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MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF HISTORICAL FIGURES ON THE YOUTUBE PLATFORM: A COMPARATIVE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORICAL MEMORY (KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKEY)

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Abstract. Introduction. In the context of digitalization and the growing influence of new media, YouTube has become an important platform for the representation of historical knowledge and the construction of historical memory. The study of how historical figures are represented in digital media is particularly relevant for understanding the formation of public consciousness and national identity. Purpose and objectives. The purpose of this study is to examine the media representation of historical figures on YouTube in Kazakhstan and Turkey in the context of historical memory. The objectives include identifying the narrative, ideological, and cultural codes that shape these representations, as well as comparing the discursive strategies used in both countries. Materials and methods. The research corpus consists of video content published between 2020 and 2024 on selected educational and historical YouTube channels from Kazakhstan and Turkey. The methodological framework includes comparative analysis, media analysis, narrative analysis, and critical discourse analysis based on Norman Fairclough’s approach. The theoretical foundation is based on the concepts of Benedict Anderson (imagined communities), Jan Assmann (cultural memory), and Stuart Hall (representation). Results. The findings show that historical figures on YouTube are constructed through diverse discursive strategies related to national identity, statehood, and collective memory. Both similarities and differences were identified in the media narratives of Kazakhstan and Turkey, as well as in their mechanisms of influencing public consciousness. Conclusion. The study demonstrates that YouTube serves as an important tool for shaping digital

historical narratives and transmitting historical memory. The results contribute to a deeper understanding of the interaction between media, history, and society in the digital age.

Keywords: YouTube, historical figures, media representation, discourse, cultural memory, Kazakhstan, Turkey.

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YOUTUBE ПЛАТФОРМАСЫНДАҒЫ ТАРИХИ ТҮЛҒАЛАРДЫҢ МЕДИАДАҒЫ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯСЫ: ТАРИХИ ЖАД КОНТЕКСТІНДЕГІ САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ДИСКУРСЫҚ ТАЛДАУ (ҚАЗАҚСТАН МЕН ТҮРКИЯ МЫСАЛЫНДА)

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Аңдатпа. Кіріспе. Цифрландыру үдерісі мен жаңа медианың ықпалының артуы жағдайында YouTube платформасы тарихи білімді репрезентациялау мен тарихи жадты қалыптастырудың маңызды алаңына айналды. Цифрлық медиа кеңістігінде тарихи тұлғалардың қалай ұсынылатынын зерттеу қоғамдық сана мен ұлттық бірегейліктің қалыптасуын түсіну үшін өзекті болып табылады. Мақсаты мен міндеттері. Зерттеудің мақсаты – Қазақстан мен Түркиядағы YouTube платформасында тарихи тұлғалардың медиадағы репрезентациясын тарихи жад контекстінде талдау. Міндеттері – аталған репрезентацияларды қалыптастыратын нарративтік, идеологиялық және мәдени кодтарды анықтау, сондай-ақ екі елдегі дискурстық стратегияларды салыстыру. Материалдар мен әдістер. Зерттеу материалы ретінде 2020–2024 жылдар аралығында Қазақстан мен Түркияның таңдалған білім беру және тарихи бағыттағы YouTube арналарында жарияланған бейнематериалдар алынды. Әдіснамалық негізі салыстырмалы талдау, медиаталдау, нарративтік талдау және Норман Фэрклоудың сыни дискурстық талдау тәсілдеріне сүйенеді. Теориялық негізін Бенедикт Андерсонның «елестетілген қауымдастықтар» тұжырымдамасы, Ян Ассманнның мәдени жад теориясы және Стюарт Холлдың репрезентация теориясы құрайды. Нәтижелер. Зерттеу нәтижелері YouTube платформасында тарихи тұлғалардың ұлттық бірегейлік, мемлекеттілік және ұжымдық жадпен байланысты әртүрлі дискурстық стратегиялар арқылы ұсынылатынын көрсетті.

Сонымен қатар, Қазақстан мен Түркиядағы медиа нарративтер арасында ұқсастықтар мен айырмашылықтар, сондай-ақ олардың қоғамдық санаға ықпал ету тетіктері анықталды. Қорытынды. Зерттеу нәтижелері YouTube платформасының цифрлық тарихи нарративтерді қалыптастыру мен тарихи жадты таратудағы маңызды құрал екенін дәлелдейді. Бұл жұмыс қазіргі медиа кеңістікте тарих пен қоғамның өзара байланысын тереңірек түсінуге мүмкіндік береді.

Түйін сөздер: YouTube, тарихи контент, жаңа медиа, аудитория, жастар, әлеуметтік көңіл-күй, медиа коммуникация.

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МЕДИЙНАЯ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ ИСТОРИЧЕСКИХ ЛИЧНОСТЕЙ НА ПЛАТФОРМЕ YOUTUBE: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ ДИСКУРСИВНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЙ ПАМЯТИ (КАЗАХСТАН И ТУРЦИЯ)

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Аннотация. Введение. В условиях цифровизации и усиления влияния новых медиа платформа YouTube становится важным пространством репрезентации исторического знания и формирования исторической памяти. Изучение способов представления исторических личностей в цифровой среде является актуальным для понимания формирования общественного сознания и национальной идентичности. Цель и задачи. Цель исследования – проанализировать медийную репрезентацию исторических личностей на YouTube в Казахстане и Турции в контексте исторической памяти. Задачи включают выявление нарративных, идеологических и культурных кодов, формирующих данные репрезентации, а также сравнительный анализ дискурсивных стратегий в двух странах. Материалы и методы. Эмпирическую базу исследования составляют видеоматериалы, опубликованные в 2020–2024 гг. на отобранных образовательных и исторических YouTube-каналах Казахстана и Турции. Методологическая основа включает сравнительный анализ, медиаанализ, нарративный анализ и критический дискурсивный анализ, основанный на подходе Нормана Фэрклоу.

Теоретическую основу составляют концепции Бенедикта Андерсона (воображаемые сообщества), Яна Ассмана (культурная память) и Стюарта Холла (репрезентация). Результаты. Результаты исследования показывают, что исторические личности на YouTube репрезентируются через различные дискурсивные стратегии, связанные с национальной идентичностью, государственностью и коллективной памятью. Выявлены как сходства, так и различия в медийных нарративах Казахстана и Турции, а также в механизмах их воздействия на общественное сознание. Заключение. Проведенное исследование демонстрирует, что YouTube является важным инструментом формирования цифровых исторических нарративов и трансляции исторической памяти. Полученные результаты способствуют более глубокому пониманию взаимодействия медиа, истории и общества в современном цифровом пространстве.

Ключевые слова: YouTube, исторический контент, новые медиа, аудитория, молодежь, социальное настроение, медиа-коммуникация.

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Introduction. The rapid expansion of digital media has profoundly transformed the production, circulation, and interpretation of historical knowledge. In contrast to traditional academic historiography and institutional memory organizations such as archives, museums, and universities, digital platforms increasingly function as influential spaces where historical narratives are produced, disseminated, and debated. Among these platforms, YouTube has emerged as one of the most prominent arenas for the public representation of history. Through audiovisual storytelling, narrative simplification, and algorithmically distributed content, YouTube enables historical knowledge to reach broad audiences while simultaneously reshaping how historical figures and events are interpreted in contemporary societies.

The growing presence of historical content on YouTube reflects a broader shift in the relationship between media, collective memory, and national identity. Historical figures are no longer represented exclusively through academic texts or official historiography; instead, they are increasingly mediated through digital storytelling, documentary-style videos, and popular educational channels. In this environment, historical narratives are constructed through a combination of visual imagery, narrative framing, music, editing techniques, and commentary. As a result, the representation of historical figures in digital media becomes not merely a transmission of historical information but a process of cultural meaning-making shaped by ideological, political, and social contexts.

Scholars of media and cultural studies have long emphasized that representation is not a neutral reflection of reality but a discursive process through which meaning is produced and circulated (Hall, 1997). From this perspective, the portrayal of historical figures in digital media can be understood as part of broader cultural and political processes that shape collective memory and national identity. Theories of cultural memory (Assmann, 2011) and imagined communities (Anderson, 2006) provide important analytical frameworks for understanding how media representations contribute to the construction of shared historical narratives. In digital environments such as YouTube, these processes become even more complex, as historical narratives are produced not only by professional historians and journalists but also by independent creators, educators, and online communities.

Recent scholarship has increasingly examined the role of social media in shaping historical memory and public historical discourse. Studies have shown that digital platforms play an active role in constructing historical narratives, influencing public perceptions of the past, and negotiating collective memory in contemporary societies (Hoskins, 2018; van Dijck, 2013). YouTube in particular has become an important site for the popularization of historical knowledge, where

historical documentaries, educational videos, and commentary channels reach millions of viewers. However, while existing research has explored digital memory practices and media representation in various contexts, most studies have focused on Western media environments or single-country analyses.

Comparative studies examining how historical figures are represented across different national media contexts remain relatively limited. This gap is particularly evident in research focusing on Central Asian and Turkish media environments. Kazakhstan and Turkey provide an especially interesting case for comparative analysis, as both countries place strong emphasis on historical memory, national identity, and the symbolic role of historical figures in public discourse. At the same time, the two countries possess distinct historical experiences and political trajectories that shape how the past is interpreted and represented in contemporary media. Examining how historical figures are portrayed on YouTube within these two contexts therefore provides valuable insights into the relationship between digital media, national narratives, and cultural memory.

Despite the growing significance of digital platforms in shaping historical discourse, the representation of historical figures on YouTube in Kazakhstan and Turkey has not yet been systematically examined through a comparative discourse-analytical perspective. Existing studies often focus either on historical memory in social media or on national historiography, but rarely combine media analysis, discourse analysis, and comparative approaches in the context of digital historical content. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing how historical figures are represented on YouTube in Kazakhstan and Turkey and by identifying the narrative, ideological, and cultural frameworks through which these representations are constructed.

The main aim of this study is to examine the media representation of historical figures on YouTube through a comparative discourse analysis of historical-educational videos produced in Kazakhstan and Turkey. More specifically, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are historical figures represented in YouTube videos in Kazakhstan and Turkey?
2. Which narrative structures and discursive strategies shape these representations?
3. How do these representations reflect broader themes of national identity, statehood, and cultural memory?
4. What similarities and differences can be identified between the media narratives of the two countries?

To address these questions, the study analyzes historical-educational YouTube videos published between 2020 and 2024 using a qualitative comparative framework. The research integrates media analysis, narrative analysis, and critical discourse analysis based on Norman Fairclough's three-level model in order to examine both the textual and socio-cultural dimensions of historical representation in digital media.

The article is structured as follows. The first section presents the theoretical framework and reviews the relevant literature on media representation, cultural memory, and digital historical narratives. The second section outlines the methodological design of the study, including data selection and analytical procedures. The third section presents the findings of the comparative analysis of YouTube videos in Kazakhstan and Turkey. The fourth section discusses the results within the broader theoretical framework of media representation and collective memory. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main findings of the study and proposes directions for future research on digital historical discourse.

Theoretical framework and literature review

Media Representation of Historical Figures and Historical Narrative on YouTube

The concept of media representation constitutes one of the key theoretical categories in the construction of historical figures' images. Stuart Hall conceptualizes representation not as a direct reflection of reality, but as a process of meaning-making. From this perspective, historical figures are presented in the media not as objective collections of data, but as symbolic images constructed through specific cultural, ideological, and discursive codes. Historical videos on YouTube are also part of this meaning-making process, where visual, textual, and verbal elements work together to produce a particular historical narrative.

The media representation of historical figures often relies on motifs of heroism, sacrifice, leadership, or national symbolism. These motifs allow historical events to be reinterpreted in accordance with contemporary societal needs and ideological demands. In this regard, media is not a neutral transmitter of historical knowledge; rather, it functions as an active agent producing meaning.

History, Cultural Memory, and National Identity

The position of historical figures in public consciousness is shaped through mechanisms of cultural memory. Jan Assmann describes cultural and collective memory as a society's way of preserving the past and renewing it within current social and cultural contexts. In contemporary settings, YouTube has become a new digital space of cultural memory, reproducing the images of historical figures in visual and narrative formats.

Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" provides a framework for understanding how national identity is constructed through media. Historical figures are presented as symbolic pillars of the national community, and their images help form a shared understanding of the past and collective values. In the contexts of Kazakhstan and Turkey, the media representation of historical figures is closely linked to the ideas of statehood, national cohesion, and cultural heritage.

Digital Media and Historical Narratives on YouTube

The development of digital media has created new forms of presenting historical knowledge. The YouTube platform, unlike traditional academic historiography, emphasizes narratives with strong visual and emotional impact. Events related to historical figures are often condensed, dramatized, and adapted for a broad audience.

Researchers highlight interactivity, algorithmic distribution, and the prominence of authorial interpretation as distinctive features of historical content on YouTube. These factors contribute to narratives that are often polyphonic, sometimes contradictory, and rarely linear. Furthermore, comments and viewer reactions on YouTube videos add an additional discursive layer to the reception of historical figures.

Literature Review and Research Gap

Although a number of studies in recent years have addressed media representation, cultural memory, and digital history, most have focused on Western media contexts or analyses within a single country. Comparative studies examining the representation of historical figures on YouTube in Kazakhstan and Turkey remain limited.

In particular, the narrative structures, ideological codes, and visual strategies involved in constructing the images of historical figures have not been comparatively studied in these two countries. This gap underscores the scientific relevance of the present study, which aims to fill this void and provide new scholarly insights into historical discourse in digital media.

Digital Media and Historical Memory: Contemporary Studies

Today, digital media plays a significant role in shaping the images of historical events and figures. The media space determines how the past should be "remembered," which information is considered important, and how it is presented. Media content goes beyond merely conveying historical knowledge to a broad audience; it also influences the relationship between the past and the present, transforming representation into a form of social construction.

Historical memory in social media is a product of digital representation, where past events are continuously reconstructed and mediated through internet platforms (Tikhonova and Artamonov). This perspective provides an important context for analyzing historical figures on YouTube, as the platform disseminates often interpreted information about the past through both individual and professional authors.

The significance of historical content on YouTube continues to grow. The platform enables not only professional historians but also bloggers and content creators to participate in shaping historical figures and events, thereby influencing the process of collective memory. On YouTube, historical knowledge is popularized, amateur historical documentaries are uploaded, and educational projects are implemented. Bloggers express evaluative judgments supported by

historical material, disseminate historical myths, and simultaneously deconstruct and challenge them (Artamonov). This provides clear evidence of how YouTube shapes and negotiates historical content: information about historical figures is derived not only from academic sources but also through interaction with the YouTube audience.

Historical podcasts on YouTube play an important role in shaping historical memory and national identity in Kazakhstan (Dzhumagaliev 635–638). Understanding how historical figures and events are represented in Kazakh media requires examining the evolution of public memory concerning key historical moments. The evolution of public memory regarding the Second World War in Kazakhstan demonstrates a broader tendency to diverge from Soviet and Russian narratives. Competition among memory agents, as well as the government's utilization of these narratives under the Tokayev administration, has led to the prominence of narratives expressing grief and protest, reflecting a distinctly Kazakh perspective on the Second World War (Dukeyev 1–14). This study provides insight into how official discourse and public memory in Kazakhstan influence the representation of historical figures on platforms such as YouTube. Additionally, analyzing the situation in Turkey is important for a comparative understanding of the interactions between public memory and media representation.

On YouTube, the images of historical figures are interpreted and reconstructed through interaction with the audience, often situated between the perspectives of professional historians and general users. YouTube acts as a platform where the legacy of historical figures is constructed and reinterpreted, influencing collective memory and public perception of national history (Amanzholova et al. 591–600). This study examines how the images of historical figures are presented, received, and reworked on YouTube.

Overall, social media has been considered a space for constructing historical memory. These studies focus on how historical events and figures are shaped through media. In the digital era, social media platforms serve as arenas for both constructing and contesting historical memory among internet users (Tikhonova & Artamonov 74–83). Such research provides a general understanding of the issues related to representing historical figures and events on platforms such as YouTube. This literature review demonstrates the multifaceted nature of representing historical figures and events on YouTube. Specifically, it shows that YouTube plays an active role in shaping historical memory; Kazakh YouTube historical content contributes to the construction of national identity; historical figures are continuously reinterpreted through audience interaction; and social media expands and transforms the process of historical memory.

Materials and Methods. This study is based on a qualitative research design and was conducted using a comparative discourse analysis approach. The primary data source consisted of historical-educational video content published on YouTube in an open-source format. Archival materials and closed databases were not utilized.

Data Sources and Corpus Formation

To construct the research corpus, YouTube channels dedicated to historical figures in Kazakhstan and Turkey were selected. The selection was based on videos published between 2020 and 2024. This period is characterized by the active development of historical content in digital media and the increasing role of YouTube in shaping public opinion. For each country, 5–7 historical-educational channels were chosen, and 10–15 videos from each channel were analyzed. As a result, the research corpus included approximately 100–150 videos from Kazakhstan and Turkey. Video duration, number of views, or production level were not primary selection criteria; the main focus was on content and discursive characteristics.

Criteria for Selecting YouTube Channels:

- YouTube channels were selected based on the following criteria:
- Consistent content focused on historical figures;
- Videos presented in an educational or historical-informative format;
- Maintenance of a professional or semi-professional media format;
- Systematic narrative structure directed at the audience;

- Potential of the content to influence public discourse. These criteria ensured the homogeneity of the research objects and supported the scientific validity of the comparative analysis between the two countries.

Research Methods

Several methods were employed in a complementary manner. The primary method was comparative analysis, which identified similarities and differences in the media representation of historical figures in Kazakhstan and Turkey.

Critical discourse analysis was conducted using Norman Fairclough's three-level model:

- Textual level (video titles, descriptions, lexical choices);
- Discursive practice (narrative structure, methods of interpreting historical events);
- Social practice (national identity, cultural memory, and ideological context) (Fairclough 177–197).

Additionally, narrative analysis was used to examine the construction of historical figures' biographies and the application of motifs such as heroism, sacrifice, and leadership. Narrative methods emphasize the organization of stories and how they convey meaning through sequence, characters, and plot (Riessman 264). Analyzing the narrative structure of YouTube videos allowed for a deeper understanding of how historical figures' images are constructed.

Media analysis focused on the role of visual elements (shots, music, editing, symbols) in constructing historical meaning.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The study is grounded in Stuart Hall's theory of representation, Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities," and Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory. These theories enable an understanding of historical figures' media images not only at an informational level but also within the framework of national and cultural discourse (Assmann 250).

Research Limitations

The results of this study are based solely on YouTube video content and do not include historical representations on other social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook). Moreover, since the analysis was qualitative, the study emphasizes discursive interpretation rather than statistical generalization.

Discussion. Social media platforms are not neutral technologies; they reflect cultural values and power relations that shape what is visible and meaningful in the realm of public memory (van Dijck 228). Memory is not merely preserved information; it is a cultural practice continuously negotiated, displayed, and reinterpreted within social communication processes (Erlil 209). Journalistic practices do not simply report recalled events; they actively shape collective memory through narrative selection and structuring (Zelizer 79–87).

Examining the role of YouTube in everyday media practices and alternative journalism allows for the observation of typological characteristics of video products (Çolak and Zinderen 249–279). Moreover, YouTube transforms the audience from passive viewers into active participants; users not only consume content but also produce, share, edit, and comment on videos, contributing to the formation of collective meanings (Burgess and Green 180).

The study's findings indicate that while the media representation of historical figures on YouTube in Kazakhstan and Turkey shares common structural features, there are notable differences in discursive organization linked to national historical experiences and cultural memory. Theories of media representation, cultural memory, and national identity provide an important interpretive framework for understanding these differences. Empirical studies on historical content and the digitalization of public historical memory in Kazakhstan further support this observation (Dzhumagaliyev 625–638).

Beyond media platforms like YouTube, historical and cultural representation is also influenced by broader regional and political dynamics. This study highlights that gradual cultural cooperation among Turkic states can evolve into institutionalized political integration, shaping the future of Turkic integration (Purtaş).

From the perspective of Stuart Hall's theory of representation, historical figures in YouTube videos are not presented as a "neutral depiction of the past" but as images reinterpreted within contemporary social and ideological contexts. Digital memory technologies do more than preserve memory; they alter how past events are remembered, shared, and felt (Hoskins 314). In Kazakh content, the portrayal of historical figures is often constructed through the discourse of "recovering lost history" and "restoring justice," whereas in Turkish videos, historical figures are represented as symbols reinforcing "continuous statehood" and the image of a "strong historical agent." This difference clearly demonstrates how representation serves national narratives in each country.

Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory provides a deeper understanding of these findings. On YouTube, the platform functions as a digital space for the revitalization of cultural memory in both countries. However, in the Kazakh context, this memory is often connected to a traumatic past, including colonial and Soviet periods, with historical figures presented as "restorers of memory" and as embodiments of collective remembrance. Collective memory is not a static entity; it is actively constructed through social relations and narrative practices (Kansteiner 179–197). Media disputes highlight the importance of narrative structures that shape public perception and memory beyond mere factual information (Ekström and Johansson 839–856).

In contrast, in the Turkish context, cultural memory is based on the logic of continuity and succession, with historical figures depicted as enduring anchors of statehood and civilizational heritage. Thus, the representation of historical figures on YouTube should be understood not merely as visual content but as a social process influencing the formation of cultural identity. Digital media discourse acts as an influential agent of cultural change, shaping collective understandings of history and national identity (Jones et al. 250).

Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" is also important for interpreting the study's findings. YouTube videos in both countries function to "imagine" and reinforce the national community. In Kazakh videos, this community is often consolidated through shared suffering and historical trials, whereas in Turkish content, it is consolidated through shared victories and strong historical figures. Thus, the media representation of historical figures becomes a tool for delineating the symbolic boundaries of the national community.

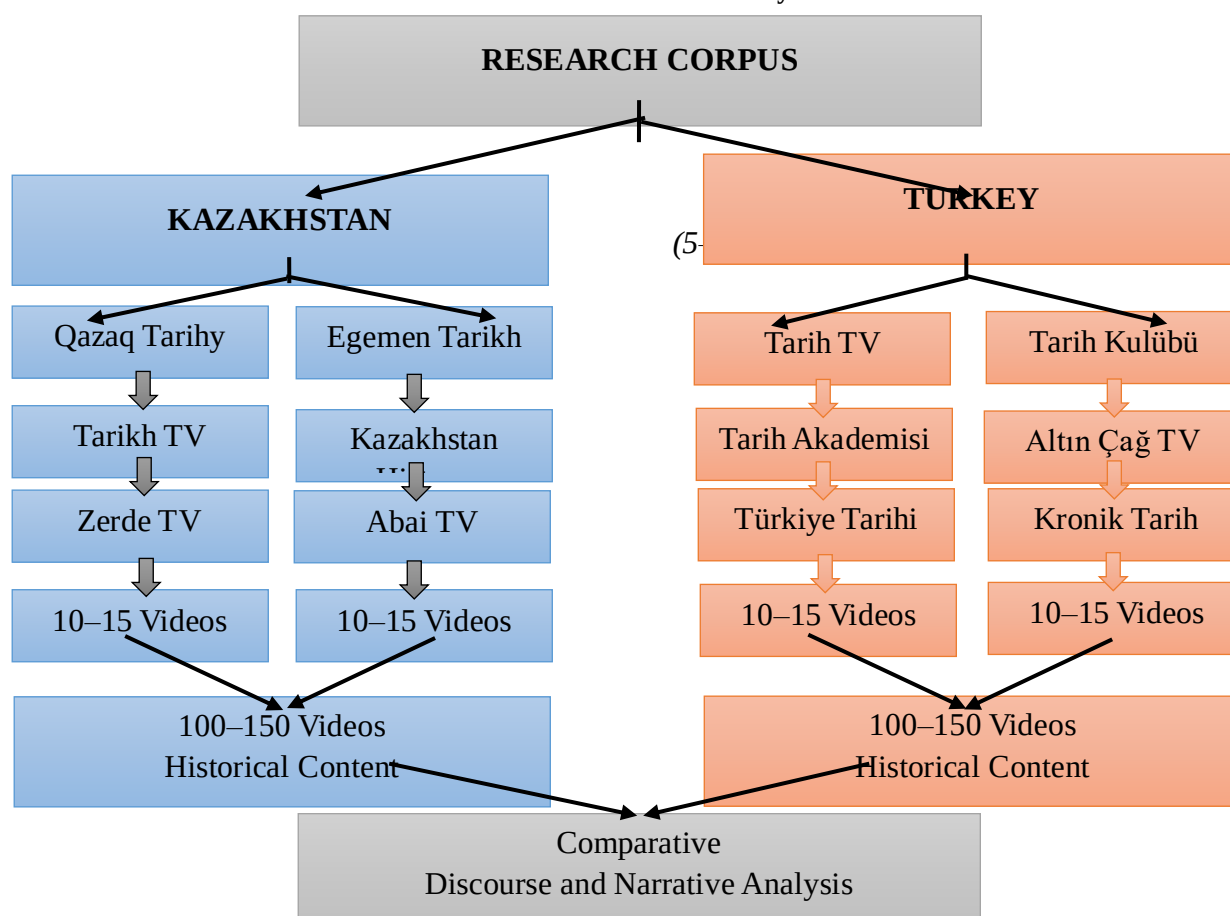
Furthermore, the findings highlight the distinctive influence of digital media on historical discourse. Historical narratives on YouTube differ from academic history in that they rely heavily on visual impact, emotional tone, and condensed storytelling. These factors may subordinate the complex and multifaceted portrayal of historical figures to dominant interpretations. In this regard, while YouTube democratizes historical knowledge, it also carries the risk of presenting it in ideologically one-sided ways.

Overall, the media representation of historical figures on YouTube in Kazakhstan and Turkey demonstrates the active role of media in shaping national identity and cultural memory. These representations do not merely recount the past but also serve as instruments for consolidating contemporary societal expectations and projecting ideologically guided visions toward the future.

Results and Analysis. This section presents the main findings of the comparative discourse analysis conducted on historical-educational videos published on YouTube in Kazakhstan and Turkey. The analysis identified narrative structures, ideological and cultural codes, as well as visual strategies employed in the media representation of historical figures.

This section presents the findings of the comparative discourse analysis of historical-educational YouTube videos from Kazakhstan and Turkey. The analysis focuses on how historical figures are discursively constructed through narrative structures, visual strategies, and ideological framing. Following Norman Fairclough's three-level model of critical discourse analysis, the findings are presented at three analytical levels: textual representation, discursive practice, and social practice.

Figure 1. Comparative Discourse and Narrative Analysis Corpus of Historical YouTube Channels in Kazakhstan and Turkey



Following Norman Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis, the empirical findings are structured across three analytical levels. The textual level examines linguistic expressions, titles, and narrative descriptions used in the videos. The level of discursive practice focuses on storytelling strategies, narrative structures, and audiovisual techniques. Finally, the level of social practice interprets how these representations reflect broader ideological frameworks related to national identity, cultural memory, and historical interpretation.

Textual Representation of Historical Figures

At the textual level, the analysis focused on titles, narrative language, and descriptive expressions used in video content. The videos in both countries frequently employ evaluative and symbolic language that frames historical figures through specific narrative roles.

In the Kazakh YouTube corpus, historical figures are often described through expressions emphasizing injustice, sacrifice, and historical recovery. Titles and narrative descriptions frequently include phrases that refer to forgotten heroes, suppressed history, or the restoration of national memory. Such linguistic patterns frame historical figures as individuals whose contributions were marginalized or misrepresented in earlier historical narratives. This discursive strategy constructs historical figures as agents of national revival and moral exemplars who embody the struggle for historical recognition.

In contrast, Turkish YouTube videos more frequently employ language associated with leadership, power, and strategic capability. Titles and descriptions often highlight the political and military achievements of historical figures, emphasizing their role as founders, commanders, or architects of statehood. The narrative language frequently presents historical figures as decisive actors shaping the course of national history. Through such textual framing, historical figures are constructed as symbols of national strength and continuity.

The differences between the two corpora indicate distinct narrative orientations. While Kazakh videos emphasize themes of historical injustice and national restoration, Turkish videos foreground narratives of leadership, victory, and civilizational continuity. These patterns suggest that textual representation plays an important role in aligning historical narratives with broader national identity frameworks.

Media Representation of Historical Figures on YouTube in Kazakhstan

Historical figures on Kazakh YouTube channels are primarily presented within the discourse of national identity and the restoration of historical justice. In these videos, historical figures are depicted as “fighters for the nation’s fate,” “sacrificed heroes,” or “individuals whose contributions were unjustly recognized in history.” These narratives are closely linked to colonial legacies, Soviet history, and ideas of national revival.

Biographical storytelling dominates the narrative structure, with the life paths of historical figures presented in chronological order. Visual elements such as archival photographs, maps, and documents are frequently used to enhance the sense of historical authenticity. In addition, the voice-over narration often employs evaluative language and emotional tone, fostering an empathetic engagement with the historical figure among viewers.

Ideologically, historical figures in Kazakh videos are represented as instruments for revitalizing national memory and reinforcing the idea of statehood. This content is aimed at constructing a cohesive understanding of the shared past within public consciousness.

At the textual level, Kazakh YouTube videos frequently employ symbolic and evaluative language emphasizing injustice, sacrifice, and the recovery of historical memory. Titles and narrative descriptions often contain expressions referring to forgotten heroes, suppressed history, or the restoration of national memory. Such linguistic patterns frame historical figures as individuals whose contributions were marginalized in earlier historical narratives and position them as agents of national revival and moral exemplars of historical justice.

Kazakhstan YouTube Channels and Videos

For the Kazakhstan corpus, five to seven YouTube channels focused on historical and educational content were selected based on the criteria described in the Methods section. Each channel contributed 10–15 videos dealing with prominent historical figures, national events, and cultural memory. The resulting dataset comprised approximately 100–150 videos in total when combined with Turkey’s corpus.

Table 1. Selection and Content Characteristics of Kazakhstani YouTube Channels

Channel Name	Focus	Number of Videos	Key Historical Figures / Topics
Qazaq Tarihy	Kazakh history documentaries	12	Abai Kunanbayev, Alikhan Bokeikhan, Kazakh Khanate
Egemen Tarikh	Educational-historical narratives	10	Independence movement, national heroes
Tarikh TV	Historical biographies	15	Ablai Khan, Kabanbay Batyr
Kazakhstan History	Archival storytelling	12	Soviet period, cultural revival
Zerde TV	Popular history & culture	11	Historical myths, folklore, historical anecdotes
Abai TV	Historical figures, national culture, documentary-educational programs	15	Kazakh khans, poets, cultural heritage, enlightenment figures

Following the overview of the selected channels, several additional observations can be made regarding the narrative characteristics of Kazakh historical content on YouTube. Another notable feature of Kazakh content is the emphasis on historical reinterpretation. Narratives frequently refer to overlooked or suppressed perspectives, particularly concerning the Soviet period. Through this discursive strategy, YouTube videos function not only as informational media but also as instruments for historical reevaluation and the reconstruction of collective memory.

For example, several videos explicitly frame historical figures through the narrative of historical injustice. Titles such as “Alash Leaders: The Forgotten History” or “Truth About Repressed Kazakh Intellectuals” highlight the theme of suppressed national memory. In these videos, narration frequently includes expressions referring to historical injustice, political repression, and the restoration of national dignity. Visual elements such as archival photographs, historical documents, and Soviet-era footage further reinforce the discourse of historical recovery.

Observations:

- In the context of intercultural communication on YouTube, viewer comments can be examined from a sociological perspective (Ulusoy 262–286). The videos themselves demonstrate a rich discursive structure and narrative complexity, integrating historical facts with broader cultural and ideological frameworks.
- Production quality, video length, or number of views were not primary selection criteria.
- The emphasis was on narrative content and discourse analysis, highlighting national memory and identity construction.

Media Representation of Historical Figures on YouTube in Turkey

Turkish YouTube channels primarily present historical figures within the context of statehood, political continuity, and civilizational heritage. In these videos, historical figures are depicted as strong leaders, strategists, and nation-builders, with their actions linked to contemporary national ideology.

The narrative structure is often epic in nature: historical events are dramatized, and visual effects and dynamic editing are widely employed. Music, reconstruction elements, and symbolic shots are used to enhance the charisma of historical figures. The narration style in these videos is artistic and emotionally engaging, while attempting to maintain factual accuracy.

From an ideological perspective, Turkish content represents historical figures as symbols of national pride. This representation aims to reinforce national identity and demonstrate historical continuity. Furthermore, the actions of historical figures are often indirectly connected to contemporary political and cultural discourse.

At the textual level, Turkish YouTube videos frequently employ language associated with leadership, power, and strategic capability. Titles and narrative descriptions highlight political and military achievements and portray historical figures as founders, commanders, or architects of statehood. Through this textual framing, historical figures are constructed as symbols of national strength and historical continuity.

Turkey YouTube Channels and Videos

For the Turkey corpus, five to seven channels producing historical and educational content were similarly selected. Each channel provided 10–15 videos, resulting in a comparable dataset to Kazakhstan.

Table 2. Selection and Content Characteristics of Turkish YouTube Channels

Channel Name	Focus	Number of Videos	Key Historical Figures / Topics
Tarih TV	Ottoman and Republic history	13	Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Ottoman sultans
Tarih Kulübü	Historical documentaries	12	Turkish War of Independence, national heroes
Tarih Akademisi	Educational historical content	11	Atatürk era reforms, cultural history
Altın Çağ TV	Historical biographies	14	Prominent figures from different periods
Türkiye Tarihi	National history and memory	10	Republican era, civilizational narratives
Kronik Tarih	Ottoman history, Turkish Republic era, historical figures, military events	15	Ottoman sultans, Turkish national leaders, major battles, political transformations

Following the overview of the selected Turkish YouTube channels presented in Table 2, several narrative and ideological characteristics of the analyzed content can be identified. In contrast to Kazakh videos, narrative structures in Turkish content tend to be more dramatized and cinematic. Storytelling often emphasizes decisive historical moments such as battles, political reforms, and turning points in national history. These narrative strategies contribute to constructing historical figures as heroic protagonists shaping historical destiny.

Observations:

- Videos emphasize national identity, statehood, and historical continuity.
- The role of YouTube as a new media platform and a narrative structure can be examined from the perspective of platform content and audience experience (Çokluk and Ökmen 721–737). Within this framework, narrative strategies reflect underlying ideological and cultural codes, thereby shaping public consciousness and the perception of history.
- Similar to Kazakhstan, video length, production level, and view counts were not limiting factors.

Comparative Findings

The comparative analysis of YouTube videos in Kazakhstan and Turkey revealed a number of similarities and differences. The comparison of discursive practices reveals two distinctive narrative styles. Kazakh content generally follows a documentary-biographical approach emphasizing historical recovery, whereas Turkish content tends to employ dramatized storytelling that highlights heroic leadership and national continuity.

In both countries, historical figures are presented as important symbols for the construction of national identity, and media narratives perform a function of influencing public consciousness. Qualitative research involves interpreting participants' experiences and the meanings embedded in their social contexts (Creswell and Poth 459).

The study corpus includes prominent historical-educational YouTube channels from Kazakhstan and Turkey (Tables 1 and 2). In Kazakhstan, channels such as Qazaq Tarihy, Egemen Tarikh, Tarikh TV, Kazakhstan History, Zerde TV, and Abai TV were selected, offering content that emphasizes national revival, the restoration of historical justice, and the remembrance of past traumas. In Turkey, channels including Tarih TV, Tarih Kulübü, Tarih Akademisi, Altın Çağ TV, Türkiye Tarihi, and Kronik Tarih focus on statehood, historical continuity, and national pride.

The comparative analysis further reveals several recurring discursive categories shaping the representation of historical figures in the two media environments. These include narratives of historical justice, heroic leadership, cultural memory, and the continuity of statehood. While Kazakh YouTube content frequently emphasizes the restoration of historical justice and national memory, Turkish videos tend to foreground heroic leadership and the continuity of state traditions. These thematic categories provide a clearer analytical framework for understanding the differences in historical representation.

Table 3. Comparative Overview of Historical-Educational YouTube Channels in Kazakhstan and Turkey

Country	YouTube Channels	Primary Narrative Focus	Visual Strategy	Ideological Frame
Kazakhstan	Qazaq Tarihy, Egemen Tarikh, Tarikh TV, Kazakhstan History, Zerde TV, Abai TV	Historical justice, national trauma, cultural revival	Documentary style, archival materials	Post-Soviet memory
Turkey	Tarih TV, Tarih Kulübü, Tarih Akademisi, Altın Çağ TV, Türkiye Tarihi, Kronik Tarih	Statehood, strong historical continuity, national pride	Cinematic dramatization, epic music	State continuity

The comparative analysis of these channels allows for the identification of both shared and distinctive characteristics in the media representation of historical figures:

Narrative Emphasis:

- Kazakh channels frequently portray historical figures as either victims of past injustices or as agents of national revival.
- Turkish channels present historical figures as heroic state-builders, strategic leaders, and symbols of national pride.

Visual and Production Strategies:

- Kazakhstan: Archival footage, maps, and documentary-style narration are commonly employed to reinforce historical authenticity.
- Turkey: Epic music, dramatized reenactments, dynamic editing, and symbolic visual elements are prominent, emphasizing heroism and continuity.

Ideological and Cultural Codes:

In Kazakhstan, historical narratives foreground the recovery of lost history and collective memory associated with the colonial and Soviet periods. In Turkey, narratives emphasize the enduring legacy of statehood and national identity, linking historical figures to contemporary ideological frameworks.

This structured overview enables readers to clearly understand how different YouTube channels in Kazakhstan and Turkey contribute to the construction of historical memory and national identity. The table also serves as a quick reference for the comparative study, linking each channel to its narrative focus and visual strategy.

Dominant Discursive Patterns

The comparative analysis identified three dominant discursive patterns shaping the representation of historical figures:

- Narratives of historical justice and recovery – especially visible in Kazakh YouTube content.
- Heroic leadership narratives – more prominent in Turkish videos.
- Cultural memory narratives – present in both contexts but framed differently.

These findings demonstrate that the representation of historical figures on YouTube is deeply embedded in broader cultural and ideological frameworks. Digital media thus acts as an important arena where national history is interpreted, negotiated, and symbolically reconstructed.

Analytical Comparison

Table 4. Comparative Discursive Themes in YouTube Historical Narratives

Discourse Theme	Kazakhstan	Turkey
Colonial trauma	strong	weak
Heroic leadership	medium	strong
Cultural revival	strong	medium

This analytical comparison demonstrates that the representation of historical figures on YouTube differs according to broader national historical narratives.

These findings contribute to broader theoretical discussions on cultural memory, media representation, and digital historical narratives. The analysis demonstrates that YouTube functions not only as a platform for disseminating historical knowledge but also as a space where collective memory and national identity are actively constructed through narrative and visual strategies. In this sense, digital media plays a significant role in shaping contemporary interpretations of the past.

Conclusion. This study examined the media representation of historical figures on YouTube in Kazakhstan and Turkey through a comparative discourse analysis, highlighting the role of digital media in shaping national historical consciousness. The findings indicate that the portrayal of historical figures in YouTube videos functions less as the transmission of factual information and more as a mechanism for reconstructing cultural memory and reinforcing national identity.

The comparative analysis revealed that in Kazakh content, historical figures are primarily represented through discourses of historical justice, collective trauma, and national revival, whereas Turkish videos emphasize statehood, historical continuity, and narratives of national pride. These

differences can be explained by the distinct historical experiences and structures of cultural memory in each country.

The scientific contribution of this study lies in providing a comprehensive comparative analysis of the media representation of historical figures within the context of YouTube in Kazakhstan and Turkey. Additionally, the study expands the applicability of theories on media representation, cultural memory, and national identity to digital historical content.

From a practical perspective, the findings are relevant for producers of historical-educational content, journalists, educators, and media researchers. Understanding the mechanisms through which historical videos on YouTube influence public consciousness can contribute to presenting historical knowledge responsibly and based on scientific principles.

The study's limitations are related to the exclusive focus on YouTube as a data source and the qualitative nature of the analysis. Future research could explore historical content on other social media platforms, investigate audience reception, and examine the impact of algorithmic factors on historical narratives.

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