



# COMPARISON OF EDITING FEATURES IN KAZAKHSTAN AUTHOR'S AND COMMERCIAL CINEMA

Raiymbek Alzhanov<sup>1</sup>, Aida Mashurova<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts (Almaty, Kazakhstan)

**Abstract.** The article provides a detailed comparative analysis of approaches to editing in auteur and commercial cinematography in Kazakhstan, focusing on how these differences shape different narrative structures and influence viewer perception. The study revealed that auteur, so-called “slow cinema”, is characterized by a viscous tempo, nonlinearity and associativity, based on which it can be concluded that in auteur cinema, editing serves to create a space for reflection and emotional depth. In commercial cinema, on the contrary, editing with frequent frame changes, rhythm, and linearity of the narrative ensures spectacle, dynamism, and accessibility for the mass audience. The article demonstrates how editing reflects the philosophical, aesthetic, and commercial objectives of various trends in Kazakhstan's cinema. The study found that editing is a key element of cinematic language, not only forming the structure of the narrative but also influencing the viewer's emotional perception.

**Keywords:** editing, art-house cinema, commercial cinema, frame, cutting, rhythm, slow cinema.

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## Introduction

Central Asia is one of the fastest-growing regions in the world regarding cinematography progress. Gulnara Abikeeva, a famous Kazakh film expert, notes this in her dissertation: “At the beginning of the second decade of the new century, Kazakh cinema occupies a leading position in Central Asia” (89). Unsurprisingly, this fact has not only made many people closely follow local cinema news but has also given a powerful impetus to developing domestic cinematography. After all, it is undeniable that cinematography is a unique art form capable of reflecting and shaping cultural contexts, and in recent decades, there have been noticeable changes in approaches to content creation. First of all, this is due to the fact that not only the auteur direction in Kazakhstan’s cinema has developed significantly: domestic commercial films such as “Dastur” (2023) by Kuanysh Beisek and “Prigovor” (2024) by Dias Bertis have shown high box office receipts and have received recognition from viewers even outside of Kazakhstan. The role of commercial cinema in the development of the industry cannot be underestimated: Gulnara Abikeeva wrote in her article that “Kazakh cinema began to take shape as a cultural industry from the moment when film distribution was revived in 2005 and films began to be made not only for festivals, but also before everything for the audience” (54). The development of the commercial direction is also evidenced by the emerging genre diversity: in addition to well-known and even somewhat dull comedies, Kazakhstan’s film distribution now includes thrillers, horrors and dramas of domestic production. This not only expands the direct opportunities of the local film industry but also provides a vast field for research and deepens the theoretical basis of Kazakhstan’s cinema. In this article, auteur and commercial cinema will

be considered in antithesis to each other: unhurried, viscous narration, characteristic of “slow cinema” and “dynamic montage”, characteristic of commercially oriented films. According to the author of this article, it is the editing that plays a key role in the visual structure and the audience’s perception of the story. As researcher Das Soumen said in his book, “as a narrative technique, film editing depends on the complex interplay between the viewer’s cognitive processes and emotional reactions” (109).

To conduct a deep analysis on the stated topic, it is worth understanding such key concepts as the already mentioned “slow cinema” and “fast content”.

In the context of globalization and digitalization, where viewers seek instant gratification, the concept of “fast content”, which explains the success of commercial films, is becoming especially relevant. This type of media production, characterized by dynamic editing, brevity and high visual appeal, has become a determining factor for mass cinema, especially on social media platforms. A group of Spanish researchers found that “during the last few decades, shot lengths have got shorter, going from about 10s in the 1930s and 1940s to below 4s after 2000” (83). Films and videos created in the fast content format are aimed at quick perception, which implies minimal time for plot development and simplified narrative structures. According to Carlo Comanducci, “fast content” is characterized by “fast-paced action, hyperkinetic cinematic style, and irreflexive consumption” (39).

On the opposite side of the spectrum is the concept of “slow cinema”, which is a conscious effort to experience time and space in a contemplative manner. This movement in filmmaking emphasizes long, still shots, minimalist dialogue, and a slow pace of storytelling. The primary goal of slow cinema is to create a deeply emotional experience for the viewer, who can immerse themselves in the atmosphere and visual

aesthetics rather than being subject to rapid-fire action. Master of Arts Shagilbaev says in his article: “Slow cinema carries a high axiological aspect and develops cinema in a cultural direction” (46).

This article will explore the opposition between “slow cinema” and “fast content”, i.e. auteur cinema and commercial cinema, examining their main characteristics, their impact on audience perception and the cultural context in which they exist. This comparative analysis will be carried out by comparing editing techniques. Editing—as a key component of cinematic language—serves as a critical lens through which these differences can be analyzed. Let’s examine editing not merely as a technical tool but as a creative force that shapes storytelling, mood, and viewer experience. It will analyse how these two approaches to cinema shape contemporary understandings of the medium, as well as their implications for cinematic practice and future trends in the industry.

## Methods and materials

In the course of this study, comparative and structural analysis methods were used to identify key features of editing in auteur and commercial cinematography of Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan’s films created within the framework of the specified directions over the past ten years were used as empirical material. The analysis of editing solutions was based on the study of rhythm, frame composition, the order of alternation of scenes, and sound and visual effects. For a more detailed examination, the case study method was used, within the framework of which in-depth analyses of individual films were conducted, representing both auteur and commercial approaches. In addition, interviews with professional editors working in these directions were studied, which made it possible to compare theoretical conclusions with practical aspects.

A notable limitation of prior research has been an overemphasis on Western

practices; this article seeks to address this gap by focusing on Kazakhstan’s unique cinematic context.

## Discussion

Kazakhstan’s auteur cinema established itself in the global film community ten years ago, when the names of Adilkhan Yerzhanov, Emir Baigazin, and Farkhat Sharipov began to appear more and more often and noticeably at prestigious class A film festivals (Abikeyeva 177). In essence, Kazakhstan’s auteur cinema is a direction in the national film industry, characterized by the individual creative approach of directors, the reflection of personal authorial visions and original artistic solutions, and the desire for cultural originality in works. Unlike commercial cinema, which is oriented towards the mass market and profit, auteur cinema focuses on aesthetic values, socially critical content, and experimental narrative forms.

Kazakhstan’s auteur films often explore national identity, historical memory, cultural traditions and contemporary social issues, using unique editing techniques, visual styles and narrative structures. In connection with the above, the author’s approach to editing by Kazakh directors can be conditionally called “reflective editing”.

The commercial side of Kazakhstan cinema is a direction of national cinema, focused on mass audiences and achieving box office success. Unlike art-house cinema, commercial cinema is based on standard genre forms (action, comedy, melodrama, horror) and uses proven narrative and visual strategies to attract the widest possible audience. The main features are: dynamic editing, entertaining content and the use of international cinematographic conventions, which makes it close to global standards of mass culture. This allows us to conclude that the choice of editing techniques in commercial cinema in Kazakhstan is determined by the principles of “dynamic storytelling”.

Commercial cinema in Kazakhstan has been actively developing since the early 2000s, when, in the context of national economic growth, an industry capable of producing films competitively at the regional and international levels began to form. Films such as *The Racketeer* (2007) by director Akan Satayev have become iconic examples of Kazakhstan's commercial cinema, combining crime action and drama elements with local themes relevant to Kazakhstan's society. Currently, precedents of young directors such as *Dastur* (2023) by Kuanysh Beysek and *The Sentence* (2024) by Diaz Bertiz can be added to this list.

In addition to the purpose of creation, commercial and auteur cinema are distinguished by the features of visual style, narrative structure, and tempo-rhythm of the story. In many ways, the final visual style and integrity of the film's event sequence are determined by editing.

As Julie Lambden puts it in her book, "Film editing is part of the long process of formulating, acquiring and presenting the images and sounds that make a film" (4). The power of editing was proven by "The Kuleshov Effect": "one shot by another would alter the apparent meaning of the component shots" (Kovacs 34). Editing is one of the fundamental elements of film language, which provides consistency and structure to the narrative and shapes the emotional and aesthetic perception of the film. Editing connects visual elements and creates connections between them, allowing the viewer to interpret and comprehend the information.

Editing determines how quickly or slowly events unfold on screen. It can create tension (for example, in action scenes with quick cuts) or relaxation (in scenes that use long takes and a slow pace). The way scenes are connected to each other affects the perception of time in a film. Slowing down the pace can help create an atmosphere and deepen emotional perception while speeding

up the pace can create a dynamic and energetic effect. Editing helps structure the narrative by creating a logical sequence and event connections. It allows for complex time structures, including flashbacks, flashforwards, and parallel plots. Effective editing can create symbolic connections between shots, reinforcing the themes and ideas embedded in a work. For example, the juxtaposition of different scenes can highlight the contrast between characters, their motivations, and their internal conflicts.

The study of editing features in Kazakhstan's cinematography is based on the works of both domestic and foreign researchers studying the differences between auteur and commercial cinema. However, most existing studies focus on Western cinematographic practices or study Kazakhstan's cinema in general, without deep differentiation between auteur and commercial directions. This work fills this gap, focusing on a comparative analysis of the two approaches, specifically in Kazakhstan's conditions.

## Results

Editing is not just a technical process of putting shots together; it is a key tool that influences the rhythm and pace of film narrative. Rhythm and pace determine how the viewer perceives and interprets the story, creating emotional and aesthetic effects. Some researchers even argue that editing can influence the viewer's perception of time (Kovarski 2).

Using the conclusions from the previous paragraphs, let's consider how editing works in the commercial and authorial directions using specific examples from Kazakhstan's cinema.

In the film "Tulip" (2008) by Sergei Dvortsevov, editing is used to create a slow, almost meditative rhythm. Long takes and minimalist transitions allow the viewer to immerse themselves in the protagonist's world, exploring his inner experiences

and alienation. Non-linear flashbacks and associative transitions help create a deep emotional connection with the characters, emphasizing their isolation and desire for love. This approach aligns with auteur filmmaking's philosophical and aesthetic goals, fostering deep engagement.

In contrast, let's consider a striking example of commercial cinema – the film *Kelinka Sabina* (2010) by Nurtas Adambay. Here, editing serves to maintain dynamics and ease of perception. Quick changes of frames in comedy scenes and the use of “editing on rhythm” with an emphasis on music create a lively and entertaining impression. Effective visual transitions and a clear structure help to hold the viewer's attention, which corresponds to the goals of commercial cinema.

Editing in “Tulip” allows for an in-depth exploration of themes of loneliness and internal struggle, creating space for reflection. In “*Kelinka Sabina*”, on the other hand, the editing maintains the lightness and entertaining nature of the plot, making it accessible to a broader audience. Each approach to editing thus reflects the differences in the aims and styles of auteur and commercial cinema in Kazakhstan.

Now let's repeat a similar analysis using more modern examples: “*Brothers*” (2022) by Darkhan Tulegenov as a “representative” of auteur cinema and “*Prigovor*” (2024) by Diaz Bertiz from commercial cinema.

Editing in “*Brothers*” plays a central role in creating dramatic tension and maintaining an emotional atmosphere. Darkhan Tulegenov uses editing to gradually reveal the inner conflict between the brothers, highlighting the contrast between their views on life. Slow editing with long takes is often seen, creating a sense of time needed to contemplate and analyze the characters' emotions. This gives the film depth and allows the viewer to feel the tension in the relationships between the characters.

Another important element is the use of parallel editing, which helps to show the characters' different perspectives and inner worlds without destroying the integrity of the narrative. For example, scenes, where the brothers' actions occur in different time frames, are connected by editing transitions, creating associative links between their life choices and decisions.

Bertiz's “*Prigovor*” uses more dynamic and aggressive editing, which emphasizes the severity and hopelessness of the characters' situations. Editing plays an important role in creating a sense of inevitability and heightening the tension, maintaining a fast pace of the plot. The shots change more frequently, especially in scenes involving trials and conflicts, which creates a sense of pressure and acceleration.

Editing in “*Prigovor*” also helps to create a sense of anxiety and instability. It uses abrupt editing transitions and contrasting scenes that switch the viewer's attention between different points of view, creating a complex and multi-layered picture of the conflict. For example, in key courtroom scenes, abrupt transitions between close-ups of the characters' faces heighten the emotional tension, adding drama to the dialogues and monologues.

From the above, it becomes clear that the editing in Tulegenov's “*Brothers*” is slow and thoughtful. It focuses on the internal conflict, giving the viewer time for reflection and understanding. In contrast, the editing in Bertiz's “*Prigovor*” is dynamic and tense, with frequent abrupt changes of shots, which contributes to creating an atmosphere of anxiety and drama.

Through editing, “*Brothers*” builds on emotional depth and the gradual revelation of character. At the same time, “*Prigovor*” uses editing to create a sense of mounting pressure and accelerated pacing, emphasizing the tension surrounding the trial. Let's consider another modern pair of films - “*Bauryna salu*” (2023) by Askhat

Kuchincherekov and “Koke” (2024) by Asylzhan Abdumutaliev.

The film “Bauryna salu” uses editing as a means to create emotional depth and emphasize cultural and family traditions. The film features long shots, which is typical for many Kazakh arthouse films, allowing the viewer to deeply understand the characters’ experiences and feel the atmosphere of the events. Editing transitions are often slow, with a smooth alternation of scenes, which creates a feeling of inner silence and contemplation. The main goal of editing in “Bauryna salu” is to convey emotions through minimalism and attention to detail.

“Koke” uses more dynamic and emotionally charged editing aimed at creating a sense of tension and drama. The film is sharper in its structure and editing, with abrupt transitions between scenes enhancing the dramatic effect. The editing here helps create strong contrasts between calm and disturbing moments, emphasizing the internal conflict and tension in the characters’ relationships.

“Koke” also extensively uses the inter-frame alternation of close-ups and general views to evoke in the viewer a sense of presence in the events. In this film, editing is aimed at sharper emotional shifts: a change in tempo and alternation of different moods help maintain a high level of tension and emotional involvement.

In comparison, it becomes clear that the montage in “Bauryna salu” is smoother and more meditative. It focuses on long-term relationships and cultural and family values, creating space for reflection and immersion in traditions. The montage in “Koke,” on the contrary, is sharper and more dynamic. It emphasizes the dramatic side of the narrative and creates an intense atmosphere due to frequent changes of plans and contrasts.

Thus, “Bauryna salu” uses montage to convey quiet emotional depth and contemplation, while “Koke” strives to create a tense and dramatic effect, making

montage an important tool for controlling the dynamics and perception of the viewer.

### *Basic Provisions*

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the divergent editing techniques employed in Kazakhstan’s cinema, focusing on both auteur and commercial forms. The findings elucidate several core insights:

1. **Editing Styles and Techniques:** Auteur cinema is marked by intricate, slow-paced editing that fosters deep character arcs and thematic sophistication. This contrasts sharply with commercial cinema, where brisk, dynamic cuts propel the storyline swiftly and maintain heightened viewer excitement and emotional intensity.

2. **Contrasting Approaches in Editing:** Films like Bertiz’s “Prigovor” utilize intense, rapid editing to underscore characters’ dire plights, engendering a palpable sense of urgency. Conversely, “Bauryna salu” adopts a smoother, reflective editing style, encouraging introspection on cultural and familial dynamics.

3. **Audience Emotional Engagement:** The study confirms that the type of editing significantly affects audience engagement and emotional response. The meditative tempo of “Bauryna salu” invites a deep narrative immersion, while the quick edits in “Koke” elicit a heightened sense of tension and anticipation.

4. **Cultural Resonance in Editing:** Editing choices mirror the broader cultural and societal contexts within Kazakhstan. Auteur films often highlight cultural traditions and personal narratives, whereas commercial cinema emphasizes dynamic conflict and storytelling flair.

5. **Impact on Viewer Experience:** The research underscores editing as a pivotal element in shaping cinematic narratives and viewer experiences. The contrasting editing methodologies in auteur versus commercial films mold not only the stories but also the emotional connection audiences form with the content.

In conclusion, this investigation



highlights the pivotal role of editing in crafting the narrative and emotional depth of Kazakhstan's films, revealing substantial differences between the narrative approaches of auteur and commercial cinema.

## Conclusion

Editing is a key element of film production, forming not only the structure of the narrative, but also the emotional perception of the viewer. In the auteur and commercial direction of cinematography, editing performs different functions, reflecting the aesthetic and genre objectives of each film.

In auteur cinema, editing is often oriented toward creating depth and reflective space, where the viewer can immerse themselves in the narrative through slow, fluid transitions and long shots. Editing emphasizes emotional resonance and thematic depth through contemplative pacing. This approach emphasizes the inner world of the characters and allows for the development of multi-layered narratives, while creating an atmosphere of contemplation and psychological immersion.

In commercial filmmaking, editing plays the role of a tool for maintaining dynamics and spectacle. Rapid frame changes,

rhythmic editing and clear linearity of the narrative create a high speed of perception, increasing tension and involving the viewer in actively following the plot. However, it is crucial to clarify that techniques like rapid montage are not inherently exclusive to commercial cinema, as they have historical roots in broader cinematic traditions, such as Sergei Eisenstein's "montage of attractions." Using such techniques in commercial films aims to captivate audiences through immediacy and spectacle. Here, editing serves primarily to hold attention and ensure maximum emotional impact. It can be concluded that commercial cinema employs editing to enhance accessibility and engagement.

This dichotomy reflects not only the differing objectives of these cinematic branches but also their contributions to the evolution of national cinema. Editing thus becomes a universal language of cinema that helps express different creative ideas and aesthetic goals. It reflects the balance between visual form, rhythm and, emotional content, playing an important role in constructing both the narrative structure and the viewer's experience.

Future research should expand to include comparative studies with international cinema to further contextualize Kazakhstan's unique contributions.

**Contribution of authors:**

**R. A. Alzhanov** – processing, editing the main text, the abstract text, the literature data analysis and generalization, preparation and accomplishment of the research part of the text.

**A. A. Mashurova** – analysis of scientific literature, work with foreign sources, preparation of a literary review, consulting and scientific advising.

**Авторлардың үлесі:**

**Р. А. Әлжанов** – негізгі мәтінді жазу, аңдатпа мәтінін өңдеу, редакциялау, әдеби деректерді талдау және жинақтау.

**А. А. Машурова** – ғылыми әдебиеттерді талдау, шетелдік дереккөздермен жұмыс жасау, мәтіннің зерттеу бөлігін дайындау және орындау, әдеби шолуды дайындау, кеңес беру, ғылыми жетекшілік.

**Вклад авторов:**

**Р. А. Альжанов** – обработка, редактирование основного текста, текста аннотации, анализ и обобщение литературных данных, подготовка и исполнение исследовательской части текста.

**А. А. Машурова** – анализ научной литературы, работа с зарубежными источниками, подготовка литературного обзора, консультирование и научное руководство.



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**Әлжанов Райымбек, Машурова Аида**

Темірбек Жүргенов атындағы Қазақ ұлттық өнер академиясы  
(Алматы, Қазақстан)

**ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ АВТОРЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ КОММЕРЦИЯЛЫҚ КИНОСЫНДАҒЫ МОНТАЖ  
ЕРЕКШЕЛІКТЕРІН САЛЫСТЫРУ**

**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада Қазақстандағы авторлық және коммерциялық кинематографиядағы монтаж тәсілдеріне егжей-тегжейлі салыстырмалы талдау берілген, бұл айырмашылықтар әртүрлі баяндау құрылымдарын қалай қалыптастыратынына және көрермендердің қабылдауына қалай әсер ететініне назар аударады. Зерттеу нәтижесінде автордың «баяу кинематографиясы» тұтқыр қарқынмен, сызықтық еместігімен және ассоциативтілігімен сипатталатыны анықталды, осының негізінде авторлық киномонтаж пайымдау мен эмоционалдық тереңдік үшін ішкі кеңістікті құру құралы ретінде қызмет етеді деген қорытынды жасауға болады. Коммерциялық кинематографияда, керісінше, кадрлардың жиі өзгеріп отыруымен, баяндау ырғағы мен сызықтылығымен монтаждау көрерменге ойын-сауықты, динамизмді және қол жетімділікті қамтамасыз етеді. Мақалада монтаждау қазақстандық киноның түрлі бағыттарының философиялық, эстетикалық және коммерциялық мақсаттарын қалай көрсететіні қарастырылады. Зерттеу нәтижесінде монтаж тек баяндау құрылымын қалыптастырып қана қоймай, сонымен қатар көрерменнің эмоционалдық қабылдауына әсер ететін кино тілінің негізгі элементі екендігі анықталды.

**Түйін сөздер:** монтаж, авторлық кино, коммерциялық кино, кадр, ритм, баяу кино.

**Дәйексөз үшін:** Әлжанов, Райымбек, және Аида Машурова. «Қазақстанның авторлық және коммерциялық киносындағы монтаж ерекшеліктерін салыстыру». *Central Asian Journal of Art Studies*, т. 9, № 4, 2024, 193–204 бб., DOI 10.47940/cajas.v9i4.937

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**Альжанов Райымбек, Машурова Аида**

Казахская национальная академия искусств имени Темирбека Жургенова  
(Алматы, Казахстан)

**СРАВНЕНИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТЕЙ МОНТАЖА В АВТОРСКОМ И КОММЕРЧЕСКОМ КИНО  
КАЗАХСТАНА**

**Аннотация.** В статье проводится подробный сравнительный анализ подходов к монтажу в авторском и коммерческом кинематографе Казахстана, акцентируя внимание на том, как эти различия формируют разные повествовательные структуры и влияют на зрительское восприятие. В результате исследования выявлено, что авторскому, так называемому «медленному кино», свойственны тягучий темп, нелинейность и ассоциативность, на основании чего можно сделать вывод, что в авторском киномонтаж служит как инструмент для создания внутреннего пространства для размышлений и эмоциональной глубины. В коммерческом кино, напротив, монтаж с частой сменой кадров, ритмикой и линейностью повествования обеспечивает зрелищность, динамичность и доступность для массового зрителя. В статье рассмотрено, как монтаж отражает философские, эстетические и коммерческие задачи различных направлений казахстанского кинематографа. В результате исследования установлено, что монтаж является ключевым элементом кинематографического языка, не только формирующим структуру повествования, но и влияющим на эмоциональное восприятие зрителя.

**Ключевые слова:** монтаж, авторское кино, коммерческое кино, кадр, ритм, медленное кино.

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**Авторлар туралы мәлімет:****Сведения об авторах:****Information about the authors:**

**Әлжанов Райымбек Амангелдіұлы** — докторант, оқытушы, «Режиссерлік экран өнері» кафедрасы меңгерушісінің орынбасары, Темірбек Жүргенов атындағы Қазақ ұлттық өнер академиясы (Алматы, Қазақстан)

**Альжанов Райымбек Амангельдыұлы** — докторант, преподаватель, заместитель заведующего кафедрой «Режиссура экранных искусств», Казахская национальная академия искусств имени Темирбека Жургенова (Алматы, Казахстан)

**Alzhanov Raiymbek Amangeldyuly** — doctoral student, teacher, deputy head of the department of “Directing Screen Arts”, Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts (Almaty, Kazakhstan)

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4618-7651  
E-mail: alzhanraim@gmail.com

**Машурова Аида Абдрахманқызы** — PhD докторы, «Режиссерлік экран өнері» кафедрасының қауымдастырылған профессоры, Темірбек Жүргенов атындағы Қазақ ұлттық өнер академиясы (Алматы, Қазақстан)

**Машурова Аида Абдрахмановна** — доктор PhD, доцент кафедры “Режиссура экранных искусств”, Казахская национальная академия искусств имени Темирбека Жургенова (Алматы, Казахстан)

**Mashurova Aida Abdrakhmanovna** — PhD, Associated Professor of the department of “Directing Screen Arts”, Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts (Almaty, Kazakhstan)

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2854-4531  
E-mail: aidamashur@gmail.com