

THE FIRST TURKOLOGY CONGRESS: HISTORY AND MODERNITY

İrada Huseynova¹

ABSTRACT

Turkic peoples—possessing a centuries-old history and a rich path of development, and having taken shape across a vast geography amidst complex socio-political and cultural processes—occupy a significant and distinctive place among the peoples of the world. The scientific study of the state-building, socio-political, and cultural experiences of Turkic peoples, as well as their rich heritage, enables the restoration of historical memory and a deep exploration of their shared roots and mutual ties. In this context, conducting research on Turkology and its institutionalization is of great importance for the systematic study of the historical heritage of Turkic peoples. In the modern era, the successful implementation of language policy and the preservation and transmission of national-moral values to future generations are among the priority areas for the independent Republic of Azerbaijan. The First Turkological Congress, held in 1926, was a cultural-historical event that reflected the unity, language, culture, system of thought, and development of the Turkic nation. The presented article examines and extensively analyzes the First Turkological Congress—which played a pivotal role in the development of Turkism—and its historical significance for the Turkic world.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issues of language and alphabet have always held special significance in the formation of the national and spiritual identity of the Azerbaijani people. Socio-political changes occurring at various stages of history, along with the development of statehood traditions and cultural values, have ensured that the Azerbaijani language and its writing system remain a constant focus of attention. Significant events that took place, particularly in the early 20th century—including the holding of the First Turkological Congress—had a major impact on the formation of national language policy and the strengthening of cultural integration among Turkic-speaking peoples.

Having entered the 21st century as a legal, democratic, secular, and civilized state, the Republic of Azerbaijan is taking confident steps toward integrating its national and moral values into the modern international community within a globalizing world. The preservation and transmission to future generations of national-spiritual and moral values, as well as customs and traditions—which constitute a priority within the framework of independent Azerbaijan's principles of statehood—are matters of particular significance.

In this regard, the decree signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, İlham Aliyev, on October 22, 2025, concerning the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the First All-Union Turkological Congress in 2026, is of great importance. The Order states that the First Turkological Congress is an event of exceptional importance, marking a significant milestone in the cultural integration of Turkic peoples who share a rich common past and an ancient heritage. At this unique international scientific forum, the most pressing issues in Turkology were subjected to extensive and systematic discussion, important decisions regarding the future of the Turkic world's language, history, ethnography, literature, and culture were adopted, and particular emphasis was placed on the transition to a unified common Turkic alphabet based on the Latin script (Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidenti, 2025).

The First Turkological Congress of 1926 marked a turning point for the history of Turkology, for Turkish-Russian relations, and for the future of the peoples of Turkestan: Although at first glance the congress was marked by the decision of Turkic-speaking peoples to switch to the Latin script, it

¹ Department of History of the Peoples of the Caucasus, Baku State University
prof.irada.huseynova@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4879-8026>, <https://doi.org/10.54414/SOEG2802>

simultaneously represented a collaboration of strategic importance between Russia and Turkey—vis-à-vis the West—spanning the cultural, military, and political spheres, as well as the field of Turkology. In a speech delivered on July 7, 1922, at a banquet held in honor of the Soviet ambassador S.I. Aralov and the Iranian ambassador Ismail Khan, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk stated: “It is true that the events recorded in existing histories do not reflect the true thoughts, aspirations, and actions of nations. The peoples of the East did not act according to their own will or feelings.” At their head stood a number of despots, arbitrary tsars, and rulers. Most historical events were the result of actions taken to satisfy their greed. “We will tear them all up; we will write a new history” (Atatürk, 1997, p. 44).

The alphabet plays a major role in the development of the national language—particularly the literary language, which is considered the fundamental symbol of a people's national identity and mindset—as well as in the formation of traditions of independent national statehood. Above all, it is instrumental in the cultural advancement of the people, the cultivation of their intellectual potential, and the flourishing of science, enlightenment, education, and culture—in short, in the overall process of cultural development. It is no coincidence that our national intellectuals—who highly valued the exceptional importance of education and culture in the cultural progress and national awakening of our people—began a struggle for alphabet reform in Azerbaijan starting in the second half of the 19th century. Renowned enlighteners and thinkers from Azerbaijan and the broader Turkic world—such as Mirza Fatali Akhundov, Ismail Gaspirali, Ahmed Baitursunov, Uzeyir Hajibeyli, Mahammad Agha Shahtakhtinski, Huseyn Javid, Firidun Bey Kocharli, Vali Khuluflu, and others—raised the issue of modernizing, reforming, or replacing the Arabic script with the Latin script at various times. Although the national enlightenment movement advocating for alphabet reform gained momentum in the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries—led by M.F. Akhundov, the idea's originator, ardent proponent, and great herald—the historical and political conditions of the time did not allow for its realization. From that time onwards, Azerbaijani ideologues of the national Enlightenment movement—which shaped the development of Azerbaijani culture—campaigns for the idea of a new alphabet based on the Latin script. This leading role had transformed Azerbaijan into the center of Turkology, both in terms of ideas and practical work. The first historic step among Turkic-speaking peoples regarding the transition to the Latin alphabet was taken in Azerbaijan—specifically during the era of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918–1920), which is considered the first legal-democratic state in the Turkic world and the East. The establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic created a historic opportunity to realize the alphabet reform that enlightened intellectuals had long aspired to. The extensive public discussions organized by the **Azerbaijan** newspaper during the period of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic's activity once again demonstrated the relevance of this process to society.

By a special resolution adopted on March 21, 1919, the Parliament of Azerbaijan established a Government Commission on Alphabet Reform under the Ministry of Public Education, chaired by Khudadat bey Malik-Aslanov. The alphabet reform served to realize the ideas held by the national government regarding enlightenment and the nationalization of public education. In the 1919 Baku textbook titled **Son türk əlifbası** (“The Latest Turkic Alphabet”)—authored by Abdulla bey Efendizade, a member of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic parliament and a renowned educator—the Arabic and Latin alphabets were compared for the first time, and the incompatibility of the Arabic script with the phonetic system of the language was demonstrated through a wealth of evidence. In the book's “Introduction,” while discussing the importance of the Latin alphabet, the author wrote: If schoolchildren learn this alphabet, no one can deny how easy it would be for them to read Latin, French, German, and Russian. Therefore, if we were to teach that alphabet alongside the Arabic alphabet in primary schools, we would bring great benefits to the population. “It was precisely with this consideration that I created that work, so that it would be possible to teach both alphabets together” (Mərdanov, 2003, pp. 59-63).

This fact demonstrates that the national government implemented concrete practical measures regarding alphabet reform, established the appropriate legal framework for realizing this historical-cultural process, initiated the phased teaching of the Latin alphabet in educational institutions, and ensured the preparation of teaching materials.

Following the establishment of Soviet rule, initiatives regarding alphabet reform were pursued within a specific ideological framework, marking the entry of Turkological research activities into a new phase. Following discussions of a report by the socio-political and state figure Nariman Narimanov at the First Congress on Regional Studies held in Baku in 1924 and at meetings of the Turkology section of the Society for the Study and Investigation of Azerbaijan, a decision was adopted regarding the necessity of convening a Turkology congress to address a number of scientific and practical issues related to Turkic culture. As early as 1922, a committee on the "transition to the Latin alphabet" was established in Baku under the chairmanship of N. Narimanov, and this issue became a focal point for Turkologists working in the scientific centers of the USSR. N. Narimanov, a victim of the Soviet totalitarian system, was one of the first proponents of the idea of holding a Turkology congress.

Research shows that although the First Turkological Congress was initially intended to be held in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg) and Moscow, it was subsequently deemed appropriate to organize it in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. There were a number of historical factors that led to the adoption of this decision. First of all, the idea of switching to the Latin alphabet or reforming the Arabic alphabet was first put forward by Azerbaijani enlighteners. Secondly, the issue of alphabet reform was first raised at the state level during the period of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, and certain practical measures were implemented in this regard. Thirdly, the New Turkic Alphabet Committee regarding alphabet reform was established specifically in the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic; compared to other Turkic-speaking peoples, more systematic preparatory work—particularly concerning the transition to the Latin script—was carried out in Azerbaijan. Fourthly, sufficient scientific potential and prominent Turkologists capable of guiding this process were concentrated in Azerbaijan. Finally, the Society for the Study and Investigation of Azerbaijan—which later played a pivotal role in the formation of the Academy of Sciences—established an institutional foundation in this field by rallying strong scientific forces around itself. All these factors provided the basis for holding the First International Turkological Congress in Baku.

Although the political leadership of the former USSR made serious attempts to obstruct the transition to the Latin alphabet on various pretexts in the run-up to the congress, it proved impossible to halt these initiatives. Thus, the First International Turkological Congress (later designated the 1st All-Union Turkological Congress)—held in Baku with the aim of organizing a scholarly discussion on language-building efforts in Azerbaijan and the former USSR, and of summarizing the results of the long-term work carried out by the New Turkic Alphabet Committee regarding alphabet reform—holds immense historical and cultural significance. It should also be noted that the congress serves as an important methodological and ideological foundation for contemporary Turkological research.

The First Turkological Congress, convened based on a joint decision by the New Turkic Alphabet Committee and the Society for the Study and Research of Azerbaijan, was held in Baku from February 26 to March 5, 1926, in the historic Ismailiyya building—where the Society was based and which currently houses the Presidium of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS). In addition to 131 delegates, numerous guests also attended the congress. The group of representatives included prominent Turkologists not only from the territory of the USSR but also from a number of European countries and Turkey. Prominent scholars and literary figures held a special place among them—such as Ali Bey Huseynzade, a renowned thinker, writer, and distinguished representative of Azerbaijani-Turkic public thought, and Mehmed Fuad Köprülüzade, a Turkish politician, historian, and literary scholar.

During the 17 sessions of the congress, 38 scientific papers dedicated to the history, ethnography, culture, languages, and literatures of Turkic peoples were presented, and corresponding resolutions and recommendations regarding these papers were adopted. (Mutanov, 1926, p. 72). Although the congress was held under the auspices of the newly established Soviet government, its initiators, organizers, and leaders were all Turks (Cəfərov, 2026, p. 15).

One of the defining features of the Turkology Congress was the active participation of Azerbaijani state and socio-political figures in its organization and opening ceremony, as well as the extensive involvement

of local intellectuals; this demonstrated that the congress held not only scientific but also political-ideological significance. Opening the congress's first ceremonial session, Samad Aghamalioghlu, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Azerbaijan, emphasized that Azerbaijan was entering a new historical stage and stated that the people had the opportunity to determine their own destiny for the first time. At the same time, he noted that the Azerbaijani people regard the holding of the first-ever global Turkological Congress on their own soil as a major historical event.

In his opening remarks, emphasizing the importance of the congress, he said: "...We must derive maximum benefit from this congress." It seems to me that I would not be mistaken in saying that no scientific congress to date has attracted the attention of the broad masses of working people to such an extent... However, for the Congress to respond appropriately to this natural sentiment of the masses, it is necessary to work as productively as possible." (Cəfərov et al., 2026, p. 7). This speech held great socio-political significance for its time. Samad Aghamalioghlu emphasized that the Congress did not remain within a narrow academic framework but evolved into a broad public event that captured the attention of the masses of working people. This approach was also significant in terms of strengthening the connection between science and society, demonstrating its link to real life, and bringing its ideological function to the forefront.

It is noteworthy that the second session of the Congress featured the presentation of a seminal paper by the eminent Orientalist and historian Academician Vasily Bartold titled "The Current State of the History of Turkic Peoples and Immediate Tasks for Its Study," alongside presentations by Gavriil Chursin ("Immediate Tasks for Studying the Ethnography of the Caucasus Turks"), Ivan Borozdin ("Latest Discoveries in the Field of Tatar Culture"), Y. Messarshan ("The Current State and Immediate Tasks of Studying the Ethnography of Anatolian and Balkan Turks"), and A. A. Müller ("On the Visual Arts of Turkic Peoples"); furthermore, the sixteenth session included a presentation by Sergey Oldenburg titled "Methods of Regional Studies Among Turkic Peoples." In these reports, the historical past, current situation, and future scientific tasks of the Turkic peoples have been analyzed from a conceptual perspective.

It should be noted that the issues raised in the reports presented at the congress were investigated to a certain extent during the 20th century, particularly by historian-Turkologists active within the territory of the former USSR. However, for a long time, those studies were unable to fully break free from the influence of Soviet ideology and its methodological stereotypes.

Only after the collapse of the USSR in the late 20th century did favorable conditions emerge for a more objective study of the history of Turkic peoples and for its widespread teaching in higher education institutions.

Although numerous papers on history, ethnography, and culture were presented at the First Turkological Congress, the congress—in line with its primary objective—prioritized issues regarding the alphabet, orthography, terminology, and methodology. In this regard, discussions concerning the transition to the Latin-based alphabet, in particular, have played a central role, and important decisions have been adopted in this direction.

At the congress, presentations by prominent Turkologists regarding the issues in question became the subject of extensive discussion. Thus, presentations such as Mehmed Fuad Köprülüzadə's "The Development of the Literary Languages of Turkic Peoples," Aleksandr Samoylovich's "The Current State and Immediate Tasks of Turkic Language Studies," Bekir Çobanzadə's "On the Close Affinity of Turkic Dialects" and "On the System of Scientific Terminology," A. P. Zifeldt-Simumyagi's "On the Principles of Forming Scientific Terminology in Turkic Languages," Sergey Malov's "The Study of Ancient Turkic Languages," C. Məmmədzadə's "On the Alphabet Systems of Turkic Peoples," and F. Ağazadə's "Correct Writing in the Turkic Language"—among others—were heard, and extensive, intensive scientific discussions were held regarding these topics.

The representation of Russian-Soviet scholars at the First Turkological Congress was quite extensive. Academician Nizami Jafarov writes about the reasons for this in the book **The Turks at the First Turkological Congress**: The scientific and cultural reason was that, at the time, there were very few highly qualified Turkologists among Turkic peoples, and there was a great need for Russian-Soviet specialists in Turkological discussions; the political-ideological reason, as is well known, stemmed from the fact that the Soviet authorities exercised control over Turkic peoples through their trusted scholars, steering their thoughts and actions in the “correct” direction. However, it seems a third reason should also be mentioned. Thus, no matter to what extent any significant historical assembly discusses national issues, it is compelled to take international opinions and relations into account.” (Cəfərov, 2026, p. 20).

The most significant outcome of the congress was the adoption of a definitive decision regarding the transition of Turkic-speaking peoples to the Latin alphabet. However, one reality must not be overlooked: the decisions and recommendations of the congress did not remain merely at the level of ideas and directives requiring short-term implementation; they also encompassed future strategic directions of great long-term significance (Mutanov, 1926, p. 72).

A full transition to the Latin alphabet was implemented in Azerbaijan starting from January 1, 1929. In accordance with the decisions of the First Turkological Congress, the implementation of the Latin-based alphabet was initiated in the Republic of Turkey, alongside other Turkic-speaking peoples and republics. This transition played a significant role in eradicating illiteracy among the general public and, at the same time, gave impetus to the strengthening of cultural and intellectual ties among Turkic-speaking peoples. However, starting in the mid-1930s, the political leadership of the former USSR decided to reconsider the policy regarding the Latin alphabet—one of the key instruments of cultural integration among Turkic peoples—and to change direction in this area.

The implementation of the decisions adopted by the First Turkological Congress faced various administrative and ideological constraints in subsequent years, and initiatives aimed at strengthening cultural integration among Turkic-speaking peoples were undermined by political agendas. A large number of the Azerbaijani Turkologists—linguists, historians, and literary scholars—who drove this process fell victim to the repressive policies of the 1930s.

In 1939, a decision was adopted in Azerbaijan to transition from the Latin script to the Cyrillic alphabet, and the implementation of the Cyrillic alphabet began on January 1, 1940. Consequently, the writing culture that emerged over a brief period in the 1920s and 1930s underwent successive changes. At the same time, for many years, the name of the First Turkological Congress was excluded from scholarly and public discourse, and references to it were restricted during certain periods. This situation only began to gradually disappear after the mid-20th century.

Despite certain challenges, the Azerbaijani language has preserved its lexical and grammatical purity throughout this period and demonstrated its high expressive potential in scientific, literary, and journalistic discourses. At the same time, Azerbaijan has affirmed its position as a key center for Turkological research and development—both within the post-Soviet space and the international scholarly community—and has maintained its status as a leading nation in upholding and advancing the scientific traditions rooted in the First Turkological Congress.

A new phase in revisiting the decisions and recommendations of the First Turkological Congress began in the 1960s. It is no coincidence that in 1966, a scientific-practical conference marking the 40th anniversary of the First Turkological Congress was held in Baku with the participation of prominent Soviet Turkologists, and the publication of scientific-theoretical and practical articles regarding the Congress's role in the cultural advancement of Turkic-speaking peoples began.

In this regard, it is appropriate to recall the following remark made by Turkologist Tofiq Hacıyev concerning the First Turkological Congress: “To use industrial terminology, the congress's recommendations actually reach ‘design capacity’ in the 1950s and 60s; they are implemented precisely in

the form envisaged by the congress ” (Hacıyev, 1987, p. 259).

With the rise of National Leader Heydar Aliyev to political power in Azerbaijan in the late 1960s, the recommendations of the First Turkological Congress regarding language policy and language development began to be implemented systematically in the republic. Indeed, from the very first years of his leadership of the Azerbaijan SSR, Heydar Aliyev consistently addressed the socio-political and ideological issues surrounding the native language—as well as language policy as a whole—and ensured the accomplishment of historically significant work within a short period.

The Great Leader had already expressed his stance on the language issue—through the bold views he voiced regarding the USSR Constitution—even before the Constitution of Azerbaijan was drafted. When speaking about the USSR Constitution, the leader of Azerbaijan particularly emphasized that the Constitution granted citizens the right to education. This right is ensured by the opportunity to study in one's native language. Such a stance was, in fact, aimed at averting the anticipated threat regarding the language issue and preserving the mother tongue's status as the state language under difficult circumstances.

The Azerbaijani language was enshrined as the state language in the 1978 Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR, and consistent efforts were undertaken to ensure it fully attained the status of a state language. On October 31, 1995, Heydar Aliyev stated at a meeting of the Constitutional Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan: However, this article (Article 73 – I.H.) sparked a massive outcry in Moscow. They used to explain that this does not exist in other republics, and that there is no need for it... However, at that time, I held very tense negotiations with the leadership of the Soviet Union and the leadership of the Communist Party. “I tried to prove that we must—and will—also enshrine in our constitution that the state language is the Azerbaijani language.” (Hüseynova, 2004, p. 60).

It should be noted that, unlike in other republics, the status of the Azerbaijani language as the primary language of instruction within the education system was preserved, and priority was given to conducting education and instruction in the mother tongue.

During this period, every form of care and support was provided for the advancement of the press, science, culture, and literature in the Azerbaijani language. The Azerbaijani language was studied on an unprecedented scale and with remarkable consistency, resulting in the production of multi-volume scholarly and educational publications; notably, the four-volume university textbook **Modern Azerbaijani Language** and the monograph **Fundamentals of Azerbaijani Dialectology** were awarded the State Prize of the Azerbaijan SSR.

The all-Union—and effectively international—journal **Soviet Turkology** (published in Russian) began regular publication in Azerbaijan in 1970; in other words, it was once again confirmed that Baku was the center of Turkology, just as it had been during the First Turkological Congress.

The preservation and development of the purity of the Azerbaijani literary language held a special place in Heydar Aliyev's attitude towards the mother tongue. The leader of Azerbaijan clearly and directly stated his principled position on this issue, even at official meetings. For instance, in his speech at the 7th Congress of Azerbaijani Writers, Heydar Aliyev spoke out boldly and unhesitatingly about the mother tongue: Language is a great treasure of the people. The progress of spiritual culture is impossible without the progress of the literary language (Əliyev, 1981).

The Azerbaijani language has ascended to unprecedented heights and evolved into a comprehensively developed language of modern poetry and prose, science and technology, administrative practice, and active socio-political life. We can state with full confidence that never in our centuries-long history has the Azerbaijani language been so rich, prestigious, and respected. However, as the level of culture and science rises and the pace of life accelerates, greater attention must be paid to the refinement, development, and enrichment of the language, as well as to the expansion of its vocabulary.

The importance of knowing and deeply mastering one's native language held a significant place in

Heydar Aliyev's national language policy. Regarding this as a primary duty, he used to say: "Every Azerbaijani must, first and foremost, have a good command of their native language—the state language." (Azərbaycan qəzeti, 1997).

It was precisely thanks to the National Leader that state awards were conferred upon several linguists for the first time. The prestige of Azerbaijani linguists rose. The awarding of prizes gave impetus to the expansion of the mother tongue's sphere of use. Heydar Aliyev did not stop there; he also showed care for scholars who had been subjected to certain pressures in previous years. As a result of the attention and care shown by the leader of Azerbaijan toward the native language, the print runs of books published in the native language within the republic increased. For example, in 1979, out of 13.8 million copies of books across 1,300 titles published in Azerbaijan, 11.1 million copies were in the native language (Azərbaycan qəzeti. 2022).

The strengthening of the socio-political prestige of the native language in Azerbaijan during the late 1980s and early 1990s was a direct result of the policy previously pursued by Heydar Aliyev. However, during those years, work in the sphere of language policy and development in Azerbaijan—particularly the transition to the new alphabet—was initiated without adequate preparation. Having returned to power in Azerbaijan on June 15, 1993, in response to the people's demand and the verdict of history, Heydar Aliyev succeeded within a short period in establishing political and economic stability and rectifying errors in cultural life—particularly regarding language policy and development—culminating in the designation of the state language as the "Azerbaijani language" in the Constitution (1995) (Azərbaycan Respublikasının Konstitusiyası, 1995).

In his speech at the 3rd Congress of Writers of the Turkic World, held in November 1996, the prominent statesman and political figure Heydar Aliyev stated... Our historical roots run very deep, as our peoples are bound—by their own free will—to a shared language, a shared spirituality, and a shared religion... "I am proud that the Azerbaijani language, which belongs to the Turkic languages, is so rich and filled with such artistic expressions, and that we can express our thoughts regarding all spheres of life in our native language." (Əliyev, 1998, pp. 10-11).

Throughout history, the Azerbaijani people have preserved their language, religion, national customs and traditions, and shared system of moral values. Azerbaijanism forms the basis of the national ideology of the independent Azerbaijani state. The core pillars of this concept are statehood, national-spiritual values, and universal values. Universal values are reflected in our Constitution, adopted on November 12, 1995. The prominent statesman and political figure Heydar Aliyev considered it one of the most vital duties for every citizen and every segment of society to live and act guided by a consciousness of statehood, a guiding ideology, and a sense of patriotism, and to safeguard Azerbaijan's independence and territorial integrity. Our national and spiritual values encompass our mother tongue—the Azerbaijani language—as well as our religion, customs and traditions, and spiritual-moral mentality. During his leadership of independent Azerbaijan, the National Leader Heydar Aliyev rendered unparalleled services toward the formation and development of a national ideology rooted in historical traditions and foundations; he ensured the development of national thought along the right path and succeeded in safeguarding the system of traditions and values inherent to the people against the harsh impacts of globalization (Hüseynova, 2020, p. 248). The National Leader, contemplating the future of independent Azerbaijan, restored our history and spiritual wealth to us and raised the idea of *Azerbaijanism* aloft forever, like an invincible banner (Hüseynova, 2024, p. 123)

The national leader said in his speech at a solemn meeting dedicated to the sixth anniversary of the establishment of the New Azerbaijan Party: "Our national and spiritual values are our native language, the Azerbaijani language, our religion, and our customs and traditions." Every citizen should feel a sense of national pride for their homeland, for their nation, for their people, for their native language, and be proud of being an Azerbaijani... National patriotism and a sense of national pride are one of the most important factors for the survival of our statehood. Azerbaijani intellectuals, progressive people, great personalities,

political and state figures, great scientists, and cultural figures have created the national and spiritual values of the Azerbaijani people. "These are our customs and traditions. This is our national moral mentality." (Əliyev, 2006, pp. 244-246).

The process of complete transition to the Latin script was also implemented with the Decree "On Improving the Implementation of the State Language," signed by Heydar Aliyev on June 18, 2001, and August 1, the day of the completion of that transition, entered our national history as the "Day of the Azerbaijani Alphabet and Azerbaijani Language" by the Presidential Decree. Thus, one of the main recommendations of the First Turkological Congress found its historical solution. Heydar Aliyev's strategy on language policy and language development in Azerbaijan found its comprehensive solution in the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the State Language in the Republic of Azerbaijan" (September 30, 2002). This Law: a) protects the Azerbaijani language as a state language; b) provides a legal and normative basis for the comprehensive development of the Azerbaijani language as a state language (Hüseynova, 2006, p.16).

The development of the Azerbaijani language, the preservation of its purity, and the application of the status of the state language are globally significant events in the development of our national and spiritual resources. The Great Leader's decree "On improving the use of the state language" dated June 18, 2001, aimed at implementing the process of full transition to the Latin script, the establishment of the State Language Commission under the President, the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the state language in the Republic of Azerbaijan" dated September 30, 2002, and the transition of all correspondence and publications in the country to the Latin script from August 1, 2001 are a vivid expression of the head of state's attention and care for our native language. By decree of the national leader, August 1 is celebrated annually as the "Day of the Azerbaijani Alphabet and Azerbaijani Language" (Hüseynova, 2005, p.390).

The cultural construction strategy founded by the National Leader Heydar Aliyev in the field of national language policy and language construction in independent Azerbaijan is being consistently and successfully continued by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev. Thus, the decrees of the head of state "On the implementation of mass publications in the Azerbaijani language with Latin script" dated January 12, 2004 and "On approval of the list of works intended for publication in the Azerbaijani language with Latin script in 2005–2006" dated December 27, 2004 are essentially a logical continuation of the language policy determined by Heydar Aliyev and are of great importance for the development of the Azerbaijani language, its widespread use based on the Latin script, and the transmission of national and cultural heritage to future generations (Azərbaycan qəzeti. 2005). It should be noted that the holding of the aforementioned events also confirms once again that the decisions of the Turkological Congress are relevant, have historical significance, resonate with our modern times, and show that they arose from objective necessity.

On February 18, 2016, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, signed an order to ensure the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the Congress at the state level. The order emphasized that with the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence at the end of the 20th century, the status of the Azerbaijani language as the official state language was strengthened, which created a favorable basis for the successful implementation of the decisions and recommendations previously put forward by the Turkological Congress in modern conditions (Məmmədli, 2026, p.304). The decree specifically mentioned issues such as the formation of new concepts in Turkological studies, the recognition of Azerbaijan as one of the world's influential centers of Turkological studies, and the creation of a scientific and theoretical basis for the cultural and spiritual unity of the Turkic peoples. Also, the decree was considered a sign of respect for the success of the organizational work of the Congress in a short period of time and the memory of the brilliant Turkologists who were repressed shortly after. The 90th anniversary of the First All-Union Turkological Congress was celebrated in Azerbaijan at the state level.

In 2023, the intergovernmental Joint Turkic Alphabet Commission began its activities with the initiative

and coordination of the International Turkic Academy, as well as the support of the Organization of Turkic States. Within the framework of the Commission's work, the Academy has closely collaborated with various partner institutions, including linguistic institutes, the Turkish Language Association, and renowned linguists. As a result of this activity, the Common Turkic Alphabet, consisting of 34 letters in the Latin script, was adopted at the third meeting of the Commission held in Baku on September 11, 2024 [22]. This important step can be assessed not only as a success achieved in the modern era towards a common alphabet, but also as a continuation of the ideas of the First Turkological Congress of 1926, and as an expression of the value given to the heritage of intellectuals who worked for the enlightenment of the Turkic peoples and the development of their national culture at that time.

As we mentioned at the beginning of the article, in 2025, Mr. Ilham Aliyev signed a decree on the 100th anniversary of the First All-Union Turkological Congress to be held in 2026 (Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidenti, 2025). The decree states that many of the ideas put forward by the First Turkological Congress are being successfully implemented in modern conditions. Remarkable achievements have been made towards reforming the Turkic world into a unified family. The decisive steps taken towards strengthening the spirit of brotherhood and alliances between Turkic countries and deepening mutual cultural cooperation are now ongoing.

The fact that the call to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the First Turkological Congress was reflected in the Declaration of the 12th Summit of the Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States, held in Gabala on October 6-7, 2025, is another manifestation of this. In his speech at the 12th Summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Organization of Turkic States in Gabala, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said: "Today, the Organization of Turkic States is not just a cooperation platform, but is shaping up as one of the serious geopolitical centers. The increasing influence of our organization at the international level is gratifying. Our common historical and ethnic roots, our common national and spiritual values unite us as a family." (Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi saytı).

It should be noted that the principle of historical-political succession is clearly reflected in the language policy of Independent Azerbaijan. The value given by national leader Heydar Aliyev to the classical heritage, our national language, and the preservation, development, and enrichment of the purity of our native language are among the priorities of President Ilham Aliyev's statehood activities. Thus, at a meeting dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, President Ilham Aliyev said: "Azerbaijani is a very rich language. Today, Azerbaijani is the mother tongue of more than 50 million people." But we are the protectors of the pure, pure, literary Azerbaijani language - the independent Azerbaijani state. For every nation, every people, its native language is the main factor of its national identity, and in this direction, all public activists, the entire public, should reach a common point... Protecting the purity of the Azerbaijani language should be the job of every Azerbaijani citizen. In other words, the state, scientists, linguists, writers, poets, journalists, and those involved in politics should pay great attention to this issue (Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi saytı, 2025).

Thus, history and time have once again confirmed the correctness, vitality, and scientificity of the decisions and recommendations adopted by the First International Turkological Congress. As it was 100 years ago, the Republic of Azerbaijan is one of the leading centers of Turkology today, a meeting point of Eastern and Western civilizations, a geopolitically important cultural space with rich intellectual potential, a secular, sovereign state based on democratic values. The First Turkological Congress is a glorious chapter in history that stood at the center of the interaction between Turkish linguistics and the Soviet state system, and at the same time determined the directions of future language policy with its scientific and ideological results, reflecting our nationality, richness, and national identity. The protocols of the congress show that not only scientific arguments but also political interests played an important role here. The alphabet change was not just a technical matter, but an important event related to the future and rich historical culture of the Turkic peoples.

Throughout their centuries-old history, Turkic peoples have lived in a large part of the Eurasian

continent since ancient times, making great contributions to world culture and enriching it with their language, literature, culture, and history. These people have been strengthened in struggles and battles, and have been able to preserve their common roots, history, language, spiritual values, and statehood traditions. Today, the Turkic world is developing on that rich heritage and uniting around common values. The fact that the historic decisions of the Turkological Congress are still relevant today is once again one of the main factors determining the importance of the unity of the Turkic world.

REFERENCES

1. Azərbaycan qəzeti. (1997, 31 avqust).
2. Azərbaycan qəzeti. (2005, 10 noyabr).
3. Azərbaycan qəzeti. (2022, 21 aprel).
4. Azərbaycan Respublikasının Konstitusiyası. (1995).
5. Atatürk, M. K. (1997). *Atatürkün söyləv və deməçləri* (Cild 2, s. 44). Atatürk Araşdırma Mərkəzi Yayınları.
6. Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidenti. (2025, 22 oktyabr). *Birinci Türkoloji Qurultayın 100 illik yubileyinin keçirilməsi haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Sərəncamı*. <https://president.az/az/articles/view/70396>
7. Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidenti. (2025, 22 oktyabr). *Birinci Türkoloji Qurultayın 100 illik yubileyinin keçirilməsi haqqında Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Sərəncamı*.
8. Cəfərov, N., Hüseynova, M., & Qəribli, A. (2026). *Birinci Türkoloji qurultay*. Zərdabi-Nəşr.
9. Cəfərov, N. (2026). *Türklər Birinci Türkoloji Qurultayda*. Elm.
10. Əliyev, H. (1981). Sovet ədəbiyyatının yüksək borcu və amalı (Respublika yazıçılarının VII qurultayında nitq 12.06.1981). *Azərbaycan*, (6).
11. Əliyev, H. (1998). *Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir* (Kitab 8). Azərənəşr.
12. Əliyev, H. (2006). *Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir* (Cild 18). Azərənəşr.
13. Hacıyev, T. (1987). *Azərbaycan ədəbi dili tarixi* (Hissə 2).
14. Hüseynova, İ. (2004). *Müstəqil Azərbaycan dövlətinin qurucusu*. Təhsil.
15. Hüseynova, İ. (2006). Birinci Türkoloji qurultay və onun Azərbaycan xalqının mədəni inkişafında rolu. *Bakı Universitetinin Xəbərləri*, (2), 16.
16. Hüseynova, İ. (2020). *Tarix. Zaman. Düşüncələr* (Cild 4). Elm və təh.
17. Hüseynova, İ. (2024). *Tarix. Zaman. Düşüncələr* (Cild 5). Elm və Təhsil.
18. Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi saytı. (*İlham Əliyevin Qəbələdə Türk Dövlətləri Təşkilatının Dövlət Başçıları Şurasının 12-ci Zirvə Görüşündə çıxışı*). <https://president.az/az/articles/view/70283>
19. Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin rəsmi saytı. (2025, 3 noyabr). *İlham Əliyevin Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyasının 80 illik yubiley yığıncağında nitqi*. <https://president.az/az/articles/view/70464>
20. Mərdanov, M. (2003). *Azərbaycan təhsili xalq cümhuriyyəti illərində (1918-1920)*. Çaşıoğlu.
21. Məmmədli, N. (2026). *1926-cı il I Türkoloji Qurultay tarixi zəmində, arxiv sənədlərində, milli mətbuatda*. Elm və təhsil.
22. Mustafayev, Ş. (2026). *Birinci Türkoloji Qurultayın qurucuları və dərsləri: tarix və müasirlik*. AMEA. <https://science.gov.az/az/news/open/35175>
23. Hüseynova, İ. (2005). *Geydar Aliyev - ot politicheskogo rukovoditelya k obshchenatsionalnomu lideru*.
24. Mutanov, G. (1926). *Pervyy Vsesoyuznyy tyurkologicheskiy s"ezd: 26 fevralya – 5 marta 1926 g.: stenograficheskiy otchet*.