



FORMATIVE PRINCIPLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UZBEK PROSE

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 20 th August 2025	The formation and development of prose in the history of Uzbek literature is one of the most important stages of the literary process. Its genesis - emergence, developmental stages, and improvement in form and content - is a multifaceted process. While poetry creation reached great heights in one era of literature, in subsequent periods it became clear that merely describing emotional experiences was insufficient to reflect changes in society, culture, and education in the literary world. It was at this time that the importance of prose works increased significantly. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in connection with the Jadid movement, the educational and spiritual functions of prose expanded, and new methodological principles based on realistic depiction were formed. After independence, psychological analysis, modernist explorations, and societal changes began to be artistically reflected in prose. The purpose of this article is to scientifically analyze the main principles of the formation of Uzbek prose genesis and to reveal its connections with classical and modern literature.
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In the history of Uzbek literature, the genesis of prose traces back to oral folk art. Prose continued to improve and develop through the enrichment of fairy tales and stories passed down orally from generation to generation, preserved by the general public in our literary history to this day. After the invention of writing in human history, written sources of prose also developed.

The roots of Uzbek literature have developed over millennia in harmony with the literary traditions of Eastern peoples, in connection with Arabic and Persian-Tajik literature, and following the emergence of Islam, through Sufi orders and mystical traditions. Prose works, which appeared relatively earlier in European literature, emerged as a form of written speech in Eastern literature somewhat later, specifically in the 5th-8th centuries, based on the Orkhon-Yenisei monuments.

Inscriptions on tombstones in the Orkhon-Yenisei script date back to the 5th-8th centuries. Accordingly, it is appropriate to date the emergence of written literature, specifically prose, in Turkic literature to the 6th-10th centuries. Literature after the Arab conquest, namely Uzbek classical literature formed in the 11th century, confirms the beginning of Turkic literature with its mature examples: Ahmad Yassavi's "Divan of Wisdom," Mahmud Kashgari's "Divanu Lughatit Turk," Yusuf Khass Hajib's "Kutadgu Bilib," and Ahmad Yugnaki's "Hibatul Haqoyiq."

In the 13th-14th centuries, Nasiruddin Rabguzi initiated the first example of Uzbek prose with his work "Qissasi Rabg'uzi," which comprises stories about the lives of prophets. In this work, the author not only depicts the lives of prophets but also illuminates the creation of the world, concepts about the universe, natural phenomena, and the development of society within historical narratives. Each story contains tales, legends, and anecdotes, and effectively utilizes the ghazal and bayt genres of classical literature, enhancing the expressive value of the prose work.

In the history of our literature, the legacy of prose works by our great thinker Alisher Navoi, as in every genre, holds a special place and status in the development of prose in Uzbek classical literature. In his prose works, the great thinker expounds on the socio-political, moral-educational, and scientific-philosophical considerations of the time. In his three-part work "Mahbub ul-qulub", written in the final moments of his life, Navoi, using rich elements of prose, comprehensively describes the typical life and problems of his era, the concept of morality, good and bad human qualities, enriching it with parables and wisdom.

In his works "Xamsat ul-mutahayyirin", dedicated to Abdurahmon Jomiy, and "Holoti Sayyid Hasan Ardasher" and "Holoti Pahlavon Muhammad," dedicated to two mentors he considered his spiritual guides, the poet thoroughly

illuminates the lives and activities of great personalities. Another prose work of the poet, entitled "Munshaot," consists of 88 letters, messages, Navruz greetings, as well as peace treaties and letters of condolence composed during his time.

In our literature, the works of the 16th-19th centuries stand out in terms of historical conditions and the development of cultural life. Works created during this period are mainly based on historical memoirs and tazkira writing. They sometimes illuminated the life of a particular person, and sometimes entire dynastic systems. Examples include Hofiz Tanish Buxoriy's "Abdullahoma," Hasanxo'ja Nisoriy's "Muzakkiri ahbob," Hakimxon To'ra's "Muxtahab ut-tavorix," Mutribiy's "Tazkirat ush-shuaro," Gulbadanbegim's "Humoyunnom," as well as prose works by Munis and Ogahiy.

Among the works created using historical aspects of national prose, "Shajarayi Turk" by Abulgazi Bahadur Khan, ruler of the Shaybanid dynasty and statesman, and "Baburnama" by Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, a prominent figure in Uzbek classical literature and founder of the Baburid dynasty, hold particular importance as historical prose works. They provide detailed information about the reality of the era, governance in the state systems of Mongol, Turkish, and Indian rulers, geographical locations, as well as nature and people's lives.

Marguba Abdullayeva, who defended her dissertation on "Comparative analysis of the artistry of historical prose works (using the examples of "Baburnama" and "Shajarayi Turk")" to obtain a scientific degree in philological sciences, compares the two works, assesses their textual objectivity and concludes the following about the genre features of both works: "In determining the genre features of historical prose works, we do not wish to draw strict boundaries between historical work, artistic work, or memoir. Rather, we want to emphasize that characteristics of each genre are present in examples of historical prose. This is because works created in the 16th-17th centuries encapsulated the thinking of an entire society. The requirements for modern prose did not exist at that time. This was determined by the natural conventions of the period in which the work was created. Based on this, if we summarize our thoughts on the genre characteristics of "Baburnama" and "Shajarayi Turk," it seems appropriate to recognize these two works as examples of artistic historical prose with a memoir nature." [Abdullayeva.M., 2008:31]

In literary studies, the concepts of classical prose and national prose gradually acquired special significance. Indeed, with the creation of the aforementioned works like Rabguzi's "Qissasi Rabguzi," Navoi's "Mahbub ul-qulub" and other prose works, as well as Babur's "Baburnama," the concept of national prose in Uzbek literature began to take shape through classical prose. Nevertheless, the development of modern prose is directly linked to the early 20th century, that is, the period of formation and development of modern literature. It was during this time that Jadidism fully emerged, and with the advent of periodicals and the publication of short stories, novellas, and articles on social life by Behbudi, Abdulla Qodiriy, Cho'lpon, Abdurauf Fitrat, Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, and Sadriddin Ayniy in newspapers and magazines, Uzbek prose took its final form. This prose differs from classical Uzbek prose primarily in its portrayal of positive and negative characters, plot and composition, artistic conflict, depiction of real or mythical-fantastic events in specific artistic language and style, and adherence to artistic conventions.

The late 19th - early 20th centuries marked a period in Uzbek literature characterized by the reflection of enlightenment ideas, the formation of aesthetic ideals in character creation, and participation in national liberation movements through works with a national spirit. The literary community, particularly the Jadids, were tasked with guiding people towards a full understanding of the socio-political situation, national identity, and reforming educational principles using European traditions.

Literary scholar Begali Kasimov defines the first period by Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, the anti-government uprisings in the country in 1905, the promises of the October 17th Manifesto aimed at granting language rights and freedom of speech to various peoples subject to Russia, and the impact of the 1916 forced labor events on Turkestan's socio-cultural life. He emphasizes that these events led to the formation of an intellectual stratum among Turkic peoples in Turkestan, the Volga region, and the Caucasus, who, correctly understanding the situation, strived to further strengthen ties of brotherhood and kinship. [Qosimov.B., 2004:137].

The Jadids, who set themselves the task of awakening the nation, instilling the concept of nationality in the people's consciousness, reforming the education system, opening new-method schools, and attempting to openly expose the machinations of the existing Soviet-era political system, chose the press and theater as the primary means to achieve this. Additionally, in literature, they established creative works in the epic genres of short stories, novellas, and novels. All of these shared a common goal: to condemn and criticize the vices of ignorance, backwardness, and lack of knowledge, while promoting the idea of an enlightened individual.

At the beginning of the 20th century, changes in the region's socio-political life, the national liberation movement, and the formation of national ideology laid the foundation for the establishment of new Uzbek literature. As national press developed in the region, the first Uzbek newspaper "Taraqqiy" was published on June 27, 1906, followed by its successors "Shuhrat," "Sadoyi Turkiston," "Sadoyi Farg'ona," "Xurshid," "Tujjor," "Hurriyat," "Samarkand," and "Turon." Magazines such as "Oyna," "Al-Isloh," and "Al-izoh" also emerged. This development laid the groundwork for the formation of the first generation of Uzbek publicists. Articles such as Behbudi's "Rights are taken, not given," Avloniy's "Waves of Culture" and "Debate on Theater," Fitrat's "Autonomy" and "Russians in Turkestan," Ibrat's "My observations from the Tashkent journey," and Cho'lpon's "What is Literature" were published in various newspapers and magazines. Thus, step by step, the process of creating prose works began.

Jadid enlighteners, like all types of literature, extensively created works in the prose genre. They strived to express their goals in a language accessible to the people. The first example of Jadid prose emerged in storytelling with Fitrat's work "A Discussion Between a Frenchman and a Bukharan Teacher in India About Jadid Schools," initially published in Turkey in Persian in 1911. It was later translated into Uzbek by Haji Muin. In this work, Fitrat presents the

thoughts and concepts of two individuals living at opposite poles of society, with different worldviews, levels of enlightenment, and understanding, in the form of a dialogue using the method of debate. Through the conflict in the conversations between the teacher and the Frenchman, he illustrates the consequences of chaos and ignorance in Turkestan and critiques the events of the time through the eyes of the characters.

We encounter unique forms of the short story genre in Cholpon's works as well. His stories "Doctor Muhammadiyor" and "Victim of Ignorance," published in the 6th issue of the "Sadoyi Turkiston" newspaper in 1914, are among them. The writer begins "Victim of Ignorance" by describing how the main character, Eshmurod, dreams of studying abroad in pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment, and constantly reads newspapers and magazines out of a desire to see enlightenment flourish among his countrymen. Later, Eshmurod listens to conversations with Nazarali Sufi, his father's friend whose only concern is the election, and learns that his watch was stolen by his servant Mo'minjon. Eshmurod laments that the people have completely given in to corruption and accuses them of ignorance. Eventually, he himself is accused of stealing the mingboshi's gold watch and, falling victim to ignorance, slander, and backwardness, takes his own life. In the story, Cholpon creates a conflict between the vices in the characters of Nazarali Sufi, the thief Mo'minjon, the beardless neighbor, and the mingboshi, and the purity in Eshmurod's character alone. As a conclusion, he presents that the nation's negligence and lack of enlightenment lead to the death of the country's emerging youth as victims of ignorance.

Another of Cholpon's early stories is "Doctor Muhammadiyor," written in 1914. The protagonist, Muhammadiyor, enters the field of science as a result of the aspirations of his 60-year-old father, the barber Haji Ahmad. At the age of fifteen, Haji Ahmad performed the Hajj with his father, traveled for about ten years in various countries around the world, learned Arabic, Persian, Russian, and English, and realized the value of knowledge and enlightenment. He did not want his spiritual state to be reflected in his child. However, the story's plot contains so many conflicts that Muhammadiyor, who studied and served in another country, realizes upon returning to his homeland that changes do not occur by themselves. He understands that deep attention should be paid to the education of young people and women, and that the nobility of the country should not be indifferent to this. He himself takes steps towards this very goal.

Cholpon scholar Dilmurod Quronov, commenting on the story, concludes: "The author's main purpose is to advance the idea that it is not enough for an individual to be enlightened; those who have awakened earlier should strive to awaken others. Enlightenment without action is like dead capital, benefiting neither the nation nor the individual." [Quronov.D., 1997:8]

In our literary studies, the development of Jadidism is considered to span from the early 20th century until 1916, up to the creation of Abdulla Qodiriy's story "Uloqda." Specifically, literary scholar Sanjar Sodiq notes: "This initial stage is characterized by features such as our literature's shift towards secular content, the predominance of the enlightenment spirit, the abundance of Jadid views, strong ideological pathos, weak artistry, and the emergence of embryonic forms of genres like drama and the novel, alongside traditional types of poetry." [Sanjar Sodiq, 2019:30] Furthermore, the development of storytelling directly paved the way for the emergence of large-scale prose works, namely novels. Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy pioneered this effort with his novels "Yangi saodat" ("New Happiness") and "Uchrashuv" ("Meeting"). Admittedly, these works do not fully align with today's novel-writing traditions, but they remain the first attempts preceding the creation of the first Uzbek novels that followed – "O'tkan kunlar" ("Bygone days"), "Mehrobdan chayon" ("Scorpion from the Altar"), and "Kecha va Kunduz" ("Night and Day").

In conclusion, we can state that the developmental stages of Uzbek prose genesis have unfolded differently across various periods. Each era introduced new content, forms, and artistic-aesthetic principles. The quality of national character, elements of realistic depiction, and psychological analysis progressively improved. This has resulted in modern Uzbek prose becoming a complex, multi-layered, and aesthetically diverse system. The fact that the development of contemporary Uzbek prose is rooted in the formative stages of national prose serves as clear evidence of this evolution.

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