

# HISTORICAL PRECONDITIONS OF INTRODUCING LATIN SCRIPT IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Latin language belongs to the Indo-European language family. The origin of its name is related to the Latin tribe, which inhabited a small region in central Italy called Latium. Latin was initially one of the many closely related Italic languages. With the expansion of ancient Roman state, Latin language had spread to the entire territory of modern Italy. It acquired a status of national language in the significant part of Europe, in Northern Africa and in some regions of Asia. Latin was the official language in Roman Empire. Before the modern era, it was one of the main written languages in West European science, culture and social life. This language was used in Catholic culture up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For more than 2000 years old literature was written in Latin. It appears to be one of the most important languages in human culture. Modern Italian, French, Romanian people speak languages, which are descendants of Latin language. These languages form a Romanic group of Indo-European language family [1; 10 p.].

Latin alphabet is used as the basis for a writing system of many languages from different language groups.

Latin alphabet, which developed, by certain resources, from Etruscan, formed nearly the VII century BC.

Modern Latin alphabet consists of 26 letters.

The primary Latin alphabet consisted only of 21 letters:  
A B C D E F Z H I K L M N O P Q R S T V X

**Then, during a long period, Latin alphabet went through the next transformations:**

-In 312 year BC – “Z” letter was dropped out of the alphabet and it shortened to 20 letters.

-In 234 year BC – “G” letter was created by adding a cross line to the “C”, which was used before to present [k] and [g] sounds.

-In the I century BC – letters “Y” and “Z” were added to the alphabet in order to write adopted words from Greek language words. These changes led to the formation of classical Latin alphabet, consisting of 23 letters:

A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T V X Y Z.

**The last modifications of Latin alphabet occurred in the Middle Ages:**

-In the XI century – “W” letter was added to the alphabet

-In the XVI century – “J” and “U” letters were introduced, and the alphabet turned into its modern version.

However, Latin alphabet, when related to Latin language itself, is often regarded as consisting of 25 letters. The reason is that letter “W” used mostly for writing English and Deutsch names, sometimes is not included in the alphabet [1; 12 p].

In the world 4 billion 200 million people use Latin alphabet, which is 60% of Earth’s population. Latin script emerged as a writing system for Romanic languages, and it constitutes a basis for alphabets of many European languages. In the present time some countries of “near abroad” use Latin alphabet as well [2; 3 p.].

“The transfer to the Latin script has a thorough reasoning,” the president of Kazakhstan N.Nazarbayev said in his article called “Bolashakka bagdar: rukhani jangiru” (“the pass to the future: the moral legacy”).

“This transfer is related to the modern technologies, environment and communications, in addition, to the features of educational and scientific processes in 21 century. Children learn English and Latin letters from the school, so there will not be any difficulties and obstacles for the younger generation to cope with the change. With the help of scientists and social discussion the new standard of Latin graphics based alphabet must be admitted till the end of 2017,” Nazarbayev writes in his article. He notices that throughout the history of Kazakh alphabet, it was transferred to one or another graphics type only in political purposes, and interests of the nation were never considered.

Kazakh language originated in VI-VIII centuries with the appearance of Ancient Turkic runic writing on the territory of Eurasian continent, better known as Orkhon-Yenisey inscriptions. These inscriptions introduced an example of one of the most ancient alphabets in human history. Turkic language had a function of international language on the biggest part of the continent during V-XV centuries. For example, official documents and international letters and messages of the Golden Horde were written in Ancient Turkic language. With spreading of Islam, runic inscriptions were gradually displaced by Arabic script. This type of graphic system was used on the territory of modern Kazakhstan for 900 years from X to XX centuries. On 7 August 1929, the Central Executive Committee of KazSSR and Council of People’s Commissars of KazSSR accepted a decree about integration of “Unified Turkic alphabet”, based on Latin graphics. This alphabet was used from 1929 until 1940. On 13 November 1940, another act of Kazakh language transfer from Latin to Russian graphics was adopted, as it is written in the article called “History of Kazakh spelling”.

“Thus, every time transferring of the language to one or another type alphabet was initiated by political aims” writes the president.

The head of the state reminded that, according to 2012 year’s strategy “Kazakhstan – 2050” the Republic has to transfer to Latin graphic system until 2025.

It means that by the time, we have to use Latin script in all spheres of state activity. From 2025, all business records, the print media, schoolbooks have to be issued in Latin graphics. The time is coming, and we have to start this work immediately. The government must prepare a schedule of transition to Latin script” the president wrote in the article in the newspaper “Yegemen Kazakhstan” (“Independent Kazakhstan”).

A transition to the Latin alphabet is not just replacement of one letters by others; it is a complicated process, which



aims to create conditions for co-development of Kazakh language and high technologies [3; 3 p.].

It is a significant element of social consciousness's modernization program, the foundation of the progress, advanced knowledge and digital communication.

As a result of association with Bologna Process Kazakhstan has passed to three-level based model of advanced education: bachelor's, master's, doctoral levels.

Introduction of global educational standards will contribute to increase of proficiency and competitiveness of Kazakh specialists in the world. In Kazakhstan, in order to receive a master or doctoral degree one must pass IELTS or TOEFL examinations, for a submission of a dissertation one must have an English article in journals, included in Scopus or Thomson Reuters database. As the transition proceeds, it will be more comfortable for youth to adjust in modern educational and informational space, where English language has a dominant position [4; 2 p.].

The head of the state has frequently noticed that the transition to the Latin graphic system will be consequent and systematic. It will occur according to a staged plan of Latin alphabet integration, starting from 2020. A special national committee will control issues of approbation, preparation of teaching corps, and creation of legislative basis. The National Committee organized four groups to deal with different types of issues: first – orthographic (for adaptation of Kazakh language's orthographic and orthoepic rules to Latin script), second – methodical (for elaboration of educational methodology and infiltration of Latin script to educational system), third – terminological (for systematization of Kazakh language's terminological fund in accordance to Latin script), fourth – expert technical (for adaptation of Latin script to IT technologies). Groups consist of experts in corresponding fields of science.

At the present time, linguist scientists develop orthographic concept. It is a complicated process, which includes creating spelling rules of Kazakh language in Latin graphics. Orthography establishes right spelling of phonemes, morphemes, words, based on three main principles: tradition-historical, phonetic and morphological (phonemic).

Tradition-historical principle is basically used in European languages: for example, in English and French. The words are written in the same way they were written in ancient times. Such type of writing system emerged a long ago, has not changed for centuries, although the phonetic was evolving, the number of phonemes was increasing. It resulted in discrepancy between letters and sounds, writing and pronunciation. The correct spelling is usually achieved with help of transcription.

Phonetic principle is common for Belarusian and Serbian languages. According to this principle, words are written in the same way they are pronounced, in other words, spelling matches pronunciation, for example: "танав", "карова", "тунэль".

Morphological (phonemic) principle is used in Russian language. Phoneme or morpheme does not change in all cognate words and their forms despite of pronunciation. Thus, the letter "O" in words "ropa" and "горы" has different sounds, but never changes in writing.

Kazakh language uses all three principles, but the leading position takes phonemic principle. In phonemic writing, the same letters present a phoneme in all its forms, no matter how it is pronounced. For instance, consonant phonemes [н, с, з] can sound differently depending on their position in a word.

The history of languages' evolution can show that sound foundation of a certain language has been improving, has been supplemented by new phonemes

and, because of their frequent use, has been adjusting to the articulatory apparatus of its users. Appearance of new phonemes is connected to a development of a language and intellection, addition with new notions, new vocabulary, influence of adjacent cultures and civilizations. This progressive phenomenon upgrades the language, but does not spoil it, as some puristic linguists think.

In the time of globalization and intercultural cooperation, education of young generation in traditions of trilingualism, puristic view of alphabet reformation cannot be accepted, as it can create a variety of additional problems. New generation aimed for European standards for entrance into global informational space, for adoption of world technologies and science systems stands for a reasonable and adequate transition of Kazakh language to Latin graphics.

New Kazakh writing system, based on Latin scripts, will allow fully and simply convert spoken language into writing, using the minimal number of letters required for that. The law of economy in orthography is one of the main goals every language aims to reach. For the Kazakh language, the way towards this goal started with one of the kazakh linguistics' founder Akhmet Baitusynov. His "tote jazı" ("economic writing") was the first attempt to present all the variety of Kazakh sounds with limited number of letters [5; 3p.].

## ТҮЙІНДЕМЕ

Мақалада латын әліпбиі мен латын тілінің пайда болуын, латын әліпбиін және оның ежелгі заман мен орта ғасырдағы өзгеруін, латын әліпбиінің Еуропа мемлекеттерінде қолдануын көрсетеді. Сонымен қатар, мақала латын әліпбиінің морфологиялық, фонетикалық және орфографиялық концепцияларын, Қазақстанның латын графикасына көшудің оң және теріс жағын баяндайды.

**Түйінді сөздер:** Латын, әліпби, орфографиялық концепциялар, латын графикасы.

## РЕЗЮМЕ

Данная статья описывает происхождение латиницы и латинских языков в целом, латинский алфавит и его эволюцию в древнее время и средние века, особенности использования латинского алфавита в европейских странах. Кроме того, данный труд рассматривает морфологические и фонетические особенности латинского алфавита, особенности его произношения, преимущества и недостатки перехода Казахстана на латинскую графику.

**Ключевые слова:** латиница, алфавит, орфографические концепции, латинская графика.

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