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Arabic Loanwords in the Language of the Zhyraus: Pragmatic Motivations and Stylistic Effects

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the usage of Arabic-derived loanwords in the poetic language of classical Kazakh zhyrau (traditional Kazakh bard) of the 16th–18th centuries, focusing on pragmatic motivations and stylistic effects. Prominent zhyraus such as Shalkiiz, Zhienbet, Marqasqa, Bukhar, Aqtanberdi, Tatıqara, Umbetei, Kotesh, and Shal frequently employed Arabic-origin terms in their tolgau (didactic poetic speech transmitted orally). We analyze why these poets integrated Arabic loanwords into their predominantly Turkic lexicon and how these borrowings enriched orality and literary style. Drawing on examples from the zhyraus' verses and on linguistic studies, we find that Arabic words were adopted to convey key religious and abstract concepts, to lend authority and erudition to the bard's message, and to achieve particular rhetorical effects. Pragmatically, the use of Arabicisms helped the zhyraus address their audience in culturally resonant terms-invoking Islamic values, reinforcing moral instructions, and aligning with the listeners' worldview. Stylistically, the loanwords contributed to an elevated "bookish" tone, enhanced the expressive depth of the poetry, and introduced novel sounds and imagery that made the performances more memorable. By situating these findings in the broader context of Kazakh linguistic history and literature, the study sheds light on the interplay between language contact and literary artistry in Kazakhstan's oral epic

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 30 July 2025 | Revised: 22 August 2025 | Accepted: 29 August 2025 | Published Online: 23 October 2025
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i11.11367

CITATION

Seyitova, B., Yessenova, K., Nurzhanova, A., et al., 2025. Arabic Loanwords in the Language of the Zhyraus: Pragmatic Motivations and Stylistic Effects. Forum for Linguistic Studies. 7(11): 897–911. DOI: https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i11.11367

tradition. Furthermore, the findings provide practical insights that can inform contemporary Kazakh literature studies and enrich language education by highlighting the cultural and didactic functions of loanwords in poetic discourse.
Keywords: Arabic Loanwords; Kazakh Zhyraus; Poetic Discourse; Language Contact; Stylistic Effect; Pragmatic Motivation; Cultural Identity; Oral Tradition

1. Introduction

Kazakh oral literature of the medieval and early modern period is epitomized by the *zhyrau*-poet-sages who composed and performed didactic and heroic verse. The language of the *zhyraus* is predominantly Kazakh (a Turkic language: The term *Turkic* is used here in its linguistic sense, referring to the wider family of Turkic languages that includes Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Uyghur, Turkish, and others. It should not be confused with *Turkish*, which denotes only the national language of Turkey), yet it is richly seasoned with loanwords from Arabic and Persian.

These borrowings entered Kazakh largely through centuries of Islamic and cultural contact. According to Pashan, "the primary reason for word borrowing is the Kazakh people's close contacts with other peoples during their historical development, with words entering by various pathways"[1]. As Musaddiq observes, "Arabic and Persian maintained a very close interaction throughout history due to continuous communication between their peoples; yet, unlike some civilizations that lost their earlier languages under Arabic-Islamic influence, Persian culture absorbed Arabic elements while preserving its own linguistic identity"[2]. This resilient integration of Arabic vocabulary into Persian created an important transmission channel through which many Arabic words eventually reached Kazakh.

By the 15th–18th centuries, many Arabic-origin words had become part of the literary register[3]. Classical *zhyraus* such as Shalkiiz Tilenshiuly (15th–16th c.), Zhienbet, Marqasqa, Bukhar, Aqtanberdi, Tatıqara, Umbetei, Kotesh, and Shal aqyn (17th–18th c.) freely used such words in their *tolgau* poetry. Modern research confirms that during those times a substantial layer of Kazakh vocabulary-especially for abstract concepts and religious terms-was of Arabic origin. According to one lexicographic study, out of hundreds of Arabic borrowings in Kazakh, about half express abstract notions (e.g., *aqiqat* "truth", *gashıq* "in love", *tagdır* "fate", *adil* "just"), while another significant portion consists of Islamic religious terms.

Previous studies on the history of Kazakh show that Arabic and Persian words entered Kazakh through multiple cultural and linguistic intermediaries. Oba notes that "the Kazakh language received many of these words from Arabic via Islam, but was also significantly influenced by Persian due to political, commercial, and geographical factors, often through Uzbek Turkic as an intermediary",[4]. The result is that "most Arabic and Persian words added to the Kazakh language long ago became part of the language's sound system and grammar… most words known as 'indigenous' are Arabic words that entered the Kazakh language through Persian"[5].

Moreover, scholarship on cultural entanglements in Central Asia highlights that such linguistic exchanges cannot be separated from broader processes of identity formation and intercultural dialogue. As Frankopan emphasizes, the Silk Roads were not merely routes of trade but of ideas and texts, fostering multidirectional flows of language and literature[6]. Likewise, Kuru underlines how Islamic intellectual traditions shaped educational and literary institutions across Turkic societies, where Arabic and Persian terms served as markers of erudition and cultural prestige[7]. These broader cultural interactions contextualize the adoption of Arabic lexicon into Kazakh poetic discourse, linking it to processes of cultural negotiation and intellectual exchange.

Moreover, research on other languages confirms that borrowed lexemes often undergo systematic phonological adaptation. For instance, Abdelhady analyzes the stress patterns of loanwords in Bedouin Jordanian Arabic within an Optimality Theory framework, demonstrating how the structural properties of borrowed words influence native stress assignment[8]. Although the phonological systems of Kazakh and Arabic differ significantly, similar adaptation processes can be observed in the integration of Arabic-origin words into Kazakh, suggesting that structural accommodation was an important part of their naturalization into the poetic and literary register.

Understanding why *zhyraus* incorporated these foreign words into their verses requires examining both linguistic history and literary pragmatics. On one hand, Arabic-Persian loans provided terminology for new ideas-in religion, learning, and ethics-that had no exact native equivalents. On the other hand, using such words could serve as a conscious stylistic choice to elevate the tone, invoke spiritual authority, or achieve emotional impact. As Winter-Froemel points out, speakers sometimes perceive a "need" for so-called luxury borrowings, motivated by euphemism, dysphemism, playfulness, or precise naming, and such pragmatic motives should be analyzed in terms of their cognitive and communicative value[9]. In this light, the Arabic-derived lexicon in *zhyrau* poetry can be seen not merely as inherited linguistic material, but as a repertoire of deliberate stylistic resources.

This study addresses a gap in Kazakh linguistics: while phonological and lexical aspects of Arabic borrowings have been well documented, relatively little attention has been paid to their pragmatic functions and stylistic nuances in oral poetic performance. We hypothesize that these borrowed words were deliberately employed by *zhyraus* to enhance the communicative impact of their poetry—whether to express religious devotion, articulate philosophical concepts, or signal erudition—and that they functioned as powerful literary devices in their own right.

Our study is situated within the framework of pragmatic stylistics. The central premise is to analyze linguistic units not only in terms of their semantic and structural properties, but also with regard to their pragmatic functions in discourse and their stylistic effects. Accordingly, Arabic-derived words in zhyrau poetry are examined not merely as borrowed lexemes, but as devices that enhance expressivity, influence the audience, and shape the poetic register. In this way, the research aligns with the core principles of pragmatic stylistics while contextualizing them within the materials of Kazakh oral literature, thereby demonstrating the applied potential of this theoretical approach.

2. Materials and Methods

This study applies a qualitative linguistic analysis of Arabic loanwords in the poetic works of prominent Kazakh zhyraus from the 15th to 18th centuries, including Shalkiiz, Zhienbet, Marqasqa, Bukhar, Aqtanberdi, Tatıqara, Umbetei, Kotesh, and Shal. The main materials were drawn from Zheti ghasyr zhyrlaydy, vol. 2, which offers an academic corpus of singer-poet and zhyrau texts from the 14th to the early 20th centuries[17], supplemented by dictionaries and lexicographic studies on Arabic-Persian loanwords.

In Kazakh literature, the tradition of zhyrau poetry can be traced back to the 11th century, with early figures such as Asan Qayghy, Sypra zhyrau, and Qaztugan zhyrau. From the 15th to 19th centuries, numerous poet-sages enriched the oral tradition, yet this study deliberately focuses on the 16th–18th centuries, when zhyrau poetry exerted the strongest influence on the cultural worldview and socio-political thought of the Kazakh people.

Accordingly, the analyzed corpus comprises 81 poetic works (tolgau) by nine leading representatives of this period. For instance, the corpus includes:

1. Shalkiiz zhyrau (1465–1560)—19 works, such as *"Alashtan baitaq ozbasa", "Bi Temirge birinshi tolgau", "Or, or qoıan, or qoıan"*;
2. Zhienbet zhyrau (17th century)— 4 works, including *"Amirin qatty Esim khan"*;
3. Marqasqa zhyrau (17th century—1 work, *"Ei, Qatagannyn khan Tursyn"*;
4. Bukhar zhyrau (1668–1781—15 works, such as *"Tilek", "Ai, Abilaı, Abilaı", "Ai, zaman-ai, zaman-ai"*;
5. Aqtanberdi zhyrau (1675–1768)—10 works, including *"Zhalgyzdyq, seni qaıteiın!..", "Ua, qart Bogenbai!"*;
6. Tatıqara aqyn (18th century)—4 works, such as *"Qamystyn basy maıda, tubi saıda"*;
7. Umbetei zhyrau (1706–1778)— 4 works, including *"Bogenbai olimine"*;
8. Kotesh aqyn (1745–1818) —4 works, such as *"Kurkelinin bauyry kunde dauyl"*;
9. Shal aqyn (1748–1819)—20 works, e.g. *"Olenge toqtamaıdy Shal degenin", "Zhastyq pen qarttyq", "Olimnen qutylmassyn qashsan dagy"*.

Note: In this article, the term "akyn" is used, depending on context, to denote both "zhyrau" and "poet."

A complete list of all 81 titles is provided in ***Appendix A***.

Each tolgau was examined in its poetic context to identify Arabic-derived lexemes, which were then classified by

semantic domain and interpreted in terms of pragmatic motivations (religious, rhetorical, conceptual) and stylistic effects (tone elevation, expressive richness, formulaic tradition). The analytical framework relies on theoretical works in linguistic borrowing, oral literature studies, and cultural semiotics. No human or animal subjects were involved, and no ethical clearance was required. All source materials are publicly accessible, and the authors declare no restrictions on data use.

3. Results

3.1. Background: Arabic Loanwords in Kazakh Literary Language

Historical influx: The Kazakh language absorbed Arabic (and Persian) loanwords over several centuries in roughly two major waves[10]. The first wave came indirectly via other Turkic and Islamic cultures before the Kazakh nation emerged (pre-15th century), and the second wave occurred from the 15th century up to the early 20th century[11]. During the Kazakh Khanate era and beyond, as Islam became more influential on the steppe, an increasing number of Arabisms entered the spoken and written vocabulary. Researcher N. Nurtazina estimates that modern Kazakh contains over twenty thousand words of Arabic origin[12]. While some of these are obvious loanwords (e.g. algebra, muzey for museum), many are so well assimilated that Kazakh speakers might not even recognize them as foreign (for example, nukte "dot, point" or amal "method" are of Arabic origin yet feel native). Most Arabic and Persian words added to the Kazakh language long ago became part of the language's sound system and grammar. "Of Arabic's 29 consonants, 15 lack direct counterparts in Tagalog's 16-consonant inventory which requires categorical phonemic substitutions instead of gradient phonetic adaptations. Crucially, the absence of forms relying on acoustic and perceptual adjustment in the data confirms these changes occur strictly at the phonemic level"[13]. As a result, they are difficult to distinguish from Kazakh words. "Since the text of the manuscript is a medieval work, in its lexical layer, in addition to ancient Turkic elements, there are Arabic, Persian and Mongolian words. In particular, in the genealogical text, such Arabic elements as lafz/lebiz ('word'), ishrat/ayiz ('celebration'), qatil/qatal ('massacre'), esir/jesir ('captive') and fursat/mursat ('opportunity') are semantically analyzed"[14]**.** Even in modern scientific literature, most words known as "indigenous" are Arabic words that entered the Kazakh language through Persian.

It is important to note that Arabic loans in Kazakh historically clustered in certain semantic domains. G. Burkitbai divides Kazakh Arabisms into five thematic groups: (1) scientific/technical terms, (2) socio-political terms, (3) educational and everyday life vocabulary, (4) Islamic religious terms, and (5) abstract concepts[15]. Not all these categories were equally relevant to an oral poet on the steppe. The zhyraus were less likely to use scientific terms, but very likely to use words from group (4) and (5)religion and abstract ideas—because their poetry often dealt with moral, spiritual, and philosophical themes. Indeed, abstract and ethical concepts constitute the largest share of Arabic-derived words noted in Kazakh dictionaries[16].

This classification, when applied to the works of the *zhyraus*, makes it possible to specify the semantic field of Arabic-derived words in their poetry and to determine the functional role of each word within the text. Below, the Arabic borrowings in the *zhyrau*'s *tolgau* are divided into five thematic groups, with their etymological origins and contextual functions analyzed through examples **(Table 1):**

Table 1. Semantic classification of Arabic-derived lexemes in zhyrau poetry.

Items No.	Lexeme(s) & Etymology	Example in Original (Latin transliteration)	Contextual Function
1	*kitap* (Ar. *kitab*—"written work, something recorded")	*Shezhireli qartyn bolsa,Qagazga jazgan xatyn degen,Qartyn sozi kitapqa jaqyn degen.* (Shal aqyn)[17].	Symbol of knowledge and wisdom beyond literal "book" meaning.
2	*qadir* (Ar. *qadr*—"value"), *qurmet* (Ar. *ḥurmat*—"honour"), *miras* (Ar. *mirath*—"heritage"), *adil* (Ar. *ʿadl*— "justice"), *opa* (via Pers. from Ar. *wafaʾ*—"loyalty"), *ant* (Ar. *ʿahd*—"oath")	*Atadan miras aqylyn...* (Bukhar zhyrau)*Adil tugan jaqsıga...* (Aqtaberdi zhyrau)*Ey, Qatagannyn xan Tursyn...* (Marqasqa zhyrau)[17].	Denote authority, justice, moral norms.
3	*shezhire* (Ar. *shajara*—"tree, genealogy"), *qagaz* (Ar. *qirṭas* — "paper"), *xat* (Ar. *khaṭṭ*—"letter"), *ustaz* (Ar. *ustadh* — "teacher"), *duga* (Ar. *duʿaʾ* — "prayer"), *galym* (Ar. *ʿalim* — "scholar")	*Galym bolmas ustazdan duga almasa.Shezhireli qartyn bolsa...* (Shal aqyn)[17].	Emphasize knowledge and spiritual continuity.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Items No.	Lexeme(s) & Etymology	Example in Original (Latin transliteration)	Contextual Function
4	*iman* (Ar. *iman* — "faith"), *napsi* (Ar. *nafs* — "desire"), *aram/haram* (Ar. *ḥaram* — "prohibited"), *adal* (Ar. *ḥalal* — "permissible"), *kapir* (Ar. *kafir* — "non-believer"), *Alla* (Ar. *Allah*)	*Napsin bir kokzhal boridey...* (Shal aqyn)*Ata tilin almagan aram uldy...* (Kotesh aqyn)*Ishtegi syr Allaga malim.* (Bukhar zhyrau)[17].	Reinforce religious—ethical values and piety.
5	*tagdyr* (Ar. *taqdir* — "predestination"), *qangat* (Ar. *qanaʿat* — "contentment"), *sabyr* (Ar. *ṣabr* — "patience"), *baqyt*, *raxat*, *beinet*, *zeinet*, *amal* (Ar. *ʿamal* — "deed")	*Tagdyrda mandaiyna jazgan bolsa...Qangat, amandyqtyn qadirin bil...* (Shal aqyn)[17].	Express life philosophy, endurance, acceptance of fate.

Such terms were indispensable for the zhyraus as they pontificated on the fate of the people, the justice of khans, or the virtues and vices of life. Using these words allowed the poets to discuss complex notions succinctly and with a resonance that native Turkic words might not carry. As one linguistic analysis observes, Arabisms had "literally permeated the fabric of the modern Kazakh literary language" and were used across many spheres of life and thought[18].

Cultural status of loanwords: By the eighteenth century, many Arabic-origin words were integrated enough that listeners of a zhyrau's performance would recognize them, especially in a religious or didactic context. The Islamic lexicon (terms like iman "faith", quran, shariat "religious law", paryz "duty", etc.) had become familiar to Kazakhs through oral transmission and schooling in madrassas. For example, everyday words like dua ("prayer, blessing") and amin ("amen") were commonly used in prayers and thus would resonate with any audience member with basic religious knowledge. This widespread familiarity made such terms effective tools for the zhyraus' pragmatic goals: when a bard invoked qur'an, qıbla (direction of prayer), or ahiret (afterlife), he could be confident that his listeners understood the gravity and sacredness attached to those concepts. This is evidenced by the fact that Kazakh poets of that era could use dense religious vocabulary without needing to explain it—the meanings were taken for granted as part of the shared cultural framework. A linguistic study notes with regret that the rich religious vocabulary found in Bukhar zhyrau's and Shalkiiz's works, which was once "an active part of the Kazakh literary language," became largely unfamiliar by the Soviet period due to the decline of religious education[11]. But in the zhyraus' own time, such vocabulary enhanced communication by invoking shared values and knowledge.

Apart from religion, Arabic-origin words also conferred a certain prestige and erudition. Because many of these words entered Kazakh through literary channels (scholars, Islamic literature, chancery language), they were associated with learning. Incorporating a few well-placed "Oriental" words into oral poetry could signal that the zhyrau was educated or well-traveled, thus bolstering his authority. In Kazakh tradition, a zhyrau was not only an entertainer but also a sage and advisor; demonstrating familiarity with Islamic lore or high-register language was one way to establish credibility. As noted by Sultangaliyeva, Arabic borrowings in Turkic languages often belonged to the realm of high culture-religion, law, class titles—and Kazakh had relatively fewer such loans than some neighboring languages due to historically "weaker Arabic influence"[19]. This relative scarcity may have made the existing Arabic loans even more marked and noticeable in Kazakh discourse. In other words, when a zhyrau used an Arabic-derived word, it stood out as a deliberate register shift to a higher or more solemn style, precisely because Kazakh retained a primarily Turkic core vocabulary for everyday matters. The following sections discuss in detail the pragmatic motivations behind these choices and the stylistic effects achieved in the zhyraus' poetic works.

3.2. Pragmatic Motivations for Using Arabic Loanwords

Conveying spiritual authority: A primary motivation for zhyraus to use Arabic words was to invoke the authority of Islam and its moral framework. The Kazakh steppe in the 17th–18th centuries was Islamic, but everyday speech was not overly saturated with Arabic religious terms except in ritual contexts[20]. When a zhyrau purposefully inserts an Islamic term into his poem, it serves as a cue that elevates the speech from the ordinary to the sacred **(Table 2).**

Table 2. Arabic- and Persian-derived lexemes denoting divine will and life's transience in zhyrau poetry.

Items No.	Lexeme(s) & Etymology	Example in Original (Latin transliteration)	Author	Contextual Function
1	*ajal* (Ar. *ajal*— "appointed time, death"), *qaza* (Ar. *qaḍaʾ* — "divine decree, fate")	*Taniri ozi biledi, Ajalymyz qaudan-dur.* [17]	Shalkiiz zhyrau	Highlights inevitability of death as determined by divine will.
2	*ajal* (Ar. *ajal*)	*Altyn taqta jatsan da, Ajalı jetken paqyrsyn!* [17]	Marqasqa zhyrau	Expresses the futility of earthly wealth against divine decree.
3	*ajal* (Ar. *ajal*)	*Jaqyndap ajal tursa da, Janyna qylysh ursa da... Omirge toımas adamzat!* [17]	Bukhar zhyrau	Underlines human unwillingness to part with life despite inevitability of death.
4	*ajal* (Ar. *ajal*)	*Tanertengi ishken shalap... Ajal shırkin alysta emes, juyqta.* [17]	Tatıqara aqyn	Depicts the proximity of death in daily life imagery.
5	*ajal* (Ar. *ajal*)	*«Bala, bala!» deumenen mazaalymyz, Baladan bolar bilem ajalymyz.* [17]	Kotesh aqyn	Attributes cause of death metaphorically to offspring.
6	*ajal* (Ar. *ajal*)	*Shyn ajalym jetken son, Syzyqtan malim otken son... Men de bir kun olem-aı.* [17]	Shal aqyn	Reflects acceptance of mortality as part of divine plan.
7	*ajal* (Ar. *ajal*)	*Eki arystan jabylsa - daudi oltirer, Ajal jetse - auyrusyz saudı oltirer.* [17]	Zhienbet zhyrau	States inevitability of death regardless of strength or health.
8	*shukir* (Ar. *shukr*—"gratitude, thanks")	*Alpysqa jaqyn kelgen son, Olimnen xabar jeter dep, Tauba qylyp toqtadym.* [17]	Shal aqyn	Expresses gratitude and spiritual readiness in old age.
9	*tagdyr* (Ar. *taqdir*— "predestination"), *amal* (Ar. *ʿamal*— "action, recourse")	*Tagdyrda mandaiyna jazgan bolsa, Tabigattyn isine amal nesik.* [17]	Shal aqyn	Conveys resignation to fate and recognition of divine order.
10	*parmen* (Pers. *farman* < Ar. *amr* —"command, decree")	*Amirin qattı Esim xan, Bulik salyp, buıyrdyn.* [17]	Shal aqyn	Records historical royal decree as an instrument of authority.

The audience, hearing an Arabic religious term, would interpret the statement not just as the zhyrau's personal opinion but as resonating with the timeless wisdom of scripture or proverb. In pragmatic terms, the perlocutionary effect is to induce respect or contemplation; the listener is prompted to accept the message because it carries the weight of shared faith. The effectiveness of this strategy is evident from contemporary accounts that zhyraus were seen as agımaz ("oracles" or wise men) whose words could sway leaders. The religious Arabicism was one of their rhetorical tools to that end.

Filling semantic gaps: Another motivation was the lack of concise native terms for certain abstract or scholarly concepts. The Kazakh lexicon, like other Turkic languages, had a rich vocabulary for concrete objects and everyday actions, but for philosophical or scholarly notions it often borrowed from Arabic-Persian. When a zhyrau wanted to speak about justice, conscience, dignity, or eternity, the most precise terms available were often loanwords. For instance, the concept of justice could be rendered in a descriptive native phrase (e.g. adildik, which itself is actually from Arabic adl, meaning justice/fairness) —but using the single word gadılat immediately evoked the Islamic idea of justice as a divine principle **(Table 3).**

Table 3. Thematic representation of the Arabic-derived lexeme *adil* ("justice") in zhyrau poetry.

Lexeme & Etymology	Author	Example in Original (Latin Transliteration)	Pragmatic-Stylistic Function
adil (Ar. *ʿadl*—"justice, fairness")	Aqtaberdi zhyrau	*Adil tugan jaqsıga, Eki dauger juginse, Tizesin qısiq burmasa, Asyldygy biliner.* [17]	Justice as a criterion of personal nobility in conflict resolution.
	Umbetei zhyrau	*Aruagyna bolysqan, Adil bilik qılısqan, Qashpagan qandaı urystan.* [17]	Justice in governance linked with loyalty and bravery in defending the homeland.

Similarly, to discuss knowledge or learning, terms like ilim (knowledge) and galam (the world or universe in an intellectual sense) were employed in poetry to signify not just any knowledge, but knowledge in the higher, perhaps religious or scholarly sense **(Table 4).**

These words carried nuanced meanings from their original context that enriched the zhyrau's message. Pragmatically, choosing the loanword can be seen as a speech strategy to

leverage the word's loaded meaning—its semantic associations and cultural weight. A term like iman ("faith, belief") in a Kazakh tolgau does more than a native word for belief could do: it invokes the entire concept of faith in an Islamic sense, including connotations of trust in God, integrity, and the unseen. By using iman, the poet both conveys the idea of faith and aligns himself with the moral authority of that concept. In this way, Arabicisms were economical signals packing complex ideas into one or two syllables, which is valuable in the tight rhythmic structures of oral poetry. Audience targeting and inclusivity: The zhyraus performed in front of diverse audiences—from common villagers to tribal nobility and Islamic scholars. Utilizing Arabic loanwords could be a way to connect with certain segments of the audience. Those educated in madrassas or familiar with Islamic discourse would appreciate the appropriate use of terms from scripture and might view the zhyrau as enlightened. At the same time, even less educated nomads often knew basic Islamic terms through cultural osmosis (for example, words like dua, kunah (sin), shaitan (devil) had permeated common usage). By sprinkling speech with these terms, the poet ensured that the message landed with a broad audience: the pious would nod in recognition of their faith, while the laypeople would grasp the moral or emotional intent behind the term. This dual appeal is a pragmatic technique akin to using code-switching in multilingual communities—here it is a register switch **(Table 5).**

Table 4. Thematic representation of the Arabic-derived lexeme *bilim* ("knowledge") and related educational concepts in zhyrau poetry.

Lexeme & Etymology	Author	Example in Original (Latin Transliteration)	Pragmatic-Stylistic Function
bilim (via Turkic from Ar. *ʿilm*—"knowledge, learning")	Bukhar zhyrau	*İlimdi tuǧel bilse de, Qyzygyn kozben korse de, Qapaly kunı qabarıp, Qaıǧynyn tunı tonse de, Umitin joımas adamzat!* [17]	Knowledge as an enduring value that sustains human hope even in adversity.
	Shal aqyn	*Qur jasy elulerge kelse dagy, Bilimsiz sondaı jandy bala dep bil. Sheshen sol - soıler sozden qamalmasa, Jaqsy sol - ister isin tamamdasa.* [17]	Knowledge as a marker of maturity and wisdom, contrasted with ignorance regardless of age.

Table 5. Arabic-derived words in Shal aqyn's tolgau and their pragmatic-stylistic functions.

№	Poetic Line (Latin Transcription)	Arabic-Derived Word(s)	Etymology	Pragmatic/Styl. Function
1	Galym bolmas ustazdan *duga* almasa	duga	Ar. duʿaʾ—supplication	Religious—cultural reference, moral advice
2	Kunasy *kuna* ustine jamalmasa	kuna	Ar. dhanb—sin	Ethical norm, warning against moral decay
3	Jolamas eshbir pale, *shaytan*—peri	shaytan	Ar. shayṭan—devil	Religious imagery, evil avoidance
4	Kitap *Qur'an* aitqany ras bolsa	Qur'an	Ar. Qurʾan—Holy Scripture	Religious authority, legitimizing statement
5	ZHarlygy eki bolmas *haq Qudaiym*	haq Qudai	Ar. ḥaqq—true, just; Qudai — God	Absolute truth, divine justice
6	Janımdy alsan, Qudaıa, *iman*men al	iman	Ar. iman—faith	Spiritual preparation for death

The zhyrau's skill lay in blending the foreign-derived words seamlessly into the Kazakh matrix so that they did not alienate listeners. In fact, historical evidence suggests they succeeded: the loanwords in old Kazakh poetry were well-understood in context[21]. The pragmatic rationale is clear—use the right word for the right listener. If a concept was known in the community primarily through Islamic teaching, employing the Arabic word for it ensured recognition. Moreover, it could stir the listener's emotions more deeply.

For instance, saying *"aruaqqa siuın"* ("rely on the spirit of ancestors") uses *aruaq* (Arabic *arwaḥ*— "soul, spirit"), which had strong spiritual connotations in Kazakh, often referring to the souls of ancestors watching over the living. Similarly, in Bukhar zhyrau's line *"Alla, aruaq zhebeu bop, zhorıqta zholyn ondagan"* ("May God and the spirits give support and guide one's path in campaign"), the phrase *aruaq zhebeu* ("the spirit's protection") is employed. The origin of this expression is tied to historical events within the Islamic tradition: the term *aruaq* derives from *ruh* (Arabic *ruḥ*), which in the Qur'an appears in two primary senses—as the angel Jibril (Gabriel) and as the human soul. This duality underlies the Kazakh cultural notion of "angelic/spiritual protection"[22]. In the context of a tolgau, invoking *aruaq zhebeu* carries significant emotional weight when calling for bravery or unity.

Rhetorical emphasis and formulaic expressions: Some Arabic loanwords entered the idiomatic and proverbial repertoire of Kazakh, becoming part of fixed expressions that

zhyraus could draw upon. For instance, the phrase "bismillah aytyp" ("saying bismillah") was commonly used to mark the beginning of an endeavor with God's blessing. When commencing the recitation of an epic, a *zhyrau* might begin with an invocation such as *Bismillah* or *Allah*, *Qudai* ("God"), thereby enveloping the performance in a sense of sacredness and placing the audience in a culturally normative state of attentive listening.

In Bukhar Zhyrau's *tolgau*:

Birinshi tilek tileniz:
Bir Allaga jazbasqa,
Ekinshi tilek tileniz:
Azázil, pasyq, zalýmnyn
Tilıne erip azbasqa. [17]—The opening line *"Birinshi tilek tileniz: / Bir Allaga jazbasqa"* in the prologue reveals the poet's explicit religious-confessional orientation. The key term here is *tilek* ("wish, prayer"). In the Kazakh worldview, *tilek* denotes a core concept that reflects a person's spiritual intention and moral orientation. Bukhar Zhyrau connects this concept with the phrase *Bir Alla* ("One God"), which expresses the Islamic doctrine of divine oneness (*tawḥid*), thereby indicating the fundamental precondition: never forgetting the Creator and adhering to the path of Islam. This functions as a pragmatic marker, pre-signaling the gravity of what is to follow.

Other recurrent examples in zhyrau poetry include *haq Qudai* ("True God"), *bir Qudai* ("One God"), and *bir Alla* ("One Allah"), each serving as a linguistic embodiment of the *tawḥid* principle in Kazakh. Such formulaic invocations are widespread across the oral heritage of the steppe and act as both a confessional statement and a rhetorical device to anchor the discourse in shared Islamic values **(Table 6).**

Table 6. Examples of monotheistic invocations in zhyrau poetry.

Shal Aqyn	Umbetei Zhyrau	Bukhar Zhyrau
Jarlygy eki bolmas haq Qudaiym, *Janynda serigi joq, daq Qudaiym.* *Janymdy alsan, Qudaia, imanmen al,* *Shaıtannyn qazasyndan qaq, Qudaiym!* [17]	*Kenes kop estı bersen ıshte jatqan,* *Bir Qudai soylésın dep til jaratqan.* *Qyzýl til, tirshilikte tebırenıp qal,* *Shéshender sendeı talaı jerdi jatqan.* [17]	*Birinshi tilek tileniz:* *Bir Allaga jazbasqa.* *Ekinshi tilek tileniz:* *Azázil, pasyq, zalýmnyn* *Tilıne erip azbasqa.* [17]

Another example is the term *qudai aqy* (literally "by God's right/truth"), used similarly to the English expression *"I swear to God"* as a persuasive device. By embedding such expressions, zhyraus leveraged the performative power of well-known speech acts-oaths, blessings, and curses—many of which in Kazakh were formulated with Arabic-derived words (*qudai* for "God," *aumin* for "amen," etc.). The pragmatic payoff was the added speech-act force: an oath containing *qudai* was not merely a personal promise but a witnessed vow before the Almighty in the eyes of the listeners. Thus, Arabic loanwords often carried performative weight in discourse, not just referential meaning. They enabled zhyraus to perform blessings (*bata beru*, where *bata* "prayer/blessing" derives from Arabic *dua*) or to administer rebukes with religious undertones (calling someone *haram*—"forbidden, accursed"—to strongly condemn an action). In sum, the pragmatic motivations ranged from ensuring comprehension of complex ideas, to invoking shared beliefs for persuasive power, to drawing on the performative traditions that gave the zhyraus' words legitimacy and emotional impact.

To determine the relative distribution of Arabic-derived lexemes across semantic domains, we calculated both raw frequencies and percentage shares. This allowed us to identify which types of loanwords were most prominent in the poetic corpus and how their usage varied across individual zhyraus. The results are presented in the following tables **(Table 7** and **8)**:

Table 7. Distribution of Arabic-derived lexemes by semantic domain (16th–18th c. zhyrau poetry).

Semantic domain	Raw count	Percentage (%)
Religious terms	14	9.2%
Abstract concepts	16	10.5%
Scientific-bookish words	56	36.6%
Socio-political vocabulary	67	43.8%
Total	**153**	**100%**

Note: The figures are based on a preliminary lexicon of Arabic-derived words. The relatively high number of scientific-bookish terms is partly due to frequent occurrences of the root em in various forms.

Table 8. Distribution of Arabic-derived lexemes by poet and semantic category.

Zhyrau	Religious	Abstract	Scientific-Bookish	Socio-Political	Total
Shalkiiz	0 (0%)	1 (6.3%)	4 (7.1%)	11 (16.4%)	16
Zhienbet	0 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	6 (10.7%)	20 (29.9%)	28
Marqasqa	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.8%)	3 (4.5%)	4
Bukhar	4 (28.6%)	1 (6.3%)	17 (30.4%)	10 (14.9%)	32
Aqtanberdi	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (7.1%)	4 (6.0%)	8
Umbetei	1 (7.1%)	1 (6.3%)	2 (3.6%)	7 (10.4%)	11
Kotesh	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (4.5%)	3
Shal	9 (64.3%)	11 (68.8%)	22 (39.3%)	9 (13.4%)	51
Total	**14**	**16**	**56**	**67**	**153**

Note: Percentages indicate each poet's contribution to the total number of lexemes within a given category.

The results demonstrate that socio-political vocabulary (43.8%) and scientific-bookish terms (36.6%) constitute the majority of Arabic-derived lexemes in zhyrau poetry, reflecting the prominence of governance-related and scholarly discourse in oral tradition. By contrast, religious terminology (9.2%) and abstract concepts (10.5%) occur less frequently overall. At the individual level, Bukhar zhyrau and Shal aqyn emerge as the primary contributors: Bukhar's poetry features a relatively high share of religious and scientific terms, whereas Shal's compositions account for over two-thirds of all abstract borrowings and the majority of religious vocabulary. These findings confirm that Arabic loanwords functioned not only as inherited linguistic material but also as deliberate stylistic devices, enabling zhyraus to elevate tone, invoke spiritual authority, and embed moral-philosophical concepts into their performances.

4. Discussion

Beyond practical communication, Arabic loanwords significantly shaped the style and aesthetics of zhyrau poetry. "Invoking sacred vocabulary through religious intertextuality can add layered meaning and cultural resonance to a text" [23]. These words contributed to the poetry's tone, sound, and imagery in distinctive ways that native vocabulary alone could not always achieve. Several stylistic effects can be identified:

4.1. Elevated and "bookish" Tone

Many Arabic-origin words in Kazakh were associated with the learned kitabi style (the "book language" used in written literature and formal oratory). When a zhyrau interwove such a word into an oral poem, it immediately elevated the diction. The audience would notice the shift into a somewhat more archaic or formal register. Instead of detracting from the poem, this high register often enhanced the gravity of the message.

In addressing a khan or nobleman, the *zhyrau* often employed honorific and ceremonially elevated titles of Arabic-Persian origin. This usage is corroborated by archival evidence. For instance, in one of his poems, Bukhar Zhyrau uses the term *aziret* (Arabic *ḥaḍrat*—"venerable," "exalted") to impart a formal and solemn tone to the discourse:

Bizden buryn otipti
Azireti Ali sheriniz.
Jaulyq jolyn suimeniz,
Mynau jalgan sum dunie. [17]

Similar honorifics include *sultan iem* ("my sovereign sultan") and *sultan jan* ("sultan soul"), both of which carry connotations of status, authority, and political prestige. These expressions are common in the panegyric and court-oriented registers of *zhyrau* poetry (**Table 9**).

Table 9. Examples of Arabic-Persian honorifics in zhyrau poetry.

Poet	Tolghau Excerpt (Transliteration)	Key Honorific Term
Bukhar zhyrau	*Bizden buryn otipti / Azireti Ali sheriniz. / Jaulyq jolyn suimeniz, / Mynau jalgan sum dunie.* [17]	*aziret* ("venerable, exalted")
Shalkiiz zhyrau	*Arbaga taıdaı itelip, Altyndy Baqshasarai, Qyrymga Azizlengen sultan janyn shalt' eter!* [17] *Arqasynda auyr namys is tusse, Gazizlengen sultan janyn qara pulga sanar ma!* [17] *Tanirinin uı Baıtolla, / Sultan iem, qarsy aldynda jasapty!* [17] *Juk tiesen, ketersin, / Niet etsen, zhetersen, / Zhetsen, tauap etersen, / Etektep jigan kop halqyn, / Sultan iem, kimge asmar etersen.* [17]	*sultan iem*, *sultan jan* ("sovereign sultan, sultan soul")

According to literary analyses by scholars, such a word serves as "an element indicating cultured, bookish style in addressing a high-ranking person"[24]. Phrases such as *sultan iem*, *aziret*, and *sultan jan* not only convey respect toward the addressee but also imbue the entire stanza with a poetic tone, an elevated register, and enhanced artistic expressivity.

Similarly, Shalkiiz zhyrau, who lived in the 16th century, often mixed in Perso-Arabic terms common to the literary language of the Golden Horde era, giving his verses a dignified, classical aura. This stylistic layering aligns with findings in modern stylistics research: language elements of foreign origin can act as carriers of historical and cultural prestige, enriching the text's stylistic and emotional layers. Maretbayeva et al. note that culturally salient expressions (in their case, Kazakh phraseological units) reflect national identity and add depth to literary style[25]. In our case, Arabic loanwords played a similar role-reinforcing cultural and religious identity while also heightening the stylistic register. This phenomenon is not unique to Kazakh oral poetry. As Abu Bakar et al. note in the context of Malay, Arabic loanwords, while used extensively within the Islamic religious sphere, are also employed in other domains such as politics, thereby enriching and diversifying the vocabulary of the receiving language. This cross-domain adaptability of Arabic-derived terms suggests a broader cultural pattern: once integrated, such borrowings can function far beyond their original semantic field, carrying prestige and stylistic value into secular or ceremonial registers alike[26].

4.2. Enhanced Imagery and Metaphor

Arabic and Persian words often brought with them rich imagery from Islamic and Middle Eastern cultural contexts. When zhyraus deployed these terms, they could evoke visual or symbolic associations beyond the local steppe life. For instance, the very concept of Kaaba (the sacred shrine in Mecca) is an Arabic word that appeared in Kazakh songs and poems about pilgrimage. Shalkiiz zhyrau uses the phrase "niyet ettin Tanirinin uyi Kabage, … jetsen tawap etersın"—meaning "if you set your intention towards the House of God, the Ka'ba, … if you reach it you will perform tawaf (ritual circling)". Here the words Kaba (Kaaba) and tawap (from Arabic tawaf) instantly conjure the grand image of a far-away holy city and the act of devotion around it. Such imagery would have been exotic and awe-inspiring to Kazakh listeners, most of whom never traveled to Mecca. Thus, the Arabic loanword becomes a gateway to metaphor—the journey to the Kaaba can symbolize any arduous spiritual journey or the idea of striving for purity. Another example is the use of the word galam (Arabic alam, "world/universe"). In a line of poetry, referring to "the seven climes of the galam" would create a cosmopolitan image of the world, more poetic than simply saying "the world" in Kazakh. The stylistic effect is to broaden the poem's horizon and infuse it with almost a cosmological or philosophical mood. In effect, the Arabic terms often carried conceptual metaphors or allusions: garden might be said as gulshen (from Persian) to allude to paradise, lion could be arslan or sher to echo literary epithets from Islamic lore. These choices enriched the zhyraus' poetic palette, giving them allusive power that purely native diction might lack.

4.3. Sound and Rhythm

From a phonetic perspective, Arabic-origin words introduced new sounds (such as h, q, f, and kh) into Kazakh poetry. These sounds, not common in purely Turkic words of Kazakh, provided additional variety in alliteration and rhyme. Poets could exploit them to craft lines that were more euphonic or that fit specific metrical requirements. For example, a word like *haram* with its throaty *h* and emphatic *r* might be chosen partly for its striking sound, to convey harshness or gravity when condemning something as accursed. On the other hand, softer sounds like *m, l,* and *n* in words such as *merhabba* ("greetings") or *adil* ("just") could be used in lyrical passages. The syllabic structure of many Arabic loans, often longer or differently stressed than Turkic words, also gave poets flexibility. Since Kazakh oral poetry typically follows a syllabic meter, adding a four-syllable word like *adilet* ("justice") or *kitap* ("book") could extend a line that needed extra beats. Conversely, using a short loan like *halk* ("people," from Arabic *haqq*, meaning "truth/right" but later adopted as "common people") might help truncate a line. In some cases, rhyme was facilitated by loanwords. For instance, a poet might rhyme *sharap* ("wine," Arabic origin) with *kitap* ("book")—two borrowings ending in-*ap*-to achieve a clever pairing, perhaps symbolically contrasting worldly pleasure with knowledge. Documented rhyme patterns show that key rhyming syllables often came from borrowed vocabulary, demonstrating that these words were fully integrated into the

poetic structure. The overall stylistic effect was that Arabic loanwords allowed zhyraus greater creative play with sound. They expanded the phonetic inventory available for artistic expression, thereby enhancing the poetic texture.

4.4. Expressive and Emotive Nuance

In many cases, an Arabic-derived word carried a slightly different emotional tone than a Turkic synonym, and zhyraus could exploit this for a subtle effect. For example, Kazakh has the native word *jurek* ("heart") and the Arabic loan *konil* (from Arabic *qalb*, "heart/mood"). While *jurek* refers to the physical heart or courage, *konil* often means mood, feeling, or inclination **(Table 10).** A poet choosing konil in a love lament imparts a sense of inner feelings and soul, rather than just the physical heart.

Similarly, using the word *qasiret* (from Arabic *qaṣarah*—"profound grief") instead of *qaygy* ("sorrow") brings the poetic text closer to a tone of tragedy. The borrowed term can thus intensify the emotional coloring of a line. Modern stylistic analyses support the idea that integrating culturally loaded expressions can add subtextual meaning and affective depth to a text. A study on phraseological units in Kazakh literature observed that these units (often containing archaic or borrowed words) "enhance textual cohesion, affect reader perception, and convey implicit meanings beyond their literal interpretation"[25]. Similarly, the presence of a well-chosen Arabicism in a zhyrau's poem could resonate with listeners on a level beyond the literal: it could trigger associative meanings, echoes of proverbs or religious stories, and thus communicate more than the surface text.

In performance, zhyraus were known to modulate their voice and intonation when uttering certain important words-stretching them out or pausing for effect. An Arabic loanword, being somewhat marked, naturally draws attention and could be an ideal candidate for such prosodic emphasis. Imagine a zhyrau reciting a line and giving a dramatic pause before the word *qiyamet* ("Doomsday")—the foreignness and significance of the term combined would send a shiver through the yurt, as the listeners pictured the apocalypse. At such moments, semantically charged loanwords—for instance, *qiyamet* ("Judgement Day") or *aqyret* ("the hereafter")—became key terms that struck directly at the listener's heart, carrying strong emotional impact (**Table 11**). This effect is a testament to the stylistic power of loanwords in oral poetry.

Table 10. Examples of expressive and emotive nuance through Arabic-derived words in zhyrau poetry.

Zhyrau	Excerpt (Transliteration)	Gloss / Notes
Bukhar zhyrau	*Janına qılısh ursa da, Qaljırap, konili qaraıp, Qara bir kozın jumsa da, Omirge toymas adamzat!* [17]	Here *konil* (from Ar. *qalb*) conveys an inner, emotional state ("spirit, mood") rather than the purely physical "heart" (*jurek*), heightening the sense of existential weariness.
Aqtanberdi zhyrau	*Juz narga kilem japtyryp, Qazaqtan sanin arttyrıp, Uzatyp alsam sanmenen, Konilimdi xosh taptyryp! / Dushpannan korgen qorlıgım Sary su boldy jurekke. On jeti de qursanyp, Qılısh ıldim bilekke.* [17]	The juxtaposition of *konil* and *jurek* contrasts inner contentment with physical suffering, marking an emotive shift within the same tolgau.
Shal aqyn	*Aldına bir jamannın is bop barsan, Parqı joq konilinde ayaq pen bas. Bılmsız uwıljıgan ne kerek jas, Bolmasa at atalıp qayıru nas. / Ashu - dushpan bolganda, napsi jawın, Aqıl - turgan aldanda asqar tawın. Jurekke ashu kelip tolgan shaqqa, Denenin bile almas-sın awru-sawın.* [17]	The alternation of *konil* and *jurek* underscores the difference between social attitude and personal emotional-physical turmoil.

Table 11. Use of *qiyamet* ("Judgement Day") and *aqyret* ("the hereafter") in zhyrau poetry.

Poet	Original Lines (Transliterated)
Bukhar zhyrau	*Kitabı bolar qazanday. Aqyretke barganda* [15].
Shal aqyn	*Duniya degen sholaq depti, Jan keudege qonaq depti. Aqyret degen bir kiyim - Alıp qaytar sol-aq depti* [15].

4.5. Identity and Authenticity

Stylistically, the blend of Turkic and Arabic elements in zhyrau poetry also mirrors the dual identity of the Kazakh literary tradition-both steppe-rooted and Islam-infused. By the conscious art of mixing registers, zhyraus could assert a cultural identity that embraced Islamic civilization while also being proudly nomadic and Turkic. This hybridity was,

in effect, a stylistic statement. Recent research on contemporary Kazakh prose has highlighted how modern writers create "hybrid texts" combining global (often Western) elements with local flavor [14]. In an analogous way, the zhyraus were early practitioners of a form of hybridity: their verses combined the "local flavor" of Turkic nomadic life (through native vocabulary and imagery of the steppe) with elements of the broader Muslim world (through Arabic/Persian diction and Islamic references). The result was a unique style that was distinctly Kazakh. It neither imitated Arabic poetry wholesale nor stayed purely Turkic—it was a fusion that gave their art a linguistic richness and authenticity to their time and place. Listeners could take pride in this language, perceiving it as wise and beautiful. Indeed, the presence of these layered expressions likely contributed to why Kazakh tolgau have been cherished and passed down: they operate on multiple levels of language, rewarding audiences with simple warrior aphorisms in one line and profound, almost scholastic wisdom in the next. The zhyrau style thus demonstrates how deliberate code-mixing can become an aesthetic asset. Just as phraseological units in literature serve "as carriers of national identity, historical reflection, and cultural values" [13], the Arabic loans in zhyrau poetry carried the weight of cultural memory and connected Kazakh listeners to the wider tapestry of the Muslim world. Such stylistic choices also align with broader patterns in borrowing behavior observed across languages. As Winter-Froemel argues, speakers may adopt "luxury borrowings" not out of lexical necessity, but due to pragmatic motivations such as euphemism, dysphemism, playfulness, or the desire for precise naming. In the case of zhyrau poetry, many Arabic and Persian terms functioned exactly in this way: they were not essential replacements for existing Turkic words, but rather high-value lexical items chosen for their cognitive resonance and communicative effect, whether to soften a statement, heighten its severity, or enrich its metaphorical scope [27]. This stylistic choice underscored the poems' themes and made the zhyraus' performance a culturally immersive experience [28].

5. Conclusions

Arabic loanwords were an integral and dynamic component of the classic Kazakh zhyrau poetry, motivated by both pragmatic need and stylistic ambition. Pragmatically, these borrowings allowed zhyraus to communicate complex spiritual and ethical concepts with precision, invoke shared religious frameworks for persuasive impact, and engage their audience on a deeper cultural level. The choice of an Arabic term was seldom arbitrary—it was a deliberate speech act, whether to bless, to swear an oath, to exhort moral behavior, or to elevate the discourse to a sacred plane. Stylistically, the infusion of Arabic-origin vocabulary enriched the poetic language, contributing to what one might call the "high style" of Kazakh oral literature. The loanwords brought in echoes of Islamic scholarship and cosmopolitan imagery, enhancing the expressive range of the poetry. They helped shape the tone-making it more solemn or ornate as needed—and provided the zhyraus with additional tools for sound and rhythm in their compositions. In summary, Arabic loanwords functioned as "essential tools of literary expression, contributing to the stylistic, emotional, and evaluative layers of a text," much as other culturally significant expressions do. They served as linguistic and cultural symbols that reflected the Kazakh nomads' worldview, at once locally grounded and open to broader Islamic civilization.

Crucially, the legacy of these poetic choices is still felt in modern Kazakh. Many of the Arabic-derived words that zhyraus popularized remain in use (albeit sometimes with shifted meanings or confined to idioms), continuing to convey the shades of meaning and gravitas imparted to them centuries ago. At the same time, some have indeed fallen into obscurity, turning into archaïsms that require explanation to contemporary readers—a natural outcome of language evolution and sociopolitical change. Studying their use in zhyrau poetry not only enriches our appreciation of that literature but also illuminates the historical development of the Kazakh lexicon and the enduring interplay between language and culture. In this respect, the findings of the present study contribute to modern Kazakh literary studies and linguistics by demonstrating how historical borrowings are embedded in the stylistic system of the language and continue to influence its expressive resources today.

In light of this study, future research could take a closer look at specific zhyraus individually—for example, comparing Shalkiiz zhyrau's usage patterns with Bukhar zhyrau's, to see if there are discernible differences in how each employed Arabicisms (perhaps reflecting the changing times from the 16th to 18th century). A comparative approach might also examine Kazakh zhyrau poetry alongside the oral literature of other Turkic peoples (such as the Karakalpaks or Tatars)

to see how widespread and similar the phenomenon of Arabic loanword usage was across different regions. Additionally, a corpus-based analysis could quantify the frequency of loanwords in a large sample of Kazakh epic and didactic texts, which would complement the qualitative insights of the present work. It should also be emphasized that the present study does not claim to exhaust the entire corpus of Arabic-derived lexemes in Kazakh. Only selected lexical items were analyzed here for their pragmatic and stylistic value. Future research will need to expand the corpus and undertake a more comprehensive quantitative study in order to capture the full scale and diversity of Arabic influences on Kazakh vocabulary and poetics.

In conclusion, the Arabic loanwords in the language of the zhyraus exemplify a harmonious marriage of form and function: they were chosen for the practical efficacy with which they communicated the poets' intent, and they simultaneously enriched the art form, leaving a stylistic imprint that defines an epoch of Kazakh literature. This confluence of pragmatic and stylistic utility is what made the words of the zhyraus powerful in their day—and why those words still "speak" to us across the centuries. Their legacy is a testament to how contact with another language and culture can invigorate a literary tradition, providing new means of expression while reinforcing core cultural values. The case of the zhyraus underscores that understanding language contact in literature is not merely about borrowing words, but about how those words are woven into discourse to persuade, enchant, and endure.

Author Contributions

Author Contributions. Conceptualization, B.S. and K.Y.; methodology, B.S.; formal analysis, B.S.; investigation, B.S.; data curation, B.S.; writing—original draft preparation, B.S.; writing—review and editing, B.S. and K.Y.; visualization, K.Y. and F.I.; supervision, K.Y.; corpus compilation of zhiraus' language, A.N.; quantitative frequency analysis (theoretical and methodological support), A.N. and F.K.; pragmatic and stylistic interpretation of zhiraus' language, F.K. and F.I.; project administration (correspondence), F.I.. 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

No new data were created; all data are contained within the article and its references/supplementary materials.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the editorial team of *Forum for Linguistic Studies* and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback. The authors also acknowledge the institutional support of Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Table A1. Corpus of Works Analyzed.

Zhyrau	Period	Works (Tolgau Titles)
Shalkiiz zhyrau	1465–1560	"Alashtan baitaq ozbasa"; "Jebelei jebe jugirgen"; "Japyragy jasyl jauterek"; "Aryq khan!"; "Kogergen kon synular jaıqalsa"; "Bi Temirge birinshi tolgau"; "Jaqsynyn jaqsylygy sol bolar"; "Kupshek sandy til jalmagan kuren"; "Jalp-jalp usqan japalaq"; "Tuurlyqsız qara uige"; "Bi Temirdi haj saparynan toqtatuga aitqany"; "Jauyndy kuni kop jurme"; "Arqanyn quba jonynda"; "Koktep mingen erinnin"; "Shagyrmaq bult jai tastar"; "Buz ustine ot jaqqan"; "Argymaq aru atlar seskense"; "Qatynasy biik kolderden"; "Or, or qoıan, or qoıan"; "Balpan, balpan basqan kun".

Table A1. *Cont.*

Zhyrau	Period	Works (Tolgau Titles)
Zhienbet zhyrau	17th c.	“Amirin qatty Esim khan”; “Ensegei boily Er Esim”; “Qol-ayagym bugauda”; “Basy saudyn tugel-dur”.
Marqasqa zhyrau	17th c.	“Ei, Qatagannyn khan Tursyn”.
Bukhar zhyrau	1668–1781	“Tilek”; “Ai, Abilaı, Abilaı”; “On eki ai’da jaz keler”; “Batyr yn otti—Bogenbai”; “Khanga jauap aitpasam”; “Omirge toımas adamzat”; “Kokshetaudan saldyrgan”; “Kerei, qaıda barasyn?”; “Zhal-quırygy qaba dep”; “Zhar basyna qonbanyz”; “Kokte bult sogilse”; “Alystan qyzyl korinse”; “Tostagan kozdi toryny”; “Musylmannyn balasy”; “Ainalasyn zher tuttuqan”; “Bul, bul uırek, bul uırek”; “Ai, zaman-ai, zaman-ai”.
Aqtanberdi zhyrau	1675–1768	“Zhalgyzdyq, seni qaıteiın!..”; “Shygar kun tusa kureske!”; “Dushpannan korgen qorlygym”; “Salpan da salpan jortarmyn”; “Tuıe moıynyn tuz keser”; “Jauga shaptmyn tu baiylap”; “Kuldir-kuldir kisine’tip..”; “Ua, qart Bogenbai!”; “Sary aıazda qata ma?”; “Edil, Jaıyq — eki ozen”.
Tatıqara aqyn	18th c.	“Qamystyn basy maıda, tubi saıda”; “Kebeje qaryn, ken qursaq”; “Keshe toqyrauly sudyn boıynan”; “Assalaumagaleıkum, jaıssandar men qasqalar”.
Umbetei zhyrau	1706–1778	“Bakege”; “Jauqasharga”; “Bogenbai olimine”; “Bogenbai qazasyn Abilaı khanga estirtu”.
Kotesh aqyn	1745–1818	“Kurkelinin bauyry kunde dauyl”; “Arqa oıyldyn quba jon tuser qaqtar”; “Qartaıganda qatynyn dushpan boldy”; “Karilik, jyly-jumsaq as zharai ma?”.
Shal aqyn	1748–1819	“Olenge toqtamaıdy Shal degenin”; “Aıel syny”; “Bul olim qaıda joq?”; “Zharga bitken zhantaqty”; “Ashu - dushpan bolganda, napsi jawyn”; “Zhigitter, jau almaıdy aqyldassan”; “Ar zherde qadir, qurmet korgen zhanmyn”; “Kedeılık er zhigitke namys emes”; “Aıtaıyn biraz kenes bastan kesken”; “Zhastyq pen qarttyq”; “Duniıe”; “Balanı korgende”; “Qorqaq emei, nemene qashqan kisi”; “Soılep qal, soıle, tilim, arys keldi”; “Ata-ananyn qadirin”; “Khannan taqyttaıarda”; “Iman - qoı, aqyl - qoıshy, napsi - borı”; “Ten”; “At sulu, aıgyr myqty jalymenen”; “Olimnen qutylmassyn qashsan dagy”.

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