



Identifying linguistic trends in Kazakh: A corpus-based and survey analysis of the Word of the Year 2024

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Key words

The Word of the Year (WOTY)

Kazakh

survey

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Abstract

The Word of the Year (WOTY) is an annual initiative that summarizes the lexical trends of a given year. This study explores the selection of WOTY 2024 for the Kazakh language by using a mixed-method approach that combines public voting with corpus-based frequency analysis. A comparative analysis across different linguistic cultures revealed the absence of English-language WOTYs such as *BRAIN ROT*, *MANIFEST*, *BRAT*, *POLARIZATION* in Kazakh texts, while Russian WOTYs such as *MIR* ‘world/peace’ and *ISKUSTVENNYI INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’ were present. A survey of 220 respondents identified *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’, *UAQYTTY AUYSTYRU* ‘time shift’, and *SU TASQYNY* ‘flood’ as the most popular candidates. To complement this, a corpus of 500 news articles in Kazakh was compiled and analysed using #LancsBox 6.0 software. This corpus revealed high frequency usage of *ÄIEL* ‘woman’, *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’, and *SU TASQYNY* ‘flood’, among others. The combination of survey data and corpus analysis led to the selection of *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’ as the representative WOTY for Kazakh in 2024, reflecting social concerns and the influence of digital technology. The contribution is a comprehensive dataset – a research corpus comprising 500 texts, totalling 260,084 tokens sourced from online news platforms in Kazakhstan for the year 2024. The study highlights the importance of combining linguistic research tools with public engagement and calls for further interdisciplinary collaboration among linguists and NLP specialists to enhance WOTY selection.

1. Introduction

The linguistic and cultural practice known as the Word of the Year (WOTY) is a mechanism for identifying the most prevalent and frequently utilized lexical item, phrase, or idiomatic

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expression within media and communications by the end of a calendar year. In recent decades, WOTY selection has evolved into a significant linguistic and cultural tradition in numerous countries. The practice started to expand into the Anglophone linguistic and cultural domain in the 1990s. In 2003, the Netherlands introduced the concept of the Word of the Year, followed by France in 2005, Denmark in 2006, Russia in 2007, and Poland in 2011 (Nikolaeva, 2017). Typically, this assessment is undertaken by a panel of experts comprising scholars, publishers, organizational leaders, and representatives from various societal sectors, in collaboration with linguists and researchers from diverse academic disciplines.

Recent progress in linguistics has been marked by the adoption of computational methods and tools (Peterson, 2013). This branch, known as computational linguistics, applies scientific approaches to language analysis and often involves the use of corpus linguistics to manage and explore large-scale textual data or access established corpora. To support linguistic hypotheses or arguments, researchers are increasingly expected to provide data-based evidence drawn from corpora (Brezina, 2018). The use of linguistic corpora has proven highly beneficial not only to language scholars but also within broader social and academic contexts, offering promising prospects for future research and applications (Mastrantuono and Regan, 2024). A corpus-based approach is particularly useful in lexical studies, where corpora allow for the examination of word usage, frequency, and contextual distribution.

This research is significant in that it conducts a linguistic evaluation of the Kazakh language through the analysis of diverse media discourse, statistical examination of lexical usage, and a survey involving participants from various age groups and professional backgrounds across Kazakhstan.

The primary aim of this study is to identify the Word of the Year 2024 by engaging the Kazakhstani public through a survey and employing a corpus-driven analysis to explore current linguistic trends in Kazakh. Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What is WOTY 2024 in the Kazakh language, its meaning and interpretation?
2. What are WOTYs 2024 in other languages and cultural contexts, and how are they reflected and interpreted in Kazakh?

2. Theoretical background and literature review

2.1 Definition

The Word of the Year is a linguistic-cultural phenomenon that represents key political, economic, and socio-cultural events within a given year (Nikolaeva, 2017). The WOTY choice acts as both a mirror and an outcome of the way cultural values are encoded in language at a specific historical moment (Ryabova and Sergeichik, 2019). This makes it a concept rooted in both linguistic and cultural dimensions. It also reflects the emergence of new, meaningful elements in the evolving semantic structure of the national language. This practice allows

linguists to assess how language has developed over the year, capture its condensed verbal and conceptual meanings, and gain insights into shifting societal values and the trajectory of linguistic change (Melnik, 2016).

2.2 Past context

The process of selecting the WOTY generally entails evaluating patterns in language use, assessing key political and cultural developments, and gauging the prevailing societal mood. Previous selections have included politically charged terms like BREXIT (2016) and FAKE NEWS (2017), as well as culturally significant words such as SELFIE (2013) and VAPE (2014). These choices often capture the essence of the year, offering a linguistic reflection of the major events and shared public sentiments (Zimmer, n.d.).

The earliest recorded attempt to identify WOTY in mass communication occurred in Germany in 1971, when the German Language Society selected *AUFMÜPFIG* ‘defiant’ or ‘unruly’. In 1984, Japan’s “Dajisen Kokuminsha” publishing house introduced the idea of recognizing the “Most Popular Words”. The American Dialect Society has been announcing its Word of the Year since 1991. In 2000, the Global Language Monitor began issuing its own version, adding related categories like “Phrase of the Year” and “Name of the Year”. Oxford University Press joined the trend in 2004 by launching its own WOTY selections for both British and American English. Merriam-Webster followed in 2006 with its own edition, while The New York Times began publishing annual lists curated by American lexicographer G. Barrett.

In Kazakhstan, this linguistic activity has not been popular so far. Based on the available literature neither institutions nor media platforms have conducted such a ranking among the public. However, in their research, Ormanova et al. (2025) defined the word that best described the year 2023. Using a generated research corpus, the words *KAZAKHSTAN* and the adjective *JANA* ‘new’ appeared to express the highest frequency in mass media communication. The combination of these words might mean a new state policy that regulates the major aspects of socio-political life in the country.

2.3 Selection process

The linguistic practice of choosing the WOTY is created to understand public sentiments and interests, to understand the spirit of the times. It is aimed at tracking changes in the language and recording keywords and expressions of the outgoing year.

WOTY status can be obtained via:

- A novel word in the language. It might have recently entered the language or acquired a new meaning, and currently it is missing from academic explanatory dictionaries.

- A word whose frequency of use has increased significantly compared to the previous period. It is familiar to everyone who follows the news or uses social networks.
- A word that stands for an actual, socially significant phenomenon, widely discussed in a country and abroad and shows current trends.

In determining the WOTY, it is crucial to elucidate the various linguistic approaches employed in its selection.

The British method focuses primarily on identifying the most frequently used words in media sources. In contrast, the French model applies a dual approach: one word is chosen through public voting to reflect pressing societal themes, while another recognizes a newly coined term that has been incorporated into dictionaries. The Russian approach is based on the vote of native speakers. For example, the Pushkin State Russian Language Institute implies a three-step methodology combining machine and expert methods. At the first stage a sociological survey is conducted that summarizes the results of the popular vote. The second stage involves the analysis of mass-media texts and Internet queries using the analytics systems Medialogia, Integrum, Wordstat tools and others. And finally, the work of a focus group takes place via a meeting of the Pushkin Institute's expert council, discussion of the shortlist, and open voting (Buryakovskaya and Dmitrieva, 2017).

Thus, usually the following stages are employed:

- Stage 1. A lengthy list that might imply collection of material such as surveys on an internet portal and on social networks, and analysis of linguistic resources, telegram channels, mass media.
- Stage 2. A shortlist that might imply quantitative and qualitative analysis such as the dynamics of the frequency of word usage in the media and in social networks, in search queries and literacy logs.
- Stage 3. The choosing of a winner that might involve expert assessment. The word of the year is determined based on the results of a soft rating vote, in which linguists participate.

However, it should be mentioned that there is no single methodology that all organizers of such activities would follow. Rating compilers can rely on the opinion of experts (linguists and philologists), the vote of readers and subscribers, and big data, such as the number of dictionary entries, the number of queries in a popular search engine, or text analysis on social networks.

2.4 Words of the Year in varied language and cultural environments in 2024

In 2024, WOTYs were chosen from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, showcasing the wide range of linguistic concerns, trends, and values that influence global and regional conversations. As our research is crosslinguistic, we take into account and compare candidates for WOTY of three operating languages in Kazakhstan – Kazakh, Russian, and English.

2.4.1 Nominees for the Word of the Year in the Kazakh language

In Kazakhstan, the news agency “Stan.kz” conducted a survey on Instagram and identified the Word of the Year 2024. There are suggested words like *UAQYTTY AUYSTYRU* ‘change of time zone’, *QYMBATŞYLYQ* ‘jewel’, *ÄDILDIK* ‘justice’. However, many recognized the word *SHTRAFSTAN* (*SHTRAF* is a ‘fine’ and the suffix *-STAN* meaning a ‘place’) as the WOTY. Most of the news was devoted to fines that people got and paid very often. The appearance of such a word in the language shows that this issue is highly discussed among the population for several reasons. Firstly, starting from 2025, prices for fines in some industries increased. Also, the number of fines imposed on drivers and car owners, those who own mopeds and electric vehicles, pedestrians and violators of public order increased as well.

2.4.2 Nominees for the Word of the Year in the Russian language

According to Pushkin State Institute of the Russian Language, 2024 can rightfully be considered the year of Pushkin. Search query statistics demonstrate consistently high interest in the poet and his work. According to Wordstat, the number of searches for the word *PUSHKIN* exceeded 10 million. Additionally, the Pushkin Institute together with the portal the Science and Technology Decade «Hayka.pф» on the final day of the IV Congress of Young Scientists named the science WOTY in 2024, which was *ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE*. According to experts, AI can claim to be the scientific WOTY due to its interdisciplinarity and acute relevance. The term entered the Russian language in the early 1970s and was first used by scientists and cyberneticists. The first written record of the word appeared 50 years ago. The high actualization of the word occurs in the second decade of the 21st century, when artificial intelligence became the subject of discussion by the public. People’s awareness of AI technologies, as well as the level of trust in them, is gradually increasing. Thus, according to a survey conducted in October 2024, the rating of trust in AI in areas of application is led by virtual assistants, creative technologies and robotics. These areas are perceived as relatively safe and understandable for most people. In 2024, the updated National Strategy for the Development of AI until 2030 was approved, and a separate federal artificial intelligence project is being prepared for the new national project “Data Economics and Digital Transformation of the State”.

The publisher “Eksmo-AST” announced the results of its “Word of the Year” project in 2024 – the word *MIR* ‘world/peace’. The participants in the online voting, AI and experts of the

contest awarded it first place, as *MIR* received 26.5 per cent of the votes. It is followed by *SEM'YA* 'family' and *CIFROVIZACIYA* 'digitalization', which received 16 per cent each, while third place was shared by *VYBORY* 'elections', *ISKUSTVENNYI INTELEKT* 'artificial intelligence' and *OSOZNANNOST'* 'mindfulness' – 10.5 per cent each. In Russian, *MIR* is used in two meanings – the world and the absence of bloodshed. Respondents understand it as a form of matter, the universe, humanity, secular life, a collection of objects, and a rural community. Additionally, it was noted that the word *SKUF* won a special nomination. It describes not only a certain style of clothing, manners, and lifestyle of a person on the threshold of middle age, but also inherent psychological traits: reflection, inner fatigue, or attempts to comprehend achievements. And in the online voting, in which around 2,000 users participated, *AI* became the leader.

The online platform "Грамота.ру" summed up the results of its expert voting on WOTY 2024. The shortlist included 11 words that over the past year have firmly entered the Russian language. The candidates are *INSAIT* 'insight', *VAIB* 'vibe', *NARRATIV* 'narrative', *AB'YUZ* 'abuse', *ASKEZA* 'austerity', *PRILYOT* 'arrival', *SKUF* 'skuf'. More than 400 philologists from different cities of Russia participated in the expert voting. The top three is *VAIB* 'vibe' with 256 points, *SKUF* 'skuf' with 229 points and *PRILYOT* 'arrival' with 124 points in its most unpleasant war context.

The Moscow Times – Russia's oldest independent media outlet – announced that 2024's word is a name – *NAVALNY*. It could be frequently found in Russian and English digital media in word combinations like Navalny's death, Navalny's funeral, Navalny's book, Navalny's will. One of the candidates that gained high frequency and popularity was *KVADROBER* who dresses up like an animal and walks on all fours.

2.4.3 Nominees for the Word of the Year in the English language

Oxford University Press, a department of the University of Oxford, presented six words that made their 2024 shortlist: *BRAIN ROT*, *DEMURE*, *DYNAMIC PRICING*, *LORE*, *ROMANTASY*, and *SLOP*. *BRAIN ROT* was chosen as WOTY and highly popular, especially among the younger generation. This word is a noun and means deterioration of a person's mental or intellectual state, especially viewed because of overconsumption of material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging. Although it is not a new or recent concept, *BRAIN ROT* has been widely used on social media this year, particularly on TikTok, and the term has become more prominent, increasing by 250 per cent in frequency per million words between 2023 and 2024 in their corpus. The first recorded use of *BRAIN ROT* was in HD Thoreau's book *Walden* in 1854.

The Cambridge Dictionary chose *MANIFEST* as the WOTY 2024 meaning using methods such as visualization and affirmation to help people imagine achieving something they want, in the belief that doing so will make it more likely to happen. *MANIFEST* has increased significantly in search queries (it was looked up almost 130,000 times on the Cambridge Dictionary website) and has been widely used in various media, which indicates its relevance and ability

to adapt to new contexts. MANIFEST was most in demand in search queries, most accurately reflected the events of the year and demonstrated changes in meaning. The use of this sense of manifestation has gained in popularity with the increasing number of manifesting influencers promoting this scientifically unproven practice on social media. When choosing the word of the year by the Cambridge Dictionary, three criteria are taken into account: user data, relevance, and language features.

The Collins Word of the Year 2024 is BRAT as characterized by a confident, independent, and hedonistic attitude. Inspired by the Charli XCX album, BRAT has become more than a hugely successful album. This word is a cultural phenomenon that has resonated with people globally, and BRAT SUMMER established itself as an aesthetic and a way of life. Additionally, the shortlist included BRAIN ROT, ERA, LOOKSMAXING, RAWDOGGING, ANTI-TOURISM, DELULU, ROMANTASY, SUPERMAJORITY, YAPPING (Shariatmadari, 2024).

Merriam-Webster’s 2024 Word of the Year is POLARIZATION, which happens to be one idea that both sides of the political spectrum agree on. Search volume on Merriam-Webster.com throughout the year reflected the desire of Americans to better understand the complex state of affairs in the country and around the world. The word was widely used across the media landscape. Fox News reported that “Vance’s debate answer on immigration crisis shows voter polarization”, while MSNBC observed that, “The 2024 presidential election has left our country more polarized than ever”. The word was also used to describe divides beyond the US election, as when Forbes warned that in workplaces, “cultural polarization is becoming a pressing challenge”. POLARIZATION and the verb TO POLARIZE, date back to the early 1800s, when they first described light waves. The physical meaning of TO POLARIZE is to cause to vibrate in a definite pattern that led to the political and cultural meaning that helps define the world today. Other words that stood out in 2024 are TOTALITY, DEMURE, FORTNIGHT, PANDER, RESONATE, ALLISION, WEIRD, COGNITIVE, DEMOCRACY.

Table 1. WOTYs 2024 in linguacultures

Linguaculture	Source	WOTY 2024
Kazakh	Stan.kz	SHTRAFSTAN
Russian	The Pushkin Institute	PUSHKIN; ISKUSTVENNYI INTELLEKT
	Eksmo-AST	MIR
	Грамота.py	VAIB
	The Moscow Times	NAVALNY; KVADROBER
English	Oxford Dictionary	BRAIN ROT
	Cambridge Dictionary	MANIFEST
	Collins Dictionary	BRAT
	Merriam-Webster	POLARIZATION
	Dictionary	

The 2024 Words of the Year (Table 1) across various linguacultures reflect a shared preoccupation with political, technological, and emotional shifts. Candidates like *NAVALNY*, *SHTRAFSTAN*, and *POLARIZATION* underscore societal tensions and governance. *ISKUSTVENNYI INTELEKT*, *BRAIN ROT*, and *KVADROBER* highlight digital and AI-related changes. Meanwhile, *VIBE*, *BRAT*, and *MANIFEST* capture generational moods and self-expression. Despite cultural differences, these WOTYs collectively mirror a world navigating disruption, identity, and emerging paradigms.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

Our research involved several stages.

During the preparatory stage, we identified the WOTYs for 2024 within the Kazakh, Russian, and English linguistic cultures. This identification was accomplished through the analysis of data from authoritative world dictionaries such as Oxford, Merriam-Webster, Cambridge, Collins, as well as from institutions and organizations engaged in the compilation of such linguistic rankings. Our research focused specifically on three languages – Kazakh, Russian, and English – which are actively used within the territory of Kazakhstan. It is currently observed that Russian and English exert significant influence on the Kazakh language in the country. This influence is driven by globalization, integration processes, historical factors, the widespread dissemination of English, and other extralinguistic elements (Ormanova and Anafinova, 2022, Zharkynbekov et al., 2013, Abdrakhman & Shaibakova, 2024).

A two-stage methodology was employed. Firstly, a comprehensive survey was conducted among the population of various age groups within the country. 220 participants aged 18-60 took part in an online survey. The data collection platform was defined as Microsoft Forms (MS Forms). The survey employed a semi-structured design, incorporating both closed-ended and open-ended questions to obtain quantitative and qualitative data. Respondents were asked about their age, the language they use for communication, which media have the greatest impact on their vocabularies, what word in Kazakh best represents the year 2024, and from a list of words, they had to select the one that best represents 2024 for them. The candidates were selected based on their relevance to current sociolinguistic trends and frequency of use in public discourse throughout the year. Additional criteria included cultural significance, media visibility, and representation of emerging linguistic phenomena in Kazakhstani society. The survey identified 10 words that were most frequently mentioned by respondents (*olimpiada*, *aiyppūl*, *äiel*, *referendum*, *shtrafstan*, *atom elektr stansiasy*, *zaSaltanat*, *su tasqyny*, *uaqyty auystyru*, *jasandy intellekt*). Secondly, a further comprehensive statistical analysis of the shortlisted ten candidates was conducted using the specialized corpus analysis tool #LancsBox 6.0.

3.2 Instrumentation

Among the specialized tools and platforms available for processing texts in various formats, one particularly advanced application that stands out is #LancsBox 6.0. Developed by the Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science at Lancaster University (UK) (Brezina et al., n.d.), this software is designed to facilitate the analysis, manipulation, and visualization of textual data. It enables users to access and work with global corpora directly on their personal computers. In addition, it supports the development of custom research corpora, which was a key component of our study.

Hence, for textual data, we compiled popular online news sources widely read in Kazakhstan. To build our corpus, we manually gathered 500 articles in Kazakh from six news websites, covering a full year of publications in 2024. The choice of news outlets was guided by site rankings listed on <https://aqparat.info/feed>. These texts were uploaded into #LancsBox 6.0, where the Text tool consolidated them into a single body of text, the Words tool generated frequency lists, and the KWIC tool displayed collocations and word form variations. Summary statistics of the compiled dataset can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. Statistics of the research corpus

News Platform	Access	Texts	Tokens	Types	Lemmas
Egemen Qazaqstan	https://egemen.kz/	180	97011	25339	25556
Forbes.kz	https://forbes.kz/	105	13362	25362	25647
Tengrinews.kz	https://tengrinews.kz/	65	22117	7397	7352
NUR.KZ	https://www.nur.kz/	50	75688	15763	15803
Informburo	https://informburo.kz/	50	36635	9303	9276
Inform.kz	https://www.inform.kz/	50	15271	6235	6105
Total: 6		500	260084	89399	89739

As shown, the corpus includes 500 texts, totalling 260,084 tokens, with 89,399 different word forms and 89,739 lemmas. We compiled the dataset to provide statistical information about the frequency of WOTYs in Kazakh. Existing Kazakh corpora do not provide such information, nor is it available from other sources, so we needed to create our own corpus. The constructed corpus successfully fulfils its purpose by providing frequency indicators for WOTYs, despite its relatively small size. It covers a wide range of topics in news articles and offers multifaceted content, despite the limited number of articles.

4. Results

4.1 Survey outcomes

The demographic distribution of respondents was as follows: 88 respondents (40%) were members of the younger generation aged 19-29, 78 respondents (35.5%) were individuals aged 30-44, (28 respondents (12.7%) were middle-aged adults aged 44-59, and 26

respondents (11%) were either children and adolescents aged 0-18 or adults aged 60 and above. In total, 220 participants took part in the online survey.

Regarding linguistic diversity, the majority of respondents (39.1%) identified as bilingual speakers of Kazakh and Russian, followed closely by monolingual Kazakh speakers at 36.4 per cent. Russian-speaking respondents accounted for 20 per cent of the sample, while speakers of other minority languages in Kazakhstan represented approximately 4 per cent of the respondents.

Concerning sources of vocabulary acquisition, news platforms were identified as the most influential, with 43.6 per cent of respondents citing them as a primary source. Television was the second most influential source, with 30.9 per cent of respondents mentioning it. Approximately 10 per cent of respondents reported that their vocabulary was primarily influenced by conversations with family and friends, while a similar percentage cited social media platforms as a significant source of new vocabulary.

For the survey question “Which of the Kazakh words do you most associate with 2024?” respondents might choose from up to three options on the shortlist, which offers a rich insight into the socio-cultural and ideological trends shaping public consciousness. Table 3 presents the number of votes received by the WOTY candidates in the public vote.

Table 3. The number of votes received by the WOTY candidates in the public vote

#	The WOTY candidate	Votes
1	ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (Kaz. <i>jasandy intellekt</i>).	126
2	TIME SHIFT (Kaz. <i>uaqytty auystyru</i>)	88
3	FLOOD (Kaz. <i>su tasqyny</i>)	78
4	FORSALTANAT (Kaz. <i>zaSaltanat</i>)	62
5	NUCLEAR POWER PLANT (Kaz. <i>atom elektr stansiasy</i>)	60
6	SHTRAFSTAN (Kaz. <i>shtrafstan</i>)	50
7	REFERENDUM (Kaz. <i>referendum</i>)	38
8	WOMAN (Kaz. <i>äiel</i>)	36
9	FINE (Kaz. <i>aiyppūl</i>)	30
10	OLYMPIAD (Kaz. <i>olimpiada</i>)	16

Hence, the survey findings indicated that ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE gained 126 votes, being the most frequently selected term. This highlights its significant prevalence in discourse. The dominance of this entry signals not only technological advancement but also deep societal reflection on the human-machine boundary, with global resonance but local interpretive nuances in the Kazakhstani context, where digital transformation intersects with linguistic and educational challenges.

This was followed by TIME SHIFT with 88 responses and FLOOD with 78, reflecting societal attention to temporal and environmental concerns. TIME SHIFT has been a highly debated issue among the public causing mostly negative reflection as the territory of the country is wide

and the main concern is that eastern regions experience inconvenience in their daily activities as well as an impact on public health. The popularity of the word FLOOD increased due to the immense destruction caused by flooding that has become the largest in Kazakhstan in the last 80 years. It lasted almost two months. Thus, TIME SHIFT and FLOOD evoke temporality and environmental precarity – concepts relevant in Kazakhstani discourse in 2024 due to shifting socio-political rhythms and climate change.

The criminal case and subsequent trial related to the murder of Saltanat Nukenova by her husband, the former Minister of Economy of Kazakhstan Kuandyk Bishimbayev, caused a strong social resonance. This case has raised the urgent issue of domestic violence in Kazakhstani society. The neologism or even slogan FORSALTANAT was chosen 62 times as it has become a symbol of the struggle for women's rights in the country, highlighting personalization of political discourse and the symbolic centrality of leadership figures, reflecting the hybridization of media language that blends formal political register with grassroots digital expression. This issue influenced another candidate for WOTY 2024, which was WOMAN with 36 votes, indicating increased gender awareness and feminist discourse. The rise of gender-related discussions in Kazakhstani media, social networks, and public initiatives over the past year provides contextual evidence for this interpretation. For example, the Resolution of the Government of the RK dated September 18, 2024 No. 759 'On approval of the Action Plan of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan to ensure the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for men and women for 2024-2027' (Adilet.kz, n.d.). According to a study by the Amanat political party, which was presented at the First Forum of the Women's Wing, the unemployment rate among women in Kazakhstan is 5.4%, and the wage gap between women and men is 25%. All this shows a higher level of public concern about women's roles at the moment.

NUCLEAR POWER PLANT with 60 votes and REFERENDUM with 38 votes represent civic discourse and policy debates, where linguistic choice reveals degrees of public engagement, ideological framing, and media agenda-setting. The colloquial and satirical SHTRAFSTAN, from *fine* and the Persian-derived *-stan* ('land'), which gained 50 votes in the survey, is a culturally loaded coinage, expressing public frustration toward systemic penalty-based governance. It fuses Slavic, Turkic, and Persian elements, exemplifying postcolonial and multilingual creativity. Such penalty-based management has influenced a candidate for WOTY 2024 – FINE (30 votes), which reflects growing attention to fairness and justice in public life. Lastly, OLYMPIAD (16 votes) connects to national pride in the international sport competition in Paris in 2024.

Together, these candidates for WOTY 2024 reflect a linguacultural space where global trends such as AI, gender, environment, meet local expressions of technology, power, resistance, identity, and pride, producing a uniquely hybrid vocabulary that mirrors the complexity of contemporary Kazakhstani society. Notably, the candidate ARTIFICIAL

INTELLIGENCE received 126 votes, representing the highest result among all entries in the shortlist.

4.2 Reflection of candidates for WOTY 2024 in the research corpus

The second step in our research methodology is twofold.

Firstly, #LancsBox software provided a list of collocations, frequency indicators, and word forms of the 10 nominees from the survey’s shortlist in the research corpus. The candidate with the most votes, *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’, occurred 388 times in 84 texts. Its frequency indicator is 8.89 (Figure 1).

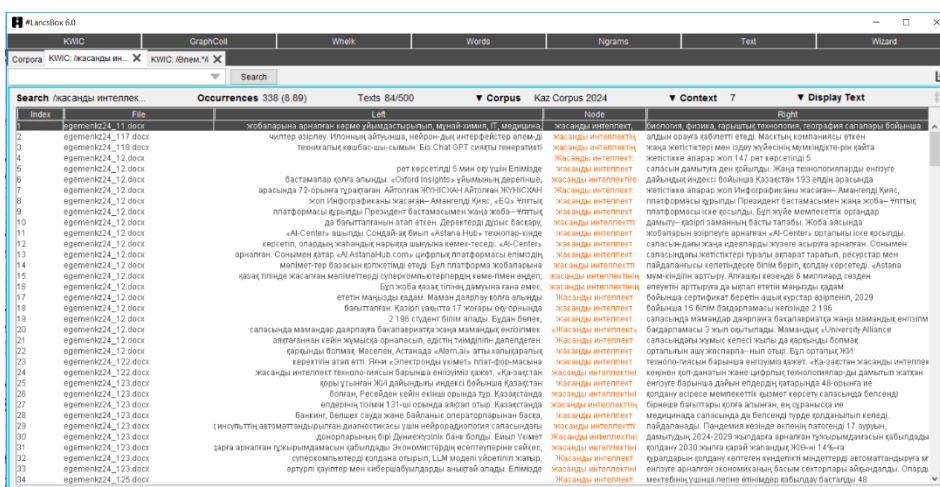


Figure 1. Corpus data of *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’

The Kazakh compound term *JASANDY INTELLEKT* is a translation of the English ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. *JASANDY* is a Kazakh adjective meaning ‘fake, untrue, false’, while *INTELLEKT* is a Russian borrowing. After examining the current terminological dictionaries of the Kazakh language, we could not find its definition. Since this term is relatively new, we can suggest that the definition in Kazakh is almost identical to that in English or Russian. However, the worldwide web offers the following: “*Jasandy intellekt* – intellektualdy kompüterlik baǵdarlamalar men maşınalar jasau tehnologiasy äri ğylym / Eng. artificial intelligence – technology and science of creating intelligent computer programs and machines/” (Wikipedia, n.d.). This term is registered in the Kazakhstani terminological database Termincom.kz in the sections Culture and art, Philosophy and political science, starting from 2021. The online translation source Sozdik.kz introduces *JASANDY INTELLEKT* as *ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE*, referring to the information technologies group.

The next candidate with 88 votes in the survey – *UAQYTTY AUYSTYRU* ‘time shift’ rarely met and had only two occurrences in two texts. So, we searched for a word combination *UAQYT BELDEUI* ‘time zone’ that is closely connected with our candidate. This search showed 19 occurrences of *UAQYT BELDEUI* ‘time zone’ in 9 texts. For example, publications such “Qazaqstanda bürynǵy *uaqyt beldeui* qaitaryla ma: ministrliktuń petisiäǵa qatysty jauaby / Eng.

Will the former *time zone* be returned in Kazakhstan: the ministry’s response to the petition/” (Tengrinews.kz, n.d.), “Sebebi, batystyñ *uaqyt beldeu* syğystyñ tūrğyndaryna sai kelmeu mümkin” / Eng. This is because the time zone of the West may not suit the inhabitants of the East/” (Forbes.kz, n.d.) indicate that the issue with the changing of time zone in the country was widely debated among the public.

The next candidate with 78 votes – *SU TASQYNY* ‘flood’ was frequently used in the texts of the research corpus. It got 158 occurrences (frequency indicator 4.15). For example, publications “*Su tasqyny* bastalğaly 4 myñnan asa su synamasy zertteldi / Eng. More than 4 thousand water samples were examined since the beginning of the *flood*/” (Nur.kz, n.d.), “*Su tasqyny* siaqty tabiği apattar 50 jylğa jetpei qaitalanyp otyrady / Eng. Natural disasters such as *floods* recur in less than 50 years/” (Egemen.kz, n.d.) show that the flooding situation in the country was extensively debated by the public, especially in the spring months.

The candidate in the shortlist *ZASALTANAT* ‘forSaltanat’ with 62 votes was not found in the texts. However, the name *SALTANAT NUKENOVA* occurred 28 times in 8 texts. Additionally, the search for *KUANDYK BISHIMBAYEV* – showed that the name of her murderer appeared 50 times in 12 texts, which proved the public resonance upon this case. Another candidate related to that theme was *ÄIEL* ‘woman’ occurred 499 times in 85 texts. However, this word can be considered a common word that frequently appears in a language but often does not carry significant meaning on its own. In the usage of this word, the context is significant. So, we broadened our search with *ÄIELDER QŪQYQTARY* ‘women’s rights’ – the theme that the nation engaged in a wide-ranging discussion about the role of women, their rights and security. This word combination appeared 10 times in 4 texts in the research corpus.

ATOM ELEKTR STANSIA ‘nuclear power plant’ with 60 votes was not popular in the texts as it got only 6 occurrences in 4 texts; *SHTRAFSTAN* with 50 votes was not found in the research corpus; *REFERENDUM* ‘referendum’ with 38 votes was used 52 times in texts.

The word *AIYPPŪL* ‘fine’ with 30 votes in the survey was frequently used in the corpus as it occurred 225 times in 37 texts; *OLIMPIADA* ‘olympiad’ was used 77 times in 25 texts.

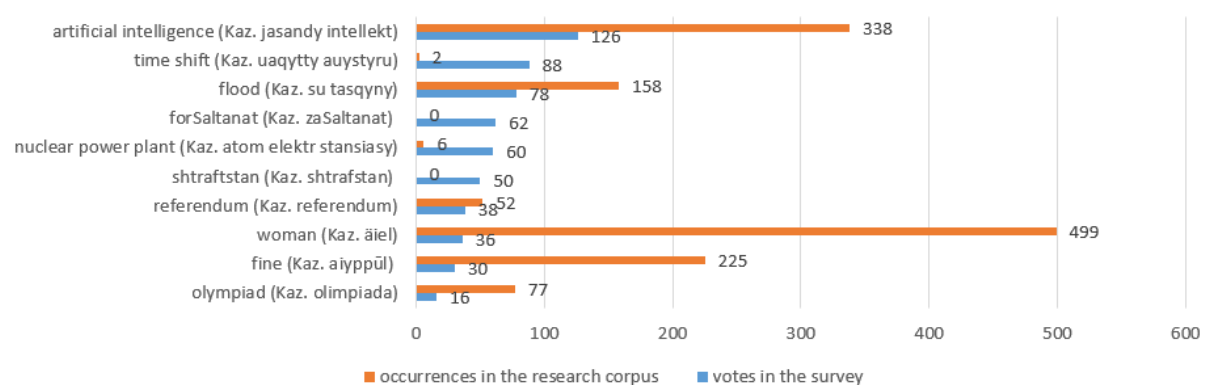


Figure 2: A rating of candidates for the WOTY 2024 shortlist in Kazakh

As we can observe (Figure 2), the survey outcomes and the corpus data do not coincide with each candidate. Some have more votes, others are more frequent in usage – WOMAN, AI, FINE and FLOOD have high occurrences in the research corpus, while AI, TIME SHIFT and FLOOD were voted for frequently in the survey. Thus, the only word that has a high frequency in the corpus and voting is *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’ which can be named the Word of the Year 2024 in Kazakh.

4.3 Research corpus data of the established WOTYs 2024

Secondly, #LancsBox provided the data for the already established WOTYs, which cover other lingua-cultures and their representation in the Kazakh texts in 2024. Based on the research data from the corpus, the frequency indicators for established WOTYs are as follows, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Occurrences of established WOTYs 2024 in the research corpus of the Kazakh media texts

WOTY	Kazakh Equivalent	Occurrences in the research corpus
MIR ‘world, peace’	ÄLEM; BEIBITŞILIK	583; 12
ISKUSTVENNYI INTELLEKT ‘artificial intelligence’	JASANDY INTELLEKT	338
PUSHKIN ‘Pushkin’	PUSHKIN	2
VAIB ‘vibe’	VAIB	-
NAVAL’NYJ ‘Navalny’	NAVALNY	-
KVADROBER ‘quadrover’	KVADROBER	1
BRAIN ROT	BREINROT	-
MANIFEST	MANIFEST	-
BRAT	NOT APPLICABLE	-
POLARIZATION	POLIARIZASHIA	-

According to the table, the Russian candidate MIR (world/peace) with almost 600 occurrences is either a new term or a word related to technology or a borrowed word or neologism. This word is of common use, but due to current events, it is even more widely used and popular among the public. Another candidate *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’ was mentioned 338 times in 84 out of 500 texts, which is a reflection of the current trends in the political, economic, and social spheres worldwide and in the country. For example, the most frequent occurrence (19 times) was found in the Forbes.kz publication “Artificial intelligence: the path to success”, talking about major projects for the introduction of new technologies and important initiatives regarding the development of AI in the country. KVADROBER and PUSHKIN are not frequently used in Kazakh texts with one and two occurrences respectively. Other established WOTYs were not found in the research corpus.

None of the English WOTYs 2024 were found in the Kazakh texts. The absence of the English WOTYs BRAIN ROT, MANIFEST, BRAT, and POLARIZATION in the Kazakh text corpus may

be attributed to several interrelated linguacultural and sociolinguistic factors. These terms are deeply embedded in English-speaking cultural and social contexts, particularly online discourse and Western media. BRAIN ROT and BRAT are slangy, informal, and tied to niche youth subcultures, which may not have direct equivalents or relevance in Kazakh media narratives. While the use of English slang is prevalent among urban and tech-savvy young people in Kazakhstan, the mainstream media, which serves as the source for the corpus, aims to reach a wider audience, resulting in a lack of representation of such vocabulary.

In comparison with the previous year (Ormanova et al. 2025), the established WOTY 2023 (NEURONET, AUTHENTIC) were frequently found in the research corpus; as for ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, it had 72 occurrences in 2023 versus 338 occurrences in 2024, almost four times higher, which shows an increasing trend in its use.

4.4 The most frequent words in the research corpus for 2024

Additionally, our research interest lies in identifying the most frequently used words or phrases. While processing the data, we utilized the Words Searches function. The search revealed that the conjunction *JÄNE* ‘and’ had the highest frequency of 92.99, occurring 3,537 times and appearing in 444 texts. It was followed by both conjunction and personal pronoun *MEN* ‘and/me’ with frequency 74.80 and 2,845 occurrences in 426 texts. Then came the demonstrative pronoun *BÜL* ‘this/that/these/those’, then the postposition *ÜŞİN* ‘for’ and other functional words that gained the highest indicators in frequency. This also aligns with the research by Omarova et al. (2025) who examined the most frequently used parts of speech and grammatical forms in the texts of the Sub-corpora of the National Corpus of the Kazakh Language.

▼ Corpus	Kaz Corpus 2024	▼ Frequency	▼ Dispersion	▼ Type
Type	▼ Frequency: 01 - Freq	Dispersion: 01_CV		
және	3536.000000	0.793156		
мен	2523.000000	0.788206		
бұл	2499.000000	0.810351		
үшін	1952.000000	0.914015		
бар	1424.000000	1.092473		
да	1410.000000	1.031855		
деп	1343.000000	1.065764		
бір	1240.000000	1.303251		
бойынша	1171.000000	1.499724		
туралы	1077.000000	1.355322		
де	1038.000000	1.178207		
адам	948.000000	2.192844		
жаңа	935.000000	1.655059		
деген	934.000000	1.573997		
видео	925.000000	4.587273		
ап	897.000000	1.232420		
болады	873.000000	1.523496		
ол	872.000000	1.418885		
жұмыс	854.000000	1.911067		
көрек	838.000000	1.644832		
жылы	817.000000	1.839090		
облысында	814.000000	4.229581		
оның	799.000000	1.301901		
осы	793.000000	1.284983		
фото	791.000000	1.493780		
өз	756.000000	1.440892		
Қазақстан	747.000000	2.179958		
емес	722.000000	1.424638		
дейін	709.000000	2.037547		
қатысты	708.000000	1.875260		
теңге	692.000000	3.365709		
болды	684.000000	1.733282		
ені	625.000000	1.967861		
ені	623.000000	1.919687		
білім	621.000000	2.626498		
2024	583.000000	1.972551		
арқылы	577.000000	2.196575		

Figure 3. The most frequent types in the research corpus

The identified types (Figure 3) with the highest frequency in the research corpus are mostly stopwords. They are common in any language and typically do not carry significant meaning when analysing text for information retrieval, sentiment analysis, or other NLP tasks (Ferilli, 2021). Based on the corpus data and after carefully analysing all provided entries we suggest the following words with conceptual meanings that were dominant and frequently used in the Kazakh texts throughout the year 2024 (Table 5):

Table 5. The most frequent word entries in the research corpus

Word entry	Frequency	Dispersion
ADAM ‘human’	948.000000	2.192844
JANA ‘new’	935.000000	1.655059
VIDEO ‘video’	925.000000	4.587273
JUMYS ‘job’	854.000000	1.911067
KEREK ‘need’	838.000000	1.644832
JYLY ‘year’	817.000000	1.839090
FOTO ‘photo’	791.000000	1.493780
ÖZ ‘own’	756.000000	1.440892
QAZAQSTAN ‘Kazakhstan’	747.000000	2.179958
TEÑGE ‘tenge’	692.000000	3.365709
EŇ ‘the most’	623.000000	1.919687
BILIM ‘knowledge’	621.000000	2.626498
ALMATY ‘Almaty’	576.000000	3.108800
JOĖARY ‘high’	575.000000	2.202200
ŪLTTYQ ‘national’	520.000000	2.486038
SU ‘water’	501.000000	4.761057

Thus, the high frequency of words such as *ADAM* ‘human’, *JANA* ‘new’, *JUMYS* ‘job’, and *KEREK* ‘need’ reflects a discourse focused on human-centric narratives, societal needs, and aspirations for innovation and development. These terms suggest a linguistic environment centred on everyday realities like employment, personal agency, and social functionality that are indicative of a society negotiating modernization and individual responsibility. The prominence of *QAZAQSTAN* ‘Kazakhstan’, *ALMATY* ‘Almaty’, and *TEÑGE* ‘tenge’ points to a strong national and urban focus, where geographic and economic references anchor identity and policy discourse. Lexemes like *BILIM* ‘knowledge’, *ŪLTTYQ* ‘national’, and *JOĖARY* ‘high’ form a semantic cluster around education and status, indicating continued emphasis on academic achievement, national prestige, and institutional authority. These also align with state-promoted narratives of modernization through education and nationalization of intellectual capital. The presence of *VIDEO* ‘video’ and *FOTO* ‘photo’ reflects the strong visual orientation of contemporary discourse and the influence of digital media platforms. Their frequency points to the multimodal nature of current communication and the integration of global digital habits in Kazakh-language media. The word *SU* ‘water’ may be reflected due to the flooding in the

spring of 2024 when this issue was highly debated among the public. Collectively, the lexical distribution reveals a discourse grounded in everyday human experience, national identity, visual culture, and socio-economic development reflecting both local concerns and the globalized linguistic environment in which Kazakh functions today.

5. Discussion

In this paper, the authors set out to identify the current linguistic trends in Kazakh by defining the Word of 2024 in Kazakh. Firstly, the authors surveyed 220 Kazakhstani respondents with a shortlist of 10 candidate words for 2024; secondly, having generated a research corpus of 500 media texts, the authors analysed the Kazakh candidates and the established WOTYs of other linguacultures via #LancsBox 6.0 software. The collaboration of these two methods proved effective in capturing the linguistic trends and shifts in the Kazakh language over time.

The survey results indicated that *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’, *UAQYTTY AUYSTYRU* ‘time shift’, and *SU TASQYNY* ‘flood’ received a significant number of votes (126, 88, 78 votes respectively). The analysis of the research corpus revealed that *ÄIEL* ‘woman’, *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’, *AIYPPŪL* ‘fine’ and *SU TASQYNY* ‘flood’ are highly frequent (499, 338, 225, 158 occurrences respectively). Consequently, the only term that demonstrated both high frequency in the corpus and substantial voting in the survey was *JASANDY INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’ – which is proposed as the Word of the Year for 2024 in the Kazakh language. This is a response to the first research question.

By answering the second research question, the authors searched the WOTY candidates of other linguacultures in both the research corpus and existing corpora of the Kazakh language and found out that none of the English WOTYs 2024 (*BRAIN ROT*, *MANIFEST*, *BRAT*, *POLARIZATION*) were found in the Kazakh texts. Russian *MIR* ‘world, peace’, *ISKUSTVENNYI INTELLEKT* ‘artificial intelligence’ are frequent in the generated corpus. Additionally, the software generated a frequency list. After eliminating stopwords, there were suggested the dominant and frequently used words with conceptual meanings in Kazakh texts such as *ADAM* ‘human’, *JANĀ* ‘new’, *VIDEO* ‘video’, *JŪMYS* ‘job’, etc.

Analysing all the nominees for the Word of the Year 2024 across various linguistic and cultural contexts (see Table 1), we cannot distinguish a common thread among them. These candidates are all distinct, encompassing a variety of subjects and perspectives. This contrasts with the WOTY 2023, where a prevailing trend was evident, centred around the advancement and incorporation of ICT, particularly the impact of ChatGPT and other AI technologies (Ormanova et al., 2025).

As there were no similar works in domestic linguistic research that focused on defining the Word of the Year by conducting a survey together with corpus-based tools, this highlights the novelty and importance of this study in the field of Kazakh linguistics. Some non-scientific

attempts had been made on mass-media sites like Stan.kz that proposed *SHTRAFSTAN* as the WOTY 2024.

A noteworthy publication that underscores the significance of corpus-based analysis in vocabulary research is the work of McEnery and Hardie (2012), who highlight the crucial role of corpora in comprehending language usage and variation. In a similar vein, Stubbs (2001) explores the benefits of employing corpus data in linguistic research, emphasizing its capacity to provide a thorough and systematic examination of linguistic patterns.

The outcomes of this study are significant in several respects. Firstly, there have been no comparable studies in the field of domestic linguistics that have explored the concept of the Word of the Year in Kazakh using a corpus-based approach and engaging with the public. Secondly, future research can benefit from the findings of our research corpus, which provides a comprehensive view of the linguistic landscape in Kazakhstan's media in 2024. This research highlights the potential for integrating corpus linguistics and public participation in monitoring language change and societal trends. The study may expand cross-linguistic comparisons and incorporate AI-driven text analytics for more dynamic WOTY selection. The authors declare no competing interests related to the design, data, or interpretation of this study.

There are some limitations. First, the narrow word selection process for the survey may have excluded important keywords or phrases that could have provided valuable insights into the topic. Second, the limited sample size of only 500 publications may not have provided a comprehensive representation of the topic. Given this restricted corpus, the results may not be generalizable or accurately reflective of the broader scholarly discourse.

Regarding future research, the study may benefit from incorporating a third stage – a focus group meeting of experts to discuss the shortlist after voting and frequency analysis. Furthermore, the process of identifying WOTY could be greatly enhanced through collaboration between linguists and NLP professionals. By combining linguistic knowledge with advanced computational methods, researchers can develop more effective algorithms for analysing large volumes of linguistic data to detect trends and patterns, both in general and specifically in the context of the WOTY.

6. Conclusion

A notable trend in recent times has been the selection of the Word of the Year in various countries. This research highlights the significance of such linguistic practice to reflect the social, cultural, and political developments of a particular year. The study sets out to identify the WOTY 2024 in Kazakh by integrating public perception with empirical linguistic analysis. Through a mixed-method approach combining a national survey and corpus-based frequency analysis, *JASANDY INTELEKT* 'artificial intelligence' emerged as the most representative term reflecting the linguistic and socio-cultural climate of 2024 in Kazakhstan. The convergence of

survey responses and corpus data underscores the growing relevance of digital discourse in shaping public language, while terms like *UAQYTTY AUYSTYRU* ‘timeshift’ and *SUTASQYNY* ‘flood’ point to broader concerns about temporal dislocation and environmental challenges. The creation of a purpose-built Kazakh-language media corpus represents a valuable resource for future linguistic research. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the effectiveness of combining corpus tools with public engagement strategies in identifying language trends. Moving forward, interdisciplinary collaboration between linguists, data scientists, and NLP specialists is essential to refine the WOTY selection process and to further explore how language mirrors social change in low-resource language contexts like Kazakh.

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