HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

# THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN THE HISTORICAL STAGES OF LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS LINGUISTIC FOUNDATIONS

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doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23291236

**Abstract:** This article examines the role of literature in the historical development of language and the linguistic value of literary texts as sources for the study of language change. Literary works preserve the vocabulary, grammatical structures, stylistic resources and sociocultural features of the periods in which they were written. Drawing on historical linguistics, text linguistics, lexical-semantic analysis and stylistics, the article discusses the interplay between language and literature and outlines the contribution of the early Turkic written heritage, the works of Alisher Navoi, Jadid literature and contemporary writing to the development of the Uzbek literary language.

**Keywords:** literature, language development, historical linguistics, literary language, linguistic analysis, lexicon, grammar, stylistics, Alisher Navoi, Jadid literature.

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a complex social phenomenon that carries a society's historical memory, modes of thought and cultural experience. Its development cannot be reduced to changes in grammatical rules or in the make-up of the vocabulary; it is closely tied to political, cultural, educational and literary processes. Literature is one of the main sources that keep a written record of these processes. Poetry, prose and drama from different periods allow us to trace how word meanings shifted, how grammatical forms were used, and how stylistic norms and speech habits evolved.[1] Literature is not a mere echo of language. Writers draw on the means already available to them, but they also create new images, activate figurative senses of words, use syntactic constructions in varied ways, and in doing so extend the expressive range of the language. Even so, an innovation found in a literary text cannot be assumed to have been accepted at once as a norm of the language of the wider community. Literary

[1] *Fludernik, M., Timofeeva, O. “Diachronicity: An issue shared between linguistics and literary studies.” Language and Literature. 2025. Vol. 34, No. 2. DOI: 10.1177/09639470251327482.*

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evidence of language development has to be examined within its historical, generic and social context.[2]

**AIM AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of this article is to identify the historical functions of literature in the development of language and to explain the main directions of the linguistic analysis of literary texts. The study employs historical-comparative, descriptive, lexical-semantic and stylistic methods of analysis. Literary texts are treated both as a record of the state of a language at a given period and as material that shows the relationship between an author's individual style and the language norms of the society in which they wrote.[3]

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

Written sources play a central role in the study of linguistic history because they preserve the forms of a language belonging to a particular period. Literature is especially valuable here: it can reflect the speech of different social strata, the individual expressive habits of an author, figurative units and the cultural concepts of an era. Studying a literary text from the standpoint of historical linguistics makes it possible to draw conclusions about earlier word meanings, grammatical forms, sentence structure and stylistic choices. At the same time, if the genre of a work and the style of its author are ignored, it may be mistaken to generalize the features of a text to the whole speech community.[4] The influence of literature on language takes several forms. First, writers use existing words and expressions in new semantic ways. Second, literary texts may help certain words spread more widely or become associated with a particular style. Third, works of literature demonstrate the expressive capacity of the literary language and provide models for later writers. Fourth, translation and contact with the literatures of other languages bring new genres, terms, syntactic patterns and forms of artistic expression into the literary tradition.

**HISTORICAL STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UZBEK LITERARY LANGUAGE**

The historical roots of the Uzbek literary language lie in the early Turkic written monuments and the later Turkic literary traditions. The written heritage of each period makes it possible to study the phonetic, grammatical and lexical features of the language. This process should be understood not as a series of disconnected stages but as a unity of historical continuity and change. In different periods, political centers, educational institutions, writing traditions and literary genres influenced the

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[2] *Fabb, N. "Linguistics in the Study and Teaching of Literature." Language and Linguistics Compass. 2008. Vol. 2, No. 6. P. 1135–1148. DOI: 10.1111/j.1749-818X.2008.00096.x.*

[3] *Joseph, B. D. "Historical Linguistics." The Handbook of Linguistics. Wiley, 2017. DOI: 10.1002/9781119072256.ch15.*

[4] *Kohnen, T. "Investigating language change in texts and genres: Historical text linguistics." English Historical Linguistics 2008. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012. P. 167–188. DOI: 10.1075/cilt.324.10koh*

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development of the language in different ways.[5] In the fifteenth century, the work of Alisher Navoi marked one of the key stages in which the artistic and scholarly potential of the Turkic literary language became evident. His writings combine a rich lexical layer, a complex system of imagery and a wide range of stylistic devices. In his Muhokamat ul-lug'atayn ("The Judgment of Two Languages"), Navoi compared the expressive resources of Turkic and Persian and sought to demonstrate the artistic capacity of Turkic. Navoi's heritage allows researchers to analyze the lexical wealth, grammatical features and stylistic possibilities of Old Uzbek. It is more accurate, from a scholarly point of view, to study his language not as identical to present-day Uzbek but as a specific stage in its historical development.[6] Jadid literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries forms another important period in the development of the language. The Jadid writers raised questions of enlightenment, education, social renewal and the spread of modern knowledge. Their newspaper articles, textbooks, plays and prose works contributed to an accessible mode of expression, to new socio-political concepts and to the growth of modern genres. Analysis of texts from this period sheds light on the renewal of the vocabulary, the formation of terminology, changes in syntax and the spread of written discourse among a mass readership.

In the twentieth century and the period of independence, the Uzbek literary language came to be used across a wide range of functional domains, including education, the press, science, the mass media and creative writing. Changes in language norms, the emergence of new terms and the relationship between loanwords and native equivalents were also reflected in literary texts. Today, electronic publications, internet texts and digital corpora offer additional opportunities for comparing the historical and contemporary literary language. However, informal online communication cannot be assessed by the same criteria as edited literary writing.

**THE MAIN LINGUISTIC LAYERS OF A LITERARY TEXT**

The linguistic analysis of a literary work covers several interrelated layers. Phonetic and phonological analysis examines how sound repetition, alliteration, assonance, rhyme and rhythm are created in poetic texts. Lexical-semantic analysis helps determine the function of word choice, historical meaning, synonymy, antonymy, figurative meaning, metaphor and phraseological units. Such devices not only produce aesthetic effect but may also reveal the worldview and linguistic resources of a particular period.[7] Morphological and syntactic analysis looks at word forms, case and tense markers, the arrangement of sentence elements, and the structure of simple and complex sentences. By comparing historical texts with present-day usage, it is possible to establish which

[5] *Abdiyeva, G. X. "Zamonaviy o'zbek adabiy tilining shakllanishi va rivojlanish bosqichlari." Ustozlar uchun. 2025. B. 234–239. DOI: 10.71337/inlibrary.uz.ustozlar.102682.*

[6] *Ashirboyev, S. "The Language of Alisher Navoi's Works and Andijan Dialect." Uzbekistan: Language and Culture. 2020. Vol. 1, No. 1. DOI: 10.52773/tsuull.uzlc.2020.1/NCDE4433.*

[7] *Fabb, N. "Linguistics in the Study and Teaching of Literature." 2008. Vol. 2, No. 6. P. 1135–1148.*

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grammatical forms have survived, changed or fallen out of use. However, inversion or unusual syntax in a literary text may also serve the author's stylistic purpose, so it would be wrong to interpret such cases automatically as general grammatical change. Stylistic and pragmatic analysis considers the purposes for which an author selects particular linguistic means, how the speech of characters is differentiated, and how irony, hyperbole, symbols and images operate. Dialogue can reveal social relations, forms of address, norms of politeness and speech registers. A literary text therefore helps us study not only the grammatical structure of a language but also how meaning is produced in communicative situations.[8]

**POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF LITERATURE IN LINGUISTIC RESEARCH**

Although literature offers linguists rich material, it does not reflect all layers of a language equally. Authors choose words deliberately, shape the speech of their characters to serve artistic goals, and use certain grammatical forms for aesthetic effect. Conclusions drawn from literary texts should therefore be compared with other written sources, dictionaries, historical documents and existing scholarship. This approach reduces the risk of presenting the features of a single author or a single work as characteristic of the whole language. Modern historical text linguistics proposes the systematic study of texts and genres as evidence of language change. When texts from different periods are compared, factors such as genre, author, audience and communicative function must be taken into account.[9] Digital corpora make it possible to analyze quantitatively how words and grammatical forms are used in literary works. The reliability of corpus results, however, depends on whether the texts have been digitized correctly, whether they are balanced across periods, and whether the criteria of analysis are clearly defined.

**DISCUSSION**

Theoretical approaches indicate that the relationship between literature and language development runs in both directions. On the one hand, literary works preserve the linguistic features of their time; on the other, writers expand the artistic and semantic potential of language by using its resources in new ways. Yet the influence of literature on the formation of language norms also depends on historical conditions, the circulation of a work, and the educational and publishing systems. For this reason, the influence of literature should be viewed not as an absolute, one-directional process but as a complex phenomenon that operates alongside social factors. For further research on this topic, one could compile a small corpus from literary texts of different historical periods, compare the use of selected lexical or grammatical units, and verify the results against dictionaries and historical sources.

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[8] *Stephens, J., Waterhouse, R. Literature, Language and Change: From Chaucer to the Present. London: Routledge, 1990. 314 p.*

[9] *Kohnen, T. "Investigating language change in texts and genres: Historical text linguistics." Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012. P. 167–188.*

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Such applied research would support theoretical positions with concrete examples. The present article is theoretical and analytical in nature; it does not claim to present the results of a specialized corpus or statistical calculations.

## CONCLUSION

Literature is both an important written source for studying the historical stages of language development and a creative space in which the expressive potential of language is extended. Literary works from different periods make it possible to observe changes in vocabulary, grammatical structure, stylistic devices, pragmatic meaning and cultural perception. In the history of the Uzbek literary language, the early Turkic written heritage, the work of Alisher Navoi, Jadid literature and contemporary literary processes show a pattern of historical continuity. At the same time, because literary texts are shaped by authorial style and genre conventions, evidence drawn from them should be compared with other historical and linguistic sources. A full understanding of the place of literature in the history of language therefore requires historical, linguistic and cultural analysis to be carried out together.

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