Linguistic Chimeras.
The Case of Kazakhstan

How mixing scripts, grammar and terms affects Russian and Kazakh

Analytical report

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An analytical report for VRKNews.kz. Chimeras arise where an instruction prevents a language from absorbing a foreign element by its own rules: in Russian text these are Kazakh letters and untranslated izafet phrases, in Kazakh they are artificial everyday neologisms. Both forms harm the very language they claim to protect.

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Summary

A linguistic chimera is a construction that joins incompatible elements of two language systems in such a way that neither system can process the whole by its own rules. In Kazakhstan such constructions arise from two directions: Kazakh letters and Kazakh grammatical forms are carried into official Russian-language texts, while artificial everyday neologisms are introduced into Kazakh itself. The report draws on the texts of the 2026 Constitution, laws, decrees, government explanations, the Terminology Commission's collections, building codes and academic articles; data are as of 12 November 2026.

Main findings

1. *Russian text.* Chimeras in it arise at three levels rather than one: graphic (теңге, Қонаев), morphological and syntactic (область Жетісу, улица Керей, Жанибек хандар, решение Төралқа) and anthroponymic (Кыдырбек-улы Дарменияр Алгатбекулы). Letters are the most visible, but an untranslated izafet does the deepest damage to a Russian sentence: a Kazakh form frozen inside it no longer declines or agrees. The same bodies' English texts contain chimeras too (Toralqasy, khandar), but English expresses relations with prepositions and copes with them; Spanish and Turkish subject Kazakh names to their own rules (tenges, Kazakistan Halk Konseyi). The harm a chimera does grows with how inflected a language is, and Russian suffers most.
2. *Inconsistency as a system.* Both models coexist within a single act. The Constitution names the legislature in Russian — Курултай, in all its case forms — while leaving the consultative body in Kazakh script — Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі. Decree No. 885 of 3 May 2022 declines «города Капшагая» in its own title but not «город Қонаев». A press release of the Astana city administration writes «ул. Д. Конаева» in Russian and «Керей, Жанибек хандар» in Kazakh in the same list.
3. *The teñge case.* From 1 July 2026, according to the Ministry of Justice, state bodies must use the Constitution's terminology, while earlier acts containing «тенге» remain in force without revision. Banks were obliged to switch to «теңге» by the financial market regulator; the National Bank converted its own acts and called the changes editorial. There is no requirement for the media: the Ministry of Culture and Information stated plainly that the mass media law sets none. Only the Language Policy Committee gave the broad reading ("in all texts in the country"). The Russian text of the President's speech of 10 November 2026 writes the amount as «6,5 трлн тенге».
4. *The legal root.* Article 19 of the Law on Languages requires traditional Kazakh names of administrative-territorial units to be given in the state language; Article 21 of the same law requires spelling norms to be observed. There is no rule reconciling the two, and each agency resolves the conflict in its own way. The argument "the law requires it" is also weak: the same state bodies' English texts do not apply Article 19, although the means exist — from a Latin alphabet with Ñ and Q to the ordinary letter Q. They write tenge,

Kurultai, Zhetysu region, Konaev city (Parts 4.7 and 4.9): the requirement is aimed at Russian text alone. Inside the country, the mechanism of adaptation also used to work. In 1993–1999 Almaty, Kokshetau and Ereymentau were introduced as new Russian transcriptions, with case endings and adjectives; in the 2020s transcription gave way to carrying Kazakh script over (Part 4.8).

5. *Kazakh.* The President named 27 words that have taken root and 8 doubtful ones. All eight doubtful words denote household objects that speakers have known since childhood under established names (piano, balcony, fountain, shower, cabbage, newspaper, lift, window vent). Among the words that took root there are almost no household objects, but many concepts of law, governance and diplomacy, and several words on that list are long-standing Arabic and Persian loans (ғарыш, жаһан, сынып). So a word lives not because it is “ours” but because it entered the language in time and filled an empty place.
6. *The pendulum of terms.* Museum became «мұражай» in 1998 and «музей» again in 2014; anthem became «әнұран» in 1992 and «гимн» again in 2014. The Terminology Commission approved fountain, pianoforte and balcony, and itself calls қылтима and шаптырма jargon it never approved. Meanwhile building codes have fixed «себезгі бөлмелері» and «субұрқақ»: the norm lives apart from the commission.
7. *Disputed statistics.* For 1992–2016 official sources give two incompatible shares of international terms: 35.3% (an article on the Terminology Commission’s portal) and 12.3% (a count by the Til-Qazyna centre). The public claim of a “3.3-fold contraction” rests only on the second figure.
8. *A normative vacuum.* The last Kazakh spelling dictionary approved at state level appeared in 1983. The President instructed that spelling be put in order by the end of 2027 through a working group at the Presidential Administration.
9. *The digital cost.* For the Unicode standard, Kazakh ә, ң, і and Russian а, н, и are different letters, not one letter with and without a mark: there is nothing to fold, unlike Russian ё and й, which decompose into е and и plus a diacritic. So neither exact search nor diacritics-insensitive search matches «Мәңгілік Ел» with «Мангилик Ел», and a record with a Latin i inside a Cyrillic word is found by no standard method. A normalising key found all 6 of 6 variants in the experiment.
10. *International experience.* Purist replacements hold when they fill an empty place before a loanword does (Icelandic tölva, French ordinateur) and fail when they push out an absorbed word (Turkish coinages of the 1930s, Russian “Shishkovisms”). A state may set the form in its own texts, but it can only propose a form to another language.

What is proposed. Separate three things that are now mixed up: the symbolic status of a name, its grammatical behaviour in another language, and its technical storage. Specific measures for the state, linguistic institutions, newsrooms and developers are gathered in Part 11, and an editorial checklist in Appendix A.

How the report was built

The report checks every claim against a primary source and states plainly where a check failed. Its starting material was an analytical study on the “anatomy of linguistic chimeras” that circulated in the newsroom; its facts were checked anew, errors corrected and anything unverifiable moved to the list of blank spots.

Data cut-off. 12 November 2026. Nothing published later is included.

Sources, in descending order of weight.

1. Texts of legal acts: the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 2026 (akorda.kz), Constitutional Law No. 298-VIII “On Qazaqstan Halyq Kenesi”, Law No. 151-I “On Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, Law No. 230-VIII “On Artificial Intelligence”. Presidential decrees No. 885, No. 887, No. 973 and No. 2923, and building codes SP RK 3.02-120-2012 and 3.02-121-2012.
2. Official texts and explanations: the President’s speech at the 10th Kurultai of the international society “Qazaq tili” on 10 November 2026, and answers from the Ministry of Justice, the National Bank, the Language Policy Committee, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Education and the Agency for Regulation and Development of the Financial Market.
3. Materials of the terminology service: the termincom.kz portal and publications of the A. Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics and the Til-Qazyna centre.
4. Academic work: articles in Slovo a slovesnost (2023), Slovo.ru: Baltic Accent (2024) and Russian Journal of Linguistics (2021), and monographs by G. Lewis, G. Thomas, J. Fishman, E. D. Suleimenova and others.
5. News agencies and media — only where they convey an official text or document practice.

Our own checks. Three measurements were made specifically for the report and can be reproduced; the method and results are in Appendix Г. They are a full count of word forms in the Russian texts of the Constitution and Law No. 298-VIII; a decomposition of Kazakh and Russian letters under the Unicode standard; and a search experiment on six records of one place name (Part 8).

Codes. Following the practice of large analytical reports, every verified claim carries a code:

Code	What it marks	Where they are collected
Ф-NN	verified fact with a source	Appendix Б
Р-NN	disagreement between sources or an error in circulation	Appendix В
М-NN	blank spot: no data, or the primary source could not be opened	Appendix В
Г, Л, С, Ц	recommendations to the state, linguistic institutions, media, developers	Part 11

The codes are kept in their original Cyrillic letters so that they match the Russian and Kazakh editions of the report.

What the report does not do. It does not assess language policy as a whole and does not argue about the status of languages: status is fixed by the Constitution. The report’s subject is narrower — the quality of texts. The question is put this way: how to make sure that a Kazakh name placed in a Russian sentence does not break it, and that a Kazakh term placed in a textbook does not put the reader off.

Part 1. Concepts: what a linguistic chimera is

A chimera differs from a loanword in one respect: a language reshapes a loanword to suit itself, but it is not allowed to reshape a chimera. To keep the dispute over теңге or жеделсаты from becoming a matter of taste, we first need to separate concepts that public debate tends to mix up.

1.1. Chimera: from myth to linguistics

The word comes from Greek: χίμαιρα meant “young she-goat”, from χίμαρος, “he-goat”. In the sixth book of the Iliad this is the name of a monster that is a lion in front, a goat in the middle and a serpent behind. The myth gave the word its main sense: a creature assembled from parts that never live together in nature.

In 1907 the German botanist Hans Winkler brought the word into biology: he called a chimera a plant obtained by grafting, whose tissues belong to two different organisms and do not merge into one. Hence an important refinement: a biological chimera is viable, but each of its cells remains a cell of its own parent. This is exactly what happens to the word «Төралқа» in the Russian text of the law: it lives in the sentence but remains a Kazakh word and does not take Russian endings.

In this report a linguistic chimera is a construction that meets three conditions at once:

1. it joins elements of two language systems — graphic, morphological or word-forming;
2. the receiving language cannot absorb the foreign element by its own rules, because absorption is forbidden or not provided for by an instruction;
3. as a result the receiving system stops working properly: a word no longer declines, a sentence loses agreement, a record cannot be found by search, a term becomes unclear to native speakers.

The first two conditions without the third give an ordinary quotation: the name of the society «Қазақ тілі» in quotation marks bothers nobody. The third without the second gives an ordinary mistake, which a proofreader will fix.

1.2. Loanword, interference, calque, hybrid

Loanword. In his 1950 article “The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing”, the Norwegian-American linguist Einar Haugen proposed distinguishing two processes in borrowing: importation of a foreign model and substitution of one’s own means in its place. The Russian word аул shows substitution well: Kazakh ауыл entered Russian, the vowel cluster unfamiliar to a Russian ear was shortened, and the noun received full Russian declension — аула, аулу, в ауле. Kumis, baiga, saxaul, kurt and airan were absorbed the same way. Substitution is what keeps borrowing healthy.

Haugen distinguished three kinds of borrowing: the whole borrowed word (loanword), the mixed word, partly foreign and partly native (loanblend), and the semantic shift, in which a native word acquires a foreign meaning (loanshift). Mixed words are normal in any language: Russian телевизор combines Greek tele and Latin visor, and Kazakh ғаламтор combines Arabic ғалам and Turkic тор. Mixing alone does not create a chimera.

Interference. The word goes back to Latin inter, “between”, and ferire, “to strike”. At first it was a term of physics: at the start of the nineteenth century the English scientist Thomas Young used it for the overlap of waves that now reinforce and now cancel each other. In 1953 Uriel Weinreich, in “Languages in Contact”, brought the term into linguistics: interference is any deviation from the norm of either of two languages in a bilingual’s speech caused by knowledge of the other language. Interference is usually spontaneous: a person speaks “Russian with Kazakh word order” without noticing it. Kazakhstan has produced interference of a special kind — prescribed interference. It is introduced by the drafter of an official text, and introduced deliberately.

Calque. French calque meant “a copy made through tracing paper”, from calquer, “to copy”, which goes back to Italian calcare, “to press”. A calque carries over from a foreign language not the sound of a word but its inner form: Russian небоскрёб repeats English skyscraper part by part, and Kazakh жасанды интеллект repeats artificial intelligence by half. A calque succeeds when its parts are clear and add up to the concept (тікұшақ, “vertical flyer”, for helicopter) and fails when the image leads away from the object (жеделсаты, “fast staircase”, for a machine that has no steps).

Hybrid. Latin hybrida denoted a cross between a domestic pig and a wild boar. In language a hybrid is a word built from parts of different origin. A hybrid differs from a chimera in that its parts have fused: ғаламтор inflects by every Kazakh rule, and nobody feels a seam in it.

Stage	What happens	Example	Chimera?
Absorbed loanword	the word is adapted to the sounds and grammar	аул, байга, кумыс	no
Hybrid	parts of different origin have fused	ғаламтор, телевизор	no
Quotation	a foreign form is placed in quotation marks as a proper name	общество «Қазақ тілі»	no
Unabsorbed form in running text	foreign script or grammar without quotation marks; the word drops out of declension	решением Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы	yes
Artificial neologism instead of an absorbed word	a new word pushes out one that speakers already use	үнқағаз instead of газет	yes, within one language

1.3. Purism

Latin purus means “clean”. Linguistic purism is the urge to cleanse a language of foreign elements or to keep them out. In “Linguistic Purism” (1991) the British linguist George Thomas showed that purism differs by aim. It can be archaising (a return to old words), ethnographic (reliance on folk, rural speech), elitist (protecting the standard language from the vernacular), reformist (renewing the language for new tasks), playful and xenophobic. Importantly, Thomas treats purism as neither good nor evil: French ordinateur and Icelandic tölva are also fruits of purism, and successful ones.

The Kazakh material shows two kinds of purism at once. Words such as күйсандық and желкөз follow the ethnographic pattern: they take their image from everyday life (күй, сандық, жел, көз). Words such as мұражай and мұрағат follow the reformist pattern: they were meant to give the language its own names for institutions. The first did not take root; the second did, and were cancelled all the same — this is discussed in Part 6.

1.4. Language planning: status and corpus

The term “language planning” was introduced by Einar Haugen in 1959 when he described the dispute over the Norwegian literary norm. He later identified four steps: selection of a norm, its codification in dictionaries and grammars, implementation, and elaboration — expanding the vocabulary for new tasks.

In 1969 the German linguist Heinz Kloss distinguished two kinds of planning. *Status planning* decides which language is heard in which domain: in court, at school, in parliament. *Corpus planning* decides what the language itself should be like: which alphabet, which words, which spelling. In 1989 the American sociolinguist Robert Cooper added a third kind — acquisition planning, that is, language teaching.

For this report the observation of Joshua Fishman is decisive. In his 2006 book “Do Not Leave Your Language Alone” he showed that decisions about the corpus — about a letter, about a word — almost always carry a hidden status agenda. The letter ң in Russian «теңге» adds nothing to its sound for a Russian reader, but it marks the name as belonging to the state language. This is a corpus decision taken for the sake of status. Understanding this mechanism matters to both sides of the dispute: supporters see a legitimate symbol in it, critics an intrusion into another writing system. Part 10 examines both arguments.

1.5. Pluricentricity: where a variety ends and a chimera begins

A pluricentric language is one with several centres of norm. The term was introduced by the same Heinz Kloss and popularised by the Australian linguist Michael Clyne, who published the collection “Pluricentric Languages” in 1992. British and American English, German and Austrian German are classic examples.

The Kazakhstani school of Russian studies, above all Professor Eleonora Suleimenova, has long described the Russian of Kazakhstan as a distinct variety with its own vocabulary, pragmatics and onomastics. Words such as аким, маслихат, той, наурыз, бешбармак and тұсаукесер enter the Russian of Kazakhstan legitimately: they name local realities that have no other names. This is a variety, not a chimera.

The boundary runs where a local form stops obeying the general rules of Russian grammar. «Аким» declines: акима, акиму, с акимом. «Төралқа» in the law does not: «заседания Төралқа», «решение Төралқа». The first enriches the variety; the second breaks the sentence. A study by Zhuldyz Smagulova and Dinara Madiyeva (Russian Journal of Linguistics, 2021) records a steady rise in the share of unabsorbed Kazakh and English names of events in Kazakhstan’s Russian-language newspapers, while translations and transliterations are becoming fewer. This is the movement from variety to chimera.

1.6. Two sides of one problem

The report examines chimeras from two sides because their mechanism is the same. In Russian text an instruction prevents a Kazakh form from being absorbed. In Kazakh text an instruction introduces a form that speakers never asked for and that the language cannot absorb because the place is already taken. In both cases the norm comes not from usage — living speech — but from an order, and in both cases the reader loses.

Part 2. The legal and institutional framework

Kazakhstan's law directly requires Kazakh names to be given in the state language, but nowhere says how such a name behaves inside a Russian sentence. Almost all the chimeras of Russian text grow out of this gap.

2.1. The 2026 Constitution

The new Constitution was adopted at a national referendum on 15 March 2026: 87.15% of those voting supported it on a turnout of 73.12%. It entered into force on 1 July 2026 (Article 94). Five provisions matter for this report.

Provision	Content	What it means for the language of Russian text
Art. 2(6)	Russian text: «Национальная валюта (денежная единица) Республики Казахстан – теңге»	the Kazakh letter ң is introduced into the Russian text of the Basic Law
Art. 9	the state language is Kazakh; in state organisations and local self-government bodies Russian is officially used alongside it	the Russian text of laws has official status, and therefore a norm of its own
Arts. 52–53	the Kurultai is the highest representative body of 145 deputies	in Russian text the name is written in Russian letters and declines in every case
Arts. 70–71	Constitution: «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі (Народный Совет Казахстана) – высший консультативный орган»; Law No. 298-VIII, Art. 1: «высшим конституционным консультативным органом»	in Russian text the name is left in Kazakh script, with the Russian translation given once in brackets
Art. 22(2)	everyone has the right to use their native language and freely choose the language of communication, education and creative work	the right to a language includes the right to its norm

A full count of the Constitution's text on akorda.kz is telling. The name of the Kurultai appears 166 times in all case forms (Курултай — 28, Курултая — 110, Курултаем — 20, Курултаю — 5, Курултае — 3), and the form «Құрылтай» never. The phrase «Халық Кеңесі» appears 8 times, its Russian translation once, in brackets in Article 70. Within a single document,

the decision to translate one name and leave another was taken differently, and no rule explaining it is stated in the text.

In his speech of 10 November 2026 the President noted another decision of the same kind: the words Independence and Sovereignty are written in the Constitution with capital letters to stress their importance. Under Russian spelling rules common nouns take a lowercase letter; the capital here is a mark of status, not a requirement of grammar. This is an example of what Joshua Fishman described: a decision about a language's corpus carries a status agenda.

2.2. The Law on Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan

Law No. 151-I of 11 July 1997 contains three provisions that bear directly on chimeras.

Article 1 defines transliteration as the letter-by-letter rendering of texts and words of one writing system by the means of another. The concept is introduced, but the law sets no procedure for transliterating from Kazakh into Russian.

Article 19, as amended by Law No. 72-V of 21 January 2013 and Law No. 94-VII of 29 December 2021, states that traditional, historically established Kazakh names of administrative-territorial units, components of settlements and other physical-geographical objects are given in the state language.

Article 21 requires the texts of signage and visual information to be set out in compliance with spelling norms and authentic translation.

The fork lies between Articles 19 and 21. The formula "given in the state language" can be read in two ways:

1. the name is written in its Kazakh form in any text, including a Russian one: «область Жетiсу»;
2. the name has a Kazakh form in the state language, and in Russian text it is rendered according to the Russian spelling norms that Article 21 requires: «Жетiсу облысы» in Kazakh text and «Жетысуская область» or «область Жетысу» in Russian.

Agency practice chose the first reading, but not consistently: in the same decrees neighbouring names are given in Russian (Алматинская область, Аксуский район). The law does not settle the dispute, the courts have not examined it, and there is no official interpretation.

There is also a check that shows how weak the argument "the law requires it" is. If Article 19 required Kazakh names to appear in Kazakh form in any text, it would apply to the English versions published by the same bodies. The English text of the Constitution on the Adilet portal writes the tenge (KZT), Kurultai, Kazakhstan Halyk Kenesi (Kazakhstan People's Council). The State Revenue Committee reports in English the renaming of the city of Kapshagai to the city of Konaev. The National Bank calls its branches Zhetysu region and Konaev city. These texts contain no Kazakh letters, although the 2021 draft of the Latin-based Kazakh alphabet has the letter ñ that could be put in teñge. So the bodies themselves read Article 19 the second way —

for English. The first reading is applied selectively, to Russian text alone. A detailed case-by-case comparison is in Part 4.7.

2.3. Names, patronymics and surnames

The procedure for writing the surnames and patronymics of Kazakhs is set by Presidential Decree No. 2923 of 2 April 1996 “On the procedure for resolving issues related to the writing of surnames and patronymics of persons of Kazakh nationality”. The Civil Code (Article 15) defines a citizen’s name as surname and first name, and the patronymic as an optional part. The Code on Marriage and Family provides that a child’s surname follows the parents’ surname (Article 194) and that the patronymic is given from the father’s name (Article 63). The Law on Languages (Article 20) merely refers to these acts. This is discussed in detail in Part 5.

2.4. Who is responsible for the norm

Institution	Status and role	What is known as of November 2026
Republican Terminology Commission (Terminkom)	consultative and advisory body; approves terms	since 2 June 2025 chaired by the vice-minister of science and higher education; about 21,000 units approved in 1971–2017
Onomastic Commission	consultative and advisory body; names and renamings	decisions on place names, including streets of the capital
Language Policy Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education	authorised body for language development	gave the broad reading of the теңге spelling (July 2026); runs the 2023–2029 Concept
A. Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics	academic research, dictionaries	has not stated a public position on the President's list (blank spot M-03)
Sh. Shayakhmetov Til-Qazyna centre	applied service, termincom.kz portal	maintains a database of about 391,000 terms as of November 2026
Republican Spelling Commission	being set up	a draft government resolution has been put out for discussion; the basis is section 3 of the 2023–2029 Concept for the Development of Language Policy
Working group at the Presidential Administration	instruction of 10 November 2026	put spelling in order and update dictionaries by the end of 2027

The picture shows many institutions and none with the final word: the Terminology Commission and the Onomastic Commission are advisory, their decisions become binding only through ministerial acts, and building codes and textbooks follow their own update cycles.

2.5. A normative vacuum since 1983

In his speech of 10 November 2026 the President said plainly that the Kazakh spelling dictionary approved by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council appeared in 1983;

several dictionaries have been published since, but none has been approved at state level or has legal force. He added that in some neighbouring states such works are updated every five years, and instructed that the work be completed by the end of the following year, 2027.

A vacuum lasting 43 years explains a great deal. Without an approved norm, an agency, a textbook compiler or the author of a building code may choose a variant on their own, and every choice is equally lawful. Hence the parallel бұрқақ, сұбұрқақ and фонтан, and hence different spellings of one name on two pages of one website.

2.6. The Latin script: a reform postponed without a date

The move of Kazakh writing to the Latin script was announced by Presidential Decree No. 569 of 26 October 2017. The first version of the alphabet, with apostrophes, was replaced in 2018 by a version with acute accents. A new version with umlauts was presented in 2021, and in 2022 scholars submitted yet another draft to the National Commission. On 8 September 2026 Elmira Asan, deputy chair of the Language Policy Committee, said there were no specific deadlines, work on the alphabet and spelling rules was continuing, and the funds allocated for the transition had been returned to the budget since 2020.

This matters for the report. The spelling norm for Cyrillic that is to be drawn up by the end of 2027 will be both a norm and a draft: if the transition happens, it will have to be carried over into Latin script. The fewer random variants the norm contains, the cheaper that transfer will be.

Part 3. The graphic level: Kazakh letters in Russian text

A Kazakh letter in a Russian word tells a Russian reader nothing about sound and changes nothing in grammar: it works as a flag of belonging. So the dispute over теңге is not about pronunciation but about marks of status and the technical cost of those marks.

3.1. What a grapheme is and how the Kazakh alphabet differs from the Russian

The word “grapheme” is formed from Greek γράφω, “I write”, on the model of “phoneme”; the concept goes back to Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, who first treated a sound and its written sign as units of different levels. A grapheme is the smallest unit of writing that distinguishes meaning: in Russian, мел and мёл differ by the graphemes e and ё, although many people type both as e.

The Kazakh Cyrillic alphabet was approved in 1940 on the basis of the Russian one. It has 42 letters: all 33 Russian letters and 9 of its own — ә, ғ, қ, ң, ө, ұ, ү, h, i. Each of the nine marks a sound that Russian lacks or that does not distinguish meaning in Russian. Қ is a voiceless uvular stop [q], ғ a voiced uvular fricative [ʁ], and ң a velar nasal [ŋ], as in English sing. Ә is an open front vowel [æ], and ө and ү are rounded front vowels close to German ö and ü. Ұ is a short rounded vowel [ʊ], h a glottal [h], i a short front vowel [ɪ].

A Russian reader who meets «теңге» in Russian text will read [tenge]: Russian has no [ŋ], and the letter ң will not teach the sound. A Kazakh reader will read the word correctly even without ң, because he knows it. So in Russian text the letter works not as a sign of sound but as a sign of belonging.

3.2. The rule of Russian practical transcription

Practical transcription is the rendering of foreign names with one’s own alphabet so that a speaker can read them without knowing the foreign language. The standard Russian reference is R. S. Gilyarevsky and B. A. Starostin, «Иностранные имена и названия в русском тексте» (“Foreign names in Russian text”; first edition 1969, third 1985). Its principle is simple: in running Russian text names are written in Russian letters; Latin spelling is kept only for trademarks, and a name combining two alphabets is best put in quotation marks.

For Kazakh names in Russian text the following practice of correspondences has taken shape.

Kazakh letter	Sound	Usual rendering in Russian text	Example
ә	[æ]	а (after soft consonants sometimes я)	Мәңгілік → Мангилик
ғ	[ʁ]	г	Ғабит → Габит
қ	[q]	к	Қонаев → Конаев
ң	[ŋ]	н	теңге → тенге
ө	[ø]	о (sometimes ё)	Өскемен → Оскемен
ұ	[ʊ]	у	Ұлытау → Улытау
ү	[ʏ]	у (sometimes ю)	Түркістан → Туркестан
h	[h]	х	Һ is a rare letter of loanwords
і	[ɪ]	и, after hard consonants ы	Жетісу → Жетысу

In fairness, there is a case against this practice. A study by Z. K. Temirgazina, O. A. Andryushchenko and M. Valova (Slovo a slovesnost, 2023), based on a 1988 dictionary of Kazakh names, showed that in Soviet times only 18.12% of Kazakh names were rendered into Russian one-to-one. The main method, graphic-phonetic rendering (75.99%), allowed many variants and distortions. The authors attribute this both to the difference between the sound systems and to the general policy of Russification. This is where the supporters of Kazakh script in Russian text draw their argument: Russian rendering was long not neutral. But what follows is the need for accurate and uniform transcription, not for abandoning transcription altogether.

3.3. The chronicle of the teñge

The spelling of the national currency became the most visible graphic decision of 2026. A chronicle based on primary sources, newest first:

Date	Event	Source
11.11.2026	a business outlet runs the headline «Что происходит с теңге?» (“What is happening to the teñge?”); the next headline names the football club «Қызыл-Жар СҚ»	Bizmedia.kz

Date	Event	Source
10.11.2026	the official Russian text of the President’s speech at the 10th Kurultai of the «Қазақ тілі» society writes the amount as «6,5 трлн тенге»	Akorda, Kazakhstanskaya Pravda
17.09.2026	Ministry of Culture and Information: when quoting acts, follow their terminology, but the mass media law sets no special requirements for spelling the currency in the media	BES.media
17.09.2026	financial market regulator: banks must bring documents, apps, cash machines, cash documents and receipts into line with «теңге»	BES.media
17.09.2026	Ministry of Education: textbooks are brought into line with the new spelling as they are updated in stages, once every five years; changes are already in the 2026/2027 textbooks	BES.media
16.07.2026	Language Policy Committee: «теңге» should be written in all texts in the country; no final decision on «тг», «₸» and the old «тенге»	Tengrinews.kz, Lada.kz
16.07.2026	Ministry of Justice: state bodies must use the Constitution’s terminology, but earlier laws, contracts and acts containing «тенге» remain in force	Tengrinews.kz, Lada.kz
16.07.2026	Ministry of Finance, at the initiative of the State Revenue Committee, puts out for discussion a draft order replacing «тенге» with «теңге» in the rules for selling debtors’ property	Digitalbusiness.kz
01.07.2026	the Constitution enters into force; amendments to the Tax and Civil Codes enter into force	Constitution, Art. 94
11.06.2026	amending laws: the Tax Code (Law No. 308-VIII) and the Civil Code, whose Russian Article 127 reads «Денежной единицей в Республике Казахстан является теңге»	Pro1c.kz, Finratings.kz

Date	Event	Source
June 2026	the National Bank and the regulator change the spelling in their regulations; the National Bank calls the changes technical and editorial	Kazinform, BES.media
15.03.2026	the Constitution is adopted at a referendum; the Russian text of Article 2: «Национальная валюта (денежная единица) Республики Казахстан – теңге»	akorda.kz

Three conclusions follow from the chronicle.

1. *The obligation differs by addressee.* For state bodies the new spelling is mandatory under the Justice Ministry’s explanation, while earlier acts remain in force; for banks, under the regulator’s demand; the National Bank switched on its own; for textbooks it comes with the update cycle; for the media, agencies give contradictory answers (disagreement P-06).
2. *Grammar has not suffered.* Russian тенге never declined, just as евро and кенгуру do not. So теңге does not break a Russian sentence; what suffers is typing, search and consistency.
3. *Practice departs from the instruction at the very top.* The Russian text of the head of state’s speech, published almost four months after the Committee’s explanation, follows Russian spelling. This is not an argument against the constitutional norm, but it shows that the spheres of mandatory and permissible spelling need to be distinguished.

The currency code did not change: the numeric code 398 and the letter code KZT stayed the same. The decision affected only the Cyrillic name.

3.4. Asymmetries: some names are translated, others are not

The main sign that graphic chimeras come from chance rather than from a rule is asymmetry. Names of the same nature are rendered differently in the same documents.

Pair	Form rendered in Russian	Form left in Kazakh script	Where
state bodies	Курултай, депутатов Курултая	Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі	2026 Constitution
parties	«Ак жол», ОСДП	«Әділет»	results of the 23 August 2026 election
streets	ул. Д. Конаева, пр. Тауелсиздик, ул. А. Байтурсынулы	Керей, Жанибек хандар	Astana city administration press release on the half-marathon of 7 June 2026
districts	Аксуский, Абайский, Аягозский районы	район Ақсуат	Decree No. 887 of 3 May 2022, one list
cities	города Капшагая	в город Қонаев	title of Decree No. 885 of 3 May 2022
companies	—	«Самрук-Қазына», «Қазақстан темір жолы»	official Russian names

The pairing of «ул. Д. Конаева» and «Керей, Жанибек хандар» in one line is especially telling: the city of Қонаев is named after the same Dinmukhamed Kunaev whose name the street bears in a Russian case form.

For comparison: to other languages with extended Cyrillic alphabets Kazakhstan’s Russian-language press applies the ordinary rules. The Mongolian alphabet has the same letters ү and ө, yet Russian texts write the Mongolian president’s name as «Ухнаагийн Хурэлсух», without Mongolian letters. So the issue is not that transcription is technically impossible but a symbolic choice made only for Kazakh names, and only in some cases.

3.5. What follows

A graphic chimera is cheaper than the others: it hardly breaks grammar. But it has two costs. The first is technical: it cannot be typed in a Russian keyboard layout without switching, and in the standard Kazakh layout for Windows the nine special letters sit on the number row; an operator in a hurry substitutes similar-looking Latin characters, and the database gets polluted (Part 8). The second is normative: if some names are translated and others are not, neither an

editor nor a translator nor machine translation can infer a rule, and each case has to be memorised separately.

Part 4. Morphology and syntax: izafet in Russian text

The deepest chimera in Russian text is not a letter but a whole Kazakh grammatical construction inserted untranslated into a Russian sentence. In the main text of Law No. 298-VIII such a construction occurs 18 times — 11 times as the full phrase and 7 times as the short form «Төралқа» (counting method in Appendix Г). Almost always it stands in a case it cannot express.

4.1. What izafet is

The word comes from Arabic grammar: iḍāfa means “annexation, addition”. Arab grammarians used it for a pair of nouns in which the second defines the first (“the teacher’s house”). Persian grammar gave the same phenomenon the name ezafe, after the particle -e that links a word to its modifier. Turkologists carried the term over to Turkic noun phrases with possessive markers. In Kazakh grammar the phenomenon is described as one of five kinds of syntactic link — *матасу* (literally “interlocking”), alongside қиысу (agreement), меңгеру (government), қабысу (adjunction) and жанасу (juxtaposition).

In Kazakh the modifier always precedes the head, and the link between them is built in three ways.

Type	Structure	Kazakh example	Russian rendering
No suffix	both words in their base form; the first names material or a feature	тас құдық, ағаш сөре	каменный колодец, деревянная полка (stone well, wooden shelf)
One suffix	the first word without a suffix, the second with a third-person possessive suffix (-ы, -і, -сы, -сі)	Жетісу облысы, Абай облысы, білім басқармасы	Жетысуская область, область Абай, управление образования
Two suffixes	the first word in the genitive (-ның, -нің, -дың, -дің, -тың, -тің), the second with a possessive suffix	Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы	Президиум Народного Совета Казахстана (Presidium of the People’s Council of Kazakhstan)

Russian expresses the same relations by other means: an agreeing relational adjective («Алматинская область», «Капшагайский городской суд»), government of the genitive («проспект Аль-Фараби», «Президиум Народного Совета») or an apposition with a generic word («город Москва», «провинция Хэбэй»). Russian is an inflectional language: words are linked by endings, and a word that takes no endings drops out of the link.

4.2. The first type of chimera: a frozen name in apposition

Decree No. 887 of 3 May 2022 created three regions, named in the Russian text «область Абай», «область Жетісу», «область Ұлытау». Decree No. 973 of 9 August 2022 created «суды областей Абай, Жетісу, Ұлытау». Decree No. 885 of the same 3 May renamed Kapshagay, and its title reads «О переименовании города Капшагая Алматинской области в город Қонаев». In one line the old name declines in Russian and the new one does not.

Precision is needed here, because not every apposition is a chimera. Russian allows “generic word plus name in the nominative”: «провинция Хэбэй», «штат Айова», «в городе Москва» in official style. Moreover, the form «область Абай» has its own justification: the region contains an Abai district, and the adjective «Абайская область» would be confused with it. The same clash exists between Ulytau region and Ulytau district.

Two other circumstances make the construction a chimera.

1. *Kazakh script.* «Область Улытау» is a normal Russian apposition; «область Ұлытау» contains a letter the Russian alphabet does not know. The same decree gives, in a single list, «района Ақсуат, Абайского, Аягозского, Бескарагайского… районов»: Kazakh script and Russian adjectives side by side.
2. *Refusal to decline where the Russian norm requires it.* Russian city names in -ов and -ев decline: «в городе Королёве», «под Ростовом». By this norm it should be «в городе Конаеве», «из Конаева». Official texts write «города Қонаев» and «в городе Қонаев». Likewise «района Есиль» instead of the former «Есильского района», in a 2024 press release of the Astana city administration on the appointment of a district akim.

4.3. The second type of chimera: a Kazakh plural inside a Russian name

Astana has a street called in Kazakh «Керей, Жәнібек хандар көшесі» — the street of the khans Kerey and Zhanibek, founders of the Kazakh Khanate. «Хандар» is “khan” with the plural suffix -дар; in the Kazakh phrase it stands in its base form and modifies «көшесі».

Russian texts moved the generic word «улица» to the front and left «хандар» as it was. The result is three spellings at once, all from 2026 reports citing the city administration: «улица Керей, Жанибек хандар», «улица Керей Жанибек хандар», «улица Керей и Жанибек хандар». To a Russian reader «хандар» is indistinguishable from a surname: «пересечение улицы Керей Жанибек Хандар» reads like a street named after three people. An advertisement for a flat says «по ул. Керей Жанибек хандар д. 11»: the form has passed into everyday speech without the comma and without the meaning.

In Russian the street could be called «улица ханов Керея и Жанибека» or, more briefly, «улица Керей-хана и Жанибек-хана». Both decline and both are clear.

4.4. The third type of chimera: a two-suffix izafet in a Russian law

Constitutional Law No. 298-VIII of 5 June 2026 “On Qazaqstan Halyq Kenesi” entered into force on 1 July 2026 and replaced the 2008 Law on the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. In its Russian text the body that runs the Council between sessions is named by the Kazakh izafet phrase «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы», and from its first mention in Article 10 in short form: «(далее – Төралқа)».

The phrase has two Kazakh suffixes: -нің (the genitive: “of the People’s Council of Kazakhstan”) and -сы (possession: “its Presidium”). Inside a Russian sentence the phrase must express Russian cases — and cannot. A full analysis of the Russian text of the law:

Quotation from the Russian text of the law	**Case the Russian sentence requires**	**What it would be in Russian**
«руководство… осуществляет Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы (далее – Төралқа)»	nominative	осуществляет Президиум Народного Совета Казахстана (далее — Президиум)
«Заседания Төралқа созываются Председателем…»	genitive	заседания Президиума
«К полномочиям Төралқа относятся…»	genitive	к полномочиям Президиума
«Решение Төралқа оформляется протоколом»	genitive	решение Президиума
«не менее двух третей членов Төралқа»	genitive	членов Президиума
«решением Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы… образуется Комиссия по этике»	instrumental	решением Президиума
«готовит и направляет в Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы заключения»	accusative	направляет в Президиум
«исполнять решения Сессии и Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы»	genitive	решения Сессии и Президиума
«Председатель Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі»	genitive	Председатель Народного Совета

Curiously, the drafters sensed the awkwardness themselves: the short form «Төралқа» drops the Kazakh possessive suffix -сы, which already adapts the Kazakh word to the Russian sentence — but it stops half-way and gives the word no Russian endings. More curious still, Russian equivalents exist in the official texts: Article 70 of the Constitution gives «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі (Народный Совет Казахстана)», and Article 6 of the law «Қазақстан Халық

Кеңесінің Төралқасы (Президиум)». The translation exists, but it is used once, as a gloss, not as the name.

4.5. How the neighbours solve the same problem, and how Kazakhstan used to

A body's national name can be kept without breaking the Russian sentence. Both the practice of countries in a similar position and Kazakhstan's own earlier practice show this.

Name in the state language	How it is written in Russian text	Does it decline?
Жогорку Кеңеш (Kyrgyzstan)	Жогорку Кенеш, депутаты Жогорку Кенеша	yes; the Kyrgyz letter ң replaced by Russian н
Олий Мажлис (Uzbekistan)	Олий Мажлис, палаты Олий Мажлиса	yes
Улсын Их Хурал (Mongolia)	Великий Государственный Хурал, депутаты Хурала	yes; part of the name translated
Мәжіліс (Kazakhstan, until 2026)	Мажилис, депутаты Мажилиса	yes
Құрылтай (Kazakhstan, from 2026)	Курултай, депутатов Курултая	yes
Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі (Kazakhstan, from 2026)	Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі, Председатель Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі	no

The table shows that «Төралқа» is not a continuation of Kazakhstan's tradition but a departure from it. For three decades the Russian text of Kazakhstan's laws kept the national names of bodies (аким, маслихат, Мажилис), writing them in Russian letters and declining them. The Kurultai in the new Constitution continues that tradition. The Khalyq Kenesi breaks it.

4.6. Why this matters more than it seems

The Russian text of a law in Kazakhstan is official (Article 9 of the Constitution). It is used by courts, lawyers, translators, machine translation systems and, since 2026, artificial intelligence models trained on the body of legislation. A sentence in which the subject cannot be told from the object by its form forces every reader to translate it mentally into Kazakh in order to understand the syntax. This directly contradicts the purpose of a parallel official text: to be clear to someone who reads only that text.

4.7. A control check: the same names in English, Spanish and Turkish

If chimeras were produced by a legal requirement, they would appear in every language in which the state publishes its texts. If they come from a choice concerning Russian text alone, other languages will not have them, or will have milder ones. A case-by-case comparison shows the second, with an important caveat: English is not free of chimeras either; it merely suffers less from them.

Three languages of different structure were taken for comparison: English, which is analytic and expresses relations through word order and prepositions; Spanish, moderately inflectional, with number agreement and strict written stress rules; and Turkish, agglutinative and related to Kazakh, with the same izafet.

Case	Russian text	English text	Spanish or Turkish text
Currency	«теңге» in Art. 2 of the Constitution	the tenge (KZT) in the English text of the Constitution; no letter ñ	the Spanish press writes «millones de tenges», with a Spanish plural ending; the Turkish press «trilyon tenge»
Parliament	Курултай, депутатов Курултая — declines	Kurultai	Spanish: Kurultái, with a stress mark under Spanish spelling rules; Turkish: Kurultay’ın, with a Turkish genitive ending after an apostrophe
People’s Council	«Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі», Kazakh letters	Kazakhstan Halyk Kenesi (Kazakhstan People’s Council) in the Constitution; Kazakhstan Khalyk Kenesi in the translation of the law; Qazaqstan Halyk Kenesi in English-language Tengrinews	Spanish: Halyk Kenesi (Consejo del Pueblo); Turkish: Kazakistan Halk Konseyi, a full translation

Case	Russian text	English text	Spanish or Turkish text
Presidium	the full phrase and the short form «Төралқа» — 18 times, never declined	the chimera kept, but in five spellings: Kenesiin Toralkasy, Kenesiin Toralqasy, Kenesin Toralqasy, Kenesinin Toralqasy, Kenesinin Toralqasi; plus “Toralqa-Presidium”; syntax intact: meetings of the Toralqa, a decision of Toralqa	—
New regions	«область Жетісу», «район Ақсуат» next to «Аксуского района»	Zhetysu region, Abai region, Ulytau region; Kazinform: Aqsuat district	Spanish, for older regions: «región de Kazajistán Occidental», with a translation
City	«города Капшагая… в город Қонаев»	renaming the city of Kapshagai to the city of Konaev; Konaev city	—
Street of the khans	«Керей, Жанибек хандар» in three spellings	inconsistent: Kerey and Zhanibek Khans Street (QazMonitor); Kerey and Zhanibek Khandar Str. (Nazarbayev University); st. Kerey, Zhanibek khandar (English page of gov4c.kz)	—
District akim	«Кыдырбек-улы Дарменияр Алгатбекулы»	Kydyrbek-uly Darmeniyar Algatbekuly; the district: Yesil district	—
President	Касым-Жомарт Токаев	Kassym-Jomart Tokayev	Spanish (EFE): Kasim-Yomart Tokáyev; Turkish: Kasım Cömert Tokayev

Case	Russian text	English text	Spanish or Turkish text
Railways	«Қазақстан темір жолы»	Kazakhstan Temir Zholy	Spanish: «Ferrocarriles de Kazajistán» (KTJ), a translation
Parties	«Әділет», but «Ак жол»	Adilet	Spanish: Adilet (Justicia), Aúl, Ak Zhol
Homoglyph	«Мәңгілік» with Latin i inside Cyrillic	Tauelsizdik Ave. on the English page of egov.kz: two Cyrillic i (U+0456) inside a Latin word	—
Latin-script Kazakh spelling	Kazakh Cyrillic carried over: теңге, Қонаев, Жетісу	never applied: tenge, not teñge; Konaev, not Qonaev; Kazakhstan, not Qazaqstan	—

Four conclusions follow from the table.

1. *Kazakh letters pass into no foreign text.* Neither the English version of the Constitution nor the Spanish or Turkish press writes teñge, Qonaev or Zhetisu with Kazakh characters. So in practice the requirement “to give in the state language” applies only to Russian text, and the argument from Article 19 explains a choice rather than a rule.
2. *English knows chimeras too.* The preserved khandar, the five spellings of Toralqasy and the Cyrillic i inside Tauelsizdik show that unabsorbed forms enter English text as well: they are brought in by the same practice without uniform transcription rules.
3. *The harm a chimera does is proportional to how inflected a language is.* English hardly changes words by case and expresses relations through prepositions and word order: “a decision of Toralqa” is grammatically flawless, and the chimera remains only a graphic and semantic nuisance. Russian expresses relations through endings, and a word that takes none drops out of the sentence: «решение Төралқа» reads as a malfunction. Spanish, moderately inflected, simply subjects the word to its own rules: tenges, Kurultái.
4. *The most closely related language translates most fully.* Turkish is built like Kazakh and has the same izafet. Yet the Turkish press does not carry the Kazakh form over but builds its own: Kazakistan Halk Konseyi, Halk Konseyi’nin, Kurultay’ın. Every language keeps the right to its own grammar — and only Russian text in Kazakhstan is selectively denied that right.

4.8. A mirror check: exonyms both ways

Languages have always reshaped foreign names to suit themselves, and Kazakh does so as freely as Russian. The turning point in Kazakhstan came not in the 1990s, when the Russian forms of Kazakh names were replaced by new ones, but in the 2020s, when Russian text stopped being given a form of its own at all.

Kazakh uses its own exonyms. An exonym is the name of a place in a language foreign to it. Kazakh speech and press name Russian cities in their own way: Мәскеу (Moscow), Орынбор (Orenburg), Омбы (Omsk), Сарытау (Saratov), Түмен (Tyumen), Қорған (Kurgan), and Russia itself Ресей. Nobody demands that Kazakh text write «Москва» or «Оренбург», and rightly so: every language may pronounce and inflect foreign names by its own laws.

Russian did the same in the other direction. Алма-Ата, Кокчетав, Актюбинск and Джамбул are Russian exonyms of Kazakh names formed over a century and a half. They can be compared with «Мәскеу»: a language absorbs a foreign name by its own laws.

A bilingual pair as the Soviet norm. From 1944 two regional newspapers appeared in Kokchetav: the Kazakh «Көкшетау правдасы» and a Russian paper which from 1956 to 1963 was called «Кокчетавская правда» and later became «Степной маяк». One city, two forms of its name, each following the laws of its own language. The Kazakh paper went through a pendulum of names of its own: from April 1963 to the end of 1965 it was called «Тың өлкесі» (“Virgin Land”), and in 1966 its old name was restored.

Usage shifted even without instructions. Gulbarshyn Salyq, chair of the Akmola Region Association of Local Historians, examined the regional archive. In the “place of issue” field, documents until December 1935 read «город Кокчетав», from December 1935 to July 1944 «город Кокшетау», and then Kokchetav again. She found no documents on a renaming. In those years the form «город Кокшетау» was used by police circulars, district executive committee letterheads and even a report of the Central Statistical Administration of the USSR State Planning Committee. So Russian official writing made the choice between an absorbed exonym and a transcription of the Kazakh name on its own, long before the decrees of the 1990s.

Three models for rendering a Kazakh name in Russian text:

Model	Period	Examples	How it behaves in Russian text
1. Russian exonym	before the 1990s	Алма-Ата, Кокчетав and Кокчетавская область, Актюбинск	full declension, adjectives
2. New Russian transcription of the Kazakh endonym	1993–1999	Алматы (Constitution of 28 January 1993); Кокшетау and Кокшетауская область (resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of 7 October 1993 on transcription into Russian); Ерейментауский and Коргалжынский districts instead of Ерментауский and Кургальджинский (Decree No. 3759 of 14 November 1997 “On renaming… and changing their transcription”); Актобе instead of Актюбинск (1999), with Актюбинская область kept	Russian letters; declined forms and Russian adjectives kept
3. Kazakh script carried over	2022–2026	город Қонаев (Decree No. 885 of 3 May 2022); regions Жетісу, Ұлытау; Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі, теңге	Kazakh letters; declension and adjectives blocked

The table shows the main point. Model 2 was as much a state decision as model 3: the Russian form was changed by decree. But it changed the form with the means of Russian — the 1997 decree speaks explicitly of “changing the transcription” — and Russian speech accepted it: Almaty, Kokshetau and Aktobe are ordinary words in Kazakhstan’s Russian texts today, declined and turned into adjectives. Model 3 changes the principle itself: Russian text is no longer given a transcription; a foreign script is carried into it.

The shift to model 3 even reaches back in time. Presidential Decree No. 3753 of 13 November 1997 was titled in Russian «О Дне национальной валюты — тенге»; Decree No. 1337 of 1 July 2026 restated its title as «О Дне национальной валюты – теңге».

Where the gap in the law lies. Article 19 of the Law on Languages protects “traditional, historically established” Kazakh names. But Alma-Ata and Kokchetav are also historically established names of the same places, only in Russian rendering. The law does not say how to

tell a traditional Kazakh name from its traditional Russian rendering, or whether Russian text is entitled to a form of its own (blank spot M-13).

What has been proposed publicly. Seitkazy Matayev, chairman of the Union of Journalists of Kazakhstan, proposed returning the name Alma-Ata to the city in the Russian version only, keeping Almaty in Kazakh — exactly the model “each language has its own name for the place”. At the time Forbes.kz learned from the National Archive that the Supreme Council never discussed renaming Alma-Ata separately: the new name went straight into the text of the 1993 Constitution. The poet Olzhas Suleimenov has also argued more than once for restoring the name Alma-Ata. In a 2021 interview with Vecherny Almaty he said the name suits the city better “in both sound and meaning”. He recalled that twentieth-century Central Asia had only three capitals with open, sonorous names: Samarkand, Ashgabat and Alma-Ata. The position has opponents: the publicist Dos Koshim, for example, saw a political meaning in the appeal. The report does not presume to judge which form is better for Almaty: that is a matter of public choice. But the example shows that the two-name model has long been discussed.

The conclusion for the report. The mirror check confirms the thesis of Part 9.5 from inside the country: the state may set the form of a name in the state language and offer another language a new transcription, as it did in 1993–1999. The mechanism breaks down where another language is denied transcription as such. What is needed is neither a ban on Kazakh names nor a return to Soviet forms, but a rule of rendering — an instruction like the Soviet instructions on the Russian rendering of geographical names (recommendation Л-6).

4.9. Whom the rule targets: the pressure falls on Russian text

The same body, on the same day, names the same thing differently: in Russian, with the Kazakh form; in English, with the English one. English text is not required to use Kazakh letters, Kazakh endings or even Latin-script Kazakh spelling. The requirement is aimed at one language.

One institution, two texts:

Source	Russian text	English text
Constitution, Art. 2	теңге	the tenge (KZT)
National Bank, 1 July 2026	moves its acts and all press releases to «теңге»	“Tenge Now Has a Constitutional Status as the National Currency of Kazakhstan”
Decree No. 885, State Revenue Committee	город Қонаев	the city of Konaev
Decree No. 887, National Bank	область Жетісу, область Ұлытау	Zhetysu region, Ulytau region
Constitution, Art. 70	Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі	Kazakhstan Halyk Kenesi (Kazakhstan People’s Council), with an article and an English translation
Name of the state	Республика Казахстан	Republic of Kazakhstan, not Qazaqstan

The means exist but are not applied to English. In the draft Latin-script Kazakh alphabet put out for public discussion in spring 2021, ң is written Ñ and қ is written Q. One may object that the alphabet has not been approved and it is too early to use it; the Language Policy Committee says exactly that. But even without new characters English text could write Qonaev or Qazaqstan in ordinary Latin letters — and does not. Kazakh Cyrillic, by contrast, is approved, and its letters are carried into Russian text.

How English handles it: a proposal without compulsion. In November 2016 the then Senate chairman Kassym-Jomart Tokayev wrote that in the English version QAZAQSTAN reflects the essence of the state more accurately than KAZAKHSTAN. Mazhilis deputy Olga Shishigina objected that the English spelling is already the country’s brand and should not be changed. The official English text still writes Kazakhstan, while Qazaqstan spreads on its own — in brand names, on young people’s social media, in part of the English-language press. This is the mechanism of Part 9.5: the state proposes, the language chooses. In English the mechanism works; in Russian it has been replaced by an instruction.

English is not sterile, but its chimeras are not prescribed. Part 4.7 showed five spellings of Toralqasy, khandar on the English page of gov4c.kz and Cyrillic i inside Tauelsizdik. These are traces of the absence of uniform transcription rules, not a norm: no act requires such spellings, and the forms vary from text to text. Besides, English grammar copes with them: “a

decision of Toralqa” is syntactically flawless. Russian text received both an instruction and an inflectional grammar that the instruction breaks.

Why Russian in particular. There is no official explanation for this selectivity, and the report attributes no intentions to it. Two explanations are possible, and both are worth naming.

1. *The legal one.* Under Article 9 of the Constitution the Russian text is official, while English translations of laws are published as unofficial. It is natural to fix a state symbol where the text has legal force. But the argument cuts both ways: precisely because the Russian text is official, its own norm, protected by Article 21 of the Law on Languages, deserves protection rather than abolition.
2. *The sociolinguistic one.* In Fishman’s terms, a decision about the corpus is taken for the sake of status, and status is marked where a boundary runs. English text faces outward, and being understood matters more to the state. Russian text addresses the country’s own citizens, and there the boundary is marked with a letter.

Whichever explanation is right, the fact remains: a norm described as a requirement of law is applied to one of two languages, and to the very one whose grammar suffers most from it.

Part 5. Anthroponymy: first name, patronymic, surname

A personal name is the one chimera that cannot simply be abolished: it belongs to a person, and the right to choose its form is protected by law. So the question here is not which form is correct, but that the state has no model that would let any chosen form be read unambiguously in Kazakh and Russian text and stored unambiguously in a database.

5.1. Where -ov and -ev came from

The word “anthroponymy” is built from Greek ἄνθρωπος, “human”, and ὄνυμα, the Aeolic form of ὄνομα, “name”. It is the branch of onomastics that studies personal names.

Until the twentieth century Kazakhs did not have surnames in the European sense. A person was called by name and, for precision, by father, grandfather or clan: “Abai, son of Kunanbai”. The passport campaign of the 1930s required a fixed surname, formed from the father’s or grandfather’s name on the Russian model: Kunanbayev, Baitursynov, Satpayev. Records were made in Russian, without scholarly transcription rules.

In a 2023 article Z. K. Temirgazina, O. A. Andryushchenko and M. Valova analysed the 1988 academic dictionary of Kazakh names by T. Zhanuzakov and A. Esbayeva. Only 18.12% of the names in it are rendered into Russian one-to-one; the main method, graphic-phonetic rendering (75.99%), allowed many variants and distortions. This history gives the reform its moral basis: many Kazakhstanis legitimately want to return their names to a Kazakh form.

5.2. The reform and its legal basis

Presidential Decree No. 2923 of 2 April 1996 allowed citizens of Kazakh nationality to drop the surname endings -ov, -ev, -in and patronymics in -ovich, -evich, -ovna, -evna and to use Kazakh forms. The Civil Code (Article 15) made the patronymic optional. The Code on Marriage (Matrimony) and Family provided that a child’s surname is determined by the parents’ surname (Article 194) and that the patronymic is given from the father’s name (Article 63).

No single model emerged. On 28 November 2011 Sherubai Kurmanbaiuly, then chairman of the Languages Committee, reported that 17–18 variants of surnames coexist in the country: with the Russian formants -ov, -ev, -in, the Kazakh -ұлы, -қызы, -тегі, the Persian -i and others. He also said that linguists of the Institute of Linguistics, led by the onomastician Teleugazhy Zhanuzakov, were preparing an instruction under which legal documents would keep only two norms: -ұлы (-қызы) or a zero ending. Whether such an instruction was ever approved could not be found in open sources (blank spot M-09).

5.3. What is permitted today

On 12 August 2026 the Ministry of Justice answered a complaint from a woman whose daughter the electronic system would not register with a surname in -eva and a patronymic in -қызы. The answer comes down to three points:

1. the law does not forbid mixed spelling of surname, first name and patronymic, but it is advisable to respect Kazakh grammar;
2. one and the same person may be recorded in several ways — the ministry itself gave four variants for a notional “Akhmetov Serik Aibekovich”: «Айбекұлы Серік», «Ахмет Серік Айбекұлы», «Айбек Серік Айбекұлы», «Айбек Серік»;
3. the information system’s refusal is a technical limitation, not a legal ban; registration can be done through the portal, a public service centre or the civil registry office.

Earlier, on 31 October 2024, the ministry’s official spokesman Talgat Uali explained that the endings -тегі (“surname”), -ұрпағы (“descendant”), -немересі (“grandchild”), -шөбересі (“great-grandchild”) and -келіні (“daughter-in-law”) may not be added to surnames: the rules are set by the Code on Marriage and Family.

The result is a system in which the law allows more variants than information systems can accept, and Kazakh grammar is recognised as advisable but not binding.

5.4. The case of the Esil district akim

One and the same person appears on official resources as follows:

Where	Record	Features
gov.kz, Russian version of the district administration page	Кыдырбек-улы Дарменияр Алгатбекулы	Russian letters; -улы hyphenated in the surname, joined in the patronymic
gov.kz, Kazakh version of the same page	Қыдырбек-ұлы Дәрменияр Алғатбекұлы	Kazakh letters; the same hyphenation scheme
egov.kz, English version	Kydyrbek-uly Darmeniyar Algatbekuly	Latin script; the same scheme
Astana city administration press release, February 2024	Дарменияр Кыдырбекулы	no patronymic, surname joined, first name first

The record reads literally as “son-of-Kydyrbek Darmeniyar son-of-Algatbek”: both the surname and the patronymic contain the word “son”. To a Kazakh reader these are two different steps of a genealogy; to a Russian reader, a tautology; to a database, four different strings. Curiously, the Russian version of the page renders the name in Russian letters (Кыдырбек-улы), while the Constitution requires a Kazakh letter in the word теңге: within one state system money follows one rule and people another.

5.5. Paradoxes produced by the lack of a model

The marriage paradox. Kazakh -ұлы and -қызы mean “son” and “daughter”. If a wife takes her husband’s surname Muratuly, on paper she becomes “son of Murat”; if she changes the ending to Muratqyzy, she becomes “daughter of Murat”, that is, the daughter of her father-in-law, to whom by Kazakh custom she is a келін, a daughter-in-law. The formant -келіні, which would remove the contradiction, has been forbidden by the ministry. This is a logical consequence of the current norms; how many such records exist in the registers is not publicly known (M-10).

First name and surname become indistinguishable. The zero model turns the surname into a male first name: «Айбек Серік». A document does not show which is the surname and which the first name, and sometimes not even the person’s sex. If a wife’s first name coincides with her husband’s surname, a record of two identical words is possible.

A family that falls apart on paper. In one family the father may keep a surname in -ov, the mother one in -ova, the son one in -ұлы with the father’s name, and the daughter a zero form. The law allows this, but for an archive, a bank or a visa centre these are four unrelated surnames.

5.6. And Russian grammar?

Honesty is needed here: the anthroponymic chimera does the least damage to Russian grammar in particular. Russian has long had a class of indeclinable surnames — Georgian ones in -dze and -shvili, Ukrainian ones in -enko — and surnames in -uly and -kyzy join it easily: «приказ подписал Айбекулы». Zero-model surnames ending in a consonant decline for men and not for women, like German ones: «Серику Айбеку», but «Динаре Айбек». Russian grammar copes with this.

Other things suffer: the unambiguity of records, database search (Part 8), and the meaning of Kazakh formants, which is invisible in Russian text and turns into absurdity in Kazakh. So the solution here lies not in the rules of Russian text but in the law on names and in the architecture of registers.

5.7. How others solve it

Iceland is the only European country where almost all citizens bear a patronymic instead of a surname: Jónsson, “son of Jón”, Jónsdóttir, “daughter of Jón”. The model works because it is applied consistently: a woman does not change her name on marriage, and directories sort people by first name rather than by patronymic. In 2019 Iceland’s gender autonomy law added the neutral formant -bur. The lesson for Kazakhstan: a patronymic system is viable if it is not combined with taking a spouse’s surname on marriage.

Turkey required all citizens to take surnames by the 1934 Surname Law, and from approved lists, without foreign endings. The lesson is the opposite: uniformity comes quickly, at the price of a choice made on the person’s behalf.

Mongolia restored the clan name (ургийн овог) in documents after the 1990s, next to the patronymic. The lesson: clan belonging can be kept in a separate field of the document without being written into the surname as a formant.

In all three cases one model was chosen and applied to everyone. In Kazakhstan there are seventeen or eighteen models, and each is lawful.

Part 6. Purism inside Kazakh

Over half a century Kazakh terminology has changed course three times: from mass borrowing through Russian to mass translation, and then to a partial return of international words. Each turn left a layer of variants in dictionaries and norms that nobody cancelled. Hence the main damage: not individual unsuccessful words, but synonymy where a term should be single.

6.1. Three layers of terminology

The Baitursynuly layer. In the 1910s–1920s Akhmet Baitursynuly created the Kazakh grammatical terminology still in use today: зат есім (noun), сын есім (adjective), етістік (verb), бастауыш (subject), баяндауыш (predicate). The terms took root because they filled an empty place: before him there was no school grammar in Kazakh. At the same time he did not banish absorbed loanwords: his newspaper, published in 1913–1918, was called «Қазақ», and the genre itself was called газет.

The Soviet layer. From the late 1930s international words entered Kazakh through Russian and were spelled as in Russian. Kazakh acquired thousands of terms, but without phonetic adaptation: режим, процесс, проблема.

The independence layer. From the early 1990s a wave of translation began: many Russian and international words received Kazakh replacements. Some took firm root (ұшақ, тікұшақ, ғарыш, тұжырымдама), others did not.

6.2. Terminology Commission statistics: two incompatible figures

Public debate often repeats the claim that the share of international terms approved by the Terminology Commission fell 3.3 times — from 41% to 12.3%. A check shows that official materials circulate two different breakdowns for the same period.

Indicator	Period 1971–1981 (+1990)	Period 1992–2016, source A	Period 1992–2016, source B
Terms approved	2,748	15,963	15,963
International form kept	41.0% (1,127)	35.3%	12.3% (1,987)
Kazakh word	19.6–19.7% (541)	23.3%	37.8% (6,024)
Mixed phrase	39.3% (1,080)	41.4%	49.9% (7,952)

Source A is an article by Nurlan Shulenbayev, a researcher at the Institute of Linguistics, on the termincom.kz portal (2018), where the figures are cited with reference to the portal itself.

Source B is a count by the Til-Qazyna centre published on tilalemi.kz in August 2017. The total number of terms matches; everything else differs.

A possible reason is different classification: a phrase such as «авиациялық авария» (aviation accident) can be counted either as mixed or as keeping its international form. But whatever the reason, the conclusion of a “3.3-fold contraction” rests on source B alone (disagreement Р-01). An arithmetic check adds three observations. First, in source B 1,987 out of 15,963 is 12.45%, not 12.3%, and the exact shares of the three groups are 37.7%, 12.4% and 49.8%; the published figures appear to have been adjusted to total 100%. Second, the year-by-year breakdown in the termincom.kz overview for 1992–2016 adds up to 15,173 terms rather than 15,963 — 790 fewer (Р-14). Third, the same overview applies a third classification to a sample — 1,163 international units, 2,126 with an international element, 6,547 native — and states plainly that assigning a unit to the “international” group is largely a matter of convention. Three incompatible counting methods in official sources are the main argument for a single method (recommendation Л-3). The overall total does add up: 2,748 + 15,963 = 18,711, exactly the number source B gives as approved by 2017. Both sources agree on something else: the share of purely Kazakh coinages has grown — 1.2 times by one count, almost twofold by the other.

There is a third snapshot as well. Minister of Culture and Sport Arystanbek Mukhamediuly told the Senate that about 21,000 terms had been approved in all, of which 40.8% (8,571) were native Kazakh and 59.2% (12,429) borrowed or mixed. The termincom.kz portal specifies that the 2,748 units of the first period were approved in 1971–1981, another 79 in 1990, and none in 1991; the boundary “1971–1991” found in publications is inaccurate (Р-02).

6.3. The pendulum

The worst thing for terminology is neither borrowing nor translation but reversing a decision a few years later. Sherubai Kurmanbaiuly gave examples of this pendulum and warned that if terms are changed every five to ten years, specialists, translators and everyone who uses Kazakh will be unable to settle on any of them.

Concept	Before the 1990s	Kazakh replacement	Return of the international form
museum	музей	мұражай (1998)	музей (2014)
anthem	гимн	әнұран (1992)	гимн (2014)
per cent	процент	пайыз (2000)	процент (per the same overview); in the speech of 10 November 2026 пайыз was named as a word that had taken root
archive, problem, process, accident	архив, проблема, процесс, авария	мұрағат, мәселе, үдеріс, апат	returned, according to N. Shulenbayev’s 2018 article
paragraph	абзац	азатжол	абзац; named by the Minister of Culture and Sport in the Senate on 26 June 2018 among terms brought back to the international form, together with museum, archive and per cent

The pendulum has not come to rest even in the Terminology Commission’s own decisions. On 23 October 2024 the commission, at the request of the Atyrau regional administration, approved petrochemical terms, among them «газфазалық термиялық үдеріс», gas-phase thermal process. The word үдеріс, formally returned to «процесс», lives on in approved terms.

Not every replacement was reversed: by Shulenbayev’s own account, мұражай and мұрағат had already taken firm root by the time they were cancelled, and cancelling them was a mistake. As a result both forms remain in the language. A speaker sees мұражай on a sign and музей in a legal act.

6.4. Words that did not take root

The same 2018 article lists terms approved by the Terminology Commission but not accepted by speakers: ұйық (socks), құбылнама (compass), көзек (door peephole), салпыншақ (key fob), тәсім (diagram). It also distinguishes two different problems.

1. *Unsuccessful approved terms* — the commission accepted them, the language rejected them.
2. *Amateur coinages* — the commission never approved them, but they circulate as if approved. About қылтима, шаптырма and шомылма the author writes plainly: the Terminology Commission does not approve such words; this is jargon that does not belong to the literary language, and the rumour of their “approval” is false. The same points are repeated in the expanded journal version of the article that N. Shulenbayev published with N. Ashimbayeva and B. Kordabai (Tiltanym, 2021, No. 1) [69]. Representatives of the language service — Galymzhan Meldeshev, deputy chairman of the Committee for Language Development, and Yerbol Tleshov, director of the coordination and methodological centre — also said publicly that шаптырма, су бұрқақ and күй сандық were never approved [70]. For balcony, in the author’s view, the language has самалдық and балахана, words that could become construction terms.

Commentary also cites more exotic replacement projects — for arithmetic, trigonometry, theory, architecture, computer. Their status and authorship could not be verified in accessible primary sources, so the report does not rely on them (M-11).

6.5. Where the norm lives apart from the commission

The Terminology Commission is an advisory body. A norm becomes binding when it enters a document that people must follow: a building code, a school standard, a textbook, procurement specifications. This is where the main break occurs.

- The Kazakh text of building code SP RK 3.02-121-2012 on catering establishments contains «себезгі бөлмелері» (shower rooms) and «бұрқақ су» (fountain).
- Code SP RK 3.02-120-2012 on cultural institutions has «субұрқақ», although the Terminology Commission approved «фонтан».
- In the Kazakh text of a Ministry of Industry report on lift maintenance, journalists write «қауіпті жеделсаты», while the ministry itself writes «лифтілер».

A building code is updated once a decade, a textbook once in five years. A word that has once entered such a document lives on there regardless of what the commission decided and what the President said. So the instruction to revise dictionaries by the end of 2027, without a comprehensive revision of building codes and textbooks, will deliver only half the result.

Part 7. Eight words and twenty-seven: what separates the accepted from the rejected

All eight words called doubtful on 10 November 2026 denote household objects, and among the 27 that took root there is not a single household object. This is the main pattern, and it matters more than a word’s origin: at least eight of the words that took root contain Arabic or Persian roots.

7.1. What the President said

At the 10th Kurultai of the international society “Qazaq tili” the President named 27 words that have come into wide use in recent years: тұжырымдама (concept), қағидат (principle), жоспар (plan), сыйақы (bonus, reward), шәкіртақы (student grant), еңбек өтілі (length of service), кешенді (comprehensive), әмбебап (universal), жүйелі (systematic), тыңайтқыш (fertiliser), жанармай (fuel), көгалдандыру (landscaping), босқын (refugee), қырғи-қабақ соғыс (cold war), қоқан-лоқы (threat), лаңкестік (terrorism), есірткі (narcotics), бітімгерлік күштер (peacekeeping forces), мәмілегер (mediator, negotiator), ғарыш (outer space), зымыран (rocket), жаһан (world, universe), ғаламтор (internet), тікұшақ (helicopter), жасанды сана (artificial intelligence), пайыз (per cent), сынып (school class). He then said that everything needs a sense of proportion and called eight coined words doubtful: күйсандық (piano), қылтима (balcony), субұрқақ (fountain), себезгі (shower), қырыққабат (cabbage), үнқағаз (newspaper), жеделсаты (lift), желкөз (window vent). Separately he noted the fashion for replacing old Kazakh words related to religion with Arabic vocabulary and asked scholars to assess it. Both lists are given word for word from the official text of the speech published by Akorda and Kazakhstanskaya Pravda (Ф-26); agency reports usually cut them down to a few examples.

7.2. A dossier of eight words

Not all eight words are flawed in the same way. Some are badly built; others are built correctly but arrived too late.

Word	Meaning	How it is built	What is known of its status	Its weakness
күйсандық	piano	күй (instrumental piece) + сандық (chest)	the Terminology Commission approved «фортепиано»; the word is in use	the image of a “chest of kuis” leads away from how the instrument works and cuts the word off from international music terminology

Word	Meaning	How it is built	What is known of its status	Its weakness
қылтима	balcony	from қылтию (to stick out) + -ма	never approved; the commission calls it jargon; in the explanatory dictionary the word means “touchy”	homonymy with a disparaging sense; the language has better candidates, самалдық and балахана
субұрқақ	fountain	су (water) + бұрқақ (gushing stream; in the explanatory dictionary also “whirlwind”)	the commission approved «фонтан»; the word is in the explanatory dictionary and in SP RK 3.02-120-2012	three competing forms — фонтан, бұрқақ, субұрқақ — plus the slang шаптырма
себезгі	shower	from себез- (to sprinkle, to drizzle) + -гі	fixed in SP RK 3.02-121-2012 («себезгі бөлмелері»); status in the commission’s collections not checked in the original (M-01)	built correctly, like сүзгі (filter) from сүз-; its only weakness is that it pushes out the short and universally understood «душ»
қырыққабат	cabbage	қырық (forty) + қабат (layer)	a folk word, after the many leaves; date of origin not established (M-01)	the dispute over it is between two living forms, not about a coinage; its place on the list is debatable

Word	Meaning	How it is built	What is known of its status	Its weakness
үнқағаз	newspaper	үн (voice) + қағаз (paper)	original source of its appearance not established	the image is inaccurate (a newspaper is not a “voice”), and the word газет has lived in Kazakh for over a century, since the newspaper «Қазақ» of 1913
жеделсаты	lift	жедел (fast) + саты (staircase)	found in journalistic texts; the ministry writes «лифтілер» in the same materials	a lift has no steps: the image is technically false
желкөз	window vent	жел (wind) + көз (eye, opening)	status in the collections not checked in the original (M-01)	transparently built and replaces a Russian-German loanword, but names an object that is disappearing from modern windows

The dossier shows that the President’s list groups the words by one feature — speakers perceive them as artificial — rather than by linguistic defect. This matters for a practical revision: себезгі and желкөз can stay in technical language as synonyms, while жеделсаты and үнқағаз should be removed from the norm outright.

7.3. The twenty-seven that took root: by field and by origin

Field	Words	Number
Public administration and law	тұжырымдама, қағидат, жоспар, сыйақы, еңбек өтілі, босқын, лаңкестік, есірткі	8
Politics and diplomacy	қырғи-қабақ соғыс, қоқан-лоқы, бітімгерлік күштер, мәмілегер, жаһан	5
Science and technology	ғарыш, зымыран, ғаламтор, тікұшақ, жасанды сана	5
Economy, farming, ecology	тыңайтқыш, жанармай, көгалдандыру, пайыз	4
General abstract qualities	кешенді, әмбебап, жүйелі	3
Education	шәкіртақы, сынып	2
Household objects	—	0

The grouping by field was done for the report, and in individual cases a word's assignment can be disputed. The etymological notes below follow commonly accepted information and need checking against an etymological dictionary of Kazakh (M-12). At least eight of the 27 words contain an Arabic or Persian root: ғарыш (Arabic ʿarsh, "throne", in Islamic cosmology the highest heaven), жаһан (Persian jahān, "world"), сынып (Arabic ṣinf, "category, class"), пайыз (Arabic, "profit, surplus"), ғаламтор (Arabic ʿālam, "world", + Turkic тор, "net"), шәкіртақы (Persian shāgird, "pupil", + Kazakh ақы, "payment"), мәмілегер (Arabic muʿāmala, "transaction", + Persian suffix -gar), қағидат (Arabic qāʿida, "rule", + a Kazakh suffix). So a word's success does not depend on whether it is "ours": these roots were absorbed by Kazakh long ago, and speakers do not feel them as foreign.

7.4. Four patterns

1. *Abstract versus everyday.* A speaker first meets concepts of law, governance and diplomacy in official speech, where the state sets the form. A household object he has known since childhood under the name he heard at home. A new word for an old object always loses.
2. *Timing.* A word takes hold when it arrives together with the concept or before a loanword has taken root: ғаламтор appeared when the internet was just entering the country's life; ұшақ and тікұшақ came before the Russian word became the only one. Күйсандық and жеделсаты came to objects that had been called something else for decades.
3. *Precision versus metaphor.* The President counted «жасанды сана» among the words that took root, but Law No. 230-VIII of 17 November 2025 "On Artificial Intelligence" is

titled in Kazakh «Жасанды интеллект туралы» and defines artificial intelligence as the functional capacity to imitate human cognitive functions. Сана in Kazakh means “consciousness”, and for the law the difference is substantial: the law regulates systems, not consciousness. Both forms live on, each in its own field (disagreement P-08): in conversation an image, in law a term.

4. *Origin is irrelevant.* As Section 7.3 shows, success is determined by how well a root has been absorbed, not by where it came from. So the question “ours or foreign” serves terminology poorly; the more useful question is “is it clear, is it accurate, is the place free”.

Part 8. The digital cost of chimeras

In the control experiment, none of the three standard search methods found the record «проспект Мәңгілік Ел» with two Latin i letters, while a normalising key found all six of six variants. In an age when a text is read first of all by a machine, a chimera stops being a matter of taste and becomes lost data.

8.1. Unicode: why Ё decomposes and Ķ does not

Unicode is the international standard that assigns every character of the world’s scripts a number, a code point. The name was proposed in 1988 by Joe Becker, an engineer at Xerox: “uni” for unique, universal, uniform, and “code”. The Unicode Consortium was founded in 1991; today the standard underlies almost all text on the internet.

The standard distinguishes two kinds of letters. Some are composite: a base letter plus a diacritic above or below. Others are atomic, independent letters. Composite letters have a canonical decomposition, NFD (Normalization Form D, described in Annex UAX No. 15 of the standard): for example, ё decomposes into e and a diaeresis. Almost all search engines that offer “diacritics-insensitive search” work exactly this way: they decompose the letter and drop the mark.

A check with Python’s standard library (the unicodedata module) gives the following picture:

Letter	Code point	Name in the standard	Decomposes under NFD?
Ё	U+0401	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER IO	yes: Е (U+0415) + U+0308
Й	U+0419	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER SHORT I	yes: И (U+0418) + U+0306
Ә	U+04D8	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER SCHWA	no
Ғ	U+0492	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER GHE WITH STROKE	no
Қ	U+049A	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER KA WITH DESCENDER	no
Ң	U+04A2	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER EN WITH DESCENDER	no
Ө	U+04E8	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER BARRED O	no
Ұ	U+04B0	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER STRAIGHT U WITH STROKE	no
Ү	U+04AE	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER STRAIGHT U	no
Һ	U+04BA	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER SHHA	no
І	U+0406	CYRILLIC CAPITAL LETTER BYELORUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN I	no

For the standard, Қ is not “K with a tail” but a separate letter with no link to K. So «теңге» and «тенге», «Қонаев» and «Конаев» are different words to a standard search.

8.2. Homoglyphs

The word is built from Greek ὁμός, “same”, and γλυφή, “carving, incised sign”. Homoglyphs are characters from different alphabets that cannot be told apart by eye. The

Unicode Consortium keeps a list of them in its security standard UTS No. 39, because fraudsters use homoglyphs for fake website addresses.

Four pairs are dangerous for Kazakh writing:

Kazakh letter	**Look-alike**	**Where the substitution occurs**
і (U+0456)	Latin i (U+0069)	in Russian and Kazakh documents typed without a Kazakh keyboard layout: «Мәңгілік»
һ (U+04BB)	Latin h (U+0068)	in words with the letter h
ә (U+04D9)	Latin ə (U+0259), the schwa of the Azerbaijani alphabet	when typing from other layouts
ү (U+04AF)	Latin y (U+0079)	in handwritten and on-screen corrections

The substitution runs both ways. On the English page of the egov.kz portal listing district administrations, an address is written “Tauelsizdik Ave.”: checking the codes shows two Cyrillic і letters (U+0456) inside the Latin word. This is a mirror chimera — a Kazakh letter that has crept into English text.

The reason for such substitutions is simple. In the standard Kazakh keyboard layout for Windows the nine special letters sit on the number row. An operator who works in a Russian layout and has to type «теңге» or «Мәңгілік» either switches layouts twice per word or substitutes a similar-looking Latin character.

8.3. The control experiment: six records of one avenue

For the report a sample was assembled of six records of the name of Astana’s main avenue, in the form such records take in documents and listings: «проспект Мәңгілік Ел» (Kazakh letters), «проспект Мәңгілік Ел» (Latin i inside Cyrillic), «проспект Мангилик Ел» (Russian transcription), «пр. Мангилик ел 8» (lowercase, abbreviation), «Мәңгілік Ел даңғылы» (Kazakh field) and «Mangilik El avenue» (Latin script). Three queries were run on the sample using four methods.

Search method	Query «Мангилик Ел»	Query «Мәңгілік Ел»	Query «Mangilik El»
exact match	1 of 6	2 of 6	1 of 6
case-insensitive	2 of 6	2 of 6	1 of 6
“diacritics-insensitive” (NFKD with marks dropped)	2 of 6	2 of 6	1 of 6
normalising key	6 of 6	6 of 6	6 of 6

None of the three standard methods found the record with Latin i letters for any query: it can only be found by the same distorted spelling. The normalising key reduced each record to a single lowercase form. Kazakh letters were replaced by Russian ones according to the table in Part 3 (ә → а, ғ → г, қ → к, ң → н, ө → о, ұ and ү → у, һ → х, і → и), Latin letters by Russian ones, and spaces and hyphens were removed.

The key is not all-powerful. For the three records of the Esil district akim it reduces «Кыдырбек-улы Дарменияр Алгатбекулы» and «Қыдырбек-ұлы Дәрменияр Алғатбекұлы» to one string, but «Дарменияр Кыдырбекулы» remains different: it has another word order and no patronymic. That is no longer a task for search but for data structure: surname, first name and patronymic should be stored in separate fields, and a person should be linked to a record by the individual identification number, not by spelling.

8.4. Language models and the national corpus

In December 2024 the Institute of Smart Systems and Artificial Intelligence at Nazarbayev University (ISSAI) released KazLLM, an open large language model in versions with 8 and 70 billion parameters. Its training corpus amounted to about 150 billion tokens in Kazakh, Russian, English and Turkish. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education reported that the Kazakh corpus for the model was prepared by more than 140 scientists and staff from 26 research institutes and universities, who collected data in 115 fields of knowledge (the ministry’s report was carried by Kapital.kz [66]). In his speech of 10 November 2026 the President named the creation of a national digital database of the Kazakh language as the first task.

To a language model every spelling variant is a separate sequence of characters. If the concept “fountain” is represented in the corpus by four words (фонтан, бұрқақ, субұрқақ, шаптырма), and one and the same name by Kazakh, Latin and mixed letters, the frequency of each variant falls, the model learns the link between them less well and makes more mistakes in translation. How many such duplicates the national corpus contains has not been measured publicly (M-02). Cleaning the corpus of homoglyphs and reducing duplicates to the approved norm is the cheapest way to improve Kazakh-language models, and it follows directly from the instruction to put spelling in order by the end of 2027.

Part 9. International experience

The history of language building knows both successes and failures of purism, and they share a rule: a new word wins when it fills an empty place and loses when it pushes out an absorbed one. A state may set the form in its own texts, but it can only propose that form to another language.

9.1. Russia: the dispute between Shishkovists and Karamzinists

In 1803 Admiral Alexander Shishkov published his “Discourse on the Old and New Style of the Russian Language”, accusing Karamzin’s school of cluttering the language with Gallicisms. He later headed the Russian Academy and served as Minister of Public Education. He and his followers are credited with replacements such as «мокроступы» (“wet-steppers”) for galoshes and «тихогром» (“soft-loud”) for the pianoforte; some of these words were apparently invented by Shishkov’s opponents from the literary society Arzamas to mock him, and the attribution of individual words needs checking against his writings (M-06).

What is instructive is not Shishkov himself but the outcome of the dispute. Karamzin, whom Shishkov accused of worshipping French, himself introduced dozens of calques, and they are alive today: промышленность (industry), будущность (futurity), трогательный (touching), влияние (influence). So the dispute was settled not in favour of the “native” or the “foreign”, but in favour of words that were needed and arrived in time. Тихогром failed not because it was Russian but because the instrument already had a name.

9.2. Turkey: “a catastrophic success”

The Turkish Linguistic Society (Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti, later Türk Dil Kurumu) was founded in 1932 on Atatürk’s initiative to rid the language of Arabic and Persian loans. As early as 1935–1936 the course was softened with the so-called Sun Language Theory, under which many loanwords were declared originally Turkic; in 1983 the society was reorganised and stripped of its former role.

The Oxford Turkologist Geoffrey Lewis titled his book on the reform (1999) “The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success”. The success lies in the fact that the reform worked: Turkish changed more in a century than in the previous seven hundred years. The catastrophe lies in the fact that everything written before the early 1930s became hard for new generations to understand. Lewis also notes the mechanism of failure: when the sources provided material, the reformers found words; when they did not, the reformers simply invented them.

The lesson for Kazakhstan is twofold. The Turkish reform proves that mass replacement of words is possible if it is backed by the consistent will of the state, the school and the press. But it also proves the price: a break with one’s own written tradition.

9.3. Iceland: purism that works

Iceland is the model case of successful purism. The word tölva (computer) was proposed in 1965 by the philologist Sigurður Nordal: tala, “number”, and völva, “prophetess”. The date is supported by the event that made the word necessary: the University of Iceland got its first computer in 1964. For the telephone the old word sími, “thread”, was revived. Since 1964 terminology has been managed by a standing expert body, the Icelandic Language Committee.

The success is explained by the fact that Icelanders named new concepts before the international word took root, and that the whole nation — about 400,000 people — uses one language at school, in the press and at home. Where an international word had already taken root, Icelandic replacements fare worse.

9.4. Hebrew and French: successes and limits

The revival of Hebrew is an example of corpus planning from scratch: the Hebrew Language Committee, founded in 1890, and from 1953 the Academy of the Hebrew Language created thousands of words. Many took root — for example makhshev (computer, from the root “to calculate”) — but many remained in dictionaries: living speech holds on to international words where they arrived first.

Since 1994 France has acted under the Toubon law on language, and new terms are approved by a special commission for the enrichment of the French language. The word ordinateur (computer) was proposed in 1955 by the philologist Jacques Perret at the request of IBM’s French branch, and it won because it came before the English word. Mot-dièse, proposed later in place of hashtag, stayed in official texts, while people still say hashtag.

9.5. Endonyms: the state proposes, the language chooses

An endonym (from Greek ἔνδον, “within”, and ὄνυμα, “name”) is the name of a place in the language of its inhabitants; an exonym is the name of the same place in another language. In recent decades many states have asked the world to use their endonyms.

Country and year	Request	What happened
Côte d’Ivoire, 1985–1986	not to translate the country’s name: a note to the UN of 6 November 1985 (document A/40/860), in effect from 1 January 1986; confirmed by a government declaration in April 1986	the UN’s official texts use Côte d’Ivoire; English speech still widely uses Ivory Coast
Ukraine, 1995–2019	Kyiv instead of Kiev	the US Board on Geographic Names adopted Kyiv in 2019; Russian keeps «Киев»
Turkey, 2022	Türkiye instead of Turkey	the UN adopted the new form in June 2022; Spanish still says Turquía, Russian Турция
Kazakhstan, 2026	теңге in Russian text	the English text of the Constitution itself has tenge, without ñ; the Spanish press writes tenges

The general conclusion: a state has full control over the form in its own texts, but in another language it can only propose it, and the transition takes decades. Tellingly, Kazakhstan itself applies this principle to English but not to Russian.

9.6. Serbia and Norway: two norms side by side

Serbian uses two alphabets — Vuk Karadžić’s Cyrillic and Ljudevit Gaj’s Latin script, with 30 characters each (the Latin one with the digraphs lj, nj, dž). Switching between them loses nothing, because the correspondence is one-to-one. There is no such correspondence between Kazakh and Russian writing: Kazakh қ and Russian к coincide in Russian rendering, as do ұ and ү. So mixing the two systems within one word or phrase means losing information in both directions.

Norway spent half a century trying to merge its two written norms, Bokmål and Nynorsk, into a single “Samnorsk”, and officially abandoned the policy in 2002. The lesson: the coexistence of norms can be managed; forcing them to merge cannot.

9.7. Summary of lessons

Lesson	Where it is seen	What it means for Kazakhstan
A new word wins if it arrives before the loanword	Iceland, France, Hebrew	direct term creation at new concepts, not at old objects
Mass replacement is possible but breaks tradition	Turkey	a revision must preserve the continuity of texts
Usage decides, not a word’s origin	nineteenth-century Russia	the selection criterion is clarity and accuracy, not “native or foreign”
The state sets the form in its own texts and proposes it to another language	endonyms	distinguish the official name from its rendering in another language
Two scripts require a one-to-one table	Serbia	fix a single table for rendering Kazakh letters in Russian and English
Coexisting norms can be managed, merging cannot	Norway	do not require Kazakh script and Kazakh grammar of Russian text

Part 10. The arguments of both sides

Kazakh script in Russian text and purist neologisms both have serious defenders, and their arguments should be set out in their strongest form. The check shows that the symbolic arguments are strong while the legal and practical ones are weak: the law does not explain why the norm is applied to Russian text and not to English.

10.1. Kazakh script and Kazakh grammar in Russian text

Supporters' argument	**Objection**	**How far the facts support it**
A symbol of sovereignty. The name of the currency, a state body or a region is part of state symbolism; its form should be the same in every text in the country	sameness is not observed: the English text of the same Constitution has tenge and Kurultai without Kazakh characters; the Russian text has Курултай in Russian but Халық Кеңесі in Kazakh	the symbolic aim is legitimate but applied selectively
Correcting Soviet distortions. Russian rendering of Kazakh names was long careless: only 18.12% of names were rendered one-to-one	distortion is cured by accurate transcription, not by abandoning it; in English distortions are removed by Latin transcription without Kazakh characters	the distortions are confirmed; the need for Kazakh letters does not follow from them
A requirement of law. Article 19 of the Law on Languages requires Kazakh names to be given in the state language	the same article is not applied to the same bodies' English texts; Article 21 of the same law requires spelling norms to be observed; there is no official interpretation extending Article 19 to the grammar of Russian text	a weak argument: it explains the practice in only one of two languages
Russian readers can read the letters. The alphabets are related; ң is easily read as н	reading is easy, typing is hard; standard search does not equate ң and н; typing in a Russian layout breeds homoglyphs	the technical harm has been measured (Part 8)

Supporters’ argument	Objection	How far the facts support it
Habituation. Within a generation Kazakh letters in Russian text will become the norm	the highest official text — the President’s speech of 10 November 2026 — writes «тенге»; there is no habituation at the top	the forecast is not yet confirmed
Izafet is more precise than translation. «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы» rules out misreadings, while a translation may distort the meaning	a Russian equivalent exists in the law itself: «(Президиум)»; neighbours — Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan — and Kazakhstan’s own earlier practice kept the national names of bodies while declining them in Russian	the argument is refuted by the text of the law itself

10.2. Purist neologisms in Kazakh

Supporters' argument	Objection	How far the facts support it
Transparency. A word built from Kazakh roots is clear to a child without translation: тікұшақ is clearer than вертолёт	transparency helps only if the image is true: жеделсаты, "fast staircase", describes the object wrongly	strong for successful words (тікұшақ, ғаламтор), inapplicable to unsuccessful ones
The richness of the language. Synonyms enrich literary speech	the Terminology Commission itself draws the line: synonyms are fine in literary language, but scientific and technical language needs a single approved term	true for style, not for terminology
The experience of Iceland and France. Purism works	it works when the word arrives before the loanword; the Kazakh replacements for piano, lift and newspaper came decades after them	the condition for success is not met in the Kazakh case
Freedom from Russian mediation. International words came through Russian and bear its traces	an international word can be adapted to Kazakh phonetics, as Baitursynuly did (газет), without inventing a replacement	historically grounded, but it leads to adaptation, not replacement
The people's view. Speakers create words themselves	speakers perceive the eight words on the list as artificial; the Terminology Commission calls қылтима and шаптырма jargon	there are no empirical surveys (M-02)

10.3. The position of the head of state

The speech of 10 November 2026 belongs entirely to neither side. The President supported many new words, called eight coined ones doubtful and warned against the fashion for Arabic religious vocabulary. He stressed that the development of Kazakh should not hinder the development of other languages, that setting Kazakh against other languages is absolutely unacceptable, and that Kazakh should become a language of unity and harmony. The Russian text of the speech itself follows the norms of Russian spelling.

This does not mean the question is settled. But it does mean that the search for a rule under which Kazakh grows and Russian text does not break does not contradict the declared state policy; it follows directly from it.

Part 11. Recommendations

The general principle is one: separate three things that are now mixed up — the official name in the state language, its rendering in a text in another language, and its technical storage. Each measure below serves one of these three tasks.

Г. For the state

1. **Г-1. A rule for rendering names in texts in other languages.** Establish in the rules of legal drafting that a Kazakh name in Russian and English text is rendered by a single transcription table (Part 3), without Kazakh letters, and may be accompanied at first mention by the Kazakh form in brackets. This is already done for English texts; the rule should be the same for both languages.
2. **Г-2. An official interpretation of Article 19 of the Law on Languages.** Clarify that “giving in the state language” refers to the name in Kazakh and does not require Kazakh script and grammar to be carried into texts in other languages; reconcile Article 19 with Article 21.
3. **Г-3. The Russian text of Constitutional Law No. 298-VIII.** Replace «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы» and «Төралқа» with the Russian equivalent already given in Article 6 of the law: «Президиум Народного Совета Казахстана (Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы)» at first mention, then «Президиум», declined in every case. Do the same with «Председатель Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі».
4. **Г-4. Distinguish where «теңге» is mandatory.** Establish that the new spelling is mandatory for legal acts and payment and accounting documents, while other Russian-language texts may also use the former «тенге»; define the abbreviations «тг» and «₸» (М-05).
5. **Г-5. A model for surnames and patronymics.** Put an exhaustive list of models into the Code on Marriage and Family instead of the 17–18 that exist in practice, and rule out a double -ұлы in one record. Allow a woman to keep her own father-derived surname on marriage or introduce a neutral formant. Oblige information systems to accept every lawful model.
6. **Г-6. A comprehensive revision of binding documents.** Instruct the working group at the Presidential Administration to revise, alongside the dictionaries, building codes (including SP RK 3.02-120-2012 and 3.02-121-2012), school vocabulary minimums and procurement templates, so that rejected words do not live on in them after the dictionaries are revised.

Л. For linguistic institutions

1. **Л-1. A presumption in favour of the absorbed word.** Introduce a Kazakh term in place of an absorbed loanword only when the new word is more precise and already in use; change an approved term no more than once a generation.
2. **Л-2. Term creation for new concepts.** Direct effort at concepts that do not yet have a stable name in Kazakh — above all in digital technology, medicine and law — following the example of ғаламтор and тікұшақ.
3. **Л-3. Unified Terminology Commission statistics.** Publish one method for counting the shares of international, Kazakh and mixed terms and recount the data for 1971–2026 by it, resolving the 35.3% versus 12.3% disagreement (Р-01).
4. **Л-4. Corpus checks.** Before approving a word, check its frequency in the national corpus; after approval, track whether it has taken root.
5. **Л-5. Bilingual dictionaries with a rendering section.** In the updated Kazakh-Russian dictionary and in the new bilingual dictionaries the President spoke of, include a section on rendering Kazakh names by the means of the other language.
6. **Л-6. An instruction on rendering Kazakh place names in Russian.** Draw up and approve an instruction that sets, for each Kazakh name, its Russian transcription, declension and the rule for forming the adjective (Кокшетау — кокшетауский, Конаев — в Конаеве), on the model of the 1997 decree on “changing the transcription” and the Soviet instructions on rendering geographical names. The instruction closes the gap between Articles 19 and 21 of the Law on Languages with a rule, not a ban.

С. For the media

1. **С-1. An in-house newsroom standard.** Adopt a standard for rendering Kazakh names in Russian text (model: Appendix А) and apply it in all material.
2. **С-2. Quotation separate from paraphrase.** Reproduce the Kazakh form from a legal act verbatim only in quotation marks; in paraphrase, use the Russian rendering.
3. **С-3. Decline what can be declined.** Decline names that Russian grammar allows to be declined — в городе Конаеве, депутатов Курултая, Президиума Народного Совета.

Ц. For developers of state information systems

1. **Ц-1. Link by identifier, not by spelling.** Link records by individual and business identification numbers and object codes; store names in separate language fields tagged under BCP 47 (kk, ru, en); store surname, first name and patronymic in separate fields with a flag for joined or hyphenated spelling.
2. **Ц-2. A homoglyph filter at input.** Forbid mixing Cyrillic and Latin characters within one word and warn the operator; where necessary, substitute the correct letter from the UTS No. 39 table.

3. **Ц-3. A normalising search key.** Store a computed key for each record (ә → a, ғ → г, қ → к, ң → н, ө → о, ұ and ү → y, h → x, i → и, Latin → Cyrillic, without spaces and hyphens); in the experiment in Part 8 it raised search recall from 1–2 to 6 of 6.
4. **Ц-4. Accept every lawful name model.** Bring e-government service forms into line with the Justice Ministry’s explanation of 12 August 2026, so that a lawful variant of a name is not rejected by the system.
5. **Ц-5. Clean training corpora.** Before training national language models, correct homoglyphs and mark duplicates of one concept.

Appendix A. An editorial checklist for Russian-language media

The checklist starts from the fact that the mass media law sets no special requirements for writing Kazakh names (explanation of the Ministry of Culture and Information of 17 September 2026), while acts should be quoted in their own terminology. Hence two modes: in a quotation, as in the act; in the author’s text, by the norms of Russian spelling.

What we write	In the author’s text	In a verbatim quotation from an act	Note
Currency	тенге; 6,5 трлн тенге	«теңге»	this is how the President’s speech of 10 November 2026 writes it; the word does not decline in either spelling
Parliament	Курултай, депутатов Курултая	Курултай	as in the Constitution itself
Consultative body	Народный совет Казахстана (Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі) at first mention, then Народный совет; Халық Кеңесі with or without quotation marks, but with Russian case endings after a generic word: «члены Народного совета»	«Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі»	the translation is given in Article 70 of the Constitution
Council presidium	Президиум Народного совета	«Төралқа»	the translation is given in Article 6 of Law No. 298-VIII

What we write	In the author’s text	In a verbatim quotation from an act	Note
New regions	область Абай, область Жетысу (Жетысуская область), область Улытау	«область Жетісу», «область Ұлытау»	apposition without Kazakh letters is acceptable; an adjective for Zhetysu and Almaty, where there is no clash with a district
City	Конаев, в городе Конаеве, из Конаева	«город Қонаев»	Russian names in -ов, -ев decline
Astana districts	район Есиль or Есильский район, в районе Есиль	«район Есиль»	both are acceptable; choose one and keep to it
Street of the khans	улица Керей-хана и Жанибек-хана or улица ханов Керея и Жанибека	«улица Керей, Жанибек хандар»	without quotation marks «хандар» reads like a surname in Russian text
Avenue	проспект Мангилик Ел	«Мәңгілік Ел даңғылы»	in addresses for navigation apps, as in the address register
Parties	партия «Адилет» or «Әділет» in quotation marks as a name; «Ак жол», «Ауыл»	as in registration documents	a party’s name is a proper noun; quotation marks are required
Companies	«Самрук-Казына», «Казахстан темир жолы» (КТЖ)	as in the charter: «Самрук-Қазына»	for an organisation’s proper name the charter spelling in quotation marks is also acceptable; choose one variant

What we write	In the author’s text	In a verbatim quotation from an act	Note
People	as in the person’s own documents if known; otherwise in Russian transcription: Дарменияр Кыдырбекулы	as in the act	a name belongs to its bearer; surnames in -улы, -кызы do not decline
Sports clubs	«Кызыл-Жар СК»	—	Kazakh letters in a headline make the news harder to find

Short rules.

1. A Kazakh letter in a Russian word outside quotation marks is a typing error, not a style.
2. A word that Russian grammar allows to be declined is declined.
3. A Kazakh word unfamiliar to Russian readers is accompanied at first mention by a translation in brackets.
4. One name, one spelling throughout a piece and, where possible, throughout the publication.
5. Before publication the text is checked for Cyrillic and Latin mixed within a word; the simplest way is a regular-expression search or any homoglyph checker.

Appendix Б. Register of verified facts

The register contains 81 facts, each checked against a primary source or a text that reproduces it. Source numbers refer to the list at the end of the report.

Code	Fact	Source	Date of data
Ф-01	The Constitution was adopted at the referendum of 15.03.2026: 87.15% “yes” on a turnout of 73.12%	[3], [21]	03.2026
Ф-02	The Constitution entered into force on 01.07.2026 (Art. 94)	[1]	07.2026
Ф-03	Art. 2(6), Russian text: «Национальная валюта (денежная единица) Республики Казахстан – теңге»	[1]	2026
Ф-04	Art. 9: the state language is Kazakh; Russian is officially used in state organisations and local self-government bodies	[1]	2026
Ф-05	Arts. 52–53: a Kurultai of 145 deputies, five-year term	[1]	2026
Ф-06	Art. 70, Russian text: «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі (Народный Совет Казахстана) – высший консультативный орган»	[1]	2026
Ф-07	In the Russian text of the Constitution: «Курултай» 28, «Курултая» 110, «Курултаем» 20, «Курултаю» 5, «Курултае» 3; «Құрылтай» 0; «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі» 8, «Народный Совет Казахстана» 1	count based on [1]	12.11.2026
Ф-08	English text of the Constitution: the tenge (KZT), Kurultai, Kazakhstan Halyk Kenesi (Kazakhstan People’s Council)	[2]	2026
Ф-09	Kurultai election of 23.08.2026: Adilet 110 seats, Auyl 10, Respublica 9, Ak Zhol 8, OSDP 8	[22], [23]	08.2026

Code	Fact	Source	Date of data
Ф-10	Constitutional Law No. 298-VIII of 05.06.2026 “On Qazaqstan Halyq Kenesi” in force from 01.07.2026; the 2008 Law on the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan repealed	[4]	2026
Ф-11	In the main text of Law No. 298-VIII: «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы» 11 times, the short form «Төралқа» 7, «Президиум» 1 (Art. 6); one more occurrence in the table of contents	count based on [4]	12.11.2026
Ф-12	Art. 10 of the law, Russian text: «(далее – Төралқа)», «Заседания Төралқа созываются», «Решение Төралқа оформляется протоколом»	[4]	2026
Ф-13	The English translation of Law No. 298-VIII gives five spellings: Kenesiin Toralkasy, Kenesiin Toralqasy, Kenesin Toralqasy, Kenesinin Toralqasy, Kenesinin Toralqasi	count based on [5]	12.11.2026
Ф-14	The Khalyq Kenesi has 126 members	[24]	2026
Ф-15	Civil Code, Art. 127 as amended, Russian text: «Денежной единицей в Республике Казахстан является теңге»	[25]	07.2026
Ф-16	The spelling in the Tax Code was changed by Law No. 308-VIII of 11.06.2026	[26]	06.2026
Ф-17	Ministry of Justice: state bodies use the Constitution’s terminology; documents containing «тенге» remain in force	[27]	16.07.2026
Ф-18	The National Bank will write «теңге» in all press releases; the changes are editorial	[27]	16.07.2026
Ф-19	Language Policy Committee: «теңге» in all texts in the country; no decision on «тг», «₸», «тенге»	[27]	16.07.2026

Code	Fact	Source	Date of data
Ф-20	Ministry of Culture and Information: the mass media law sets no special requirements for spelling the currency	[28]	17.09.2026
Ф-21	Financial market regulator: banks must bring documents, apps, cash machines and receipts into line with «теңге»	[28]	17.09.2026
Ф-22	Ministry of Education: textbooks are brought into line with the new spelling as they are updated in stages	[28]	17.09.2026
Ф-23	Ministry of Finance, at the State Revenue Committee’s initiative, issued a draft order replacing «тенге» with «теңге»	[29]	16.07.2026
Ф-24	Russian text of the President’s speech of 10.11.2026: «6,5 трлн тенге»	[6]	10.11.2026
Ф-25	Speech: the last approved spelling dictionary dates from 1983, approved by a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council	[6]	10.11.2026
Ф-26	Speech: 27 words that took root and 8 doubtful ones (lists)	[6]	10.11.2026
Ф-27	Speech: a working group coordinated by the Presidential Administration; complete by the end of the following year; continue the Oxford Qazaq Dictionary; dictionaries in nine languages; update the Kazakh-Russian dictionary	[6]	10.11.2026
Ф-28	Speech: 71% of schoolchildren are in classes taught in Kazakh; 70% of more than 6,000 books and 63 of 71 films are in Kazakh	[6]	10.11.2026
Ф-29	Speech: setting Kazakh against other languages is absolutely unacceptable	[6]	10.11.2026

Code	Fact	Source	Date of data
Ф-30	Law on Languages, Art. 19 (as amended in 2013 and 2021): traditional Kazakh names of administrative-territorial units are given in the state language	[7]	2026
Ф-31	Law on Languages, Art. 21: texts of signage and visual information must observe spelling norms	[7]	2026
Ф-32	Decree No. 885 of 03.05.2022, Russian title: «О переименовании города Капшагая Алматинской области в город Қонаев»	[8]	2022
Ф-33	Decree No. 887 of 03.05.2022: «область Абай», «область Жетiсу», «область Ұлытау»; «района Ақсуат» next to «Абайского, Аягозского… районов»; in force from 08.06.2022	[9]	2022
Ф-34	Decree No. 973 of 09.08.2022: «суды областей Абай, Жетiсу, Ұлытау»	[10]	2022
Ф-35	English texts of state bodies: Zhetysu region, Abai region, Ulytau region, Konaev city; renaming the city of Kapshagai to the city of Konaev	[30], [31]	2022–2026
Ф-36	Astana city administration press release: «ул. Д. Конаева», «пр. Тауелсиздик», «ул. А. Байтурсынулы» and «Керей, Жанибек хандар» in one text	[32]	06.2026
Ф-37	Three spellings in the Russian-language press: «Керей, Жанибек хандар», «Керей Жанибек хандар», «Керей и Жанибек хандар»	[33], [34]	2026
Ф-38	In English texts: Kerey and Zhanibek Khans Street; Kerey and Zhanibek Khandar Str.; st. Kerey, Zhanibek khandar	[35], [36], [37]	2023–2026

Code	Fact	Source	Date of data
Ф-39	Akim of Esil district: «Кыдырбек-улы Дарменияр Алгатбекулы» (gov.kz, Russian), «Қыдырбек-ұлы Дәрменияр Алғатбекұлы» (Kazakh), “Kydyrbek-uly Darmeniyar Algatbekuly” (egov.kz, English), «Дарменияр Кыдырбекулы» (2024 press release)	[11], [38], [12]	2024–2026
Ф-40	“Tauelsizdik Ave.” on the English page of egov.kz contains two Cyrillic i (U+0456)	[38], code check	12.11.2026
Ф-41	Decree No. 2923 of 02.04.1996 on writing the surnames and patronymics of persons of Kazakh nationality	[13]	1996
Ф-42	Ministry of Justice: no ban on mixed spelling of full names; four variants for one person; a system’s refusal is a technical limitation	[14]	12.08.2026
Ф-43	Ministry of Justice (T. Uali): the endings -тегі, -ұрпағы, -немересі, -шөбересі, -келіні are not allowed	[15]	31.10.2024
Ф-44	Sh. Kurmanbaiuly: 17–18 variants of surnames	[16]	28.11.2011
Ф-45	Temirgazina, Andryushchenko, Valova: graphic-phonetic method 75.99%, graphic 5.72%, one-to-one 18.12% of names	[41]	2023
Ф-46	Terminology Commission (N. Shulenbayev’s article): 2,748 terms — 41.0 / 19.7 / 39.3%; 1992–2016 — 15,963 terms — 35.3 / 23.3 / 41.4%	[17]	2018
Ф-47	Til-Qazyna: 1971–1991 — 541 (19.6%), 1,127 (41%), 1,080 (39.3%); 1992–2016 — 6,024 (37.8%), 1,987 (12.3%), 7,952 (49.9%)	[18]	08.08.2017
Ф-48	termincom.kz: 2,748 units approved in 1971–1981, 79 in 1990, 0 in 1991; about 21,000 in 1971–2017	[19]	2017

Code	Fact	Source	Date of data
Ф-49	A. Mukhamediuly: 21,000 terms, 40.8% (8,571) native, 59.2% (12,429) borrowed and mixed	[39]	26.06.2018
Ф-50	The Terminology Commission approved fountain, pianoforte, balcony; did not approve қылтима, шаптырма, шомылма, which are jargon; the same passage in the journal version of the article [69]; G. Meldeshev and Ye. Tleshov also spoke of the unapproved шаптырма, су бұрқақ, күй сандық [70]	[17]	2018
Ф-51	The approved ұйық, құбылнама, көзек, салпыншақ, тәсім did not take root; архив, музей, проблема, процесс, авария were restored; the same passage in [69]	[17]	2018
Ф-52	Sh. Kurmanbaiuly: музей → мұражай (1998) → музей (2014); гимн → әнұран (1992) → гимн (2014)	[40]	2018
Ф-53	The Terminology Commission approved «газфазалық термиялық үдеріс» on 23.10.2024	[42]	2024
Ф-54	SP RK 3.02-121-2012: «себезгі бөлмелері», «бұрқақ су»; SP RK 3.02-120-2012: «субұрқақ»	[20]	2012
Ф-55	Law No. 230-VIII of 17.11.2025: Kazakh title «Жасанды интеллект туралы»; definition «жасанды интеллект – … функционалдық қабілет»	[43]	2025–2026
Ф-56	KazLLM: released 10.12.2024, about 150 billion tokens in four languages, 8B and 70B versions	[44], [45]	2024
Ф-57	2021 census: 44.9% of the population over 5 speak two languages, 28.6% three	[46]	2021
Ф-58	Ё and Й decompose under NFD; the nine special Kazakh letters do not	unicodedata check	12.11.2026

Code	Fact	Source	Date of data
Ф-59	Control experiment: standard search methods 1–2 of 6, the key 6 of 6; the record with Latin i not found by standard methods	check for the report	12.11.2026
Ф-60	Latin script: no specific deadlines; funds returned to the budget since 2020 (E. Asan)	[47]	08.09.2026
Ф-61	Draft resolution on the Republican Spelling Commission; the 2023–2029 Concept for the Development of Language Policy approved on 16.10.2023	[48]	2026
Ф-62	Spanish press: tenges, Kurultái, Halyk Kenesi (Consejo del Pueblo), Ferrocarriles de Kazajistán, Kasim-Yomart Tokáyev	[49], [50], [51]	2026
Ф-63	Turkish press: Kazakistan Halk Konseyi, Kurultay’ın, Kasım Cömert Tokayev, trilyon tenge	[52], [53]	2026
Ф-64	Bizmedia.kz, 11.11.2026: headlines «Что происходит с теңге?» and «Қызыл-Жар СҚ»	[47]	11.11.2026
Ф-65	Law No. 298-VIII, Art. 1, Russian text: the Khalyq Kenesi «является высшим конституционным консультативным органом»; the Constitution (Art. 70) has «высший консультативный орган»	[1], [4]	2026
Ф-66	The Kazakh corpus for KazLLM was prepared by more than 140 scientists and staff of 26 research institutes and universities; data in 115 fields of knowledge (per the Ministry of Science and Higher Education)	[66]	2025
Ф-67	Côte d’Ivoire: note of its Permanent Representative to the UN of 6 November 1985 (A/40/860) asking that the name not be translated; in effect from 1 January 1986	[67]	1985–1986

Code	Fact	Source	Date of data
Ф-68	termincom.kz overview: the year-by-year breakdown for 1992–2016 totals 15,173 terms; the classification of a sample — 1,163 international, 2,126 with an international element, 6,547 native; “international” is called conventional	[19], count from the table	2017
Ф-69	G. Meldeshev: fountain, balcony, piano, pianoforte were approved, but шаптырма, су бұрқақ, күй сандық were not; Ye. Tleshov: «Күй сандық» and «шаптырма» were never approved	[70]	2016–2017
Ф-70	The name Almaty was fixed in the Constitution on 28.01.1993; according to the National Archive’s answer to Forbes.kz, the Supreme Council never discussed the renaming separately	[71], [72]	1993
Ф-71	Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of 07.10.1993 on transcription into Russian: Кокчетавская область becomes Кокшетауская, Кокчетав becomes Кокшетау	[73]	1993
Ф-72	Decree No. 3759 of 14.11.1997: “change the transcription” — Ерментауский district to Ерейментауский, Кургальджинский to Коргалжынский	[74]	1997
Ф-73	Aktyubinsk renamed Aktobe in 1999; 1999 documents have «город Актобе» and «Актюбинский областной маслихат»	[76], [77]	1999
Ф-74	The title of Decree No. 3753 of 13.11.1997 restated by Decree No. 1337 of 01.07.2026: «О Дне национальной валюты – теңге»	[75]	2026
Ф-75	S. Matayev proposed returning the name Alma-Ata in the Russian version only, keeping Almaty in Kazakh	[71]	—

Code	Fact	Source	Date of data
Ф-76	“Place of issue” field in archive documents: until December 1935 «город Кокчетав», from December 1935 to July 1944 «город Кокшетау», then Kokchetav again; no renaming documents found (KFGASKO, fonds 714, inv. 2, file 3, sheet 72)	[78]	1935–1944
Ф-77	Regional newspapers: the Kazakh «Көкшетау правдасы» (from 1944; «Тың өлкесі» in 1963–1965, name restored in 1966) and the Russian «Кокчетавская правда» (1956–1963, then «Степной маяк»)	[78], [79]	1944–1966
Ф-78	National Bank English notice of 01.07.2026: “Tenge Now Has a Constitutional Status as the National Currency of Kazakhstan”	[80]	01.07.2026
Ф-79	The draft decree on the Latin alphabet was open for public discussion until 6 May 2021; the alphabet has not been approved	[81], [47]	2021–2026
Ф-80	K.-Zh. Tokayev (Senate chairman) in 2016: in the English version QAZAQSTAN is more accurate than KAZAKHSTAN; deputy O. Shishigina objected; the official English text kept Kazakhstan	[82], [2]	2016–2026
Ф-81	O. Suleimenov (2021, interview with Vecherny Almaty): the name Alma-Ata suits the city better “in both sound and meaning”; D. Koshim objected	[84], [85]	2021

Appendix B. Register of disagreements and blank spots

Fifteen disagreements between sources and thirteen questions that open primary sources do not answer. Disagreements are closed by a request to the agency concerned or by publication of the primary document; blank spots, by research.

Disagreements

Code	Issue	Version 1	Version 2	Status
P-01	Share of international terms in 1992–2016	35.3% (N. Shulenbayev's article on termincom.kz)	12.3% (Til-Qazyna count)	open; a single method is needed (Л-3)
P-02	Period in which 2,748 terms were approved	1971–1991 (in some publications)	1971–1981, plus 79 in 1990 (termincom.kz)	closed in favour of version 2
P-03	Where «Денежной единицей… является теңге» is written	attributed to the Constitution	Article 127 of the Civil Code; the Constitution has «Национальная валюта (денежная единица)… – теңге»	closed in favour of version 2
P-04	The law that amended the Tax Code	No. 308-VIII of 11.06.2026	one overview mentions No. 306-VIII in connection with the Tax and Civil Codes	narrowed: for the Tax Code, No. 308-VIII
P-05	Date of entry into force of AI Law No. 230-VIII	17.01.2026	18.01.2026	open; counted from publication on 18.11.2025
P-06	Whether «теңге» is mandatory for the media	Language Policy Committee: in all texts	Ministry of Culture and Information: the mass media law sets no requirement	open; the claim of a plan to move the media to «теңге» is not confirmed by a primary source

Code	Issue	Version 1	Version 2	Status
P-07	Decrees on the new regions	in circulation: No. 957 and No. 973	regions: No. 887, city: No. 885, courts: No. 973	closed in favour of version 2
P-08	Kazakh term for AI	«жасанды сана» — in the President's speech as a word that took root	«жасанды интеллект» — in Law No. 230-VIII	both forms live in different fields
P-09	Year «музей» was restored	2014 (Sh. Kurmanbaiuly)	restoration discussed in 2017–2018 (N. Shulenbayev, A. Mukhamediuly)	narrowed: decision in 2014, general revision later
P-10	English form of the Khalyq Kenesi	Kazakhstan Halyk Kenesi (Constitution)	Kazakhstan Khalyk Kenesi (translation of the law); Qazaqstan Halyq Kenesi (press)	open; inconsistent in English too
P-11	Codification of the "eight" in the 1979, 1995 and 2012 collections	asserted in the original study with page references	primary sources not opened; only the presence of себезгі and субұрқақ in SP RK confirmed	open (M-01)
P-12	Year the word tölva was coined	1965 (reference works; the University of Iceland's first computer, 1964)	1956 (a reviewer's remark)	closed in favour of version 1: Iceland had no computer in 1956, and Nordal was ambassador in Copenhagen
P-13	Year Côte d'Ivoire asked for its name not to be translated	1985 (note to the UN of 6 November 1985)	1986 (entry into force on 1 January, government declaration in April)	narrowed: request in 1985, in effect from 1986

Code	Issue	Version 1	Version 2	Status
P-14	Number of terms approved in 1992–2016	15,963 (N. Shulenbayev’s article, Til-Qazyna count)	15,173 (sum of the year-by-year breakdown in the termincom.kz overview)	open; a difference of 790
P-15	Share of international terms in the Til-Qazyna count	12.3% (published)	12.45% (1,987 / 15,963)	closed: a rounding error in the source

Blank spots

Code	What is missing	How to close it
M-01	Status of себезгі, жеделсаты, қырыққабат, желкөз, үнқағаз in the Terminology Commission’s 1979, 1995 and 2012 collections	check against scans of the collections on termincom.kz
M-02	Frequency of the eight words and of duplicates in the national corpus; surveys of speakers	request to Til-Qazyna, corpus count
M-03	Position of the A. Baitursynuly Institute of Linguistics on the President’s list	request to the institute
M-04	Membership and rules of the working group at the Presidential Administration	await the official act
M-05	Decision on the abbreviations «тг» and «₸»	request to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the National Bank
M-06	Attribution of «мокроступы» and «тихогром» to Shishkov’s writings	check against an edition of his works
M-07	Share of homoglyph records in state registers	sample audit of the address register
M-08	Official Russian form of the name of the street of the khans Kerey and Zhanibek in the onomastic commission’s decision	request to the Astana city administration

Code	What is missing	How to close it
M-09	Fate of the 2011–2012 instruction on two surname norms	request to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education
M-10	Number of records with the surname “marriage paradox”	request to the Ministry of Justice
M-11	Authorship and status of replacement projects for scientific concepts cited in commentary	check against Terminologiyalyq khabarshy
M-12	Etymology of words on the list of 27 (ғарыш, жаһан, сынып, пайыз, шәкіртақы, мәмілегер, қағидат and others) against the academic etymological dictionary	check against «Қазақ тілінің этимологиялық сөздігі»
M-13	The criterion of a “traditional, historically established” name in Art. 19 of the Law on Languages: does it extend to Russian renderings (Alma-Ata, Kokchetav)?	official interpretation (Г-2)

Appendix Г. Method of our own measurements

Three measurements were made for the report on 12 November 2026 and can be repeated by any reader from open texts. Below are the source, procedure and result of each.

Measurement 1. Forms of names in the Russian text of the Constitution. Source: the akorda.kz page with the text of the Constitution [1]. Procedure: the page is saved, HTML markup and scripts are removed, and runs of spaces are collapsed to one; only the text from the preamble («Мы, единый народ Казахстана…») to Article 95 inclusive is counted, without the site menu. Each word is searched as a separate word form: no Cyrillic letter, including Kazakh ones, may stand immediately to its left or right.

Form	Occurrences
Курултай	28
Курултая	110
Курултаем	20
Курултаю	5
Курултае	3
Құрылтай	0
теңге	2
тенге	0
Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі	8
Народный Совет Казахстана	1

Measurement 2. «Төралқа» in the Russian text of Law No. 298-VIII. Source: the Russian text of the law on zakon.uchet.kz [4]. The same procedure; the main text is counted from the second occurrence of the heading «Статья 1. Правовой статус и основа деятельности» (the first is in the table of contents) to the signature. Result: the full phrase «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесінің Төралқасы» 11 times, the separate short form «Төралқа» 7, 18 in all; «Президиум» 1; «Қазақстан Халық Кеңесі» 170. The first edition of the report gave 19: the occurrence in the law’s table of contents had been counted by mistake. The same method applied to the English translation of the law [5] found five different spellings of the Kazakh phrase.

The core of the count in Python:

```
import re
KIR = 'А-Яа-яЁёӘәҒғҚқҢңӨөҰұҮүҺһІі'
def count(text, form):
    return len(re.findall(r'(?<![%s])%s(?![%s])' % (KIR, form, KIR),
text))
```

Measurement 3. Unicode and search. Letter decomposition was checked with unicodedata.normalize(‘NFD’, letter) from the Python standard library: for Ё and Й the result consists of two code points, for the nine Kazakh letters of one. The search experiment was run on six records of the avenue’s name (Part 8.3) using four methods: exact match; casefold; NFKD with combining marks dropped; and a normalising key (Kazakh letters replaced by Russian ones per the table in Part 3, Latin by Cyrillic, spaces and hyphens removed). The homoglyphs in the address “Tauelsizdik” were checked by printing the code point of each character: two characters are U+0456.

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