

**PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTIC FOUNDATIONS FOR SELECTING MODERN
LITERARY WORKS****Zulfira Musaboyeva Iqboljon kizi**

Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature, PhD

E-mail: zulfiramusaboeva@gmail.com

Phone: +998 99 008 05 63

Abstract: This article examines the principles of selecting highly artistic works from modern Uzbek literature for study in literature classes at general secondary education schools. It emphasizes fostering respect and admiration for nationally esteemed writers through these works, rejecting the practice of imposing ready-made interpretations of literary texts on students, and instead developing students' independent and critical engagement with literary works based on specific questions and tasks. The study analyzes literary works selected for literature textbooks and explores approaches to developing students' reading culture within the national experience of literary education. Furthermore, the article investigates factors that stimulate students' interest in reading outstanding literary works in the state language and clarifies the conditions that must be considered to ensure the three main aspects of text selection: high artistic value, social significance, and the ability to provide aesthetic pleasure to the reader.

Keywords: textbook, curriculum, didactics, literary education, method, genre, artistic interpretation.

Introduction

Literature endows ordinary words with life-giving power, awakens the most delicate human emotions, and explores the mysterious and wondrous world of the human soul. It reveals the essence of the world and humanity, teaches the meaning of life and its laws, and helps define the principles of existence. Any literary work studied in literature classes is reprocessed in the student's consciousness and finds expression within their worldview and intellectual framework. Contemporary literary education, therefore, requires serious reflection on new and effective methods of teaching literary works and conveying their meaning to students. In this regard, the reforms initiated by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh. M. Mirziyoyev, aimed at transforming and developing the education system are of particular importance. Specifically, the Concept for the Development of the Public Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, approved on April 29, 2019, outlines practical tasks such as improving teaching methodologies, gradually implementing the principles of individualization in the educational process, and introducing modern information and communication technologies as well as innovative projects into the field of public education [Appendix 1 to Presidential Decree No. PF-5712 of April 29, 2019, Chapter 1. General Provisions, 2019: 1].

Main Part

For many years, the reading and analysis of literary works have been based on traditional aesthetic principles. In literature textbooks, literary works or excerpts from them are usually presented to students in a ready-made, interpreted form.

While there is no doubt that the educational content should include artistically refined and mature works, the authors themselves must also be taken into account. Indeed, a student who understands and recognizes a well-known writer through their works, develops a sense of

respect toward them, and acquires appropriate reading skills will later, when interest in another famous writer or poet arises, choose to become acquainted with their works independently. Students' ability to form an adequate understanding of Uzbek literature, to gain knowledge about the unique masterpieces created by prominent writers, as well as about the history, culture, national values, spiritual heritage, traditions, and distinctive features of Uzbek literature, largely depends on the selection of literary works included in the curriculum.

It should be emphasized that alongside the specific characteristics of national literatures, there exists a universal, international content that manifests through clear national identity. This aspect of selected works facilitates understanding their content. It may be advisable, especially in the initial stages and in lower grades, to prioritize such universally resonant works. This is because a non-Uzbek reader approaches Uzbek literary texts based on their own aesthetic perception and evaluates them through the lens of their national literature. Understanding the content of a literary work occurs under such complex conditions.

Especially for students growing up in today's era of integration and globalization, ready-made interpretations can alienate them from literature. A literary work becomes a source of powerful aesthetic and spiritual energy only when it is fully felt, understood, and experienced by the student, allowing them to grasp the subtle charm and magic of fine literature. Beauty that is not felt or understood cannot serve the formation of spirituality. Therefore, the analysis of literary works occupies a special place in the teaching of literature [Yo'ldoshev Q. 1996: 68]. From this perspective, a monographic approach to the issue of text selection is both important and relevant.

Modern literary education today requires elevating the student from a passive reader to an active reader capable of expressing the products of their own intellectual reflection. Analyzing this issue based on the views of Western and Eastern scholars, studying for the first time—on an experimental basis—the theoretical foundations of text selection using general secondary education literature textbooks as examples, moving away from traditional teaching methods, and developing criteria for selecting literary works all demonstrate the necessity and relevance of this research. Applying perspectives on literary text selection to national literary education processes, drawing concrete conclusions, and developing recommendations are among the most important tasks of today.

It should be particularly noted that the power of influence and specific characteristics of literature have been well known since ancient times. In this regard, Aristotle states the following:

“In fact, a work should be written in such a way that even without being seen on stage, every listener, upon hearing what happens, should feel compassion and shudder in response to the development of events, just as one does when listening to the story of Oedipus” [Aristotle 1980: 28].

In practice, when selecting works for a literature course, the abundance of unfamiliar words and linguistic phenomena often prompts textbook authors to shorten or, in other words, adapt the text. The adaptation of literary works is addressed by pedagogical textology, which develops principles and techniques for pedagogically presenting literary texts in textbooks and teaching aids.

Adapting texts can also yield positive results by relieving students of excessive psychological pressure. However, in general, shortening or adapting a literary work must be done with great skill; pedagogically and emotionally expressive parts of the text should not be excessively reduced.

In his work *Poetics*, Aristotle already addressed the perfection of a literary work, emphasizing that it is “a depiction of a complete and unified action possessing a certain magnitude.” He writes: “A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end. A beginning is that which does not necessarily follow something else, but after which something naturally follows or occurs; an end, on the contrary, is that which naturally follows something else, either by necessity or as a rule, and after which nothing else follows; and a middle is that which follows something else and is itself followed by something else” [Aristotle 1980: 19].

Moreover, Aristotle, who generally considers a literary work as a narrative, expresses an important conclusion:

“Thus, well-constructed narratives should not begin and end arbitrarily, but should be structured according to the established rules” [Aristotle 1980: 19].

In *Poetics*, Aristotle also outlines a fundamental principle of adaptation, emphasizing logical coherence between parts: “The parts of events,” he writes, “should be arranged in such a way that if any part is transposed or removed, the whole is altered or disrupted; for that whose presence or absence makes no perceptible difference cannot be an integral part of the whole” [Aristotle 1980: 21].

The question of how selected works should be grouped within a literary reading course is also of great importance. V. A. Nikolskiy identifies three approaches to grouping:

- placing works of the same genre side by side;
- selecting works that are thematically close to each other;
- finally, arranging works in chronological order [Nikolskiy 1971: 78].

There are also alternative views on compiling literary reading programs: such programs often involve presenting a positive character after a negative one, a peasant after a feudal landlord, a hero after a base individual, a novel after a short story, a poem after a ballad, and prose after poetry.

Great attention should also be paid to poetry when selecting texts. Poetry embodies both the poet’s personal mood and universal human values. Therefore, attention is also given to the harmony between the tone or mood of a poem and its historical period.

Summarizing the above considerations, we believe that attention should be focused on the following principles of text selection:

- ensuring that the selected works are connected to students’ future career choices and correspond to their interests;
- ensuring that the content of the work and the issues raised are understandable to students;
- selecting works with clear educational and moral significance;
- enabling students to imagine and emotionally perceive the psychology and character of the protagonists;
- ensuring that the language of the selected work is accessible or does not create excessive difficulties in comprehension, and that it is close to the norms of the modern literary language;
- selecting works of high artistic quality that can exert an aesthetic influence, cultivate students’ artistic taste, and contribute to their spiritual development;
- paying attention to diversity in themes, genres, and stylistic approaches;
- choosing works appropriate to students’ age and not excessive in length;
- selecting works that allow for comparative study with related and world literature.

Thus, when determining the content of teaching Uzbek literature, it is necessary to carry out the selection of literary works with due regard to students’ literary preparedness. For this purpose, it is important to select artistically high-quality excerpts that are recognized by contemporary society. In doing so, attention should be paid to the length of the work, the number of

unfamiliar words, the use of vocabulary within the text, and the achievement of thematic and genre diversity in the selected excerpts.

When selecting literary works, it is also required to pay attention to heroic, dramatic, romantic, and critical works. A certain balance among these types should be ensured. In addition, the suitability of the selected works for moral education objectives must also be taken into account. As noted by methodologist scholar O. Musurmonova, “National literature artistically and truthfully reflects the character, emotions, lifestyle, and the stages of socio-economic and cultural development of each nation” [Musurmonova 1993: 14]. This idea provides correct guidance for the selection of literary works for Uzbek language lessons in schools where instruction is conducted in other languages. Based on such texts, students develop an understanding of the Uzbek language, the Uzbek people, their national spirituality and values, as well as their behavior, and are educated to treat them with respect.

Speaking about the shortcomings of literature lessons in Uzbek schools, O. Musurmonova states: “...during the teaching process, students are given knowledge about various concepts, but very little attention is paid to discussing such notions as duty, honor, love, friendship, kindness, evil, justice, egoism, pride, shame, malice, humanism, freedom, liberty, happiness and unhappiness, and their essence” [Musurmonova 1993: 16].

P. Ravshanov and N. Mirqurbonov draw attention to the following moral concepts: “Justice, patriotism, homeland, science, labor, profession, respect for parents, attitudes toward women, teacher–student relations, modesty, equality, generosity, truthfulness, honesty, love, loyalty, determination, productivity, friendship, mood, communication, hospitality, modesty, etiquette, purity, remembrance, pessimism, tyranny, arrogance, fame, drinking, intoxication, old age, empathy, authority, greed, stinginess, avarice, selfishness” [Ravshanov 1991: 107]. These concepts also play an important role in shaping a well-rounded generation.

However, the moral concepts mentioned by O. Musurmonova, P. Ravshanov, and N. Mirqurbonov cannot be considered exhaustive. Their complete list has not yet been compiled. For instance, in addition to those listed above, it is sufficient to mention the existence of many other moral concepts such as loyalty to friends, distinguishing friends from enemies, wisdom, good and evil and the struggle between them, beauty, nobility, naturalness and sincerity in conversation, childlike innocence, generosity, kindness, compassion, tolerance, thirst for knowledge, fairness, purity of heart, longing for one’s mother, missing her, lying, contentment, diligence, honesty, courage, and bravery.

When determining the content of teaching twentieth-century Uzbek literature, it is necessary to select literary works while taking into account students’ literary preparedness. For this purpose, artistically high-quality excerpts recognized by society today should be selected, considering the size of the work, the number of unfamiliar words, word usage, and the diversity of themes and genres in the selected passages. Literary materials should also be reviewed in terms of genre and style.

While selecting prose works presents certain difficulties, selecting poetic works is even more challenging. Nevertheless, poetic works are included in the educational content at a very early stage. Their richness in aesthetic values and suitability for teaching rhythm and intonation make this possible. Moreover, since some poems also contain narrative elements, understanding their content becomes relatively easier.

Regarding the importance of studying prose works, methodologist scholar D. D. Islomova writes: “Compared to instructional texts, prose works serve as a meaningful and influential means of learning both the Uzbek language and literature, as well as national values, and they are able to reach the hearts of students” [Islomova 2007: 15]. Indeed, this is the case.

D. D. Islomova draws attention to the following problematic aspects of prose works selected for studying Uzbek: “A literary work in Uzbek sometimes does not correspond to students’ usual perceptions, because the events depicted and the character traits of the protagonists are connected, on the one hand, with national values and national spirituality, and on the other hand, with universal human qualities. Studying excerpts taken from such figurative literary works involves examining their ideological and aesthetic aspects, structure, and linguistic features, while also becoming acquainted with additional information. Especially if the difficulties related to the structure of an excerpt taken from a large work are not eliminated in advance, or if supplementary information (notes, commentaries) that partially resolves these difficulties is not provided, the teacher’s efforts to overcome these challenges without understanding their causes may prove ineffective, resulting in the failure to achieve the intended outcomes” [Islomova 2007: 16].

First and foremost, a literary work must be emotionally engaging, that is, it should give pleasure to the reader (student). Prominent scholar Ozod Sharofiddinov emphasizes: “No matter how important the relevance of the topic, the weight of the idea, and the vitality of the problem may be, they alone cannot determine the value of a literary work. Because a work should affect not only the reader’s mind, but also their heart, captivating them with a kind of ‘magic’.”

In short, the value of a literary work largely depends on its authenticity and emotional impact. However, it is also necessary to clearly define what constitutes emotional impact. According to Izzat Sultan, emotional impact is determined by two factors: 1) the expressiveness and richness of the language of the work; 2) the content of the work.

According to the concept of high artistic value, a work should employ fresh, unexpected, and original words and linguistic means. However, taking into account another point emphasized by Izzat Sultan, “While the writer’s language stands out for its diversity and richness, it must also be understandable to everyone” [Izzat Sultan 1980: 226].

In general, works selected for educational content should be those whose artistic value does not “change” or diminish over time.

The question of which works should be selected for study in Uzbek literature lessons can be answered from the following perspectives:

- the work or selected excerpt should provide life lessons for students;
- it should introduce them to national spirituality;
- it should familiarize them with national values;
- it should reflect customs characteristic of the Uzbek people;– it should acquaint students with Uzbek traditions;
- it should serve to inform them about national customs;
- it should make them familiar with the dreams and aspirations of the Uzbek people;
- it should immerse them in the national mentality;
- it should narrate the past and present of the Uzbek people.

We are far from the idea that Uzbek language teachers do not know which works are artistically mature or weak, or which are considered good or “light works” [Husanboeva 2009: 193].

An analysis of literary works included in the current Uzbek Literature textbooks shows that the authors have attempted to pay particular attention to artistic value when selecting poetic and prose texts. The textbooks contain poems by Abdulla Oripov, Erkin Vohidov, Hamid Olimjon, Zulfiya, and other poets, as well as excerpts from prose works by writers such as Oybek, Pirmqul Qodirov, Odil Yoqubov, and O‘tkir Hoshimov.

It is well known that shallow poetic and prose works lacking artistic value can facilitate students’ acquisition of reading techniques, that is, enable them to read and easily understand

the content of a text. In this respect, such works may satisfy certain educational needs. However, a literary text is not read solely for understanding its content. Methodological literature emphasizes that even at upper-grade levels, within a successfully acquired vocabulary, approximately 10–15 percent of the words in any literary text remain unfamiliar to students. This proportion exceeds the optimal threshold identified by L. A. Gaydarova (4–5 percent of new words for prose texts and 2.5 percent for poetic works).

A large number of unfamiliar words in a text can sometimes make comprehension difficult. Nevertheless, this difficulty can be mitigated by relying on the following factors:

1. understanding the meanings of certain words through contextual clues;
2. interpreting some unfamiliar words through word structure when they occur in parts of the text not directly related to the core meaning;
3. taking these linguistic difficulties into account when selecting literary works.

In prose texts, word meanings are generally understood through context.

L. I. Timofeev draws attention to the special significance of words in lyric poetry. According to him, “In lyric poetry, words reach such a level of expressiveness that emotions become concrete facts of life, appearing before us as vivid human feelings” [Timofeev 1958: 409]. It is therefore evident that when selecting poems, priority should be given to those containing words with a high degree of expressiveness.

In lyric poetry, familiar words often reveal unusual and new semantic nuances. The relatively small size of a poem makes it possible not only to explain new words but also to explore new shades of meaning in familiar vocabulary.

Another important aspect to consider when selecting a literary work is its emotional impact, that is, its ability to give pleasure and delight to the reader. The prominent scholar Ozod Sharafiddinov emphasizes: “No matter how important the relevance of the theme, the weight of the idea, or the vitality of the problem may be, these factors alone cannot determine the value of a literary work. A work must influence not only the reader’s mind but also their heart; it must captivate the reader through a kind of ‘enchantment’ and hold them spellbound.”

The Grade 5 literature textbook includes Anvar Obidjon’s poem “Every Moment of Life Is Beautiful,” which begins with the following lines:

The curtain of night slowly opens,
The sun steps onto the stage.
Like a well-dressed bride,
It lifts its head from a floral greeting.
The courtyard seems like washed porcelain,
The roads like polished glass,
To celebrate this new day,
People rise eagerly to their feet...

The content of this poem cannot fail to captivate students. It poetically and simply conveys the beauty of a new day’s beginning, the idea that every day brings a new opportunity, and that a new day gives fresh life not only to people but to all existence. In every respect, this poem is suitable for reading by fifth-grade students, who can fully experience its aesthetic impact.

According to the concept of high artistic value in literature, a work should employ original, unexpected, and fresh words and linguistic devices. However, taking into account another important observation by Izzat Sultan, “While a writer’s language should be distinguished by its richness and diversity, it must also be understandable to everyone.”

In modern education, the subject of literature teaches students to independently comprehend and analyze outstanding examples of national and world literature. Through this process, it

fosters students' interest in fiction, develops reading culture, shapes their moral and ethical worldview as well as literary and aesthetic taste, and cultivates knowledge, skills, and competencies related to independent thinking and imaginative cognition.

In conclusion, when selecting literary works for textbooks, special attention is paid to their linguistic accessibility. If it is necessary to choose between two works of equal significance, preference is given to those that are relatively shorter in length and whose language is closer to the norms of contemporary literary language.

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