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QIYOSIY ADABIYOT EFL O'RGANUVCHILARIDA TANQIDIY FIKRLASH VA INGLIZ TILI KO'NIKMALARINI RIVOJLANTIRISH VOSITASI SIFATIDA

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Аннотация.

Ushbu maqolada EFL o'rganuvchilarida tanqidiy fikrlash va ingliz tili ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda qiyosiy adabiyotning imkoniyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Asosiy e'tibor o'zbek va ingliz adabiy asarlarini, xususan, Abdulla Qodiriyning "O'tkan kunlar" hamda Jane Austenning "Pride and Prejudice" ("Andisha va g'urur") romanlarini qiyosiy o'rganishga qaratilgan. Maqolada qiyosiy adabiy tahlil o'rganuvchilarga o'xshash va farqli jihatlarni aniqlash, obrazlar va mavzularni talqin qilish, madaniy va ijtimoiy qadriyatlarni baholash hamda o'z fikrlarini matniy dalillar bilan asoslashga qanday yordam berishi yoritilgan. Shuningdek, adabiyotga asoslangan til o'qitishning o'qish, lug'at boyligi, og'zaki va yozma nutq ko'nikmalari hamda madaniyatlararo xabardorlikni rivojlantirishdagi o'rni ko'rib chiqilgan. Talabaga yo'naltirilgan qiyosiy faoliyatlar o'rganuvchilarga tahliliy, tanqidiy va yuqori darajadagi fikrlash ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish bilan birga ingliz tilidan mazmunli foydalanish imkoniyatlarini yaratishi asoslangan. Shu jihatdan, qiyosiy adabiyot EFL darslarida til ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish, adabiy bilim, madaniy tushuncha va tanqidiy fikrlashni integratsiyalash uchun samarali pedagogik vosita bo'lib xizmat qilishi mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: qiyosiy adabiyot, tanqidiy fikrlash, EFL o'rganuvchilari, adabiyotga asoslangan til o'qitish, adabiy o'qish, ingliz tilini rivojlantirish, madaniyatlararo xabardorlik, talabaga yo'naltirilgan ta'lim, yuqori darajadagi fikrlash, o'zbek va ingliz adabiyoti.

СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЕ КАК СРЕДСТВО РАЗВИТИЯ КРИТИЧЕСКОГО МЫШЛЕНИЯ И НАВЫКОВ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА У ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК КАК ИНОСТРАННЫЙ

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Аннотация.

В статье рассматривается потенциал сравнительного литературоведения для развития критического мышления и навыков английского языка у изучающих английский язык как иностранный (EFL). Основное внимание уделяется сопоставлению произведений узбекской и английской литературы, в частности романов Абдуллы Кадыри «Минувшие дни» и Джейн Остин «Гордость и предубеждение». Рассматривается, каким образом сравнительный литературный анализ помогает обучающимся выявлять сходства и различия, интерпретировать образы и темы, оценивать культурные и социальные ценности, а также аргументировать свои идеи с опорой на текст. Кроме того, анализируется роль обучения языку на основе литературных произведений в развитии навыков чтения, словарного запаса, устной и письменной речи и межкультурной осведомлённости. Обосновывается, что ориентированные на обучающихся сравнительные задания создают содержательные возможности для использования английского языка и одновременно способствуют развитию аналитического, критического мышления и мыслительных навыков высокого уровня. Таким образом, сравнительное литературоведение может служить эффективным педагогическим ресурсом для интеграции языкового развития, литературной компетентности, культурного понимания и критического мышления на занятиях по английскому языку как иностранному.

Ключевые слова: сравнительное литературоведение, критическое мышление, изучающие английский язык как иностранный, обучение языку на основе литературы, литературное чтение, развитие английского языка,

межкультурная осведомлённость, личностно-ориентированное обучение,
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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AS A TOOL FOR DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS AMONG EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract.

This article examines the potential of comparative literature for developing critical thinking and English language skills among EFL learners. It focuses on the comparison of Uzbek and English literary works, particularly Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan Kunlar* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The article discusses how comparative literary analysis can help learners identify similarities and differences, interpret characters and themes, evaluate cultural and social values, and support their ideas with textual evidence. It also explores the role of literature-based language teaching in developing reading skills, vocabulary, speaking, writing, and intercultural awareness. The article argues that learner-centered comparative activities can create meaningful opportunities for students to use English while developing analytical, critical, and higher-order thinking skills. Thus, comparative literature can serve as an effective pedagogical resource for integrating language development, literary awareness, cultural understanding, and critical thinking in the EFL classroom.

Keywords: comparative literature, critical thinking, EFL learners, literature-based language teaching, literary reading, English language development, intercultural awareness, learner-centered instruction, higher-order thinking, Uzbek and English literature.

Introduction. Today, learning English as a foreign language is not only about learning vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Students also need to learn how to think critically. This means being able to analyze information, understand different opinions, express ideas, give reasons, and evaluate different points of view. Therefore, developing critical thinking has become an important part of modern English language education.

Literature can be very useful for developing these skills. Literary works contain language, culture, social issues, and human experiences. By reading literary texts, students can improve their vocabulary and reading skills and learn how to express their own ideas. Literary works also include different characters, conflicts, problems, moral questions, and opinions. These elements encourage students to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and think deeply about what they read.

Studying literary works from different cultures can make this process even more useful. Comparative literature allows students to find similarities and differences between texts, characters, themes, cultural values, and social situations. In this way, students do not only ask what a text means but also think about why people, ideas, and values are presented differently in different cultures.

Comparing Uzbek and English literature is especially useful for students learning English in Uzbekistan. Uzbek students already have knowledge of their own culture, literature, and society. They can use this knowledge to better understand English-language literary works. When students compare familiar Uzbek literature with English literature, they can connect new information with what they already know. This can make learning English and reading literature more interesting and meaningful.

For this study, Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan Kunlar* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* are useful examples for comparison. Although these novels were written in different countries, cultures, and historical periods, they discuss several similar topics. These include love, marriage, family expectations, social rules, personal choices, and the relationship between individuals and society. Comparing these themes can help students understand how similar human problems are presented in different cultures.

Comparative literature can also help students develop higher-level thinking skills. Instead of only answering simple questions about a text or learning new vocabulary, students can compare characters, explain their actions, discuss their motivations, evaluate social values, give their opinions, and support their ideas with evidence from the texts. These activities make students active participants in the learning process.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE: CONCEPT, DEVELOPMENT, AND EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL

Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field of literary study that examines literary works, traditions, genres, themes, and cultural phenomena across linguistic, national, and cultural boundaries. Rather than limiting literary analysis to a single national literature, comparative literature seeks to establish relationships between texts and literary traditions

and to explore how different cultures represent similar human experiences, social concerns, and intellectual ideas.

The concept of comparative literature has developed considerably over time. Earlier approaches to the field were often associated with the comparison of national literatures and the investigation of direct literary influence. Scholars examined relationships between authors and texts in order to identify similarities, sources, adaptations, and historical connections. However, contemporary comparative literature has expanded beyond the study of direct influence and now includes broader questions of cultural interaction, intertextuality, translation, reception, identity, and cross-cultural representation.

One of the important characteristics of comparative literature is its ability to reveal both universal and culturally specific dimensions of literary experience. Literary works produced in different historical and cultural contexts may address similar themes, such as love, family, conflict, social inequality, individual freedom, identity, and the relationship between the individual and society. The educational value of literature is also significant in language learning. Literary texts can provide learners with rich linguistic and cultural contexts and can be used through a variety of student-centred classroom activities (Collie & Slater, 1987). At the same time, these themes may be represented differently because of differences in cultural values, historical circumstances, social structures, and literary traditions. Comparative analysis allows readers to examine these similarities and differences systematically.

From an educational perspective, this feature of comparative literature is particularly valuable. When learners encounter two literary texts that address a related theme from different cultural perspectives, they are encouraged to move beyond simple comprehension. They must identify relevant information, compare perspectives, interpret characters and events, evaluate ideas, and formulate their own conclusions. Consequently, comparative literary reading can become an intellectually active process that supports the development of analytical and critical thinking.

Comparative literature also provides opportunities for language development in the EFL classroom. Literary texts expose learners to authentic and contextually meaningful language. Through close reading, learners encounter new vocabulary, grammatical patterns, figurative language, narrative structures, and different forms of written expression. Lazar (1993) emphasizes the importance of carefully selecting literary materials and designing appropriate activities for language learners. When two texts are studied comparatively, learners have additional opportunities to use English for describing similarities and differences, explaining interpretations, expressing opinions, supporting arguments, and discussing cultural perspectives.

The educational value of comparative literature is especially significant when learners compare texts from their own cultural tradition with texts written in the target language. Such an approach can activate learners' existing knowledge and make unfamiliar cultural concepts more accessible. For Uzbek EFL learners, the comparison of Uzbek and English literary works can establish a meaningful connection between the learners' cultural background and the culture represented in English-language literature.

For example, Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan Kunlar* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* emerge from different historical and cultural contexts, yet both contain literary representations of love, marriage, family expectations, social conventions, and individual choice. These thematic connections make the texts suitable for comparative classroom activities. Learners can examine how similar social and personal issues are represented differently and can discuss the cultural factors that influence the characters' decisions and relationships.

Another important educational advantage of comparative literature is its potential to promote learner-centered instruction. Instead of receiving a single predetermined interpretation from the teacher, learners can participate in constructing meaning through discussion and textual evidence. They may develop different interpretations of a character or theme and defend their positions using examples from the texts. Such activities encourage active participation, independent thinking, and communication in English.

Comparative literary activities can also support the development of higher-order thinking skills. Learners can be asked to identify similarities and differences, classify information, interpret motives, evaluate social values, establish relationships between events, and create evidence-based arguments. These activities correspond to increasingly complex forms of cognitive engagement and can help learners move from basic understanding toward analysis, evaluation, and creation.

Furthermore, comparative literature can contribute to intercultural awareness. When learners examine literary representations from different cultural traditions, they have an opportunity to recognize that social practices, values, relationships, and individual experiences can be understood differently across cultures. This does not require learners to judge one culture as superior to another. Instead, comparative analysis can encourage them to recognize cultural diversity and develop a more reflective understanding of both their own culture and other cultures.

1.2. Literature-Based Language Teaching in the EFL Classroom

Literature-based language teaching refers to the use of literary texts as meaningful materials for developing learners' language competence. Unlike approaches that treat literature mainly as an object of historical or aesthetic study, literature-based language teaching considers literary texts as resources through which learners can develop linguistic, communicative, cultural, and cognitive abilities. In the EFL classroom, literary texts can provide learners with authentic examples of language use and create opportunities for meaningful interaction with texts and ideas.

The use of literature in language education has a long tradition. Literary texts have traditionally been used to introduce learners to vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and cultural knowledge. However, contemporary approaches emphasize the active role of learners in interpreting and responding to literary texts. Instead of focusing exclusively on identifying linguistic forms or reproducing information about an author, learners are encouraged to engage with characters, themes, conflicts, and social issues presented in the text.

One of the main advantages of literature-based language teaching is the richness of literary language. Literary works contain a wide range of vocabulary, expressions, sentence structures, narrative techniques, and forms of discourse. Lazar (1993) emphasizes that literary materials can be incorporated into language teaching through different approaches and classroom activities, depending on learners' needs, proficiency levels, and educational objectives. Exposure to such language can help learners expand their linguistic resources and develop greater awareness of how meaning is constructed through context. Literary texts can also introduce learners to language that differs from the simplified language often found in conventional teaching materials.

Another important advantage is the contextualization of language. Vocabulary and grammatical structures encountered within a meaningful literary context can be more memorable than isolated language items. When learners encounter unfamiliar words or expressions while reading about characters and events, they can use the surrounding context to infer meaning and understand how language functions in communication. This makes literary reading a potentially effective means of developing vocabulary and contextual language awareness.

Literature-based instruction can also support the development of reading skills. Literary texts require learners to identify main ideas, understand relationships between events, recognize implied meanings, and interpret characters' intentions. Such processes encourage learners to read beyond individual sentences and consider the overall meaning and structure of a text. Through guided literary reading, learners can develop skills such as prediction, inference, summarization, interpretation, and evaluation. Carter and Long (1991) similarly discuss literature as a resource for language teaching and identify approaches through which literary texts can be connected with learners' linguistic and educational development. Their work demonstrates the importance of selecting appropriate literary materials and designing activities that make literature accessible and useful to language learners.

The communicative potential of literature is equally important. Literary texts often present situations involving conflict, relationships, decisions, and social problems that can stimulate classroom discussion. Teachers can use these situations as starting points for pair work, group discussions, debates, role-plays, and presentations. In this way, literature can create authentic reasons for learners to use English to express opinions, ask questions, agree or disagree with others, and justify their interpretations.

Literature-based language teaching can further contribute to writing development. Learners can be asked to write responses to literary texts, compare characters, analyze themes, express personal reactions, or construct arguments supported by textual evidence. Comparative writing tasks are particularly useful because they require learners to organize ideas, establish relationships between texts, use appropriate linking expressions, and present a coherent argument.

The role of the teacher is important in ensuring that literary texts are used effectively. Literary texts may sometimes be linguistically or conceptually challenging for EFL learners. Therefore, teachers need to consider learners' proficiency levels, interests, cultural backgrounds, and learning objectives when selecting and presenting texts. Appropriate pre-reading activities, vocabulary support, guiding questions, and post-reading tasks can make complex literary materials more accessible.

Learner-centered instruction is another important principle of literature-based language teaching. Rather than providing learners with a single authoritative interpretation, teachers can encourage them to develop and defend their own responses to literary texts. Different interpretations can be discussed as long as they are supported by evidence from the text. This approach promotes learner autonomy and encourages students to take greater responsibility for their learning.

In the context of comparative literature, the pedagogical potential of literary texts can be further increased by bringing together works from different cultural traditions. Comparative activities encourage learners to examine how similar themes and human experiences are represented in different contexts. For Uzbek EFL learners, comparing Uzbek literary works with English literary texts can help connect existing cultural knowledge with new linguistic and cultural experiences.

The combination of literature-based language teaching and comparative analysis therefore creates an integrated learning environment. Learners can simultaneously develop their language skills, literary awareness, cultural understanding, and critical thinking. For example, a comparative task involving *O'tkan Kunlar* and *Pride and Prejudice* may require learners to read selected passages, identify relevant vocabulary, compare the social expectations faced by the characters, discuss cultural differences, and write an argument based on textual evidence.

Such an approach changes the role of literary texts in the EFL classroom. Literature is no longer treated simply as additional reading material or as a subject separate from language learning. Instead, it becomes an active pedagogical resource through which learners can practice language while engaging with complex ideas and perspectives. Therefore, literature-based language teaching provides an important theoretical foundation for the present study. Its integration with

comparative literary analysis makes it possible to use literary texts not only for language development but also for the systematic development of critical thinking and analytical skills. The next section examines more specifically how literary reading contributes to English language development among EFL learners.

1.3. Literary Reading and English Language Development. Literary reading can play an important role in the development of English language skills among EFL learners. Unlike isolated language exercises, literary texts provide learners with language in meaningful contexts and expose them to a wide range of vocabulary, grammatical structures, expressions, and discourse patterns. Critical thinking involves a range of cognitive processes through which learners examine information and make reasoned judgments. Facione (1990) describes critical thinking in terms of purposeful and self-regulatory judgment involving interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and explanation. This contextualized exposure allows learners to encounter English as a means of communication, interpretation, and expression rather than merely as a collection of linguistic rules.

Reading literary texts can contribute significantly to the development of reading comprehension. Literary narratives require learners to follow events, understand relationships between characters, identify important details, and interpret explicit and implicit meanings. Through regular engagement with literary texts, learners can develop strategies such as prediction, inference, summarization, interpretation, and evaluation. These skills are essential not only for literary reading but also for academic and professional communication in English.

Vocabulary development is another important benefit of literary reading. Literary texts introduce learners to words and expressions in meaningful contexts, allowing them to understand meanings through surrounding information. Repeated exposure to vocabulary and the opportunity to observe how words function in different contexts can strengthen learners' lexical knowledge. Literary texts can also introduce idiomatic expressions, figurative language, collocations, and stylistic features that enrich learners' understanding of English.

Literary reading can also support the development of speaking skills. Literary texts frequently provide topics that encourage learners to express personal opinions and respond to social, cultural, and moral questions. Classroom discussions about characters, conflicts, relationships, and themes give learners opportunities to formulate ideas and communicate them in English. When learners are asked to defend an interpretation or compare two literary perspectives, they practice using English for meaningful communication and argumentation.

Writing development can similarly be supported through literary activities. Learners can write character analyses, thematic responses, summaries, comparative essays, reflective pieces, and evidence-based arguments. Such activities require learners to organize their thoughts, select appropriate vocabulary, construct coherent sentences, and connect ideas logically. Comparative writing is particularly valuable because learners must identify relationships between texts and communicate similarities and differences clearly.

Literature can also contribute to learners' grammatical and stylistic awareness. In educational practice, Bloom's taxonomy provides a useful framework for understanding different levels of cognitive activity. The original taxonomy includes knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, moving from relatively basic forms of cognitive activity toward more complex forms of thinking (Bloom, 1956). By observing sentence structures and different forms of written expression in literary texts, learners can develop a greater awareness of how grammar and style contribute to meaning. Teachers can draw attention to selected linguistic features without reducing literature to a grammar exercise. In this way, language analysis can remain connected to the broader meaning and context of the literary work.

The development of English language skills through literary reading is especially effective when learners are actively engaged with texts. Passive reading alone may not produce significant language development. Therefore, teachers should design activities that encourage learners to predict, question, compare, interpret, discuss, and respond to what they read. Such activities transform literary reading into an interactive learning process.

Comparative literary reading provides additional opportunities for language development because learners must use English to establish relationships between two or more texts. They may compare characters, themes, social values, settings, or conflicts and explain the reasons for similarities and differences. In doing so, learners practice a range of useful linguistic structures, including comparison, contrast, explanation, justification, and argumentation.

For Uzbek EFL learners, the comparison of Uzbek and English literary texts can be particularly productive. Familiar cultural references can provide a starting point for understanding unfamiliar English-language texts, while differences between the two traditions can encourage learners to ask questions and communicate their interpretations. Thus, comparative literary reading can support both linguistic development and deeper engagement with cultural meaning.

Overall, literary reading can contribute to the integrated development of English language skills by combining meaningful language exposure with interpretation, communication, and reflection. When literary reading is organized through comparative and learner-centered activities, it can provide a particularly rich environment for developing learners' linguistic competence and preparing them for more complex forms of academic communication.

1.4. Comparative Literature and Critical Thinking. Critical thinking is an important component of effective foreign language education because learners need to do more than understand and reproduce information. They need to analyze ideas, evaluate evidence, recognize different perspectives, make informed judgments, and communicate their

reasoning clearly. Literary texts are particularly suitable for this purpose because they often contain complex characters, conflicting viewpoints, social problems, and situations that allow for multiple interpretations.

Comparative literature strengthens this potential by requiring learners to examine more than one text or cultural perspective. When learners compare literary works, they are encouraged to identify similarities and differences, investigate possible reasons for those differences, and evaluate how historical and cultural contexts influence literary representation. This process requires learners to move from basic comprehension toward analysis and interpretation.

Comparative literary activities can involve several levels of critical engagement. At the initial level, learners identify information and establish similarities and differences. At a deeper level, they interpret characters' motivations, analyze themes, examine social values, and evaluate alternative perspectives. At the most advanced level, learners can formulate their own arguments, support their conclusions with textual evidence, and develop independent interpretations.

For example, comparing *O'tkan Kunlar* and *Pride and Prejudice* can encourage learners to examine the role of family and society in personal relationships. Rather than simply identifying that both works address marriage and social expectations, learners can investigate how these expectations operate within different cultural contexts. They can consider why particular characters make certain choices and evaluate whether those choices reflect personal desires, family pressure, or wider social conventions.

Such activities also promote evidence-based reasoning. Learners are encouraged to support their opinions with specific examples from the literary texts rather than relying exclusively on personal impressions. This practice is particularly valuable in EFL education because it combines critical thinking with language production. Learners must formulate arguments in English, select appropriate vocabulary, organize ideas logically, and communicate their conclusions effectively.

Comparative literature can also challenge learners' assumptions. When students encounter cultural practices or values that differ from their own experiences, they may initially interpret them from the perspective of their own cultural background. Comparative discussion can encourage them to reconsider these assumptions and recognize alternative ways of understanding social and human experiences.

The teacher plays an important role in facilitating this process. Instead of providing predetermined answers, the teacher can use open-ended questions that encourage learners to explain, justify, compare, and evaluate. Questions such as "Why does this character make this decision?", "How would this situation be understood in another cultural context?", and "What evidence supports your interpretation?" can encourage deeper engagement with literary texts.

Critical thinking through comparative literature is therefore closely connected to language development. Analysis and interpretation require learners to use language for specific intellectual purposes, while discussion and writing provide opportunities to practice English in meaningful contexts. As a result, critical thinking and language development can reinforce each other rather than functioning as separate educational objectives.

In conclusion, comparative literature offers a valuable pedagogical framework for developing critical thinking among EFL learners. Through comparison, interpretation, evaluation, discussion, and evidence-based argumentation, learners can develop both higher-order thinking abilities and English language competence.

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