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Norm and Usage in Contemporary Kazakh: A Linguistic Analysis of Youth Discourse and Digital Communication

Zagira Ordabayeva^{1*} , Shara Mazhitayeva¹ , Karlygash Khamzina² , Togzhan Smakova¹ , Zhanbai Kadyrov³ 

¹ Faculty of Philology, Karaganda University, Karaganda 100024, Kazakhstan

² Department of Kazakh Language and Culture, Karaganda Technical University, Karaganda 100012, Kazakhstan

³ Faculty of Philology, M. Kozybayev North Kazakhstan University, Petropavlovsk 150003, Kazakhstan

ABSTRACT

This article explores the shifting balance between codified linguistic norms and actual usage patterns in contemporary Kazakh. The main focus is on changes observed in youth colloquial speech and in the rapidly evolving discourse of digital communication. The expansion of social media platforms such as Telegram, Instagram, and WhatsApp has led to the frequent use of non-standard constructions, calques, and hybrid forms. The study demonstrates how these trends are influencing the perception of linguistic correctness, as widespread usage (*usus*) is increasingly being favored over traditional literary norms. The research is based on a qualitative corpus consisting of social media posts, informal spoken language data, and scholarly opinions on language norms. The methodological foundation includes discourse analysis, comparative syntactic analysis, and contextual-semantic interpretation. The analysis identifies key mechanisms of deviation from the norm, including calquing from Russian, syntactic transfer, non-standard punctuation, abbreviations, and examples of digital slang. The study reveals that in contemporary Kazakh speech, especially among youth, the gap between normative rules and actual linguistic behavior is widening. While traditional grammar is still taught in the educational system, everyday language use increasingly reflects global and media-driven influences. The article frames this shift not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but also as a reflection of deeper

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Zagira Ordabayeva, Faculty of Philology, Karaganda University, Karaganda 100024, Kazakhstan; Email: ordabaevazz@mail.ru

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 26 July 2025 | Revised: 7 August 2025 | Accepted: 2 September 2025 | Published Online: 22 October 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i11.11287>

CITATION

Ordabayeva, Z., Mazhitayeva, S., Khamzina, K., et al., 2025. Norm and Usage in Contemporary Kazakh: A Linguistic Analysis of Youth Discourse and Digital Communication. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 7(11): 686–701. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i11.11287>

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sociocultural transformations within individual identity, modern culture, and the digital environment. The findings provide important recommendations for language education, media literacy, and language codification policy. The study underscores the need to reconsider how linguistic norms should be defined, maintained, and taught in the digital age.

Keywords: Norm; Usag; Kazakh Language; Linguistic Analysis; Youth Discourse; Digital Communication

1. Introduction

In the contemporary era, the processes of globalization and the rapid advancement of digital communication are exerting a direct influence on the internal structure of linguistic systems, particularly on the relationship between linguistic norms and actual usage (*usus*). In the current state of the Kazakh language, the boundary between codified literary language and widespread non-standard usages is increasingly blurred, leading to a growing complexity in linguistic situations. From this perspective, distinguishing between linguistic norm and *usus*, identifying their boundaries, and analyzing their interaction in the development of the language has become both a theoretical and practical concern in linguistic studies.

In classical linguistic tradition, the term “linguistic norm” refers to the codified literary form of language governed by established rules, whereas “*usus*” describes the actual language practices of speakers—their habitual usage. These two concepts are sometimes seen as overlapping, but often appear as conflicting phenomena. Scholars such as V. V. Vinogradov^[1] (1960) and S. I. Ozhegov and N. Y. Shvedova^[2] (1997) emphasized the social consensus underlying linguistic norms, while more recent research has increasingly acknowledged the dynamic nature of *usus* itself. In Kazakh linguistics, this issue has been addressed at various levels by scholars such as A. Baitursynuly, K. Zhubanov, I. Kenesbaev, R. Syzdyk, A. Khasenov, M. Balakaev, A. Salkynbai, and Zh. Sarsenbai. Notably, A. Salkynbai and Zh. Sarsenbai have analyzed how current linguistic processes are shifting toward *usus* and how this trend relates to established norms, discussing deviations at the orthoepic, orthographic, lexical, syntactic, and stylistic levels.

The Kazakh language today stands at the crossroads of several intersecting influences: official language policy, the trilingual education program, discursive transformations in social media, and the evolving nature of youth speech culture. All of these factors are generating new de-

mands on linguistic norms. In particular, the rise of social media and messenger-based communication (WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, etc.) is compelling a reconsideration of standard language practices. On such platforms, normative grammatical constructions and stylistic conventions are often disregarded, giving way to shortened, slang-based, phonetic writing patterns supplemented by multimodal elements such as emojis and stickers. This situation has prompted scholarly debate: do these patterns represent deviations from the norm, or the emergence of new norms?

The study of youth speech culture reveals a prevalence of language play, creativity, neutrality, expressiveness, comic elements, as well as linguistic economy (the law of brevity), inter-style mixing, lexical reduction, and discursive constructions. These patterns are increasingly taking root not only in spoken but also in written communication. As shown in the research by A. Kurmanbekova and others, youth-generated texts often neglect the norms of sentence construction and exhibit syntactic and morphological inaccuracies. These deviations not only contradict internal linguistic rules but also challenge the regulatory function of the language.

Such linguistic phenomena can be viewed from two angles: on the one hand, as a natural evolutionary development of the language; on the other, as a reflection of broader socio-communicative shifts. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct a systematic investigation of current normative tendencies and *usus*-related features in the Kazakh language. This issue should be examined not only through a linguistic lens but also from the perspectives of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, and linguistic cultural studies. The balance between norm and usage is, after all, a key indicator of a language’s stability and adaptability.

This article aims to analyze the relationship between linguistic norms and *usus* in contemporary Kazakh through the lens of social media and youth discourse, focusing on linguistic-cultural and pragmatic aspects. The study investigates deviations from norms in modern spoken and writ-

ten texts, their causes and consequences, and the influence of emerging *usus* patterns on the language system. Exploring this issue is vital for forecasting the future development of the Kazakh language, updating normative frameworks, and refining language policy.

In this study, we adopt a more precise distinction between linguistic norm and *usus*. A norm is defined as a codified, prescriptive set of linguistic rules officially recognized and maintained through educational, literary, and institutional mechanisms ^[1,2]. By contrast, *usus* refers to recurrent, habitual practices of speakers in real communicative contexts, which may diverge from codified rules but gain stability through frequency of use ^[3,4].

2. Literature Review

In the tradition of Russian and Kazakh linguistics, scholars such as Vinogradov ^[1] (1960) and Ozhogov and Shvedova ^[2] (1997) emphasized norm as a socially accepted model, while Baitursynuly ^[5] (1914) and Syzdyk ^[6] (1997) treated it as the cultural foundation of the Kazakh literary language. More recent works ^[7] argue that *usus* should be considered not only as deviation but also as a potential source of future norms. This theoretical shift is essential for understanding the dynamics of Kazakh in digital contexts.

In Kazakh linguistics, the issues of linguistic norm and actual usage (*usus*) have evolved through various theoretical perspectives and practical demands across historical periods. The scientific foundation of this topic was laid in the early 20th century by A. Baitursynuly (1914). His reformist efforts to standardize the phonetic, morphological, and syntactic structures of the language played a pivotal role in the codification of the Kazakh literary language. In his seminal work *Til-Qural*, Baitursynuly conceptualized language as a systematic, regulated structure suitable for formal instruction.

The relationship between linguistic norm and *usus* has been extensively examined in the works of scholars such as V. Vinogradov, E. Vereshchagin, Yu. Karaulov, and S. Ozhegov. According to these scholars, a norm is a socially accepted and regularized linguistic form, while *usus* refers to the habitual linguistic practices of speakers. This distinction has also found expression in Kazakh linguistic

studies. For example, R. Syzdyk, in her work *Söz Qudireti* (1997), highlights both the historical-comparative and cultural-cognitive aspects of the concept of norm, emphasizing its role as the foundation of linguistic culture.

In the current context, detailed analyses of norms and *usus*-related phenomena have been undertaken by A. Salkynbai and Zh. Sarsenbai ^[7] (2023). Their article *Current Linguistic Trends: Norms and Usus Features* presents examples of linguistic deviations across various levels—orthographic, orthoepic, lexical, syntactic, and stylistic. The authors argue that the frequent use of calques and syntactic structures from translated texts negatively affects both spoken and written language norms.

A. Qurmanbekova ^[8] (2022) and her research team, in their analysis of youth speech culture, emphasize the prevalence of non-normative, expressive, slang, and graphic elements in youth communication. These findings suggest a widening gap between literary norms and actual communication practices. Youth language often exhibits emotional-expressive tones, abbreviations (e.g., *qaz*, *inst*, *zhh*), phonetic spellings, and multimodal features (e.g., emojis, memes, hashtags), which are seen as markers of emerging *usus*.

Consequently, there is a growing need to reconsider the pragmatic and functional boundaries of linguistic norms. Researchers such as K. Kenzhebekova and A. Qakharmahnova ^[9] (2022), studying social media communication, have shown that deviations from written language norms—especially syntactic simplifications and disregard for grammatical rules—are widespread. They also point out that in social media discourse, principles such as linguistic economy (e.g., abbreviations, phrase reductions) and expressiveness (e.g., emotional tone, pragmatic modality) are dominant features.

These challenges are not unique to the Kazakh language but are echoed in global linguistic research. In English, French, and German linguistics, internet language and youth discourse are also studied as mechanisms that bypass normative grammar and establish new pragmatic norm ^[3,4]. Such studies conceptualize internet discourse not merely as deviation but as an adaptive mechanism of language evolution.

In addition, some studies explore the relationship between linguistic norms and *usus* from the perspectives

of language policy and codification. Researcher such as emphasize Qurmanbayuli ^[10] (2022), the normative role of corrective dictionaries like Söztüzer. These dictionaries identify and offer corrections for frequent calques and semantically distorted phrases; however, their continued use among speakers demonstrates the resilience of *usus*.

Work by Aldash ^[11] (2021) address issues related to orthoepic norms and linguistic etiquette, while those by Sarseke ^[12] (2011) and Uali ^[13] (2021) examine stylistic norms in connection with national worldview. Collectively, these studies reflect the multidimensional nature of modern linguistic norms: on one hand, formal-legal norms (rules, dictionaries, official documents), and on the other, socially entrenched usage patterns (*usus*).

In conclusion, distinguishing and understanding the functions of norms and *usus* in modern Kazakh linguistics remains both theoretically and practically significant. Literary norm preserves cultural heritage and enables stable communication, whereas *usus* represents a dynamic communication mechanism responsive to contemporary demands. New usage patterns that emerge at the intersection of these two systems—especially in youth and digital discourse—are increasingly viewed as influential factors shaping the future of the Kazakh language.

The findings of this study also resonate with broader international scholarship on digital language change. Scholars such as Androutsopoulos ^[14] (2006), Herring & Androutsopoulos ^[15] (2015), and Tagg ^[16] (2015) highlight that digital media fosters new norms of communication where brevity, multimodality, and hybrid codes dominate. Similarly, global research emphasizes that deviations in online discourse should be understood as adaptive mechanisms rather than mere violations of norms ^[3,4].

Furthermore, recent studies ^[17–19] demonstrate that digital platforms accelerate processes of linguistic innovation, code-switching, and identity construction across diverse linguistic communities. By engaging with these perspectives, the present study positions Kazakh digital discourse within the global context of internet linguistics and sociolinguistic transformation.

3. Methodology

For the purposes of this study, norm will be opera-

tionalized as codified and prescriptive forms of Kazakh (e.g., orthographic rules, grammar, and official stylistic standards), while *usus* will be operationalized as stable, recurrent, but non-normative forms observed in youth discourse and digital communication. This distinction allows us to analyze both categories systematically rather than treating deviations as isolated errors.

3.1. Materials

The primary materials for this study consist of non-standard, *usus*-based usages in contemporary Kazakh, as found in both spoken and written communication. Specifically, the research incorporates data from youth discourse, language patterns on social media, media texts, and stylistic or syntactic disruptions that deviate from codified literary norms. The materials were collected from the following sources:

Kazakh-language posts and comments on social media platforms such as Telegram, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook (2024–2025);

Informal interview transcripts and recordings of everyday conversations with young people;

Translated and original press materials in Kazakh (newspapers, websites, news portals);

Examples cited in academic publications ^[7–9].

In total, more than 1200 linguistic units were analyzed, from which normative and *usus*-based patterns were categorized. Given the diversity of genres (dialogues, monologues, comments, news, and posts), the data enabled a broad discourse and functional analysis.

3.2. Research Design

This research employed a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The core method was discourse-linguistic analysis, supplemented by content analysis, frequency counts, and comparative linguistic evaluation.

The study began by organizing linguistic units at various levels—sentence, phrase, word, and morpheme—and conducting contextual analysis to identify types of norm deviation (lexical, syntactic, orthoepic, stylistic). Each example was described in terms of its pragmatic function and usage context, with special attention given to frequently recurring patterns.

3.3. Data Collection and Sampling Procedure

The dataset of 1200 linguistic units was collected using a stratified sampling strategy to ensure diversity across discourse types. Sources included (a) social media posts and comments (Telegram, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook), (b) informal youth conversations recorded and transcribed during 2024–2025, and (c) translated and original media texts.

The inclusion criteria were:

1. The text had to be written or spoken in Kazakh;
2. It belonged to informal or semi-formal discourse domains;
3. At least one normative or stylistic deviation had to be present;
4. The material was produced after 2020.

From the pool of collected data, units were randomly selected across different platforms to maintain balance between genres and speaker demographics.

3.4. Data Processing and Analysis Methods

The analysis followed a three-step procedure. First, all units were coded into three categories: (a) normative, (b) *usus*-based, and (c) deviant usage. Second, frequency analysis was conducted to determine the distribution of deviations by type (lexical, morphological, syntactic, pragmatic). Third, contextual-pragmatic analysis was applied to interpret the communicative functions of deviations.

To ensure reliability, 20% of the dataset was independently coded by two linguists. The inter-coder agreement rate was 87%, which we consider sufficient for qualitative corpus studies. Disagreements were resolved through discussion.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Relationship Between Linguistic Norm and *Usus*: Theory and Contemporary Practice

In today's Kazakh communicative space, the boundary between the concepts of norm and *usus* is increasingly becoming blurred. This is due, on the one hand, to the influence of globalization and social media, and on the other,

to changes in speakers' perceptions of linguistic correctness. In this section, we analyze the interrelation between normative and *usus*-based uses in contemporary Kazakh, drawing upon classical theories of linguistic norm while offering practical examples.

A linguistic norm refers to a set of codified rules and patterns that are accepted, regulated, and culturally endorsed within a speech community. Academician V.V. Vinogradov defines the norm as “a linguistic structure accepted in social practice, recognized by the community, and promoted as exemplary.” Similarly, Akhmanova^[20] (2013) describes it as “a collection of language elements and structures considered correct and suitable for instruction in a given language.”

By contrast, *usus* (from Latin *usus* meaning “habit” or “use”) refers to actual, real-life linguistic usage within specific social contexts at a particular time. *Usus* may align with, or deviate from, the normative model. In many cases, *usus* precedes the norm, later becoming incorporated into it. In this context, Salkynbai and Sarsenbai^[7] (2023) describe current linguistic trends in Kazakh as a dialectic between “normalized” and “non-normalized” uses.

Today, particularly within informal discourses (such as youth speech, social media communication, and messaging), deviations from the norm are widespread. Many of these *usus*-based expressions are deeply embedded in communicative practice, though they are still regarded in academic or grammatical contexts as “incorrect” or “non-normative”. This discrepancy illustrates the tension between codified norms and lived language use (Table 1).

As demonstrated in these examples, *usus*-based forms deviate from norms not only structurally but also in their pragmatic and functional dimensions. *Usus* tends to favor informal, concise, and expressive language, while the norm emphasizes correctness, formality, and linguistic discipline.

The linguistic community remains divided on the valuation of *usus*. Some scholars^[21] (e.g., Karaulov, 1992) view it as deviation from the norm, while others^[8,22] recognize it as part of the natural evolution of language. In the history of the Kazakh language, we can observe instances where *usus*-based expressions later became normative. For instance, *qazaqsha* was once an informal alternative to *qazaq tili*-men, but today it is considered standard.

Table 1. Codified norms and lived language.

No.	Usus-Based Usage	Normative Equivalent	Commentary
1	Qatysamyn degen oidamyn	Qatysamyn dep oilaimyn	Calque of Russian: “думаю, что приму участие”
2	Mende sұraq bar	Meniń sұragym bar	Calque of Russian: “у меня есть вопрос”
3	Men qattı quandym goı	Qattı quandym (emes pe?)	Use of goı as an emotional intensifier
4	Post jazyp qoıǵanmyn	Jazba jariyalǵanmyn	Formation through new media lexicality

A key issue arising here is the potential for the socialization and codification of usus. If a particular linguistic pattern becomes widespread across social domains, it may qualify for recognition as a normative element. Salkynbai and Sarsenbai ^[7] (2023) refer to this process as “the transformation of usus into norm.”

The research also revealed that usus is closely tied to age, especially among speakers aged 18–30. In this group, calque structures, sentences influenced by Russian interference, and new media vocabulary appear frequently. These usages typically occur in informal contexts and are motivated by the need for quick communication, emotional expression, or stylistic nuance.

Common usus-based expressions observed in texts include:

- Söilein dep jatırmyn – instead of söilegeli otırmyn
- Telefon sogyp köreın – instead of qoıyrau shalamyn
- Bir jerge baryp keldik goı – emotive/expressive past tense
- Oqyp shyqtym – implies skimming or quick review, rather than detailed reading

The relationship between norm and usus in contemporary Kazakh is dialectical: the norm functions as a stabilizing, regulatory mechanism, while usus acts as a renewing, evolutionary force. In a dynamic linguistic environment influenced by societal change, usus-based constructions should not be viewed merely as deviations, but rather as indicators of potential normative shifts. Understanding this internal dynamic is crucial for managing linguistic change responsibly and for developing responsive language policies.

While some scholars describe usus-based forms as signs of “erosion” of linguistic norms, such terminology may be overly prescriptive. From a sociolinguistic perspective, usus can be seen as part of natural language change, often preceding codification. For example, the form qazaqsha was once considered informal but is now accepted as standard. Similarly, contact-induced calques such as

qatysamyn degen oidamyn (from Russian “думаю, что приму участие”) illustrate adaptation to bilingual contexts rather than degradation. Thus, instead of interpreting these forms as a threat to the literary norm, we consider them transitional phenomena that reflect dynamic interaction between codified rules and lived usage. This perspective aligns with global findings on digital discourse ^[3,4], where non-standard forms often function as precursors to emerging norms.

4.2. Typology of Deviations from the Norm in Youth Language

The code-switching patterns observed in Kazakh youth discourse can be more deeply understood through established theories of multilingualism. Gumperz ^[23] (1982) viewed code-switching as an interactional resource, enabling speakers to signal shifts in topic, stance, or identity. Similarly, Myers-Scotton’s ^[24] (1993) Markedness Model explains that speakers choose between codes depending on the social meaning they want to index—whether to mark solidarity, authority, or informality. In Kazakh digital contexts, the alternation between Kazakh, Russian, and English often reflects these pragmatic motivations.

More recently, translanguaging theory ^[25] emphasizes that multilingual speakers draw on their entire linguistic repertoire as a unified system, rather than separating languages. This perspective aligns with our data, where hybrid utterances such as Bilmim, uaiym zhoq voobshe or Men agree-min illustrate fluid language practices that resist strict boundaries between Kazakh, Russian, and English. Thus, code-switching in digital Kazakh discourse should be interpreted not merely as deviation but as evidence of multilingual competence and creativity in contemporary communication.

To move beyond illustrative examples, the dataset of 1200 linguistic units was systematically categorized into four main types of deviation. The distribution is shown in **Table 2** below:

Table 2. Frequency of deviations in youth and digital Kazakh discourse.

Type of Deviation	Examples	Frequency (%)
Lexical (slang, borrowings, abbreviations)	krash, norm, zhynyma tidi, qaz	38%
Morphological (non-standard affixation, agreement mismatch)	oilaitanymyn, sóletkizbeitindei	22%
Syntactic (ellipsis, calques, loose word order)	Men goı ony atqan keshe	28%
Pragmatic (expressive particles, multimodal elements)	bilmim endi, seriozno, voobshe	12%

This categorization highlights that lexical innovations dominate youth speech (38%), followed by syntactic deviations (28%). Morphological and pragmatic deviations appear less frequently but remain significant. By quantifying the distribution of deviations, we demonstrate that usus-based language is not random but patterned and systematic, reflecting consistent communicative strategies in digital and youth contexts.

In the dynamics of contemporary Kazakh, youth discourse plays a particularly significant role. Young speakers represent a driving force behind the rapid, innovative, and creative changes in language ^[26,27]. However, youth language often steps outside the boundaries of linguistic norm and embraces informal, usus-based structures ^[28]. This section analyzes the most common types of deviation from the norm among young speakers—lexical, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic—alongside the causes and communicative functions of such deviations.

Lexical Deviations:

Lexical innovations in youth speech are largely tied to new word-formation patterns, abbreviations, borrowed elements, and slang expressions.

1. Slang and Informal Words

Common informal words used among youth include:

- top, krash (“crush”), zhynyma tidi (“pissed me off”), respect, good, nastr zhoq (“no mood”) These expressions carry emotional coloring and often serve the function of internal group identity.

2. Mixed-Language Layer

Words borrowed or calqued from Russian:

- Barqağan bolarsyń → “You might have noticed” (calque from Russian: наверное заметил)
- Bir nárse bolatyndaı bolyp tur → “Feels like something will happen” (reflecting Russian structure)

3. Abbreviations and Transformations

- zháqs, norm, tezék, waq, prabl zhoq – shortened words used for brevity and efficiency
- tufliş (from тупли), maıkinka (from майка), kámpıitka, zhanka, narik, kent – transformed words from urban/street language

Morphological Deviations:

Word formation and inflection in youth speech often diverge from traditional morphological norms or are applied more freely.

1. Incorrect Affix Usage

- oilaitanymyn, kóreınshık, sóletkizbeitindei – constructed using non-standard affix combinations to create expressiveness or irony

2. Person-Tense Agreement Mismatch

- Men barady, Ol keledi ma, Sen aldyń ba edi, Zházatynmyn sıyaqty edim – mixing of tense, mood, and person

3. Linguistic Hybridity

- Qyzyqtap otyrmak goı qazır prosto → “I’m watching it out of interest right now, just”
- Bilmim, uaıym zhoq voobshe → “I don’t know, no worries at all”

These examples mix Kazakh and Russian elements within a single syntactic block

Syntactic Deviations:

Syntactic irregularities are frequent in youth speech, influenced by the convergence of spoken and online written communication.

1. Ellipsis and Incomplete Sentences

- Sender she? Men bolsam... → “What about you? As for me...”
- Mektepte, keiin unıverde... endi túsinésiń goı → “In school, then at university... well, you know”

2. Frequent Use of Parentheticals

- Bilmim endi, seriozno, sonдай bir prikol boldy → “I don’t know, seriously, it was kind of a joke”
 - Men ony priam osylai aıtyp turmyn goı → “I’m literally saying it like this”
3. Loose Word Order
- Men goı ony aitqan keshe → “It was me who said it yesterday”
 - Keldiń be, íá, keshe sol? → “Did you come? Yeah, yesterday, right?”
- These examples show that syntactic looseness allows speakers more expressiveness and escape from neutrality.
- Pragmatic and Functional Motivations:
- Stylistic differentiation – To stand out in peer groups, to shape a unique speech style
 - Communicative economy – To save time and increase speed in messaging apps
 - Emotional expression – To convey emotion that formal language may lack
 - Multicultural influence – Intersection of Kazakh, Russian, and English linguistic-cultural layers, especially among urban and diasporic youth
- The non-normative language used by youth reflects not just linguistic but also socio-psychological and cultural factors. Youth may be reluctant to follow normative language for the following reasons (**Table 3**):

Table 3. Findings Summary.

Type	Examples	Function
Slang & Abbreviations	norm, waq, prabl, krash, chotkiı	Brevity, internal group style
Morphological Deviations	kóreınshık, oilartanymyn, bilembe	Irony, emotional intensification
Syntactic Structures	Men bolsám..., Bilmim endi...	Ellipsis, informal tone
Mixed-Language Patterns	voobshe, prosto, priam, tipa	Cultural-linguistic interference

Youth language represents one of the most creative yet controversial layers of contemporary Kazakh^[29]. Deviations from norms often occur unconsciously and are closely tied to the speaker’s age, social environment, and discourse context. Rather than dismissing these as “errors,” it is more productive to view them as signs of transformation and development in informal Kazakh discourse^[30]. At the same time, the widespread nature of such usus-based patterns underscores the relevance of policy, educational, and cultural initiatives aimed at preserving linguistic norms.

It is important to note that not all deviations from codified norms can be categorized as “errors.” A distinction should be made between accidental mistakes (e.g., spelling slips, inconsistent affix usage) and systematic, recurrent forms that serve communicative purposes in digital interaction. For instance, the use of particles like *goı* or the adoption of abbreviated forms (*zháqs*, *norm*, *prabl*) function as pragmatic markers of identity and efficiency rather than mistakes. In digital communication, where speed and expressiveness are prioritized, such forms can acquire legitimacy through frequency and social acceptance.

From this perspective, deviations should be reinterpreted as emerging patterns within usus that have the potential to become codified over time. This aligns with global research on internet linguistics^[3,4] which shows that many informal digital forms gradually enter mainstream language use. Thus, contemporary Kazakh “deviations” may foreshadow the linguistic norms of tomorrow.

It is necessary to reconsider the notion of “error” in relation to informal digital discourse. Many of the examples cited—such as the emphatic use of *goı*, loose word order (Men goı ony aitqan keshe), or abbreviations (norm, prabl, zhaks)—are not random mistakes but intentional stylistic strategies. They serve to enhance expressiveness, solidarity, and identity among peers in online environments.

In this respect, such constructions can be classified as marked stylistic choices rather than deviations in the traditional sense. They expand the stylistic repertoire of Kazakh, enabling speakers to negotiate between formality and informality, seriousness and playfulness. This interpretation is consistent with global research on digital style^[14,27], which shows that non-standard features often carry social and pragmatic meaning beyond grammatical correctness.

4.3. The Influence of Social Media Language and Calqued Translation

In the 21st-century information and communication society, social media has become the primary domain for interpersonal linguistic interaction. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, TikTok, and WhatsApp host millions of Kazakh-speaking users daily who exchange information and express opinions^[31]. Within this mode of communication, conventional linguistic norms and stylistic features are often disregarded in favor of fast-paced, brief, informal, and expressive speech conventions^[32,33]. As a result, several linguistic shifts are affecting the lexical, syntactic, and stylistic structures of traditional Kazakh, with calqued translations being among the most widespread deviations.

The impact of Russian on Kazakh cannot be fully understood without considering its historical and sociopolitical background. During the Soviet period, Russian functioned as the dominant language of administration, education, and science, while Kazakh was often relegated to informal or domestic use. This institutionalized bilingualism established deep structural and cognitive contact between the two languages. After Kazakhstan's independence in 1991, Kazakh regained official status, yet Russian has retained considerable prestige, particularly in urban centers, higher education, and media.

As a result, calqued expressions and syntactic transfers are not merely linguistic borrowings but outcomes of long-term bilingual practice shaped by political and cultural hierarchies. The persistence of such forms reflects the embeddedness of Russian-language patterns in the linguistic consciousness of Kazakh speakers. In digital communication, where Russian remains a dominant parallel code, these calques become normalized, often unconsciously. Recognizing this sociopolitical legacy helps explain why usus-based forms are widely accepted and why speakers do not always perceive them as deviations.

1. Social Media Language as a New Linguistic Code

A defining characteristic of new media language is its interactivity, visual orientation, and linguistic economy. As a new form of written discourse, it relies less on tradi-

tional grammar and more on syntactic reductions, punctuation flexibility, and informal vocabulary.

New linguistic features in Kazakh arising from social media include:

Shortened sentence forms: qal ("stay"), zhzh ("good night"), kettik ("let's go"), pzh ("please")

Pictographic symbols: emojis, hashtags, meme-texts

Code-switching (mixing languages): Men agree-min → "I agree", Like etip qoyındar → "Give a like".

These patterns contribute to the erosion of linguistic norms. The dominance of Russian as a second language also facilitates the proliferation of calqued expressions.

Beyond lexical and syntactic features, digital Kazakh discourse is profoundly shaped by multimodal elements such as emojis, stickers, GIFs, and memes. Emojis frequently function as paralinguistic markers, substituting for prosody and intonation in text-based interaction. For example, 😂 or 😭 often clarify whether a statement is humorous or serious, while 👍 or 🙏 serve as discourse-closing devices. Hashtags (#qazaqsha, #studentlife) and memes provide additional layers of meaning, creating intertextual links with global digital culture.

These visual elements cannot be regarded as "mere decoration"; they represent a pragmatic system in their own right, often carrying meanings that words alone cannot. In Kazakh digital discourse, emojis and memes also play a role in identity construction: for example, using emoji or traditional ornament-inspired stickers to mark national affiliation. Thus, multimodal features are not deviations from norm but integral parts of contemporary usus, illustrating how linguistic and visual codes are merging in digital environments.

2. Theoretical Background of Calqued Translation

A calque (from French *calquer* – to trace or copy) is the semantic and structural replication of a phrase or construction from one language into another. It affects the internal system of a language by importing external linguistic models and often results from interference and code-mixing (**Table 4**). Calques typically affect: Fixed expressions (idioms, phraseologisms); Syntactic models; Word order in phrases.

Table 4. Calques typically affect.

Russian Phrase	Calqued Kazakh	IPA	Normative Kazakh Equivalent	IPA
У меня есть идея (U menya est' ideya)	Mende ideia bar	[m'ien'de i'dieja bar]	Menín oıym bar	[me'nunıŋ u'jum bar]
Я думаю, что это так (Ya dumayu, chto eto tak)	Men oilaimyn, bul solai	[men oj'lajmun bül so'laj]	Menínshe, bul durys	[me'nunıŋfe bül dı'rus]
Ты что, не понял? (Ty chto, ne ponyal?)	Sen ne, túsinbedín be?	[sen ne tysun'bedıŋ be]	Sen túsinbedín be?	[sen tysun'bedıŋ be]
Это зависит от него (Eto zavisit ot nego)	Bul oǵan bailanysty	[bül o'kan baj'lanustı]	Bul soǵan täyeldı	[bül so'kan tawjel'dı]

3. Manifestations of Calques in Kazakh

Calques are frequently found in youth language and social media content. They occur at several levels. 1) Lexical calques: Qara kózildirik (literally “black glasses”) from Russian чёрные очки – should be kúnkózildirik Qatty tamaq (“hard food”) from твёрдая пища – should be bekin gen as/qatyq as; 2) Syntactic calques: Men seni kórýge keldim – calque of Я пришёл тебя увидеть (should be Seni kórý úshin keldim); 3) Semantic calques: Taza úı – used in the sense of “completely clean” (from Russian чистый дом), instead of the normative zhinaýly úı.

Examples from research data:

- Telegram channel: Mende súraq bar. Menín oıymsha, bul durys emes.
(I have a question. I think this is not right.)
- Instagram stories: Bızde tańerteń júgırıy boldy. Endi demalamyz.
(We had a morning run. Now we're resting.)
- TikTok comment: Sen ne, shynymen túsinbedín be?
(What, you really didn't understand?).

Though these sentences follow Kazakh grammatical structure, their semantic and syntactic logic reflect Russian models.

4. Stylistic and Pragmatic Impacts of Calques

Calques are not merely linguistic but also pragmatic and ideological issues. First, they are seen as norm violations, introducing structural interference into the language. Second, they affect cognitive patterns, weakening native stylistic intuitions and leading to degraded speech culture. For instance, “zhákсы sóz aıtu” (to say good words) is being replaced by “zhákсы sóz laqtyrý” (“to throw good words”), Or “qýanyp qaldym” (I was happy) with “kónıl köterdım” (I raised my mood).

Another widespread trend is translation automatism—word-for-word transfers from one language to another. When this becomes habitual, it signals creolization in the speaker's linguistic consciousness: Kazakh and Russian elements merge to form hybrid codes.

5. Combating Calques and Preserving Norms

To limit the spread of calqued expressions and reinforce normative speech in Kazakh, the following measures are recommended:

- Promote linguistic hygiene in multilingual environments:
 - In education, provide clear comparisons between normative and non-normative forms
- Conduct language monitoring:
 - Analyze social media content, identify calques, and promote public discussion
- Mobilize media and influencers:
 - Encourage the use of clean, literary, and expressive Kazakh speech
- Develop state-level language policy:
 - Expand the functional domain of Kazakh (e.g., in IT, science, administration) with high-quality equivalents to prevent reliance on foreign-language calques

Social media is a powerful tool shaping the new trajectory of language development. It produces new words, expressions, and structures. However, not all developments are positive: calqued translations, linguistic interference, and hybrid codes pose a challenge to the integrity of Kazakh norms. Defining the boundary between normative speech and calqued usus, and responding with timely linguistic analysis, is a pressing task for linguists, educators, and cultural policymakers invested in the future of the Kazakh language.

4.4. Linguistic Norm, Codification, and Language Consciousness: Final Analytical Aspects

In the current sociolinguistic landscape of the Kazakh language, significant contradictions are emerging between the normative linguistic system and actual language practices. These contradictions manifest not only in structural forms but also in the speaker's language awareness, preferences, perception, and evaluation^[34]. This section examines speakers' attitudes toward linguistic norms, the social function of codification, and the transformations occurring in linguistic consciousness.

Linguistic consciousness refers to an individual's internal perception, intuitive evaluation, and emotional relationship with their native language. It is largely shaped through schooling, family environment, and media influence. Among contemporary Kazakh youth, adherence to or deviation from linguistic norms is often not a matter of conscious choice, but rather a result of linguistic inertia and peer influence.

Phrases commonly used by adolescents and students include:

- Mende idea bar → "I have an idea"
- Sen ne, túsinbediñ be? → "What, didn't you understand?"
- Bul saǵan baılanysty → "It depends on you"

Though these expressions are calqued from Russian, speakers do not perceive them as incorrect. This reflects a shift in language consciousness away from normative standards toward habitual *usus*.

Codification is the process of formally establishing and standardizing linguistic norms in textbooks, dictionaries, and normative acts. In Kazakh, codified norms are articulated through:

- Grammar rules
- Orthographic dictionaries
- Stylistic handbooks
- Decisions of the State Terminological Commission

Yet in practice, these norms are often overlooked. For example:

- Mende dosym bar (calque of Russian У меня есть друг)

- Normative: Meniñ dosym bar ("I have a friend")

Despite the normative version being literary, the calqued form is more frequently used in social media and messaging, illustrating how *usus* is beginning to dominate over codification.

Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram have become new linguistic arenas where formal stylistic conventions are rarely observed. Brevity, emotional immediacy, and visual cues (e.g., emojis, GIFs) influence word choice and sentence construction.

Frequent Deviations Observed:

- Direct syntactic calques from Russian:
Mende problema bar → "I have a problem"
- Altered word order:
Men seni kórgim keledi emes → Should be Men seni kórgim keledi goı
- Loss of stylistic neutrality:
Real'no, ol uzhe ketti → Mixed code: "Really, he already left"
- Spelling violations: Writing in all caps, without punctuation, or inconsistent capitalization

These are no longer regarded as "errors" but are increasingly accepted as a new form of digital "literature." This signals a collective transformation in linguistic consciousness.

Young people's attitudes toward standard language are ambivalent:

- On one hand, they acknowledge the necessity of literary language – primarily in formal settings.
- On the other, they treat *usus*-based forms as natural in daily interactions.

This divide stems from a disparity between linguistic education and communicative practice. Rather than learning norms through instruction, youth acquire language patterns through immersion – observing and mimicking what they see in media and social networks.

For example:

- School version: Men sabaq oqydym → "I studied the lesson"
- Social media version: Men oqydym sabaq or Oqydym goı → Word order shifted for stylistic effect and conversational rhythm

Such variations accelerate communication but erode standardized grammar. In Education:

Teach language not just as grammar but as a tool of communication; Clearly distinguish between *usus* and norm with real examples; Use dialogue, essays, and debates to reinforce standard forms. In Media and Social Networks: Increase the number of programs in standard Kazakh; Engage linguists in blogging and social media content creation; Use satire, infographics, or memes to expose calques and hybrids. In Public Awareness: Elevate the prestige of literary language; Turn normative speech into a “trend” or symbol of status; Connect language purity to national identity and cultural heritage.

A linguistic norm is not merely a set of grammatical rules but a coded representation of national identity and worldview. Normative language consciousness directly contributes to the preservation of a people’s cultural integrity. Thus, the issue of language norm is not only linguistic, but also cultural, ideological, and value-based.

The prestige of the Kazakh language cannot be ensured by legislation alone – it depends on collective acceptance, internal necessity, and language awareness. To achieve this, literary Kazakh must become a prestigious model among both intellectual elites and the younger generation.

To conclude, the interrelation between linguistic consciousness, norm, and codification in contemporary Kazakh society is undergoing visible transformation. Social media and youth communication culture are redrawing the boundaries of standard language, blurring distinctions between literary and spoken forms. In response, language policy and educational systems must adopt new approaches. Preserving the linguistic norm is not just about maintaining purity – it is about safeguarding the essence of national identity.

The dynamics observed in contemporary Kazakh discourse parallel developments in other Turkic and post-Soviet languages. For example, Uzbek and Kyrgyz youth speech exhibits similar reliance on Russian calques and hybrid codes in digital environments^[35]. In Bashkir digital communication, scholars have noted increased code-switching with Russian and English, reflecting globalized youth culture^[36]. Studies of Russian itself^[37] show that internet discourse promotes new stylistic norms that

challenge traditional literary standards. These parallels suggest that the interaction between codified norms and *usus* in Kazakh is part of a broader post-Soviet sociolinguistic trend, where digital communication acts as a catalyst for linguistic innovation.

By situating Kazakh within this comparative framework, we highlight that the processes under study are not isolated but connected to regional patterns of multilingualism, youth identity, and digital globalization.

While concerns about the weakening of codified norms are valid, it is equally important to acknowledge the positive contributions of digital discourse to the Kazakh language. Online platforms provide unprecedented opportunities for linguistic creativity, where youth coin new expressions, abbreviations, and hybrid forms that expand the stylistic range of Kazakh. This process democratizes language use by allowing non-elite speakers to participate in shaping linguistic trends, thereby increasing the inclusivity of Kazakh.

Moreover, the presence of Kazakh on global platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram helps to expand its functional domains, making the language more visible in transnational communication. In this sense, digital *usus* contributes not to the erosion but to the revitalization and modernization of Kazakh, ensuring its relevance in contemporary globalized society. Such developments align with broader theories of language change^[3], which stress that non-standard digital forms often enrich languages with new resources for identity construction and expressive nuance.

5. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that the boundary between codified linguistic norms and *usus* in contemporary Kazakh is increasingly blurred. The analysis of over 1200 linguistic units revealed systematic patterns of deviation, with lexical innovations and syntactic calques as the most frequent. These patterns are not isolated mistakes but reflect consistent communicative strategies in digital and youth discourse.

Theoretically, the findings support the view that *usus* is not simply a deviation but a driving force in linguistic evolution. As Vinogradov^[1] and later Crystal^[3] argued,

norms are historically dynamic, and usage often precedes codification. The Kazakh case illustrates this principle in real time: forms once perceived as non-standard (e.g., *qazaqsha*) have become accepted norms, suggesting that today's digital deviations may be tomorrow's literary standards.

On a broader level, this study situates Kazakh within global debates on internet linguistics and sociolinguistic change. The parallels with other Turkic and post-Soviet languages indicate that digital communication acts as a catalyst for reconfiguring norms across the region. The implications are twofold: (1) for linguistic theory, it reinforces the dialectical model of norm and *usus* as interdependent forces; (2) for language policy and education, it highlights the need to engage with digital realities rather than oppose them.

Ultimately, the prestige and vitality of Kazakh will depend not only on preserving codified norms but also on integrating legitimate elements of *usus* into evolving linguistic standards. This balanced approach ensures that the Kazakh language remains both culturally rooted and adaptable to contemporary communicative practices.

The dynamic processes currently underway in the Kazakh language—globalization, urbanization, the expansion of the digital media sphere, and multilingualism—are increasingly blurring the boundary between linguistic norms and actual usage. This study has examined the internal nature of these processes by analyzing the relationship between the codified system of Kazakh and its *usus*-based usage, particularly in youth language, social media, and speech culture, from both linguistic and sociocultural perspectives.

1. Key Findings

The research has led to the following conclusions:

- First, a clear gap has emerged between the normative linguistic system and real-world *usus*-based usage in Kazakh. This gap is most visible in youth speech, digital communication, and messaging platforms. Such tendencies may undermine the social prestige of language norms and affect the functional-cultural load of the language.
- Second, structures resulting from calqued translations from Russian are widespread in both spoken

and online written Kazakh. These calques often occur unconsciously, as part of automated linguistic inertia, and are generally not perceived as incorrect by young speakers. This suggests that the distinction between norm and *usus* is fading in linguistic consciousness.

- Third, social media has created a new linguistic space for Kazakh. In this domain, literary norms are often disregarded in favor of expressiveness, informality, and abbreviation. The written form of colloquial speech has introduced new stylistic layers and has contributed to increasing stylistic differentiation.
- Fourth, the balance between maintaining linguistic norms and applying them in real life is heavily influenced by education, media, language policy, and ideological orientation. Promoting linguistic normativity as a respected value among youth requires a comprehensive and integrated approach.

2. Theoretical and Practical Significance

This study is significant for clarifying the boundaries between norm and *usus* in the development of modern Kazakh. It intersects with various theoretical frameworks such as codification, standardization, language consciousness, calquing, speech culture, and media linguistics. Specifically, the research:

- Expands the cognitive and sociolinguistic understanding of linguistic norms;
- Provides a concrete empirical base regarding youth lexicon and calqued usage;
- Offers methodological insight for the teaching of language standards.

From a pedagogical perspective, this research supports the redesign of language teaching methods, allowing for the explanation of literary norms through real-life usage and aiding the development of intuitive linguistic awareness.

3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study primarily relied on qualitative linguistic observation and did not involve surveys or empirical data collection. Future research may be expanded in the following directions:

- Conducting surveys on how language norms are per-

ceived across online platforms;

- Mapping regional variations in the norm–usus relationship among youth;
- Performing automatic content analysis of sentence structures on platforms such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and TikTok.

These directions would enhance the representativeness of the study and allow for more scientifically grounded generalizations about national-level language trends.

4. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. In education: Teach norms in contrast with usus using real examples; integrate practical analysis into curriculum design.
2. In media: Increase the quantity of content adhering to literary norms; involve linguists in popular formats; expose calques through satire and infographics.
3. In language policy: Adapt codified norms to real communicative settings and create a link between normative and natural usage.
4. In academic research: Treat linguistic norms not just as rules but as symbolic representations of national worldview and cultural identity.

The future of the Kazakh language will be measured by its prestige and functionality in public life. That prestige is directly tied to the preservation and transmission of literary norms to future generations. Linguistic norms are not constraints, but systematized forms that convey national culture, thought patterns, and historical experience. Thus, maintaining linguistic norms is not merely the responsibility of language specialists, but a shared cultural and spiritual responsibility of society as a whole.

5. In education

In multilingual classrooms, teaching language norms requires an approach that balances codification with real-life usage. Rather than discouraging students from using usus-based forms, educators can adopt comparative analysis: presenting a usus form alongside its normative equivalent and discussing the differences in register, context, and function. Such strategies reflect modern pedagogical approaches, including translanguaging practices, where mul-

tle languages and registers coexist in the learning process

Additionally, the rise of digital communication demands that students develop critical digital literacy: the ability to recognize informal, abbreviated, and multimodal forms (emojis, memes, hashtags) while understanding when to switch to normative forms. By embedding these practices into curricula, language teaching in Kazakhstan can remain relevant to students' actual communicative environments while reinforcing the prestige of literary Kazakh.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Z.O. and S.M.; methodology, K.K.; software, T.S.; validation, Z.O., S.M. and K.K.; formal analysis, Z.O.; writing—original draft preparation, Z.O.; writing—review and editing, Z.O.; visualization, Z.O.; supervision, Z.O.; project administration, Z.K.; funding acquisition, Z.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

This work received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

The qualitative and quantitative datasets generated and analyzed during the current study—including the annotated corpus of 1200 Kazakh linguistic units collected from social media posts, informal interviews, and media texts—are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request. Because some raw materials contain identifiable information from public social-media profiles, only de-identified excerpts and coded data will be shared to protect participant privacy.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks are extended to colleagues in the Department of Kazakh Linguistics for their constructive feedback during data coding, and to the anonymous reviewers whose suggestions helped to refine the final version of this article.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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