

## Reading Literature in Uzbekistan: From Local to Global Thinking

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**Abstract.** *In the pre-independence period of Uzbekistan, reading literature was also based on communist ideology. Today's globalization is also impact on interpreting literary art. Because through the universal approach to a specific reality, readersr might discover new interpretations in the harmony of national and international concepts while analyzing the literary texts. At the same time global integration is negatively influencing on nation's thought, especially, young people's thinking and it causes a lot of cultural loses, treats to values in the sense «covering the entire globe", "exceeding", "exceeding the limit" .*

*In this article, the main principles of reading literature, positive and negative impact of globalization on students thought, positive, at the same time negative consequences of global integration is analyzed in the local and global context. And influence of ideological inertia of Soviet Imperia to reading literature, life style of old and young generation will also be discussed in the case of Uzbekistan.*

**Key words:** *reading literature, literary analyses, international thought, globalization, transmission, sociocultural changes, political context.*

### Introduction

In 1940–1950s, when Soviet Empire completed its own establishment, a number of writings which were completely ideological and political by nature, and shallow and poor by artistic value, had appeared in Uzbek Soviet Literature. Reading literature in Soviet Empire is also influenced by soviet ideology. In Higher and secondary schools' analyses of literary text is also based stereotyped views, and a pre-determined leading ideology provided by the authors of the text-books "Literature". It should be emphasized after 1991 traditional approaches which make students to think in the same way continued as an inertia of soviet ideology. For example, in the textbook "Literature" for 10th grade, published in 2019<sup>1</sup>, understanding the writers phenomenon or literary text is based on the analysis of the textbook authors. The interpretations on Navoiy's creative heritage, his contribution to develop of Uzbek language and Literature, the main features of poet's writings and analyses of the Navoi verses provided by the textbook authors. This proceed toward the understanding the literary text doesn't allow pupils to think freely. Besides, first, understanding the text doesn't start after reading it but before reading the text, second, this ready - make interpretations done by respective scholars evokes imaginations that the final truths about the fiction have already told and there is nothing to say more. As a result, they strictly follow these interpretations as their own ideas and blocked their own thinking abilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Authors Q. Yo'ldoshev, V.Qodirov. J. Yo'ldoshev. Tooshkent, "O'zbekiston", 2019

The fact that reading is not based on constructive learning in Uzbekistan has a negative impact on developing of critical and independent thinking skills in students. It is interesting that this stereotype principle “gained” in the schools is moving towards the university from the secondary schools.

In addition, globalization is also impact on interpreting literary art. Because through the universal approach to a specific reality, readers might discover new interpretations in the harmony of national and international concepts while analyzing the literary texts. At the same time global integration is negatively influencing on nation’s thought, especially, young people’s thinking and it causes a lot of cultural loses, treats to values in the sense «covering the entire globe”, “exceeding”, “exceeding the limit”.

## Discussion and Result

In the 1930 s of 20<sup>th</sup> Century reading literature based on “innovative experiments” formed of “classroom-lesson” system and literature began to be taught as a separate subject in secondary school. During the pre-Soviet period of Uzbekistan, reading literature strictly followed by Marxist-Leninist methodology, and was highly influenced by the philosophy of dialectical materialism. Even Alisher Navoi's ghazals the main point was focused on his contradictions between Huseyn Boykara and the main interpretations demonstrating his ability, valuable heritage and his artistic skills were almost missed. In many cases, the poet's views on religious and philosophical views were misinterpreted.

After the years of independence, there was a need to radically renew the methodology of teaching literature, along with other areas of art. On the path to the development of literary education, respected scholars such as Omonulla Madayev, Marguba Mirkasimova, Kazakboy Yoldoshev, Safo Matchonov, Bokijon Tokhliyev, Kunduzkhan Husanboyeva, Roza Niyozmetova and many others, have made and continue to make significant contributions to the development of teaching literature by exploring new methods. However, in most cases in secondary schools and even in the Universities students are still reading literature on a basis of previous principles.

For example, I have recently made a survey among students of the Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature, focusing on the analysis of the main characters (Kumush, Otabek, Zaynab) in the first realistic novel “Days By Gone” by Abdulla Qoditdiy. In this novel Otabek who is from Tashkent fell in love with Kumush when he visited Margilan for business. Kumush was a single daughter of her parents, that’s why they didn’t want Kumush to leave them alone. And Otabek agreed to stay in Margilan with Kumush. Hearing that Otabek got married his mother Uzbekoyim was offended and made Otabek to get a second wife from Tashkent. In the beginning Otabek rejected but when his parents forced him he agreed. At this time Kumush also came to Tashkent to live with Otabek’s family. Due to the constant struggles between kundoshs<sup>2</sup>, Zaynab and Kumush, Zaynab on the advice of her sister Khusro'yibibi, poisons Kumush, in the consequences she dies. After Otabek expels Zaynab from the house, she also madden.

All the interpretations concerning the novels “Days by Gone” Kumush is analysed as a protagonist, sufferer, ideal of the author while Zayneb is evaluated as a killer, the main reason of Kumush’s tragedy. In the textbooks of Literature we might face such kind of interpretations. In fact, such interpretations contain the inertia or still-existing influence of the socialist realism method, which is based on the principle of characterizing images as either completely positive or negative.

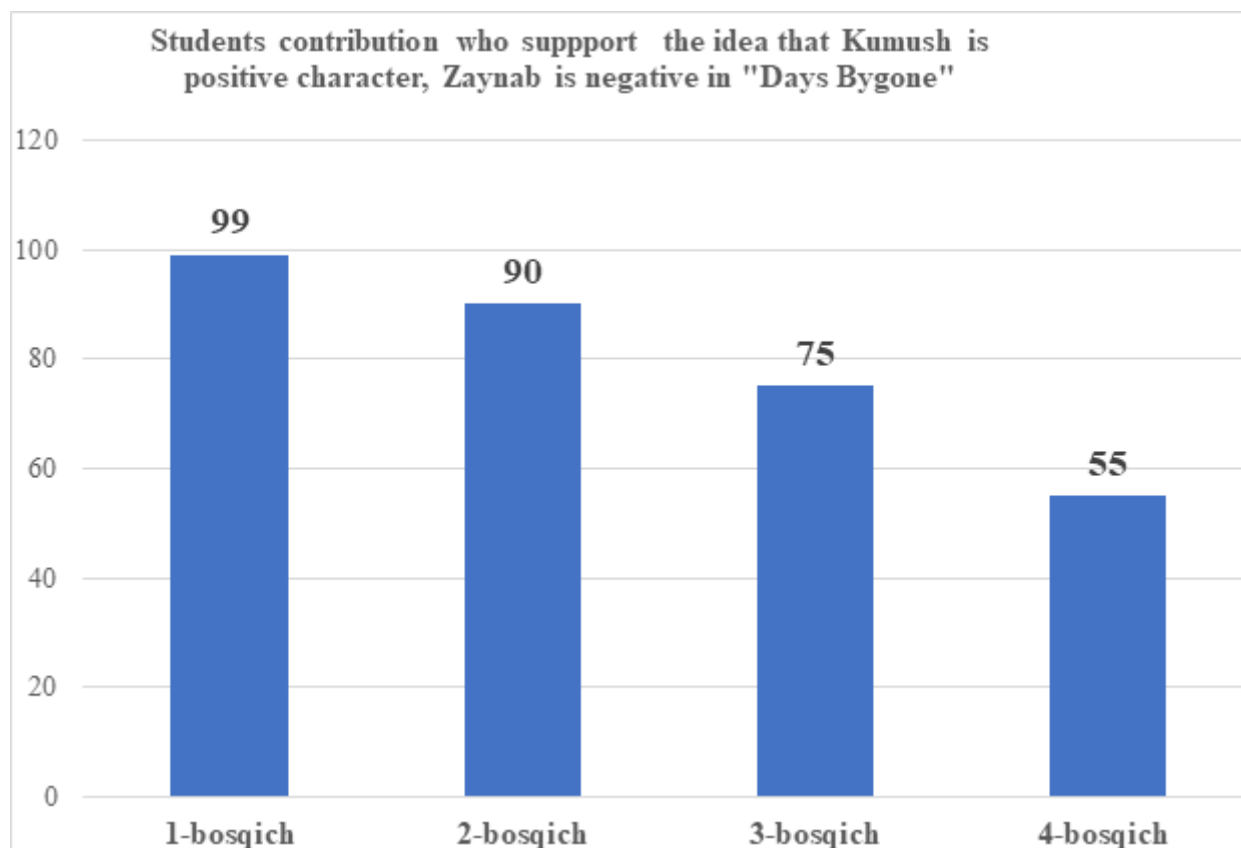
So, the purpose of the survey was:

- a) to create a comparative analysis of the attitude of readers of different ages to characters;
- b) to examine the influence of Soviet ideology on the analysis of literary texts and its inertia in the thinking of the new generation;
- c) to determine the statistics of unconventional views in the analysis of characters;

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<sup>2</sup> A kundosh is part of a presumably wealthy man's bevy of brides. The literal translation is "day companion" — "Kun" meaning day, "dosh" meaning someone who shares a status or situation with you.

d) to determine the impact of the ready – make interpretations, (subjective thoughts of the author of the textbook) on students' thinking<sup>3</sup>.



*Results of a survey conducted among students of the Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature based on A. Qodiriy's novel "Days Bygone", 2020*

From the results of this questionnaire, almost all first-year students answered the questions such as “How do you evaluate the character of Kumush and Zaynab?” in the same way saying “Kumush is positive, Zaynab is negative. The attitude of second, third, fourth year students towards Kumush and Zaynab gradually changed. It confirms that reading literature among pupils and students are still influenced by the the soviet ideological tendency- inertia. And they couldn’t be free from the views provided in the school textbooks provided by the authors.

However, after 2000s because of globalization, integration processes, and many other factors have impacted on the reading literature, actually the youth started to freely attitude to the literary works. In their attitude to literary works one can find different, dissimilar conclusions, even those that contradict national values, aspirations and traditions.

The first definition of globalization, integration, and the word “global” (“encompassing the entire globe”, “exceeding”, “going beyond limits”) evokes negative images. However, its second meaning, such as “universal; world-wide, of global significance” [Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language, 2020: 507], means a universal approach to a specific reality, including the analysis of a literary text, discovering new global interpretations. At the same time, there is question “ is interpretation of the literary work could be global? We can say “global problem”, “global ideas” but how about “global interpretation” [Nazarov, Meliev, 2019: 18]. 2, 2019:2 ] since there is no eternal truths in leading writings. Because global also means “limit” of a certain event. Halima Ahmad, a famous modern Uzbek writer remembers a story in her childhood: “when I was 10 years old our neighbor's orphan daughter asked me to give her my favorite doll which my mother presented me for my birthday. But I didn’t want to give and kicked her out of the house. Then my mother slapped my face. I understood it was not my mother's hand, but it was Allah’s hand”. So, this Uzbek poetess’s interpretation is a final point on an event, while it is not an absolute final view, but for now, until

<sup>3</sup> Mirzayeva Z. Ilmiy tadqiqot metodologiyasi. Toshkent, Academ Space, 2024, 24-bet

another evaluation on this situation is found, it is considered the final, global one. From these views stated above "global thinking" mean a universal approach to a specific reality, including the analysis of a literary work, discovering new interpretations in national and international context, "searching for, finding universal meanings, new interpretations from the work" [Nazarov, Meliev, 2019: 18].

The real meaning of global thinking is more clarified in the context of local (the word local is not the same as "national" – Z.M.) thinking. Therefore, in order to identify the concepts of global thinking, we first need to examine our views on the essence of local thinking. Tere Vaden states that "local thinking is not universal but at the same time spatial and temporary [Vaden, 2006]. Continuing the scientist's ideas, local thinking has a nominalistic nature, it does not have a universal essence, and reason cannot give a single concept or image that corresponds to any universal or general term [Vaden, 2006].

There are two main factors in forming local thinking; first, impact on a certain extent by the characteristics, culture, language, attitudes, and worldview of a particular nation. From this point local thinking does not have a universal nature; second, the way of thinking of peoples who have been colonized for many years cannot deviate from the stereotypes in relation to life or artistic reality. At the same time global cultural transformation is serving as an important factor in breaking down traditional stereotypes.

After four years later I made a second survey on the same topic. From the results of this questionnaire, the students gave quite different, even very opposite to the previous one such as "Kumush is a very selfish, and the main cause of Zaynab's tragedy. They confirm that Zaynab who was interpreted as a negative character in previous survey was evaluated as a sufferer. Another main character in the novel Yusubek Hoji, a father of Otabek, was interpreted as a typical representative of ideal Uzbek fathers. But today modern readers consider him as a passive hero who can't impact his wife's decisions and one of the main cause for Zaynab, Kumush and Otabek's unhappiness.

Another example, in a short story by Uzbek famous writer Abdulla Qahhor called "Horror", a Dodho, a rich, old man got married his 8th wife Unsin who is only 16 years old. After six months she asked freedom from his husband with the condition of making tea in the cemetery. Dodho was angry with his young wife for preferring to live in poverty outside of his palace, but promises to let her go if she fulfills his condition. Yet Unsin couldn't back and died in the graveyard because of fear.

In the Uzbek literary criticism we can see the interpretations blaming Dodho and the social system for Unsin's tragedy and death. However, today's modern readers, including young people, are coming to the conclusions which are completely opposite to previous views. They don't blame Dodho for Unsin's death, we even can face thoughts aimed at justifying Dodho.

The interpretations above mentioned claims that sociocultural changes behind the global world is also highly impacting on reading process in Uzbekistan. On one hand, diversity in interpretation of literary texts plays an important role in improving students' critical thinking, On the other hand such "alien" views pose a threat to the future as a rebellion against national traditions and values.

On the other hand, I can say that a literary text consists of different layers of meaning, and its initial, that is, direct conclusions are based on the essence emerging on the surface of the text, and such interpretations can be said to be, in a certain sense, a product of local thinking. An interpretation based on local thinking, first of all, does not acquire a universal, global scale, and secondly, it does not allow discovering the "unwritten part(s)" of the text. Interpretations based on global thinking, on the other hand, explain the feelings, events and images in the work of art to the fullest extent, as Suvon Meliev puts it, through the use of symbols in the work, artistic means of depiction reflecting important concepts, and categories of imagery.

I think, the formation of global thinking is based, first of all, on critical thinking while "critical" does not mean condemning a work, looking for only negative aspects in it, denying any idea and trying to prove one's own point of view, but critical thinking means:

- 1) checking the confirmation and denial of previous opinions about a certain literary works

- 2) creating new interpretations of the text based on individual experiences of the reader such as searching for answers to open questions, reviewing the fiction from the point of today's requirements, modern methods of analysis, and comparing it with old interpretations.
- 3) examining and interpreting data in different contexts, evaluating the chain of cause and effect in the work from various aspects, making logical decisions through reasoning, justifying one's opinions.

I think interpreting of literary text in the cultural context is also important since . the writer's artistic thinking is formed in the culture, religion, beliefs, values, customs, and attitudes of that nation, and naturally, all of this is reflected in the works of art his/her writings. The cultural context refers to a certain "lifestyle" that includes aspects such as the beliefs, religion, race, nationality, dress codes, and behavior of the character(s) in the work. In addition, knowledge about the general aesthetic laws in the development of art and culture, which help to understand the work of art, is also developed through this cultural context. Therefore, another important aspect of forming global thinking skills in students is also determined by assessing the intercultural relationship, the secular thinking of creators, their knowledge, beliefs characteristic of other peoples and nations, and the ability to reflect universal human values in their works. It is clear that a reader who does not have a good idea of Uzbek culture, beliefs, religion, and values will not understand the beautiful features of the Uzbek national character reflected in Kumush's attempt. (when Yusufbek Haji enters in to see Kumush, she tries to get up because of her respect toward her father in law even she is having her last days of her life) Or, it is impossible to understand for western reader Tog'ay Murod's protagonists' pain who can't have a child for a long time in "People Walking on the Moon" if they don't not have an idea that the child is the main happiness in Uzbek family.

## Conclusion

In the conclusion, I can say whereas in the past, analyses of works of art were based on ready-made interpretations influenced by socialist inertia, or on national culture, customs, and traditions, today's reader analyzes fiction based on his or her own worldview, life experience, emotional state during the reading process, and spiritual needs. globalization, virtual world in most cases are badly impacting our children. Because of losing emotional intellect they cannot understand their friend's pain, his mother's suffering, or his father's problems. They are getting selfish and insensitive.

Sociocultural changes behind the global world is also highly impacting on reading process in Uzbekistan. On one hand, diversity in interpretation of literary texts plays an important role in improving students' critical thinking, On the other hand such "alien" views pose a threat to the future as a rebellion against national traditions and values.

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