



CURRENT ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The study of literature in the third decade of the twenty-first century has transcended mere aesthetic appreciation, evolving into a strategic struggle for the preservation of humanistic thought. Within the context of Uzbekistan's Third Renaissance, this article examines the "Current Issues" facing the field, ranging from the neurological erosion of "Deep Reading" to the widening linguistic chasm between classical heritage and modern vernacular. By proposing an interdisciplinary synthesis of Digital Humanities, Cognitive Science, and Comparative Globalism, the paper argues for a radical transformation of literary pedagogy to ensure the survival of national identity in an increasingly automated world.

Keywords: Literary studies, contemporary issues, digital humanities, philological research, critical thinking, reader engagement, classical vs. modern literature, interdisciplinary approach, cultural identity, pedagogy of literature.

The primary challenge in contemporary literary studies is the profound transformation of human cognitive architecture. The transition from a "culture of the printed word" to a "culture of the digital screen" has fundamentally altered the neurobiology of reading. Traditional philology is predicated on the capacity for "Deep Reading"—a slow, contemplative process that allows for the internalization of moral dilemmas and complex metaphors. However, the modern information environment has fostered a "skimming culture". As Maryanne Wolf explores, the digital medium encourages a "word-spotting" approach rather than deep engagement with text [9:74]. Consequently, the first major issue is not a lack of access to books, but the erosion of the cognitive patience required to read them deeply. This leads to superficial engagement with the nation's intellectual heritage, where the dense prose of classical masters is perceived as exhausting rather than nourishing. A critical issue is the widening "Linguistic and Semiotic Chasm." When a modern student encounters the works of Alisher Navoi or Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, they encounter not archaic words but an entirely different metaphysical system [2:112; 5:96]. Arabic and Persian loanwords once served as conduits for Sufi philosophy but are now perceived as barriers. Without grounding in the symbolic universe of Aruz metrics and allegorical imagery, the spiritual messages are lost [7:58; 10:41]. The pragmatic marginalization of the humanities under the global STEM movement threatens philology. Literature remains the ultimate training ground for empathy and moral reasoning that AI cannot replicate [6:23]. To restore prestige, an interdisciplinary synthesis is required. The use of Digital Humanities tools such as algorithmic text analysis can demonstrate that literature is intellectually rigorous

[8:52]. One of the most profound issues is the "De-contextualization of the Aesthetic Experience." Traditional philology often focused purely on formal properties—meter, rhyme, and trope—in isolation. Modern academic trends demand a shift toward "Literary Cognition." Reading classical literature enhances the brain's "Theory of Mind" [3:178]. By engaging with the internal monologues of characters from different centuries, such as the spiritual journey of Majnun or the philosophical reflections of Hamlet, the reader develops a heightened capacity for social navigation. To solve the declining interest in literature, curricula must integrate neuro-literary research, demonstrating to pragmatic modern learners that the deep study of fiction is a form of "mental simulation" that prepares them for real-world complexities. In the era of global climate crises, the study of literature must address the urgent need for **"Ecological and Ethical Criticism."** Classical literature offers a unique "long-term" perspective on the human relationship with the environment. For instance, the concept of **"Adolat" (Justice)** in the works of Alisher Navoi is not a static legal term but an ecological and social equilibrium. By re-reading these texts through the lens of **"Ecocriticism,"** scholars can show how classical wisdom anticipated modern sustainability goals. This repositioning moves "old" literature from the periphery of historical interest to the center of global survival discourse. With the digitization of manuscripts, the problem is excess data. "Distant Reading" techniques allow macro-level understanding of Uzbek literary influence across the Turkic world [1:201]. Finally, the "Pedagogy of Affect" must address the alienation students feel toward the dry, clinical dissection of literature. We must revive the **"Oral and Performative Traditions"** of literature. Historically, poetry in the East was meant to be heard and felt, often accompanied by music (Maqom). By re-introducing auditory elements through podcasts, slam poetry, and musical collaborations, we can bypass the "visual exhaustion" of the digital screen and reach the student through the power of sound and emotion. The survival of the literary word in the age of Artificial Intelligence depends on our ability to transform it from a static object of historical veneration into a dynamic, interdisciplinary tool for modern cognitive development. The pursuit of the Third Renaissance in Uzbekistan provides a unique historical laboratory for this transformation. By integrating technological innovation with hermeneutic depth, we ensure that the wisdom found in the verses of Navoi and the memoirs of Babur remains not a relic of the past, but a blueprint for the future.

Finally, pedagogy must revive oral and performative traditions. Poetry in the East was meant to be heard and felt, often accompanied by Maqom, reconnecting literature with emotion rather than screen fatigue [10:88]. However, these obstacles do not signal the end of philology; rather, they demand its evolution. The survival of the literary word depends on transforming it into an interdisciplinary tool for cognitive development. The wisdom of Navoi and Babur remains a blueprint for the future [2:214; 5:167]. The pursuit of the Third Renaissance in Uzbekistan provides a unique historical laboratory for this transformation. By integrating "Digital Humanities"—such as AI-driven linguistic decoding and virtual reality immersions—we can bridge the 500-year gap between the Timurid era and the digital generation. Furthermore, by repositioning classical literature as "Intellectual Capital" and teaching it alongside psychology, management, and global ethics, we prove its empirical value to a pragmatic society. Literature remains the only medium capable of fostering the "Theory of Mind" and the profound empathy required to navigate the complexities of a globalized world. Ultimately, the goal of modern literary studies is

to ensure that the "Living Word" of our ancestors continues to serve as a moral and spiritual compass. We must move beyond rote memorization and embrace a pedagogy of hermeneutics and creative response. The wisdom found in the verses of Navoi, the memoirs of Babur, and the epics of world literature is not a relic of the past, but a blueprint for the future. By solving the current issues through technological innovation and interdisciplinary synthesis, we ensure that the flame of humanism remains inextinguishable, guiding the next generation toward a new era of enlightenment and cultural maturity.

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