

**NEW KAZAKH NATIONAL ALPHABET FOLLOWING AKHYMET  
BAYTURSYNULY'S WAY**

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**Abstract.** Historically, the Kazakh national alphabet was first created in 1912. Before that, the Kazakh people had been using Arabic script for centuries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Kazakh enlightener, reformer of the Kazakh script Akhmet Baitursynuly, realizing that the writing that used at that time could not accurately reflect the natural laws of the Kazakh language, wrote in 1912 his work "Language-tool". Then, using Arabic graphics, he created an alphabet that fully reflects the sounds of the Kazakh language. In this alphabet, each sound has its own symbol. And for soft sounds, there is a special mark called dayekshe. Using dayekshe helped to reduce the number of characters in the alphabet from 43 to 25. This decision was a novelty for that time. Russian scientists, such as Polivanov and Yakovlev, were both amazed and astonished that this solution was correct when they checked it based on a mathematical formula. Even today, there is no doubt that this decision was optimal. This alphabet was named "the first Kazakh national alphabet".

A century later, the Kazakh people returned to the issue of creating the Kazakh national alphabet. This time, the issue is expected to find a positive solution for the bright future of the country. The reason is that the Republic of Kazakhstan is a sovereign country that is not subject to anyone as it was a century ago. In 1993, the then President of the International Kazakh Language Society, Academician Abduali Kaidar, after discussions with Kazakh journalists and scholars, wrote an open letter to the President with proposals on the transition of the Kazakh script to Latin script. Ever since they received the answer, "This is a question worth thinking about, let the experts do it and come up with a concrete proposal for me," the issue of changing the alphabet has been constantly discussed. The National Commission for the translation of the Kazakh alphabet into Latin script was established on November 14, 2017, and various alphabet projects were submitted for consideration. However, the exact version of the alphabet has not yet been approved.

This article examines the ways of creation of the first Kazakh national alphabet, created by the founder of Kazakh linguistics Akhmet Baitursynuly. The main reasons and proposals for the transition to Latin, as indicated in an open letter to the President, will also be considered. The level of transition to Latin script will be studied when it follows the path of Akhmet Baitursynuly.

**Keywords:** Kazakh national alphabet, orthography, textbook

## **INTRODUCTION**

As we know that writing officially took its place in the world of linguistics as a separate science in the 1950s, even though it has long been a field of study. Many scholars in every nation have studied their writing and language and left behind important works. At the beginning of the XX century, scholars paid attention to the Kazakh script and wrote new works. Alikhan Bukeikhanuly, Akhmet Baitursynuly, Khalel Dosmukhamedov, Telzhan Shonanuly, Eldes Omarov, Mirzhakyp Dulatuly, Zhusupbek Aimautov, Nazir Torekulov, Kudaibergen Zhubanov, Sarsen Amanzholov, Nygmet Sauranbayev and many other Kazakh educators were concerned about the Kazakh language, including the Kazakh script, and left great works.

The significant changes in the Kazakh script in the XXth century:

- ✓ the Kazakh national alphabet was created (1912)

- ✓ Kazakh writing changed from Arabic graphics to Latin graphics (1929);
- ✓ Kazakh writing changed from Latin graphics to Cyrillic graphics (1940).

Some believe that the occurrence of these historical events in the Kazakh script was in line with life requirements. However, at a time when we have become an independent country and have the opportunity to freely study our history, we understand that these changes are the results of a deliberate policy.

The Kazakh national alphabet was first created in 1912. Before that, the Kazakh people had been using Arabic script for centuries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Kazakh enlightener, reformer of the Kazakh script Akhmet Baitursynuly, realizing that the writing that used at that time could not accurately reflect the natural laws of the Kazakh language, wrote in 1912 his work “Language-tool”. Then, using Arabic graphics, he created an alphabet that fully reflects the sounds of the Kazakh language. In this alphabet, each sound has its own symbol. And for soft sounds, there is a special mark called dayekshe. Using dayekshe helped to reduce the number of characters in the alphabet from 43 to 25. This decision was a novelty for that time. Russian scientists, such as Polivanov and Yakovlev, were both amazed and astonished that this solution was correct when they checked it based on a mathematical formula. Even today, there is no doubt that this decision was optimal. This alphabet was named “the first Kazakh national alphabet”.

A century later, the Kazakh people returned to the issue of creating the Kazakh national alphabet. This time, the issue is expected to find a positive solution for the bright future of the country. The reason is that the Republic of Kazakhstan is a sovereign country that is not subject to anyone as it was a century ago. The Republic of Kazakhstan gained its independence in 1991. In 1993, the then President of the International Kazakh Language Society, Academician Abduali Kaidar, after discussions with Kazakh journalists and scholars, wrote an open letter to the President with proposals on the transition of the Kazakh script to Latin script. Ever since they received the answer, “This is a question worth thinking about, let the experts do it and come up with a concrete proposal for me,” the issue of changing the alphabet has been constantly discussed. The National Commission for the translation of the Kazakh alphabet into Latin script was established on November 14, 2017, and various alphabet projects were submitted for consideration. However, the exact version of the alphabet has not yet been approved.

At the XII session of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan on October 24, 2006, in Astana, the President said that it was necessary to return to the issue of translating the Kazakh alphabet into Latin. In 2012, he stated in the Strategy “Kazakhstan-2050” that “from 2025 we will begin the transition to the Latin alphabet” (2017). The National Commission for the transition of the Kazakh alphabet into Latin script was established on November 14, 2017, and approved by № 153 orders.

On February 19, 2018, a new alphabet was approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. At the request of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, this alphabet still needs to be improved. Now, in this case, it is not enough to change the alphabet, and there are suggestions that writing reform is needed. Linguist-scientist Alimkhan Zhunusbek says that writing consists of the alphabet, symbols and orthography. Here, the scientist defines the alphabet as the phonetic structure of the language, the symbol as the shell of the sound, and the orthographic rules as the national link of the alphabet and the symbol. “Writing reform needs to find a comprehensive solution to these three issues,” he said. “Only then will the original national alphabet be formed”(2017).

This article examines the ways of creation of the first Kazakh national alphabet, created by the founder of Kazakh linguistics Akhmet Baitursynuly. The main reasons and proposals for the transition to Latin, as indicated in an open letter to the President, will also be considered.

The level of transition to Latin script will be studied when it follows the path of Akhmet Baitursynuly.

### MAIN PART

The reformer of the Kazakh script, Akhmet Baitursynov, in his report on the alphabet, defines the alphabet as “a paradise of symbols for the sounds.” That is a paradise, where each person will have his own spacious palace so that the full rights of human beings are protected without interference and no one is disturbed, in the same way, he beautifully compared the alphabet with the spacious palace of sounds – the paradise of symbols. This means that just as everyone in Paradise will have his or her own well-prepared and beautiful place, so will the sounds in the alphabet have their place in every letter. Further, the scientist focuses on the properties of a good alphabet. According to the scientist, a good alphabet must have the following qualities:

1. *«It must suit the language perfectly»*. The scientist explains this with the example of ordinary clothes. He says that having too many letters in the alphabet is as inconvenient as the width of a garment. Conversely, if you wear tight-fitting clothing, it will also strain your body. In the same way, the lesser letters of the alphabet are narrower and more inconvenient. That's why a good alphabet should fit language perfectly in the way clothes suit the person well.

2. *«It should be easy to write»*. Here the scientist says that if the characters in the alphabets are complex, it takes a long time to write them. Also, learning them may not be easy.

3. *«It must be suitable for printing»*. The scientist says that the alphabet, which is easy to type and takes up little space when pressed, simplifies publishing. In other words, the scientist emphasizes that the alphabet must be technically convenient.

4. *«It should be easy to teach»*. Here the scientist pays special attention to the methodological aspect of the alphabet, saying that the letter which is easy to write easy to teach.

Akhmet Baytursynuly writes: “All alphabets will be defective alphabets if they don't fit these four qualities for a good alphabet”. Whether it's the Turkish alphabet or the other alphabet, we need to look at these four attributes. According to the scientist any alphabet, whether Cyrillic or Latin, should correspond to these 4 basic characteristics. Only then the alphabet will be perfect.

Akhmet Baitursynov says that the alphabet is not a world that is not subject to the Kazakh experience. He also writes *«This (alphabet) is no more, no less, as a set of signs depicting the main elements of speech. The easier, the more fully these elements of speech are conveyed, the better the alphabet»* (1924) In his report, the scientist asked what was required of the alphabet, to which he replied that “the alphabet is required so that it could transmit sounds well and was technically comfortable” (1924).

Reading the works of Akhmet Baitursynuly, we see that he went through three stages while creating the first national alphabet (1912):

1. *He found and revealed the shortcomings of the existing writing.*

2. *First of all, he suggested that the order of writing should be corrected, and he presented his work to the people.*

3. *He said that it is necessary to choose the right tool. And he did it.*

*Shortcomings of the existing writing.* In his article “The Order of Writing”, the scientist argues that the need to study in Kazakh is indisputable, and points out that at that time there are two types of learning: Islamic and Russian. He warns that studying in Russian takes a long time and emphasizes the need to study in Kazakh. He argues that studying in Kazakh is not the same as studying in Islamic way at those days. It's difficult to study in Islamic way and it takes more time as studying Russian. And it takes a year or two to learn to read and write correctly in Kazakh. At that time, books written in Nogai, Turkish, Persian and Arabic were mixed, it confused children more and made the study difficult. “In today's writing, we don't have a letter for every sound; we use one letter for several different sounds” he writes (1912). We write five

different sounds with this letter «و-و», and three different sounds with this «Ы-Ы». Thus, the scientist says that it is violent to teach a child the same spelling words differently. In addition, the scientist mentions the following main shortcomings of that time:

- *Everyone writes differently. There is no standard writing.*
- *There are no orthographic norms that can tell the difference between right and wrong.*
- *The reason for its absence is that there are no letters for Kazakh sounds.*

He listed such shortcomings and concluded that Kazakhs need new writing. He showed that Kazakhs need orthographic norms to distinguish between right and wrong spelling and for that Kazakh sounds needed letters first. That is, dedicating letters to Kazakh sounds means creating a new alphabet. Taking into account the fact that the Arabic graphics at that time could not fully convey the Kazakh sounds, he writes: “Instead of losing the sound in the language, it is necessary to find the letters for the sounds.” He conveys the idea that doing so is normal, not just for us, but for others as well. Once one identifies the shortcomings, the work to address them will be clear. He also said that the textbook should be easy to understand, worked to solve this issue.

*Adjust the order of writing.* The scientist began his work by identifying the original sounds of the Kazakh language. «There are 24 sounds in the Kazakh language. Five of them are vowels, seventeen consonants and two are half-vowels. Vowel sounds: ا(a), و(o), ؤ(y), ي(Ы), ة(e). Consonants: ب(б), پ(п), ت(т), ج(ж), چ(ш), د(д), ر(p), ز(z), س(c), غ(Ғ), ق(k), ك(k), گ(г), ث(Һ), ل(л), م(m), ن(н). Half vowels: ؤ(y), ي(й)».

According to the scientist, among these sounds, some sounds are always hard (к, Ғ), and some are always soft (к, г, и). The rest have both hard and soft versions. If we write each of 19 hard and soft sounds, we will need 38 letters, and if we add the remaining 5 sound symbols, we will need 43 letters in total. Since there are not many letters in the Arabic alphabet, the scientist introduces a special sign " ؤ- a dayekshe, which indicates softness of the sounds. Thereby he reduces the number of letters in the alphabet. This is because he considers consonant sounds are subordinate to vowel sounds. This means that if the vowel is hard, the consonants in the word will be spoken hard, and if the vowels are soft, the consonants in the words will be spoken softly. This decision was a novelty for that time. Russian scientists, such as Polivanov and Yakovlev, were both amazed and astonished that this solution was correct when they checked it based on a mathematical formula. Even today, there is no doubt that this decision was optimal. “The sign that our vowel sounds: a- o , ا- ۋ , و- ы , ؤ- ы- are pronounced for the soft pronunciation is ؤ (warning sign), this sign is placed in front of the word as a reference,” says the scientist. With that sign, people read the words were in a soft way.

scientist says that there is no letter in the Arabic alphabet that corresponds to the sound ы (Ы), and takes the letter .pots lluf a tuohtiw scihparg cibara ni ي This way he dedicated a new letter to the existing sound in Kazakh. Similarly, he assigned new letters to the sounds ۋ, o, r, e, п, Һ, y which are not present in Arabic graphics.

He also says that he is on the side of preserving the words that came from the Arabic and Persian languages and became the Kazakh word. He substantiates the idea by saying that others keep the words adapted to their language as well. Examples of such words are the Arabic words adal-halal, aram-haram, al-hal, and the Persian words an-ahn and khoja-khoja.

This is how the scientist arranged the letters of the alphabet and the order of writing. Even though there were some critics, this was the alphabet that was recognized and used by the general public and educators at that time. This alphabet was named “the first Kazakh national alphabet”.

*Properly done textbook.* Once the shortcomings of the existing writing were identified and the writing was put in order, the task was to create the textbook. He succeeded here as well. “The greatest textbook is a book for teaching children” (1912), successfully understanding the

importance of textbooks for children, that they should be easy to learn, he successfully developed “Language – a tool”. The order of the letters on this textbook had also placed in a special order. It had not based on the order of the alphabet, but on the ability to form words. There were various exercises and review tasks. This textbook was used till the transition of the alphabet from Arabic to Latin in 1929. Even today, Kazakhs who live in China use this “tote jazı” literally means direct writing. So this is proof that this writing was well made. So this is proof that this writing was well made.

### DISCUSSION

Now we will write about the current process of creating a new national alphabet. It is necessary to know the reason for the first suggestion of a new national alphabet. Usually, if the existing alphabet has a shortcoming, the alphabet is replaced if it does not give the sounds of the language well. And what made the Kazakh people make this decision?

The initial answer to this question was given in an open letter of academician Abduali Kaidar to the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1993. The academician asks and answers important questions. The scientist says, that the following question is always asked first: “Why to replace the Cyrillic alphabet, which has been in use for half a century, with the Latin alphabet?” He says that it is not easy to answer this question in one word and that this topic is not only related to language policy, but also the country's economy, demographic situation, social and democratic processes. *«First of all, when other related Turkic peoples moved to the Latin script, the Kazakhs were separated from them and left alone with the old script - the alienation from the whole Turkic community, from*

*their spiritual and cultural life»* (1993) he writes, and *and Second, although the Cyrillic script has been the basis for the development of national culture and science for the past fifty years, it has failed to unite the Turkic peoples and ethnic groups of the world, let alone the Turkic peoples of the former USSR. Due to some “features”, they could not read and understand each other's writings. The academician says that this question is also asked many times: “What are the personal shortcomings of the Cyrillic script for the Kazakh and other Turkic languages?” He points out three main shortcomings:*

1. *“Kazakh and other Turkic languages could not freely develop their own natural features (sound composition, syllable system, consonant law, etc.) through this writing; As a result, there is a huge gap between the norms of oral (orthoepic) and written spelling of our language; Although there are many educated people, there are few literate people.” All of this suggests that not only the nature of the language, but also the future of the younger generation who speak it, is being seriously affected, and that one of the manifestations of the ecological phenomenon in language is related to this.*

2. *«It is difficult for Kazakh children to learn and use the Cyrillic alphabet, which consists of 42 characters instead of the 26-28 letters required for the Kazakh language. And adding of so many superfluous symbols was born from the fact that from the very beginning it was in the interests of the national languages, and in any case to bring the Kazakhs closer to the Russian language»* writes the scientist.

3. *«Since the Kazakh language was facing difficulties in marking the 9 phonemes typical of the Kazakh language - (ə, ɵ, ʏ, ʘ, i, k, f, h, h), the use of so many extra redundant characters as (в), (ё), (y), (ф), (x), (и), (ч), (ш), (ъ), (ь), (э), (ю), (j) – complicated the writing system. This is only one side of the issue. There is another side to it: Other related Turkic languages, such as Kazakh, have come up with the phoneme 8-9 (“Turkish”) in different ways, using it in different ways and it might be the result of the policy called “Divide and rule.” He leaves this aspect of the problem in history and says that it is a historic moment that will radically decide the fate of our promising and long-lasting national writing. He says that if we do not solve it together with the Turkic community today, it will be too late tomorrow and it will get worse over time.*

In this open letter, the academician offers 28 characters of the Kazakh alphabet from the 34 letter alphabet common to the Turkic people. «*Although we have included two of these letters in the alphabet project, proving the need for consonant (Ww) for the Kazakh language, which is found in words such as taw, jaw, suw, buw, puw, juwan, duwman, and (Əə). It is on the same principle they could not accept (Өө)*» by writing this, he believes the commission will be able to resolve such issues. At the same time, the scientist states that the fate of any alphabet, its function in the language, is directly related to the spelling of the alphabet, and at the same time it is necessary to prepare the orthographic rules of spelling for the Kazakh language. «*After all, the soul, the life, all the possibilities of the alphabet are determined only by orthography. One of the main features of the Latin alphabet is that it corresponds to the phonetic principle of spelling and can more fully reflect the peculiarities of our spoken language. This is also an important issue to consider*» he concludes his speech about spelling. The academician deeply understands the importance of creating the Kazakh state national writing and suggests that this script should be based on modern Latin script.

If we follow the principles and ways of Akhymet Baitursynuly in the creation of the Kazakh state national script, we will surely produce a good alphabet. And the issue of spelling should not be left out. So, the first of the three stages of Akhymet Baitursynuly's creation of the alphabet, that is, the shortcomings of the existing alphabet, were explained in the open letter of academician Abduali Kaidar. The next step - to correct writing order: dedicate letters from Latin graphics to Kazakh sounds; Adherence to the principle "One sound - one letter"; To get rid of redundant characters in the alphabet; Conformity of the alphabet to the requirements of the four characteristics mentioned by Akhymet Baitursynuly; create an appropriate orthographic norm that distinguishes between correct and incorrect spelling; As a result, to develop a textbook on the alphabet and spelling, following methods of Akhymet Baitursynuly's teaching.

As far as we know, the work of the second stage has not been fully resolved. However, specialists are actively involved in the third stage and are in the middle of the work. Undoubtedly, this is an interesting situation. This is because it seems that we should not rush to prepare a textbook if the alphabet and spelling are not clear.

**CONCLUSION** This article deals with the formation of the Kazakh state national writing. It analyzes the way of creation of the first Kazakh national script. It suggests using the principles of the first Kazakh national alphabet in the creation of a new alphabet. The principles and great works of the reformer of the first Kazakh national alphabet Akhymet Baitursynuly in the creation of the alphabet were studied.

The issue raised in both centuries is the formation of the Kazakh national script. To do this, firstly, it is important to fully understand the shortcomings of the existing alphabet. Secondly, it is important to adjust the order of writing: to mark the Kazakh sounds correctly, that is, to create an alphabet. Get rid of redundant characters in the alphabet; Create appropriate orthography to determine if the spelling is correct or incorrect; As a result, to develop a textbook on the alphabet and spelling, following methods of Akhymet Baitursynuly's teaching This is a large-scale work that requires great responsibility and devotion to the Kazakh language. It is expected that the case initiated by Academician Abduali Kaidar following Akhymet Baitursynuly's way will be completed by linguists in a proper way. If the new Kazakh national alphabet will be created by Akhymet Baitursynuly's way, meets the requirements of the scientist for a good alphabet, if it obeys the laws of the Kazakh language, the present and future of the Kazakh state as well as the Kazakh language will be bright.

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