences in the

consonant system compared to the literary language—for example, correspondences such as $p \sim b$ and $ch \sim sh$. These features provide a basis for understanding how idiomatic expressions have changed phonetically and morphologically over time.

Table 1: Structural and Semantic Similarities of Locative Phraseologisms.

Kazakh	Kyrgyz	English
1. Koz Ushynda	Koz uchunda	At the edge of eye
2. Aidala	Aitalaa	In the middle of nowhere
3. Zher Tubi	Jer tubu	The bottom of the land
4. Ulyn Urymga, Qyzyn Qyrymga	Ulyn Urunga, kyzyn Kyrymga	Send your son to Urum, your daughter to Krym
5. Ata Qonys	Ata konush	The ancestral home

The Imagery and Common Turkic Features of Phraseological Units

Since the Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples led a nomadic lifestyle, their phraseology contains many idiomatic expressions related to nature and animal husbandry.

For instance:

1. Kazakh: *at shaptyrym zher* – Kyrgyz: *at chabym zher* (approximately 30–40 kilometers)
2. Kazakh: *qunan shaptyrym zher* – Kyrgyz: *qunan chabym zher* (approximately 3–4 kilometers)
3. Kazakh: *tai shaptyrym zher* – Kyrgyz: *tai chabym zher* (a relatively short distance)
4. Kazakh: *kozy kosht zher* – Kyrgyz: *kozu köch zher* (approximately 5–7 kilometers)
5. Kazakh: *it ölgen zher* – Kyrgyz: *it ölgen zher* (a very distant or remote location)

These units of measurement constituted an important system for conceptualizing and quantifying space in Kazakh-Kyrgyz nomadic culture.

Lexical Differences

Although some phraseologisms share similar meanings in both languages, the individual lexical components constituting them often differ (See Table 2).

Table 2: Lexical Differences of Phraseologisms

Kazakh	Kyrgyz	English
1. Tas laqtyrym jer	Tash yrgytym zher	A stone-throwing distance
2. Alystan at arytyp kelu	At boroyun sydyrtuu	To ride a horse from afar
3. Koz aldynda	Koz zhazdygynda	In front of the eyes
4. Qol sozym jer	Kol sungan zher	Within arm's reach
5. Iek astynda	Eek aldynda	Under the jaw
6. Aq orda	Ak ui	White Horde, White House
7. Dunieniñ tort buryshy	Togoroktun tort buruchu	The four corners of the world

These differences have developed due to the linguistic evolution of each people and the usage of individual words.

Idiomatic expressions unique to Kazakh or Kyrgyz, arising from worldview-specific features

In the Kazakh language

1. At a dog's back ridge (*It arqasy qiyanda*) – denotes a distant location.
2. A stick-throwing distance (*Tayaq tastam zher*) – denotes a nearby or adjacent area.
3. A place where the camel's hoof would fall (Tuyenin tu'yagy tüsetin zher) – denotes a remote location.
4. A place reachable by foot (*Ayaq zheter zher*) – denotes a nearby or adjacent area.
5. A faraway place (*Audem zher*) – denotes a distant location.
6. Sent to a dog-harness place (*It jekkenge aidatty*) – denotes a harsh, desolate, and undesirable location.

In the Kyrgyz language

1. From the top of Zangel (*Zaňgeldin bashynan*) – denotes a distant location.
2. Came through the grave (*Mazar basyp kelgen*) – denotes a location very far away or a long distance.

Discussion

Locativity is a linguistic category essential for expressing the spatial position, orientation, and movement of objects and phenomena. Locative idiomatic expressions not only convey spatial relationships but also reflect

the national worldview, culture, and lifestyle. Spatial orientation begins with self-awareness and exploration of one's environment. In the absence of standardised measurement tools, Turkic peoples historically used fingers, hands, and feet to gauge distances, giving rise to expressions such as *kol sozym zher* ("within arm's reach") and *ayaq zheter zher* ("within foot's reach").

The nomadic Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples, whose livelihoods centred on animal husbandry, developed numerous idioms linked to domestic animals—horses, camels, sheep, and dogs—through observations of nature and livestock management. Additional idioms pertain to household objects and spatial relations. Despite their shared Turkic roots, Kazakh and Kyrgyz exhibit both similarities and differences. Many grammatical structures and word meanings are analogous, and certain idioms preserve common Turkic worldview elements. However, semantic shifts in individual words and the presence of idioms unique to each language reflect the distinct cultural and historical experiences of each people.

Theoretically, these findings align with Bondarko's functional-semantic field theory (Bondarko, 2011). From a practical research perspective, the present study is consistent with empirical traditions in phraseology and functional semantics. Earlier classics by (Dalrymple, 1999; Gabelentz, 1883; Halvorsen, 1983; Potebnya, 1958) provide a comparative grammatical framework, while a few current studies like Kismetova and Ziyedenova (2025) and Bekeyeva et al. (2021) highlight cross-linguistic phraseological patterns. Smagulova (2020) shows how idioms reflect the Turkic worldview, and Veresh et al. (2023) emphasize the role of semantic analysis. Overall, locative idioms act as key linguistic markers encoding spatial, cognitive, and cultural information.

Conclusion

The Kazakh and Kyrgyz peoples' conceptions of space are closely tied to their way of life, pastoral traditions, and geographical environment. Phraseological units represent a reflection of the people's worldview; therefore, their meanings and uses have developed while preserving distinctive features of national culture. In both languages, phraseologisms with locative meaning play a significant role in describing space, distance, and movement. Most of these expressions are similar, stemming from a common Turkic heritage. However, certain phraseological units reveal lexical and semantic differences, and some expressions are unique to either Kazakh or Kyrgyz. The similarities in fixed expressions that denote spatial relations highlight the cultural and historical commonalities of the two peoples, while the differences demonstrate each nation's distinctive worldview.

The findings underscore the importance of systematic investigation of locative phraseological units in Kazakh and Kyrgyz, contributing to both linguistics and ethnolinguistics by offering deeper insights into the national worldview. However, the study was limited by scope of analyzed materials. Regional and dialectal variations were not examined in depth, and focusing on only two languages restricts broader generalization to the Turkic family.

Future research should include additional Turkic languages such as Karakalpak, Nogay and use corpus-based methods to study idioms in natural contexts. Combining insights from linguistics, ethnography and cultural studies could give a clearer picture of how language shapes our understanding of space. The results of the study can help develop linguistically relevant educational materials and dictionaries in Kazakh and Kyrgyz.

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