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An Innovative Model for Literature Education in Higher Education: A Case Study of Nazar Eshonqul's 'Go'r O'g'li' Novel

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Abstract: This article presents an innovative model for organizing literature classes in higher education through the lens of Nazar Eshonqul's novel "Go'r o'g'li." The research was conducted with 5th-year students studying Uzbek Language and Literature Education. The study investigated the potential for effective engagement with the novel's text by systematically applying tasks aimed at deep textual analysis, including "Close Reading" questions and tasks focused on understanding the symbolism of plot, setting, characters, and processes. Additionally, the "Social Roles," "Literature Circles," and "Chained Conclusion" methods were systematically implemented. The results indicate that these methods significantly contribute to developing students' critical thinking and literary analysis competencies.

Introduction: In contemporary Uzbek literature, Nazar Eshonqul's novel "Go'r o'g'li" stands out for its philosophical depth, critical social spirit, and artistic craftsmanship. The work illuminates complex relationships between individuals and society, addressing themes such as personal freedom and the pressures of social systems. Studying this novel in literature classes serves to develop students' critical thinking abilities, enhance their understanding of social issues, and foster their skills in deeply analyzing literary works.

Literature Review

"Nazar Eshonqul's novel 'Go'r o'g'li or the Water of Life,' initiated in the 1990s, was originally titled 'Lahad' (The Grave), as acknowledged by the author himself. It is dedicated to reflecting the true picture of human feelings being suppressed within the system and the treatment of the human individual in society" [X.

To'liboev: 2024, 393]. Z. Pardaeva considers this mythopoetic novel one of the significant achievements of Uzbek prose [Z. Pardaeva: 2023, 64]. In contrast, I. Yakubov criticizes the work, stating that "the blend of fantasy and reality, imagination and life observed in contemporary Uzbek novels, is actively employed, but the work follows Western philosophy rather than ancient Eastern doctrines" [I. Yakubov: 2023, 371-372].

There are also diverse opinions regarding the novel's content. I. Yakubov's research concludes that the main character, N., "accepts that the essence and meaning of life consist of suffering. That is, N. moves forward from the 'borderline situation' between death and life, seeking to affirm his existence, and ascends to aesthetic and ethical levels of existence. However, he cannot rise to the religious stage of truly understanding existence" [Yakubov I: 2018, 258]. Conversely, X. To'liboev states that at the end of the work, N. "comes to the conclusion that being a slave to anyone other

than the Creator is the most helpless and worthless way for a human to live" [X. To'liboev: 2024, 397].

Overall, "Go'r o'g'li" is one of the key objects of study as a significant example of post-independence Uzbek literature. Therefore, this work is actively studied by both researchers and literature students. In this research, we developed recommendations for analyzing the work during the academic analysis process. These recommendations are based on the "Deep Reading" technique (Close reading). "Understanding connections within the text, building upon prior knowledge, identifying unexamined aspects in the text, and analyzing what the author intended," specifically asking questions, identifying symbolism, and writing down the results of these two activities, are considered strategies of deep reading. Therefore, when discussing "Deep Reading," "Adler and Van Doren (1972) suggest that readers become detectives in their engagement with the text as they explore its layered structures" [Baker S.: 2017, 71-75].

METHODOLOGY

Initially, the study involved working with "Deep Reading" questions and tasks designed for in-depth textual analysis.

I. Answer the questions by relying on the text and context.

1. How was the great importance of entering the Chief's office demonstrated?

2. Describe the environment of Soviet-era organizations through the depiction of the Chief shaving twice a day, the secretary applying makeup, and N.'s roommate brushing dust off his shoulder.

3. Explain the Soviet system through the sentence: "Don't speak about work-related problems to the leader."

4. N. carried the lever, yet everyone in the office knew he was entering the Chief's room and became agitated. Even strangers recognized N. and gathered under the window. Explain the socio-psychological state of ordinary people during the totalitarian era through these two depictions, using the keywords: censorship, control, spectator.

5. Why doesn't the Ferris wheel turn? Why does the Ferris wheel resemble the workplace?

6. "Like the dead, there was no difference between my night and day, or my today and tomorrow. I came to infect you with my pains and torments. Yes, that's right, bring me back to life, you needed me. Only you needed me. Give meaning to my life, give me torment! I found you by tearing my heart apart. Yes, that's how it is with the dead: but I wanted to live, and I came to you to bring me back to life." What do we learn about the character's psyche through this confession?

7. Why was he called by mistake? Why was this depiction necessary?

8. The employees told him that the ceremony could not be postponed. "N. was preoccupied with ensuring the ceremony ran flawlessly, a habit of many years; he unconsciously worried that any shortcoming in the ceremony might tarnish our office's reputation." How was the process of systemic values suppressing personal values from consciousness implemented? Is this expressed in the work?

9. What ideological principles are expressed in the work through the widely organized funeral ceremony?

10. Even though the leader never handed himself a certificate of praise, he had no doubt that it was so internally. Can this conviction be said to be the basis of his tragedy? Explain your answer.

11. "However, he did not want to deviate from the rules. He was not used to disrupting the rhythm of his daily life." If he was so orderly, why was he precisely the one sent to his death?

12. Could keeping a diary be one of N.'s crimes?

13. Why do Tall Guy and Bald Guy badmouth each other? Why does the editor's nephew criticize the reporter and say he will help the young man, yet push the young man out to get him to leave?

14. "People humiliated by old age are always nervous." What role do the depictions of elderly people play in understanding the character's psyche?

15. "A person whose work goes well and whose worries no longer perch on their tree always wants to be benevolent. Life is always a struggle between benevolence and envy. If benevolence turns into envy, it is not surprising. Envy is also a sign of life." Explain the sentence based on the work. Why are almost all the characters in the work troubled by the illness of envy?

16. "Law, in essence, means obedience." Explain this judgment.

17. Scenarios and applications are read by guards, and the cemetery guard is a bailiff. Guards are the descriptive pillar of the work's setting. Do you agree with this idea? Explain your answer.

18. State N.'s words, who was the cause of all problems.

19. Were the answers given to Burunduq the answers that led to his death?

20. What meaning does the crowdedness of the interrogation room convey?

21.   "Discontent is a dangerous symptom. A discontented person is ready for any crime. Anything can be expected from an unhappy person. Unhappiness is a bad emotion. Unhappiness is also considered a crime, or rather, preparation for a crime, at any moment, with bitterness, one can commit a crime; a person who considers himself unhappy stands among criminals. Our task is to prevent crime." Explain Burunduq's thoughts.

22.   Who were the complainants?

23.   Who is the investigator, in reality, and why is he absent?

24.   Do unusual depictions such as Burunduq's shortness and the evidence being a cup have a logical meaning?

25.   Why is the investigator's building located in the steppe after the investigation department?

26.   Who is the cowardly scientist Shomon?

27.   Did N. understand the truths when he thought about the "organization that works to distract people"?

28.   "If the investigator's death were revealed, can you imagine criminals rising up in the city and unbelievable chaos beginning? A veritable doomsday would begin. N. was humbled before the scientist's evidence-based thoughts, as the scientist himself said. Indeed, it is natural that they are keeping the investigator's death a secret, just as the scientist said. Then they would be pointlessly bothering and harassing N. in the investigator's name." Provide examples based on historical facts for the mechanisms of the system's shaping and control of human consciousness.

29.   "Of course," said the scientist. "They are absolutely required to work honestly. And honesty is determined by bodily purity. Know that whoever has a clean body is more honest." Is this form of honesty still applicable today?

30.   In the work, the book of law is read in the bathhouse. Explain the symbolism. Are laws still being studied in bathhouses today?

II. Following the questions and tasks, students are given an assignment to briefly outline the plot elements to form a general understanding of the work in their minds. (Sample answers provided)

Express the plot elements briefly		
1	Exposition	*Information about N.'s character being known at his workplace.*
2	Inciting Incident	*N. being mistakenly called to the Chief's office, and his desire to be addressed as N., stating his name is N.*
3	Rising Action	*Occurs in the sequence of burial ceremony, editorial office, court, interrogation room, cemetery, expulsion*
4	Culmination	*Howling like a dog.*
5	Resolution	*None.*

III. Understanding the Qualities of Setting, Character, and Process: Fill in the table with important places and processes from the work and their descriptions. Try to explain why these places and processes are depicted in such a way.

Identify	N.'s room	Burial ceremony	Interrogation room	Dogs howling	?	?
Write the description	*Lightless, messy, dirty, not cleaned for 6 months.*	*Open air, sunny day.*	*Dark room, desolate, unpleasant steppe.*	*Dark, dirty, filthy environment.*	?	?

III. Understanding the Qualities of Characters and Their Symbolism: Below are the descriptions of the given characters and an explanation of their symbolic significance.

Burunduq	*Short and shrill-voiced.*
Reporter at the door	*Bald, cunning-faced.*
Scientist	*Hat-wearing.*

Guard in the investigator's building	*Burly, tall.*
Interrogation staff	*Bare, like lower-grade students.*
Havo	*Middle-aged, with eyes staring fixedly and shamelessly, an open face, and a warm appearance.*
Gravedigger	*Yellowish complexion, smelling of wine, with a tattered collar.*
Assistant	*Tall, a very seriously dressed young man.*

IV. Organizing the "Social Roles" Method Through Collaborative Activity: Uncover the masks of the system through the social roles in the work. Each group chooses 1 role: Guards – control; Investigator – holding in fear, falsification; Judge – pressure; Employees – blind executors; Reporters – propagandists.

Task 1. Groups find answers to the following questions for each role:

What function does this character actually perform in society, and what function does it perform in the work?

Does this character possess individuality (humanity)?

Which of the roles given to the groups is furthest from reality?

Task 2. Each group should prepare a "Character Map" for their character. The card should sequentially reflect the following: character's name, its function, its place in the system, its relationship with others, what the author criticizes through the character.

Task 3. Groups should work collaboratively to show how the characters served the system using a cluster method.

1. Explain their interdependence and the system's chain of command.

V. General Classroom Task: Analyze the novel's references to international literature and mythology based on evidence from the text. Collaborative activity is organized according to the "Literature Circles" method. First, each group is given a separate task (such as Greek mythology, Uzbek folklore, world literature). For this assignment, specific tasks are assigned to group members (e.g., for Uzbek folklore: studying the epic, understanding the novel's connection to the epic, extracting text from the novel). Each group and group member collects information regarding their assigned task. Finally, the group and groups generalize the information.

VI. Implementing the "Chained Conclusion" Method: To implement the "Chained Conclusion" method, two-person groups are given cards with one keyword written on each: human dignity, bureaucratic system, injustice, moral values, truth and falsehood, criticism of the system, belief. Based on these, they are asked to write answers to the following questions: Explain the paradox of the concepts of vitality and mortality through the work. What is the root of the tragedy? Partners present their answers in a predetermined order (in a chained sequence). Here, the first group presents its work, then the second group presents its answer, taking into account the information from the first group (without repeating the same answer). They add the answers of teams given other keywords to their conclusions. Finally, all teams collectively draw a general conclusion.

As homework: Prepare a "Clown Theater" in a critical, ironic spirit based on the work. In this method, students approach the performance creatively and freely, with improvisation and playfulness playing a key role. Students generally rely on the text but can deviate from it to add their own feelings and ideas.

RESULTS

The experiment was conducted with two groups of 4th-year students studying Uzbek Language and Literature Education. A traditional lesson was conducted in the control group. Analysis of the experimental group's lessons showed that the recommended methodology effectively helps students to understand the text content more deeply and to comprehend its various layers.

Specifically, the questions and tasks aimed at deep reading of the text within the research methodology, as well as practical work focused on analyzing plot elements and understanding the qualities of setting, character, and process, significantly enhanced students' critical thinking skills. The results obtained from uncovering the masks of the system through the "Social Roles" method and illuminating paradoxical concepts in the work through the "Chained Conclusion" method confirmed that the level of text comprehension in the experimental group was higher than in the control group. This indicates that the

proposed methodology has high effectiveness in deep text analysis and comprehension of literary works.

In the control group, students were limited to listening to the interpretation of the work, which led to an ineffective use of class time. 10 students showed interest in presenting interpretations. Some students, when answering, tried to respond by reading prepared academic interpretations. 3 of the respondents were able to deeply analyze the content of the work, 2 were able to analyze at an average level, and 5 were found to have a superficial analysis. In the experimental group, every student actively participated in writing and orally presenting their interpretations of the work, and through collaborative activity, succeeded in creating a collective analysis. Significant effectiveness was observed in this group: 14 students were able to deeply analyze the content of the work, 4 students were able to analyze at an average level, and the remaining students were assessed as having a superficial analysis. Students demonstrating a high level of effectiveness constituted 50 percent in the experimental group, and 10.7 percent in the control group. When implementing the experiment in practice, it is recommended to ask students for short and concise answers, avoid repetition of identical answers, set time limits for group work, and strictly adhere to them. The proposed methodology has the potential to serve as an effective tool for analyzing large-volume texts of literary works. It should be noted that achieving full effectiveness may be difficult during the initial implementation of the methodology, but its systematic and continuous application leads to high academic effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The conducted research tested an innovative model for organizing literature classes in higher education using Nazar Eshonqul's novel "Go'r o'g'li" as an example. In the analysis of the work, the systematic application of the following processes was found to be effective: obtaining short answers to questions and tasks aimed at deep engagement with the text; working with a table to understand the plot; comprehending the symbolism in the qualities of setting, character, and process; implementing the "Social Roles," "Literature Circles," and "Chained Conclusion" methods. Pilot studies showed that this system is significantly more effective than traditional methods in developing students' critical thinking, literary analysis, and deep text comprehension competencies. The research results confirmed that the proportion of students who could analyze at a high level in the experimental group was almost five times higher than in the control group, which demonstrates the high academic effectiveness of the methodology. Systematic and continuous application of the methodology allows for achieving even higher results in the analysis of large-volume literary works.

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