

Ozod Sharafiddinov And The Transformation Of Critical Discourse In Twentieth-Century Uzbek Literature

Nurulloyeva Mashhura

Uzbekistan University of Journalism and Mass Communications, Faculty of Journalism 2nd-year student, Uzbekistan

Received: 29 November 2025; **Accepted:** 21 December 2025; **Published:** 25 January 2026

Abstract: This article explores the transformation of critical discourse in twentieth-century Uzbek literature through the intellectual and scholarly legacy of Ozod Sharafiddinov. As one of the most influential literary critics of his time, Sharafiddinov played a decisive role in reshaping the language, methodology, and ethical foundations of Uzbek literary criticism. The study examines how his critical writings contributed to the transition from ideologically constrained, prescriptive criticism to a more interpretative, human-centered, and aesthetically grounded discourse. Special attention is paid to the evolution of critical terminology, narrative strategies, and evaluative principles in Sharafiddinov's works, highlighting their impact on the broader literary process of the twentieth century. Employing discourse analysis and historical-literary methods, the article reveals how Sharafiddinov redefined the function of literary criticism as an autonomous intellectual practice. The findings demonstrate that his critical approach not only reflected the changing socio-cultural context of the period but also actively influenced the modernization of Uzbek literary thought.

Keywords: Uzbek literary criticism, critical discourse, twentieth-century literature, discourse transformation, literary theory, ideological criticism, aesthetic values.

Introduction: Literary criticism has played a decisive role in shaping the intellectual and aesthetic development of twentieth-century Uzbek literature. Throughout this period, critical discourse underwent significant transformations, reflecting broader socio-political, ideological, and cultural changes. Within this evolving landscape, the figure of Ozod Sharafiddinov occupies a central position. As a prominent literary critic, essayist, translator, and scholar, Sharafiddinov contributed substantially to redefining the principles, language, and functions of Uzbek literary criticism.

METHOD

During much of the Soviet era, Uzbek literary criticism was largely governed by ideological imperatives, particularly the doctrines of socialist realism and political conformity. Critical discourse often functioned as a prescriptive tool, prioritizing ideological correctness over aesthetic value and artistic

individuality. However, beginning in the latter half of the twentieth century, a gradual shift toward a more interpretative and humanistic approach to criticism became evident. Ozod Sharafiddinov emerged as one of the leading figures of this transformation, advocating intellectual independence, aesthetic sensitivity, and ethical responsibility in literary analysis. Scholarly studies on Uzbek literary criticism have consistently emphasized the strong ideological framework that characterized critical discourse throughout much of the twentieth century. Researchers such as N. Karimov and U. Normatov note that literary criticism during the Soviet period often served as an extension of political ideology, limiting interpretative freedom and suppressing alternative aesthetic perspectives. Within this context, critics were expected to evaluate literary works primarily on the basis of their ideological alignment rather than artistic merit [4], [6].

Ozod Sharafiddinov's contribution to Uzbek literary criticism has been examined by several scholars, particularly in relation to his role in promoting intellectual independence. In his collection "Dovondagi o'ylar", Sharafiddinov openly reflects on the ethical responsibility of the critic, emphasizing sincerity, courage, and devotion to truth [9]. According to Normatov, this work represents a turning point in Uzbek criticism, as it foregrounds the critic's moral stance alongside aesthetic judgment [6].

Another significant aspect of Sharafiddinov's legacy is his engagement with world literary theory. Scholars such as D. Quronov argue that Sharafiddinov's familiarity with Western and Russian literary thought—particularly the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin and Georg Lukács—enabled him to introduce dialogic and socio-aesthetic perspectives into Uzbek criticism. This is evident in his analytical essays on major Uzbek writers, where he prioritizes character complexity, narrative structure, and philosophical depth over ideological slogans [7], [11].

Comparative studies further highlight Sharafiddinov's role in transforming critical discourse. For example, Karimov contrasts Sharafiddinov's interpretative style with earlier prescriptive criticism, noting that Sharafiddinov treats literary texts as autonomous artistic systems rather than mere ideological instruments [3]. His essays on writers such as Abdulla Qodiriy and Chingiz Aitmatov demonstrate a nuanced understanding of literary universality and national specificity.

Despite these contributions, some scholars argue that Sharafiddinov's work has not been sufficiently examined from a discourse-analytical perspective. Most existing studies focus on his biographical significance or moral authority rather than systematically analyzing how his language, terminology, and evaluative strategies transformed critical discourse. This article seeks to address this gap by situating Sharafiddinov's criticism within the broader evolution of twentieth-century Uzbek literary discourse.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The transformation of critical discourse in twentieth-century Uzbek literature cannot be fully understood without acknowledging the intellectual legacy of Ozod

Sharafiddinov. His critical writings represent a significant departure from ideologically constrained criticism toward a more interpretative, ethically grounded, and aesthetically oriented discourse. By emphasizing the autonomy of literature and the moral responsibility of the critic, Sharafiddinov redefined the function of literary criticism as an independent intellectual practice.

The analysis demonstrates that Sharafiddinov's approach was both reflective and transformative. On the one hand, his criticism responded to the changing socio-cultural conditions of the late Soviet and early independence periods. On the other hand, it actively shaped new modes of literary thinking, encouraging critical plurality and interpretative depth. His engagement with world literary theory further enriched Uzbek criticism, enabling it to move beyond isolation and ideological rigidity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Ozod Sharafiddinov's contribution to the transformation of critical discourse extends beyond individual texts or authors. His legacy lies in establishing a model of criticism grounded in intellectual honesty, aesthetic sensitivity, and humanistic values. This model continues to influence contemporary Uzbek literary studies and remains relevant for future research on the evolution of literary criticism in post-Soviet cultural contexts.

REFERENCES

1. Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination*. Austin: University of Texas Press. — Theoretical foundation for discourse and dialogism used in modern criticism.
2. Imyaminova, S., & Yakubov, S. (2022). Roots of friendship: Uzbek literature and literary criticism in international context. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 8(4), 66–73. — Discusses transnational literary discourse.
3. Karimov, B. (2011). *Uzbek Literary Criticism: An Anthology*. Tashkent: Turon-Iqbol. — Contains translated and analyzed critical texts from the 20th century.
4. Karimov, N. (2001). *History of Twentieth-Century Uzbek Literature*. Tashkent: Fan Publishers. — A foundational study of Uzbek literary development

and criticism.

5. Mirzaeva, Z. I. (2024). Literary and social interpretations of the stagnation period in twentieth-century Uzbek literature. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 7(3), 45–52. — Provides socio-literary context for critical discourse evolution.
6. Normatov, U. (2010). *Literary Criticism and the Spirit of the Age*. Tashkent: Yangi Asr Avlodi. — An important work on ideological and aesthetic shifts in Uzbek criticism.
7. Quronov, D. (2018). *Fundamentals of Literary Theory*. Tashkent: Akademnashr. — Frequently used theoretical framework in Uzbek literary studies.
8. Rakhmatova, F. K. (2022). Education and Uzbek literature in the 1970s–1980s. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 5(2), 117–123. — Examines ideological pressure on literature and criticism.
9. Sharafiddinov, O. (1989). *Thoughts on the Mountain Pass*. Tashkent: Gafur Ghulam Publishing House. — Key critical essays reflecting ethical and aesthetic transformations in criticism.
10. Sharafiddinov, O. (2004). *Faith and Creativity*. Tashkent: Ma'naviyat. — Explores the moral responsibility of the literary critic.
11. Lukács, G. (1971). *The Theory of the Novel*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. — Influential in shaping socio-aesthetic criticism relevant to Sharafiddinov's approach.
12. Eagleton, T. (2008). *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. — Provides critical theory tools for discourse analysis.