



POLYPHONIC POETICS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK NOVELISTIC
TRADITIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GENEALOGY AND
NARRATIVE VOICE

Saparova Mohigul Ramazonovna,

Senior Teacher, Bukhara State University, Uzbekistan

m.r.saparova@buxdu.uz

ORCID: 0009-0008-9941-6482

Abstract. *This article examines the comparative genealogy and poetic principles of the polyphonic novel in English and Uzbek literary traditions. Drawing on Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism, heteroglossia and the autonomy of consciousness, the study argues that polyphony should not be reduced to the number of characters or plot lines. It is a narrative principle through which different social languages, values and historical memories enter into active dialogue. In English fiction, polyphonic tendencies develop through social heteroglossia, the ethical narrator and modernist experimentation with consciousness. In Uzbek fiction, they emerge through the encounter of oral-storytelling inheritance, Jadid reformist thought, historical memory and national self-reflection. The article concludes that the polyphonic novel is a flexible comparative category: it becomes productive only when it is interpreted through the concrete literary history of each national tradition.¹*

Keywords: *polyphonic novel, dialogism, heteroglossia, English novel, Uzbek novel, comparative poetics, Abdulla Qodiriy, Bakhtin.²*

Introduction

The problem of polyphony remains central to contemporary comparative poetics because the novel is the genre most capable of representing competing truths

1. For the broader categories of dialogism and heteroglossia, see Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

2. For Qodiriy's role in Uzbek prose, see Qodiriy, A. (2018). *Bygone Days: O'tkan Kunlar*. Trans. M. Reese. Nouveau Monde Editions; Qodiriy, A. (2019). *Mehrobdan chayon*. Tashkent: Gafur Gulom Publishing House.



within one artistic whole. Since Bakhtin's interpretation of Dostoevsky, the term has indicated not merely the coexistence of many speakers, but the presence of consciousnesses that preserve their ideological weight inside the narrative design. For this reason, polyphony is especially useful for studying literary traditions that developed under different cultural and historical pressures.³

The comparison of English and Uzbek novels is methodologically significant. The English novel was formed in close relation to print culture, urban society, class differentiation and the rise of individual moral consciousness. The Uzbek novel, by contrast, entered modern literary history through the interaction of classical narrative memory, oral storytelling, Jadid enlightenment and the need to articulate national identity in a changing social order. These different origins produce different forms of dialogic narration, yet both traditions reveal how the novel organizes the plurality of social experience.⁴

Main body

The theoretical basis of this article is Bakhtin's distinction between monologic and dialogic artistic structures. In a monologic form, the author's finalizing position dominates the meanings of the characters. In a polyphonic form, however, characters and social voices do not simply illustrate an author's thesis; they confront one another as relatively independent carriers of worldview. Heteroglossia, in this sense, is not decorative linguistic variety, but the artistic organization of social languages, ideological accents and evaluative positions.

The article uses a comparative-typological method. It does not claim direct influence between English and Uzbek writers. Instead, it identifies analogous narrative functions: the decentralization of authorial authority, the coexistence of conflicting value systems, the use of socially marked speech, and the transformation of historical memory into dialogue. This approach also requires caution. A novel with many characters is not automatically polyphonic; polyphony begins where those

3. Bakhtin's distinction between monologic and polyphonic design remains the major theoretical basis for the present article. See Bakhtin, M. M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

4. On the formation of the English novel as a social genre, see Watt, I. (1957). *The Rise of the Novel*. Berkeley: University of California Press.



characters' voices are allowed to challenge, complicate or relativize the dominant narrative perspective.

In English literary history, the novel became a major form for representing social heteroglossia. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction brought together different registers of speech, social manners, moral expectations and institutional discourses. The narrator often remained strong, but the represented world became increasingly plural. In Dickens, for example, class, profession and social environment are heard through distinctive verbal textures. In George Eliot, competing moral and intellectual perspectives are organized through sympathetic but analytical narration.

Victorian fiction therefore does not fully repeat Bakhtin's Dostoevskian model. It usually preserves an ethical center that guides readerly judgment. Yet this ethical narration does not cancel polyphonic potential. Rather, it creates a mediated polyphony in which voices are framed by irony, sympathy and social critique. Modernist fiction later radicalizes this tendency. In Joyce and Woolf, narrative authority is dispersed through interior monologue, shifting focalization and fragmented temporality. The dialogic conflict moves from external social speech into the inner structure of consciousness itself.⁵

The Uzbek novel arose from a different but equally complex literary ground. Before the modern novel, Uzbek artistic culture possessed rich dialogic resources in classical poetry, dastan traditions, oral narration and public ethical discourse. Jadid literature transformed these resources by connecting narrative form with education, reform, national awakening and criticism of social stagnation. The result was not a simple imitation of European prose, but a new genre adapted to local historical needs.⁶

Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* and *Mehrobdan chayon* occupy a foundational place in this development. Their artistic importance lies not only in

5. On the English novel's connection with social structure and historical consciousness, see Williams, R. (1970). *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*. London: Chatto & Windus.

6. On polyphonic tendencies in Uzbek literature, see Saparova, M. R. (2024). Peculiarities of Polyphony in Uzbek Literature. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics*, 3(04), 103-106.



historical subject matter, but also in the tension between private feeling, family honor, social custom, political disorder and moral choice. The narrator does not merely report the past; he organizes a dialogue between memory and evaluation. In later Uzbek prose, especially under Soviet ideological pressure and during the independence period, this dialogic inheritance becomes more complicated. Official discourse, personal conscience, national memory and individual destiny often meet in one narrative field.

The comparison of English and Uzbek traditions shows that polyphony is both universal and nationally specific. The universal aspect is the novel's capacity to make social and ideological plurality audible. The specific aspect is the historical source of that plurality. In English literature, polyphonic tendencies are connected with class mobility, urban modernity, parliamentary culture, empire, gendered experience and the crisis of individual consciousness. In Uzbek literature, they are connected with historical rupture, colonial and postcolonial memory, Jadid reformism, the conflict between tradition and renewal, and the formation of modern national self-awareness.

The narrator's role also differs. English novels often develop a flexible narrator who mediates plurality through irony or psychological analysis. Uzbek novels frequently combine historical commentary with ethical reflection, creating a narrative voice that remembers, judges and questions at the same time. In both cases, the strongest polyphonic effect appears when no single discourse can exhaust the meaning of the represented world. A character's speech, a collective memory, or an ideological position becomes artistically significant because it enters into conflict with other meanings rather than remaining isolated.⁷

Conclusion

The polyphonic novel should be understood as a poetic structure of dialogue rather than as a mechanical accumulation of voices. In English fiction, it develops from social heteroglossia toward modernist interior plurality. In Uzbek fiction, it

7. On thematic dimensions of polyphonic novels, see Ramazonovna, S. M. (2025). Thematic Exploration in Polyphonic Novels. *Ijtimoiy Fanlarda Innovatsiya Onlayn Ilmiy Jurnali*, 5(2), 73-76.



develops from inherited narrative dialogism, Jadid reformist consciousness and historically charged national memory. The comparative perspective therefore helps to clarify both traditions: English fiction demonstrates the social and psychological expansion of voice, while Uzbek fiction demonstrates the connection between narrative plurality and cultural self-definition.

For the research, this framework is useful because it permits the study of genealogy and poetics together. Polyphony is not only a theoretical term borrowed from Bakhtin; it is also an analytical tool for explaining how different literatures transform conflict, memory and consciousness into novelistic form. Future research may deepen this approach through close readings of Dickens, Eliot, Woolf and Joyce alongside Qodiriy, Cho'lpon, Oybek, Ulug'bek Hamdam and other Uzbek novelists.

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