






# Developing Modern Literature Textbooks: Scientific and Methodological Challenges

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**Abstract:** In this article, "Literature" textbooks created for secondary schools in different countries were comparatively studied. The factors such as: age and physiological characteristics of pupils, and schoolbooks compliance with modern requirements and methodological criteria were taken into account in the research process. The results of the study were based on a survey of 279 schoolchildren in grades 7-9 in Uzbekistan. It had been scientifically and methodologically proven that working on questions and assignments designed for a work of art included in the textbooks had great potential in teaching students to think independently. Experimental work and research results serve as a unique methodological resource in the creation of a new generation of "Literature" textbooks.


## 1 INTRODUCTION


Science and evolution are constantly altering. Initially, the education system was tasked with educating a comprehensively developed generation. Later this task was replaced by providing a good education and a career. However, over the past period, both have come under fire. Today's students are required to be creative, to strive to change the knowledge that they have acquired, and to constantly master the achievements of science. In this sense, it is vital to constantly update the textbooks and manuals that define the content of literary education on the basis of scientific progress and changes in society. Woefully, most of the existing textbooks do not meet the methodological requirements. Researchers Andy Smart and Shanti Jagannat have studied the policy of creating and publishing textbooks in Asian countries, noting that a carefully designed textbook is not a limitation for the teacher, but the closest assistant that saves his energy and time. In addition, the textbook is


a mandatory tool for working with pupils and teaching the literary material being studied. Indeed, the textbook - school pedagogy - is one of the key factors determining the level of quality of education, in which the educational outcome is interrelated and at the same time interdependent. Besides, in recent years, although a lot of research has been done to improve the competence of teachers, the implementation of new interactive methods, the main factor that ensures the effectiveness of education - textbooks - is ignored. According to research conducted by international organizations, only half of students are able to put into practice the knowledge they have acquired. To determine the general condition, comparative analysis on "Literature" textbooks for secondary schools in France, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was carried out. The psyche of each nation is more vividly reflected in its folklore. Therefore, as part of the research, the topic of studying folk epics in these textbooks was selected for analysis.

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## 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Evidently, there is neither the possibility nor the need to include all examples of fiction in the textbook. In pedagogical practice, the reader is predominant, not the level of artistic maturity of the work. Thereupon, the educator should ask him/herself the following types of questions: 'Can a student "digest" this work at this age? What can this work give to the reader?' If the written work is not given to the reader at the right age, in the right way, this art will remain undiscovered, and as a result, this "burden" will not give the child any spiritual nourishment.

In the 7th grade Literature textbook of the secondary school of the Republic of Kazakhstan there are conditional symbols for working with the studied subjects, and each symbol has its own color. In particular, for the analysis of works of art, such symbols as "Knowledge", "Understanding", "Application", "Analysis", "Generalization", "Evaluation", for aphorisms, quotations, proverbs and sayings - "Jewelry word", "Valuable information" signs, and for literary information signs for instance "Literary Theory", "Assignments", "What you know is no more" are given. The textbook provides audio copies of excerpts from works of art in the form of SD disc. Likewise, the source's platform address is also provided for online downloading. Another achievement of the textbook is that at the end of each topic, a list of additional literature under the heading "Readers of the XXI century" is recommended so that students can get acquainted with other literature related to this topic. Dictionaries are also provided under the heading "Sozmarjon" for unintelligible words in the works of art included in the textbook. It is recommended to read the epic "Kyz Jibek" from the examples of folklore in that textbook. The epic was preceded by a theoretical account of the Liro-epic epics. In order to determine the knowledge of students on the topic on the basis of "Brainstorming", questions such as, "What is the folklore?", "What are the peculiarities of lyric-epic epics?" are asked. After that, definition of the Liro-epic epics and the description of events and feelings in them are given. Kazakh epics including, "Kyz Jibek", "Qazi Korpesh-Bayan Suluv", "Ayman-Sholpan" are presented as examples. The presence of an audio version of this information can be deduced from the conditional symbol marked SD. For theoretical information, 10 questions are asked, of which 8 are factual and 2 are conceptual questions. In order to strengthen the knowledge and skills of students on the topic, 6 tasks are given. One of which is to compare the similarities

and differences between lyro-epic epics and heroic epics on the basis of the Venn diagram.

The textbook contains a 6-page excerpt from the epic "Kyz Jibek". Besides, along with the text of the epic, pictures of Jibek and Tolagan in national costumes are depicted to help the reader to form a certain image of the heroes. Now the reader can imagine them as they read about the adventures of the epic heroes, and this brings the reader closer to the work.

There are 33 questions for the text of the epic. Unfortunately, most of them are aimed at repeating the sequence of events. Manifestly, in methodological science, in the formation of the Reader's spirituality, it is not enough to be aware of the content of the epic and to remember the sequence of plots. The above tasks, the answers of which are ready in the text, can be found at a glance. Students do not develop any skills and abilities in the analysis of works of art.

The teaching of folk epics in the textbooks of secondary schools in Uzbekistan begins in the 7th grade. Patently, in methodological science, the correct choice of text for a textbook is crucial. From this point of view, the presentation of the epic "Ravshan" in the 7th grade, based on the age of the students, is a great achievement of the textbook. The topics included in this textbook (18, 2017) are divided into sections similarly, "You are in my eyes, Motherland!", "Infinite sky of my thoughts", "Echoes of the past", "Breath of the new era". In the section "Echoes from the past" 4 hours are allocated for teaching the epic "Ravshan", which will be studied firstly. According to the curriculum, another hour is allocated for the analysis of the creative essay on the topic "Description of the image of Ravshan" as a control work. For the nearly 29-page text, 28 questions and assignments are given, all of which are conceptual questions. Here are some of them:

What do you think why Hasankhan allowed to his young son going abroad alone?

Find an exaggerated description of Hasankhan's condition before entering the battle in the epic and explain the artistic function of exaggeration in this place. Explain how well it fits Hasankhan's current state of mind;

The epic has a picture of Ravshan crying under a gallow. Explain the reason for his crying;

Try to explain Ravshan's nature based on his words under the gallow: "If I don't die, I won't give up on my homeland!" Share your thoughts about someone who values their country and their religion more than their own lives.

There is no ready answer to any of these questions in the textbook. The reader can answer these

questions only by taking an independent look at the content of the work, thinking about the originality and differences of the images, and reading the text carefully. They also try to justify their answers based on their knowledge of other disciplines, their own life experiences and observations. The textbook also contains 72 dictionaries for the text of the epic. After the passage, the information about the epic, its uniqueness, events, the state of the heroes and a description of their experiences are presented in a simple and engaging way on the example of the epic "Ravshan". Theoretical information entitled "Artistic image and exaggerated image" is also stated. Unhappily, no questions or assignments are bestowed to reinforce students' knowledge of the information.

The textbook was not creatively designed in terms of design. Its colorlessness (black and white), as well as the fact that no pictures, audio or video materials are provided related to the subject, reduce students' interest for the textbook. There is also a methodical manual for teachers. It is recommended that almost 3 hours of the lesson be devoted to general information about the epic and its analysis, and that the last 1 hour be organized as a forensic lesson as a concluding one.

In general, a map of the topic of teaching the epic is ready for the teacher, but it is not specified which method and techniques to use. Narrative narration alone does not create the basis for a student's creative and enterprising activity.

The methodological and pedagogical skills of teachers are diverse. We cannot alter all teachers to achieve lesson effectiveness. Notwithstanding, this can be achieved by creating perfect textbooks. In this sense, good textbooks are a guarantee of high quality teaching and learning.

The Literature Textbook, written for 7th graders in French schools, is more attractive in terms of design. Each section is decorated with individual colors and themed pictures. Topics such as "Children's literature", "Youth romance", "Fairy tales", "Theater", "Parable", "Poetry", "Novel", "Theater: comedy", "Arabic fairy tales" intended to be taught in 3 sections. Since this class does not teach folk epics, let's take a look at the fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast" by Janny-Marie Leprince de Beaumont. The work is divided into 5 small parts, at the end of each part there are oral questions and assignments on the text. Here are some of them:

Which dream is shattered? Justify your answers using quotes from the text.

What responsibility does Beauty want to shoulder? Why?

How does Beauty's attitude conflict with that of her sisters?

What does Beauty's father think about Beauty?

All questions except the task 'Divide into small groups of 3-5 people and form a continuation of the story and tell it to the group' are factual questions aimed at retelling the content of the story. Such questions are bound to lead to deep and imperfect. Of course, some teachers can give compelling tasks based on modern methods and at the same time require a serious approach to the text of the work. However, not all teachers can be assigned as creators of questions and assignments. Questions that encourage the reader to reflect on the essence and art of the work would have taught them to do more research and draw logical conclusions. Certainly, the teacher may not use these questions at all, because the correct organization of the study of the work depends on the pedagogical skills of the teacher in all respects. The teacher should not only create conceptual questions that encourage students to think, but also divide them into small groups and give practical assignments on the topic, which intensify the learning process and increase the enthusiasm of students. After all, 'Children feel events brighter and deeper together than loneliness'.

At the end of the story, links to the full version of the work is provided for students who want to know its continuation, and this allows the reader to get acquainted with the original, full version of the work. Plainly, through the works included in the textbook, the reader gets a certain idea that literature is a holistic aesthetic phenomenon. Hence, only elevated artistic works are included in the textbook set. The most beautiful works of art are included in the 7th grade "Literature" textbook of the secondary school of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Topics are divided into several sections: "Samples of folklore", "Love of the Motherland, examples of heroism", "Spiritual values, eternal wisdom", "Children's world, the fate of the child", "Conservation of nature, care for nature." In this class it is planned to study the work "Durna Teli" from folk epics, that is one of the most popular epics of the "Gorogly" series. Before the text of the epic is given, the following questions are asked, which serve as an "introduction" to the topic:

What do you know about Gorogly?

Who is called a national hero?

What do you think is the reason why Gorogly has lived in the memory of the people for centuries?

This was followed by an abbreviated text of the epic, consisting of 7 small sections, and questions for each section that encouraged students to analyze the work. Along with the text of the epic, there is an image of "Gorogly" by the artist T. Salahov. This single photo is a great help for the reader in forming

a certain imagination of the fearless and noble Gorogly. According to the curriculum of the subject 'Literature', 3 hours are allocated for the study of this epic. Furthermore, questions and assignments for this 3-hour lesson are provided by the authors of the textbook. Thought-provoking tasks based on various diagrams and tables similarly, do with your partner, prepare a presentation based on one of the given topics, compare, analyze, write an essay help students to refer to the text over and over again, to develop comparative analysis skills, and to understand the beauty of expression.

Certainly, the process of literary education cannot be standardized. The teacher chooses different forms and content of teaching methods based on the age characteristics of students, the level of mastery, the conditions of the room in which the lesson is held. A method that gives very good results in one group may not give the expected result in another group. Properly selected practical tasks, interactive methods such as working in small groups on the basis of tables, comparative analysis of characters, various presentations, use of multimedia materials turn the student from the listener to an active participant in the lesson.

### 3 ANALYSIS

In order to determine the role of "Literature" textbooks in the process of teaching and learning literary material, experimental work was carried out among students in grades 7-9 of secondary schools. The development of this study is based on a series of pilot surveys conducted among students and teachers of secondary schools in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Previously, we managed to find out that, in general, there is a need for a wider application of modern interactive teaching methods, at the same time there is a demand for an increase in teaching materials in video format and mobile applications (Available: <https://www.dpublication.com/proceeding/4th-wcfeducation#Table-of-Contents>). We decided to delve deeper into the topic and conduct an additional survey, expanding the sample size to 279 respondents. The respondents were selected in three schools in the city of Tashkent, among students in grades 7, 8 and 9. The distribution of pupils by schools and classes was even, by gender, pupils were distributed as follows: boys - 53.0%, girls - 47.0%.

The data were collected using a questionnaire method. The representativeness of the study on the scale of the studied group is ensured by the use of a multi-stage stratified sample, with a ten percent error,

at a reliability level of 95%. As the main criteria of the survey, we chose a number of questions showing the interest of students in literature lessons, in particular to the question "Are you interested in the subject of literature?", 42.7% of survey participants answered yes, 29.0% reported an average level of interest, and 21.9% of respondents reported that they were not interested in literature lessons. After the method of cross-frequency analysis, we decided to find out the trends in these answers among those selected for socio-demographic indicators.

The results of survey show that, in general, literature lessons at school are more engrossing for girls, while boys showed an average level of interest to a greater extent.

Table 1: Distribution of answers to the question "Are you interested in the subject of literature?" by gender of respondents.

	Yes	No	Average
Male	0,28	0,20	0,52
Female	0,60	0,24	0,17
Total	0,43	0,22	0,35

This distribution can be considered statistically significant at the level of 10% error for the studied groups. What is more, to test the hypothesis about the influence of the teacher and the bias of the school itself in the field of conducting literature classes, we carried out another cross-frequency analysis, according to the class of students.

Table 2: Distribution of answers to the question "Are you interested in the subject of literature?" by class of respondents.

	Yes	No	Average
7th grade	0,20	0,39	0,41
8th grade	0,53	0,13	0,34
9th grade	0,55	0,14	0,31
Total	0,43	0,22	0,35

The results show us that, to a large extent, the manifestation of interest in literature classes also depends on the teacher and the attention that the school pays to this subject. Next, we examined the overall student satisfaction with literature lessons in terms of textbook design and visual design. Thus, the majority of survey participants (60.9%) reported that they were not satisfied with the design of the available literature textbooks. To the question "Are there pictures in the textbook of the heroes of the artwork being studied?" - 81.4% answered no. Moreover, the

vast majority of respondents noted that textbooks are not accompanied by additional audio and video materials. Probably, the factors described above also caused the general self-assessment of the assimilation of theoretical knowledge by students, of which only 13.6% reported that they were fully able to assimilate theoretical material.

We have as well put forward an assumption about the connection between interest in the subject "literature" and the format of presentation of educational materials. We asked the students to evaluate the three main formats for presenting the material on a five-point scale, where 1 meant completely ineffective, and 5 meant very effective (Table 3).

Table 3: Evaluating the effectiveness of training materials in various formats.

	Not effective at all	Not effective	Not so effective	Effective	Very effective
Audio		0,03	0,08	0,40	0,50
Video		0,03	0,19	0,30	0,49
Text	0,17	0,27	0,43	0,14	

At the same time, the results of the extended survey show a shift in the assessment of the usefulness of a mobile application as a textbook of literature towards higher average ratings (Fig. 1).

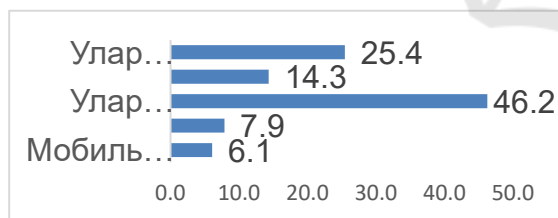


Figure 1: How important do you think it is to create modern textbooks in the format of a mobile application? (as a percentage of the number of respondents, n = 279).

The study of the results of the survey as a whole shows a tendency towards an increase in the demand of modern students for educational materials in more modern formats, despite the fact that the subject itself is linked to text materials. However, there is sensitivity in respondents' answers to the size and model of the sample, which in this case is a prime limitation. Subsequently, for a deeper and more meaningful study of the designated subject area, it is required to expand the sample size and the set of

measuring instruments, however, despite these limitations, a number of conclusions can already be drawn based on the trends identified as a result of the current research:

1. There is a need to create new, modern textbooks on the subject of literature;
2. The traditional text format for this subject is considered insufficiently effective by modern students, as opposed to audio and video formats;
3. There is a request to create textbooks in the mobile application format, which combines all the other formats discussed above;
4. There is also a need for retraining of teaching staff in the direction of improving their skills in working with these modern formats of educational materials;
5. Careful and detailed elaboration of the design of these textbooks plays a major role in the creation of textbooks of a new type;
6. All the recommendations proposed above, in the opinion of the research group, can lead to a significant increase in interest in the subject "literature", and will also contribute to a better assimilation of knowledge within this subject.

#### 4 DISCUSSION

The analysis of textbooks shows the need to further improve the methodological system of teaching folk epics, which are large in size and have several options, based on modern requirements. Consequently, textbooks need to be updated to nurture young people who are able to think independently and realize their intellectual and creative potential, and to transition to a competent approach to education.

The fact that the data in some textbooks are outdated from a scientific point of view, the information is inconsistent, and the lack of methodological guidelines for the teacher in most textbooks also causes a lot of misunderstanding. Most of the literature textbooks have been reprinted. They have been published at least four times. Some even up to 7 times. The surnames of some authors are enclosed in a rectangular frame. It is surprising that textbooks are being rewritten and published on behalf of the deceased.

Admittedly, among the existing new textbooks and manuals, enriched scientifically and methodologically, there are textbooks that do not meet today's requirements, didactic methods that do not justify themselves, which lead to a sharp decline in the effectiveness of literary education. As a matter

of course, the teacher can not only rely on the textbook, but also use a number of materials on the topic, recommending students to read additional literature on the topic covered. However, the teacher may not have the time, energy, desire, or experience to search or create teaching materials other than the textbook. It should be taken into consideration that families in need of social protection will not be able to purchase resources other than textbooks. In addition, the student does not study only "Literature" at school. It is advisable that the study load should correspond to pupils' age and level of mastery.

Based on the results of comparative study and experimental work of existing educational complexes, we put forward the following proposals for further improvement of the study of folk epics in textbooks of "Literature" in secondary schools:

- Textbooks must be attractive. Textbooks, which must be read in educational institutions, should attract students in terms of their appearance, structure, design and motivate them to read the works in them.
- A photo album, audio and video materials must be provided for each epic work. The role of the text in understanding the work and analyzing the artistic means is invaluable. Even so, the text itself is lacking in conveying the full appeal of the epic to the readers. Epics, a unique treasure of folklore, have been sung for centuries by bakhshis to the accompaniment of drums. Bakhshi's melody, the performance of the epic in a peculiar muffled voice, the sound of the drum penetrates into the heart of the reader, and such an aesthetic impression will be remembered for a lifetime. Accordingly, the adaptation of literature textbooks to modern requirements, the use of textbooks not only the text of the epic, but also the audio version of the poem, a video film based on the epic and photo albums with the plot and main characters of the epic will increase the effectiveness of the lesson. The characters in the epic will have a more complete picture of the images, facial expressions, costumes, and the epic space reflected in the epos. Only then students will have a brighter idea of the work and be given a better sense of the characters' feelings and experiences.
- It is crucial that the textbook includes excerpts from folk epics selected and recommended for reading in accordance with the age and physiological characteristics of students. Most textbooks do not provide an excerpt from the original text of the epic work being studied, but an analytical text in which the textbook authors narrate the content of the work. It is necessary to acquaint students with the language of the work of art, style of expression, the beauty of the image and the skill of the narrator in the use of words, as well as to allow them to independently discover the beauty and charm of the epic.
- The works included in the textbook, photo, audio and video materials, especially questions and assignments on the topic should be appropriate to the age and physiological characteristics of pupils. In this sense, it is advisable to recommend reading only one folk epos in each form textbook.
- Textbooks should include a list of additional literature on the topic and a link to them. The teacher should not only rely on the textbook while teaching a particular topic. They ought to get acquainted with other literature, research papers and dissertations on the topic, by allowing students to gain new and captivating information. For this purpose, the textbook should include a list of additional literature and a link to them so that pupils can be familiar with other literature on the subject.
- Homework assignments on the topic should be clearly indicated. The correct selection and assignment of homework on the topic is a foremost pedagogical process. Home tasks based on the student's level of knowledge and mastery that allow him or her to work independently. But experience has shown that most teachers do not give homework other than writing a synopsis and essay on the epic. The 98% of the essays written about the work read and analyzed in the classroom are essays copied from the textbook. They do not contain independent opinions. Unfortunately, even the written manuals for teachers do not provide recommendations on how to properly organize homework assignments.
- More thorough scientific bases for the provision of literary and theoretical information in textbooks should be developed. Cases of repetition of information related to the studied literary material in subsequent classes should be eliminated. It is also advisable to provide theoretical information on the topic in a concise, design-friendly manner.

- The methodological manual for teaching the topics included in the textbook for teachers should also indicate the methodological criteria for assessing students in the subject "Literature". It should not be forgotten that literature lessons do not serve to memorize or convey information to students, but to develop universal qualities and nurture their feelings in the heart of the pupils. This begs the questions: How to evaluate students in the subject "Literature"? On the basis of what criteria can their level of knowledge be determined? After all, memorizing poems, remembering the names of the heroes in a work of art and the sequence of the plot, the ability to tell the literary-theoretical rules exactly as written in the textbook is not the main criterion! Given that the methodological manual is used not only by experienced teachers, but also by young professionals who have just entered the field, it seems that the methodological manual should be perfectly created.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Textbooks are a mirror that reflects the strengths and weaknesses of each state's education system. This is why a comparative study and analysis of textbooks from schools around the world is essential. Experiments have shown that it is needed to create modern, thorough and perfect new generation textbooks. Notwithstanding, textbooks alone cannot be a ready-made solution in ensuring lesson effectiveness. The main value in literary education is a teacher, of course. But the fact that not all teachers are equally creative and enterprising requires careful and perfect creation of textbooks.

At school, the student is required to master not the works of the author that he likes or wishes, but all the topics included in the textbook in accordance with the curriculum. Textbooks created in accordance with modern requirements play an important role in making compulsory lessons fascinating. Designed in an attractive, methodologically sound way, the textbooks not only make the lessons interesting and effective, but also ensure that students actively participate in the lesson and master the subject in depth.

None of the textbooks we analyzed in the article contain pictures based on the plot sequence. Therefore, we have created some illustrations as

examples for the Ravshan epic for 7th graders. Some of them are presented in the following.



Figure 2: Pictorial Expression of Stories.

Students can now retell the story based on a sequence of pictures. The artistic excerpt with pictures is easily assimilated and well-remembered. Now, when students read about characters like Ravshan, Hasankhan, Zulhumor, they can imagine them. Through this, they realize that epics are not a monument of the past, but the aesthetics in motion.

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