

Academic Study of Alisher Navoi's Prose Heritage in Türkiye: Sources, Directions, and Methodological Principles

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ABSTRACT

The study of Alisher Navoi's prose heritage in Türkiye constitutes an important field of Turkish Navoi studies: its historical foundations are associated with manuscripts, translations, and literary contacts, while its modern stage is represented by scholarly editions, dissertations, and specialized philological research. This article examines Turkish scholarship on Navoi's prose not merely as a bibliography, but in terms of research object, methodological orientation, and scholarly results. Bibliographic-analytical, historical-comparative, textual, and comparative-typological methods are employed. Studies of Majalis un-nafais, Muhakamat al-lughatayn, Mahbub ul-qulub, Tarikhianbiyovahukamo, Tarikhimuluki Ajam, Munshaot, Vakfiya, and Nasoyimul-muhabbat constitute the principal material. The analysis identifies four interconnected orientations in Turkish Navoi studies: bibliographic-source studies, textual-philological research, translation-comparative studies, and literary-analytical interpretation. It is argued that the existing philological foundation enables a deeper investigation of the poetics, narrative structure, genre characteristics, epistolary features, and literary reception of Navoi's prose through contemporary literary-critical methods.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, Turkish Navoi studies, prose heritage, textual criticism, literary reception.

INTRODUCTION

Alisher Navoi's creative legacy is one of the major artistic and aesthetic phenomena in the history of Turkic literatures, and its significance is not confined to the framework of Uzbek classical literature. Navoi's poetic and prose works exerted a strong influence on the development of Turkic literary thought, while his artistic and aesthetic views continued to resonate in various literary and cultural environments in subsequent centuries. Therefore, studying the dissemination, reading, translation, and scholarly interpretation of Navoi's heritage in other Turkic regions constitutes an important comparative direction in Navoi studies. Türkiye is of particular scholarly importance in this respect. The preservation of Navoi manuscripts in Turkish libraries, the historical interest in Chagatai literary language and literature, the familiarity with Navoi's works in the Ottoman literary milieu, and the development of Turkological scholarship in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have created a distinctive scholarly tradition of Navoi studies in Türkiye. VahitTürk's comprehensive study of Navoi research in Türkiye likewise notes that interest in Navoi's works and personality has continued from the sixteenth century to the modern period [1].

Navoi's prose works form a distinct scholarly layer within the study of his heritage in Türkiye. Although *Majalis un-nafais*, *Muhakamat al-lughatayn*, *Mahbub ul-qulub*, *Tarikhianbiyovahukamo*, *Tarikhimuluki Ajam*, *Munshaot*, *Vakfiya*, and *Nasoyimul-muhabbat* differ in genre and poetics, together they reveal an integrated system of Navoi's prose thought. The coexistence within one author's legacy of the *tazkira*, historical prose, epistolary text, didactic-philosophical prose, Sufi biography, documentary-autobiographical narrative, and a theoretical treatise on language requires Navoi's prose to be studied as a multigenre and complex literary phenomenon. Early Turkish research focused especially on identifying, describing, and bibliographically recording manuscripts; later scholarship increasingly emphasized transcription, transfer into modern Turkish, the preparation of glossaries and indexes, facsimile publication, and specialized studies of individual

works. Türk's survey likewise classifies dissertations, articles, conference papers, and books devoted to Navoi in Türkiye as distinct groups [1].

From the perspective of specialty 10.00.02 – Uzbek Literature, however, the crucial point is that preparing a text or compiling its glossary does not mean that the literary and aesthetic nature of the work has been fully investigated. The results of textual criticism, historical linguistics, and lexicography provide a fundamental basis for literary analysis, but the poetic structure, composition, narrative strategy, authorial position, genre transformation, and reception of a work in another literary environment require a separate methodological approach. It is therefore necessary to move from a simple bibliographic enumeration of Turkish studies of Navoi's prose toward analytical and comparative evaluation. Rather than merely indicating how many studies exist on a given work, it is more productive to determine which work was examined, from which scholarly perspective, by which method, and with what result.

The purpose of this article is to systematize academic research in Türkiye devoted to Alisher Navoi's prose heritage, compare its methodological characteristics across the principal prose works, evaluate the existing scholarly results, and identify issues that require further investigation within the framework of specialty 10.00.02 - Uzbek Literature.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The source base of the study consists of bibliographic research produced in Türkiye on Alisher Navoi and his prose heritage, studies of manuscript collections, scholarly text editions, monographs, doctoral and master's dissertations, academic articles, and specialized publications. Two criteria guided the selection of sources: first, a study or publication had to be directly related to Navoi's prose heritage; second, it had to be produced within the Turkish academic environment or contribute to an understanding of the scholarly reception of Navoi's works in Türkiye. The bibliographic-analytical method was used to

group existing studies according to works and types of research. The historical-comparative method made it possible to trace the scholarly trajectory of Navoi's prose heritage from historical translation and manuscript traditions to modern academic research. A textual-critical approach was applied to assess the scholarly function of such editorial components as transcription, transfer, glossary, index, commentary, and facsimile. The comparative-typological method was used to identify similarities and differences among the forms of Turkish research devoted to Navoi's prose works of different genres. In the literary analysis, the work was treated not merely as linguistic material but as an artistic and aesthetic system. For this purpose, the model "work - type of research - methodological direction - scholarly result" was employed. This model makes it possible to determine at which scholarly levels each work has been sufficiently studied and which aspects still require further research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The general picture of research on Navoi's prose heritage in Türkiye demonstrates that this scholarly process is not unidirectional. Existing materials reveal diverse forms of academic activity, including bibliographic registration, manuscript description, preparation of critical texts, grammatical analysis, compilation of glossaries and indexes, transfer into modern Turkish, facsimile publication, dissertation research, and literary-aesthetic interpretation [1]. This indicates that Turkish Navoi studies have gradually expanded from source studies toward philological and analytical research.

Vahit Türk classifies research on Navoi in Türkiye according to doctoral dissertations, articles, conference papers, books, and other forms of publication [1]. His observations show that a considerable portion of dissertation research belongs to the fields of language and literature, with historical-linguistic studies of texts being particularly prominent. Some editions combine a transcribed text, transfer into modern Türkiye Turkish, glossary, index, and facsimile [1]. This suggests that a comprehensive

philological publication model has developed in Türkiye for introducing Navoi's works into scholarly circulation.

Majalis un-nafais is one of the prose works that has acquired such multilayered scholarly reception. It is especially important as a primary source for studying Navoi's literary milieu, biographical information about poets and writers, aesthetic judgments of creative figures, and the literary process of the fifteenth century. At the same time, it is not merely a collection of historical-biographical information but an example of *tazkira* prose expressing the author's views on literature, creativity, and artistic mastery. Kemal Eraslan's scholarly editions of *Majalis un-nafais* represent an important stage in its philological study in Türkiye [2; 3]. The integration of text, translation, and commentary facilitates both the reading of the historical text and the interpretation of its semantic layers. Such editions allow subsequent researchers to focus on poetic and literary-aesthetic questions rather than having to reconstruct the text anew.

The analysis shows that a strong textual foundation has been established for *Majalis un-nafais* in Türkiye, while the poetics of the literary portrait in the *tazkira* still requires more comprehensive literary study. When presenting a writer, Navoi does not limit himself to biographical facts; through evaluative vocabulary, concise characterization, textual examples, and individual judgment, he constructs the poet's image. Thus, identifying the relationship between biographical information and artistic interpretation is an important methodological criterion for revealing the literary-aesthetic nature of the work. The relationship between *Majalis un-nafais* and Ottoman *tazkira* writing also requires a distinction between historical-genetic and typological connections. Compositional similarities between two *tazkiras* or common methods of classifying poets do not by themselves prove direct influence. Such a conclusion requires evidence that an author knew Navoi's work, textual parallels, historical contact, and other source-based proof. This cautious methodology enables a more substantiated evaluation of relations between Navoi and Ottoman literature.

The study of *Muhakamat al-lughatayn* in Türkiye reveals another methodological dimension of Navoi's prose. The

scholarly edition prepared by F. Sema Barutçu Özönder created an important foundation for examining the work from the perspectives of historical linguistics and philology [4]. Because the work discusses the expressive capacities of Turkic and Persian, it naturally attracted Turkologists to lexical and linguistic questions. Yet the literary nature of *Muhakamat al-lughatayn* is broader. Navoi substantiates his views not only through theoretical judgments but also through examples, comparison, authorial experience, and rhetorical argumentation. Consequently, the argumentative composition of the work, the function of the authorial "I," the relationship between evidence and example, and the interaction between concepts of language and artistic creation constitute independent literary problems. Studying the work from this perspective can reveal the interaction of scholarly-publicistic and artistic discourse in Navoi's prose.

Mahbub ul-qulub is among the works studied in Türkiye not only philologically but also in terms of content and values. Its didactic-philosophical nature, classification of social groups, observations on human character, and integration of stories and admonitions make it a complex example of Navoi's prose poetics. Textual and lexical study creates the philological basis necessary for understanding the historical text. However, revealing its literary essence also requires attention to composition, the function of stories within the overall didactic conception, the author's evaluative position, aphoristic expression, and imagery. Recent research has also addressed the value system of the work [5]. This demonstrates an expansion in the reception of *Mahbub ul-qulub* from philological study toward content-based and interpretive analysis.

Tarikhianbiyovahukamo and *Tarikhimuluki Ajam* are two distinctive examples of Navoi's historical prose. The former presents Navoi's interpretation of traditional narratives about prophets and sages, while the latter reworks the historical-literary memory of ancient Iranian rulers. These works should be studied not only as sources of historical facts but also in terms of the principles through which history is transformed into literary narrative. In Navoi's historical prose, the relationship among

fact, tradition, and authorial interpretation is especially significant. Selecting, condensing, or expanding an existing narrative about a historical figure, assigning moral evaluation, and directing a historical event toward a didactic conclusion reveal the author's narrative strategy. The textual basis created in Türkiye can therefore be continued through narratological and comparative-literary analysis.

Munshaot is a central source for studying the epistolary nature of Navoi's prose. In the history of its study in Türkiye, Ayşehan Deniz Abik's doctoral research on *Tarikhianbiyovahukamo*, *Tarikhimuluki Ajam*, and *Munshaot* through text, grammatical index, and glossary represents an important stage. The subsequent publication of *Munshaot* as a separate book by Vahit Türk demonstrates the continuity of this direction. The 316-page *Kitâb-ı Münşeat*, published in Ankara in 2020, further strengthened the work's place in contemporary scholarly circulation in Türkiye [6].

The analysis indicates that one of the most important scholarly dimensions of *Munshaot* from the perspective of specialty 10.00.02 is its epistolary poetics. A letter is not merely a means of transmitting information: the relationship between author and addressee, communicative purpose, forms of address, social status, courtesy and request, emotional attitude, and pragmatic intention form a unified textual system. *Munshaot* should therefore be evaluated not only as lexical-grammatical material but also as a literary monument demonstrating the artistic and pragmatic features of epistolary discourse. Differences among addressees and writing situations generate different speech strategies. An address to a person of higher status does not follow the same pragmatic model as an address to a close acquaintance. These distinctions appear in lexical choice, forms of address, sentence construction, the degree of explicitness in requests or demands, and the overall tone of the text. A deeper study of *Munshaot* from the perspectives of epistolography and pragmapoetics can thus bring the results of Turkish philological editions to a new stage of literary scholarship.

Vakfiya is another distinctive example of Navoi's prose. Information on charitable activity, property relations, and waqf matters makes it valuable as a historical and legal source, yet its literary nature should not be overlooked. The author's account of his own activity, the moral and ethical meaning attributed to his deeds, and the linking of personal action with social benefit construct a distinctive authorial image. *Vakfiya* can therefore be studied through autobiographical elements, authorial self-presentation, and the concept of social responsibility. Navoi does not simply record his activity; he places it within a specific system of moral and spiritual values. Documentary content consequently merges with the author's ideological and aesthetic position. The philological publication of the work in Türkiye provides the textual basis required for such literary analysis.

Nasoyimul-muhabbat is one of the most important examples of Navoi's Sufi-biographical prose, and its study requires a methodology different from that applied to his other prose works. The text brings together materials concerning the lives, spiritual status, miracles, sayings, and inner experiences of Sufi figures. It therefore combines features of *tazkira*, biographical prose, Sufi source writing, and artistic interpretation. The relationship between individual biography and the Sufi ideal is central to its analysis. Navoi does not present all biographical details equally; he selects episodes, sayings, and narratives that demonstrate a person's spiritual rank. The very act of biographical selection therefore reflects the author's conception. Recent studies have also discussed the place of such Sufi concepts as *ma'rifa*, *tawhid*, love, *fana*, and *baqa* in Navoi's interpretation [7]. Such research indicates that *Nasoyimul-muhabbat* should be evaluated not simply as a collection of historical personalities but as a prose expression of Navoi's Sufi worldview.

The results further demonstrate the importance of comparatively examining *Nasoyimul-muhabbat* in relation to Jami's tradition and Navoi's mechanisms of creative reworking. Questions concerning which biographies were selected, what new information was added, where the text was shortened or expanded, the place of representatives of the Turkic Sufi environment, and the specificity of authorial evaluation

constitute independent problems for reception studies and comparative poetics.

The materials reviewed reveal another important regularity: genre is one of the principal factors determining research method. *Majalis un-nafais* cannot be fully understood apart from *tazkira* writing and the poetics of the literary portrait; *Muhakamat al-lughatayn* from argumentative and literary-linguistic discourse; *Mahbub ul-qulub* from didactic-philosophical prose; *Munshaot* from epistolary poetics; the historical works from historical narrative; *Vakfiya* from documentary-autobiographical narration; and *Nasoyimul-muhabbat* from Sufi-biographical poetics. Accordingly, existing research on Navoi's prose in Türkiye may be summarized in four principal methodological directions. The first is bibliographic and source-oriented research, in which the identification and systematization of manuscripts, editions, and scholarly works are primary. The second is textual-philological research, encompassing transcribed texts, grammatical analysis, glossaries, indexes, commentary, transfer, and facsimile preparation. A significant portion of Turkish scholarship on Navoi belongs to this direction [1]. The third is translation and comparative-philological research, focusing on historical translations, transfers into modern Türkiye Turkish, and the adaptation of texts to another linguistic and cultural environment. The fourth is literary-analytical research, which is particularly important for specialty 10.00.02 – Uzbek Literature. This direction studies poetics, genre, composition, narrative strategy, authorial position, intertextual relations, and reception in another literary environment. Analysis through these four directions shows that textual criticism and historical philology are relatively well developed, whereas literary-analytical possibilities remain open to further deepening. This should not be regarded as a deficiency of previous scholarship but as a natural sequence of scholarly development, since accurate poetic analysis depends on the availability of reliable texts and philological commentary.

On this basis, the article proposes the model “work -type of research -methodological direction -scholarly result.” The existence of a transcribed text and grammatical index for

Munshaot, for example, does not mean that its epistolary poetics has been fully investigated; an annotated translation of *Majalis un-nafais* does not mean that its mechanisms of literary portraiture have been completely studied; and linguistic research on *Muhakamat al-lughatayn* does not eliminate the need to examine its argumentative and artistic structure. This model makes it possible to identify scholarly gaps in Turkish Navoi studies not in general terms but according to particular works and methods. It can prevent repetition in selecting new research topics, facilitate productive use of previous scholarly results, and strengthen academic integration between Uzbek and Turkish Navoi studies. The same methodological principle may be useful in comparing Navoi scholarship in Türkiye and Uzbekistan. The aim is not to determine which scholarly school is "stronger," but to show what questions have been asked about the same work in two academic environments. If Turkish scholarship has developed the text, glossary, and grammatical features of a work in detail, Uzbek scholarship may have placed greater emphasis on its poetic, philosophical, or generic characteristics. Integrating such complementary results can contribute to a comprehensive study of Navoi's prose. Thus, the study of Navoi's prose heritage in Türkiye is not simply an accumulation of bibliographic facts but a continuous scholarly process moving from manuscript to scholarly edition, from scholarly edition to philological analysis, and from philological analysis toward literary interpretation. Its next stage should combine the rich textual foundation already established with contemporary methods of literary studies.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of materials concerning the study of Alisher Navoi's prose heritage in Türkiye demonstrates that this scholarly process has historical roots, multiple stages, and methodological differentiation. Academic activity that began with identifying and describing manuscripts later expanded to include transcribed texts, grammatical analysis, glossaries, indexes, translation, transfer, facsimiles, dissertation research, and literary interpretation. The analysis shows that the scholarly reception in

Türkiye of *Majalis un-nafais*, *Muhakamat al-lughatayn*, *Mahbub ul-qulub*, *Tarikhianbiyovahukamo*, *Tarikhimuluki Ajam*, *Munshaot*, *Vakfiya*, and *Nasoyimul-muhabbat* is not uniform. The principal reason lies in their differing generic nature. *Tazkira*, historical prose, epistolary writing, didactic-philosophical works, Sufi biography, and theoretical treatises require different methodological approaches. Four directions can be distinguished in Turkish Navoi studies: bibliographic-source studies, textual-philological research, translation-comparative studies, and literary-analytical research. They should be understood not as rigid chronological stages but as mutually complementary scholarly tendencies.

The substantial achievements of textual and historical-philological research in Türkiye have contributed to the establishment of a reliable textual foundation for Navoi's prose works. This creates a ready scholarly basis for contemporary literary studies. Further research should deepen the study of literary portrait poetics in *Majalis un-nafais*; argumentative discourse in *Muhakamat al-lughatayn*; the structure of didactic prose in *Mahbub ul-qulub*; epistolary poetics and pragmatics in *Munshaot*; historical narrative in *Tarikhimuluki Ajam* and *Tarikhianbiyovahukamo*; authorial self-presentation in *Vakfiya*; and Sufi-biographical narrative and reception in *Nasoyimul-muhabbat*.

The model proposed in the article – “work – type of research – methodological direction – scholarly result” – makes it possible to evaluate differentially the degree and scholarly levels at which each of Navoi's prose works has been studied in Türkiye. Such an approach replaces general judgments such as “studied” or “not studied” with a more precise distinction between established scholarly results and questions that remain to be investigated.

Comparative research between Turkish and Uzbek Navoi studies should also be developed on this basis. Integrating textual, linguistic, poetic, and historical-literary results produced by the two scholarly traditions can open new possibilities for the comprehensive study of Navoi's prose. The study of Alisher Navoi's prose heritage in Türkiye thus demonstrates the multistage reception of Uzbek classical literature in another

Turkic scholarly and cultural environment. Advancing this tradition from bibliographic-descriptive registration toward analytical-comparative and poetic study can contribute to a deeper understanding of the place of Navoi's prose in the broader Turkic literary process.

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