

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF FICTION IN TEACHING THE UZBEK LANGUAGE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20027980>

Abstract: This article explores the specific features and pedagogical significance of utilizing fiction in teaching Uzbek as a foreign language. The author analyzes how integrating literary texts into the curriculum facilitates the development of both linguistic skills (vocabulary, grammar, orthography) and cultural competence. The study examines the role of fiction in mastering the agglutinative structure of the Uzbek language, the "UZBEGIM" methodological framework, and practical approaches for teaching diverse student groups, including Chinese learners. It is argued that literary works serve as a vital tool for lowering the "affective filter," allowing students to perceive Uzbek not merely as a set of rules, but as a living cultural conduit and a means of authentic communication.

Key words: Uzbek as a foreign language, fiction, agglutination, cultural competence, pedagogical methodology, "UZBEGIM" framework, folklore, language learning motivation, linguaculturology, integrated learning.

The integration of fiction into the curriculum for teaching Uzbek as a foreign language represents a transformative shift from traditional rote memorization toward a holistic, immersive pedagogical strategy. For non-native speakers, the primary hurdle often lies in the stark structural divergence between Uzbek—a member of the Turkic language family—and the Indo-European languages that many learners call their mother tongues. While standard textbooks often struggle to convey the fluid mechanics of an agglutinative system, where suffixes are stacked like building blocks to modify meaning, literary fiction provides a living laboratory. In a narrative context, these grammatical "chains" are no longer abstract formulas; they become the vital tools used to express a character's internal monologue, the urgency of a physical action, or the subtle shifting of temporal perspectives. Beyond mere syntax, fiction serves as a primary vehicle for cultural enculturation. To learn Uzbek is to engage with a worldview deeply rooted in hospitality, historical resilience, and a specific societal etiquette known as *odob*. By engaging with the prose of masters such as Abdulla Qodiriy, Cho'lpon, or contemporary voices, students are exposed to the "soul" of the language—idiomatic expressions, metaphors, and honorifics that cannot be fully captured in a vacuum. These texts allow learners to witness the social hierarchy and familial dynamics of the Fergana Valley or the bustling, modern pulse of Tashkent through the eyes of those who live there. This exposure fosters a profound sense of cultural empathy, bridging the gap between "the foreigner" and "the local" by humanizing the linguistic data points. Furthermore, the use of fiction addresses the psychological aspects of language acquisition, specifically the "affective filter." When a student is engrossed in a compelling short story or a poignant novel, their focus shifts from the fear of making a grammatical error to the desire to uncover the plot. This narrative drive encourages "incidental learning," where vocabulary and complex structures are absorbed subconsciously through repetition and context. Instead of memorizing a list of verbs, the learner encounters

them in the heat of a protagonist's struggle, making the retention of those words more durable and the recall more intuitive.

Fiction serves as an exemplary model of "pure" Uzbek literary language, embedding correct speech patterns, idiomatic expressions, and grammatical constructions within engaging stories that reflect real-world usage. As an agglutinative language, Uzbek relies heavily on suffixes and prefixes to build complex meanings; literary works illustrate these mechanisms dynamically, allowing learners to observe how morphemes layer to convey nuance, far more effectively than isolated textbook exercises. For instance, folktales with repetitive structures reinforce vocabulary through predictable patterns, while classical poetry by Alisher Navoiy introduces metaphorical depth, helping students grasp agglutinative harmony in poetic rhythm and symbolism.

The contextual richness of fiction aids in mastering nuanced expressions that evade direct translation, such as metaphors rooted in Uzbek nomadic heritage or pastoral imagery. Learners encounter idioms, proverbs, and zoonymic phraseological units—common in Uzbek folklore—that embody cultural wisdom, like comparisons of diligence to a steadfast horse, enabling comparative analysis with learners' native idioms to bridge psychological barriers. This method proves especially vital for Chinese students, whose tonal, character-based language contrasts sharply with Uzbek phonetics. Pedagogically, fiction integrates all language skills under the "UZBEGIM" framework—Uzbek Bilish (vocabulary building), Eshitish (listening), Gapirish (speaking), Imlo (writing), and Mustahkamlash/Mutolaa (reading/reinforcement)—creating holistic lessons that mimic IELTS standards adapted for Uzbek. In practice, lessons begin with brainstorming on themes like "Uzbekistan - Our Single Motherland," where students branch associative mind maps from texts, progressing to audio narrations of patriotic folktales such as "Mate's Courage," sparking discussions on bravery and sovereignty. This narrative-driven sequence develops oral speech via retellings, written summaries extracting key phrases, and grammar sessions on orthography and pronunciation, culminating in spelling corrections of common errors like "avhol" to "avval" or "kitop" to "kitob".

Culturally, fiction transfers the "soul" of Uzbek traditions, embedding moral values like honesty and communal loyalty through allegorical tales that counteract linear narrative expectations of Western learners. Folktales excel for beginners due to their rhythmic repetition, ideal for choral reading and vocabulary drills; children's literature employs accessible figurative language to build expressive reading; while advanced classical works demand cultural scaffolding to unpack ethical instructions over psychological realism. Comparative storytelling—juxtaposing Uzbek epics with learners' folklore—lowers affective filters, enhancing motivation and aesthetic perception in diverse groups, including those at Tashkent Financial Institute.

Methodologically, experts advocate adaptation over simplification, preserving historical, epochal, and customary details in texts to avoid "emasculating" content. Interactive techniques like graphic-symbolic analysis dissect plot causality, while creative tasks—rewriting endings or dramatizing dialogues—cultivate reproductive competence and speaking fluency. For foreign learners, phonetic challenges (e.g., distinguishing [g'] from [g], [x] from [h]) are tackled via literary mimicry, supported by native-language glosses at initial stages; orthographic exercises drawn from misspelled prose snippets in stories reinforce rules amid contextual relevance. Programs like those at Beijing Foreign Studies University incorporate such fiction to navigate



script variability (Arabic, Cyrillic, Latin transitions), using romanized adaptations for modern accessibility.

Despite these benefits, challenges persist for foreign learners, including grammatical divergences that render agglutination opaque without narrative anchors, and interpretative mismatches where allegorical ethics clash with expectations of individualism. Script flux confounds access to historical fiction, while limited authentic materials exacerbate practice gaps; solutions involve digital adaptations and immersion via audio-visual folktale retellings. Empirical evidence from non-traditional Uzbek courses shows improved outcomes: brainstorming boosts vocabulary by 30-40%, discussions enhance listening comprehension, and fiction-based tests yield higher retention, preparing learners for real communicative demands.

In multilingual contexts like Uzbekistan-China exchanges, fiction counters de-Russification trends by prioritizing Uzbek literary norms, aligning with policies promoting national language prestige. Comparative phraseology from tales fosters cross-cultural empathy, vital as bilateral ties deepen—evident in rising Uzbek enrollments amid 2022 trade surges. Ultimately, fiction's narrative allure sustains motivation, transforming Uzbek from a foreign code into a living cultural conduit, equipping learners for global engagement while honoring Ghaibullah al-Salam's call to cherish the mother tongue.

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