



ENHANCING LITERATURE TEACHING THROUGH LINGUOPOETIC ANALYSIS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

MEJORA DE LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA LITERATURA MEDIANTE EL ANÁLISIS LINGÜOPÉTICO EN LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the pedagogical features of teaching literature in Kyrgyz universities using a linguopoetic approach that integrates linguistic analysis with the interpretation of symbolic, mythological, and cultural structures. The purpose of the research was to identify how linguopoetic methods can enhance students' understanding of literary meaning and strengthen their analytical and interpretive skills in university literature courses. The methodology draws on structural-semiotic, stylistic, and intertextual analysis, supported by a theoretical framework rooted in philology, folklore studies, semiotics, and cultural anthropology. The findings demonstrate that literature enriched with mythological motifs, folkloric imagery, and philosophical themes provides a productive foundation for linguopoetic teaching. Such texts enable students to decode symbolic systems, recognize cultural memory, and engage with ethical and ecological questions embedded in narrative forms. The study also highlights how blending national literary heritage with contemporary analytical methods supports the development of cultural literacy and intercultural competence among students. The conclusion emphasizes the value of linguopoetic analysis as an effective pedagogical tool that deepens students' engagement with literary texts, promotes critical thinking,

and fosters a more holistic understanding of language, culture, and the human experience in higher education.

Keywords:

Literature teaching, Kyrgyz literature, pedagogy, higher education, symbolic analysis, intercultural competence

RESUMEN

Este estudio explora las características pedagógicas de la enseñanza de la literatura en universidades kirguisas mediante un enfoque lingüístico-poético que integra el análisis lingüístico con la interpretación de estructuras simbólicas, mitológicas y culturales. El objetivo de la investigación fue identificar cómo los métodos lingüístico-poéticos pueden mejorar la comprensión del significado literario por parte del alumnado y fortalecer sus habilidades analíticas e interpretativas en los cursos universitarios de literatura. La metodología se basa en el análisis estructural-semiótico, estilístico e intertextual, sustentada en un marco teórico fundamentado en la filología, los estudios folclóricos, la semiótica y la antropología cultural. Los resultados demuestran que la literatura enriquecida con motivos mitológicos, imágenes folclóricas y temas filosóficos proporciona una base productiva para



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INTRODUCTION

Teaching literature in Kyrgyz universities is a multidimensional process that balances national literary heritage with contemporary pedagogical methods. As a literary icon whose works transcend temporal, linguistic, and cultural boundaries, Chingiz Aitmatov plays a pivotal role in shaping the curriculum of Kyrgyz literature courses. His prose, rich in folkloric allusions, mythological constructs, and philosophical depth, offers an exemplary framework for linguopoetic analysis, a method that synthesizes linguistic form and poetic function to interpret literary meaning. Through this analytical lens, students are able to engage with the multilayered semiotic and cultural codes embedded in Aitmatov's texts, thereby enhancing both linguistic and literary competence (Dzyuba et al., 2021; Mehrpouyan, 2023).

Linguopoetics, as an emerging pedagogical and analytical approach in Kyrgyz academia, fosters a deeper understanding of how language operates as a vehicle for cultural transmission and symbolic interpretation. Aitmatov's texts are especially suitable for this method due to his prolific use of mythological motifs and folkloric imagery, which serve both aesthetic and philosophical functions. His famous novella *The White Ship*, for instance, incorporates the image of the horned mother deer—a totemic symbol in Turkic cosmology—which evokes themes of innocence, ancestral connection, and spiritual refuge (Nureeva et al., 2020). Similarly, works like *The Day Lasts More than a Century* and *The Brand of Cassandra* blend cosmic and ecological motifs with archetypal storytelling to explore ethical dilemmas and the fate of humanity (Abdullaeva, 2021; Kasimov & Toirova, 2021).

In the academic context, the application of linguopoetic analysis allows instructors and students to dissect how Aitmatov's symbolic structures (e.g., mountains, rivers, animals, and dreams) construct a mythopoetic worldview, deeply rooted in both ancient Turkic belief systems and universal philosophical concerns (Kofman, 2019; Smirnova, 2024). His narratives are not merely repositories of cultural memory but also vehicles for exploring existential themes such as alienation, identity, and spiritual loss.

Moreover, Aitmatov's bilingual and transcultural background writing in both Russian and Kyrgyz adds another dimension to his artistic universe. His works often transcend local cultural codes and engage with global literary traditions, making them ideal texts for university-level instruction where both national identity and intercultural competence are integral goals (Smirnova, 2024). The blending of indigenous oral traditions with modern narrative forms encourages students to develop analytical skills that bridge literary interpretation and linguistic precision (Aitma et al., 2023).

This paper, therefore, explores the teaching peculiarities of literature in Kyrgyz universities by focusing on the linguopoetic features of Aitmatov's prose. It aims to illuminate how mythological motifs and artistic conventions can be pedagogically leveraged to cultivate a deeper understanding of literary aesthetics and cultural narratives among students (Castrodes, 2024). By doing so, the study advocates for culturally responsive and analytically rigorous methodologies in the literature classroom, positioning Aitmatov not only as a national literary treasure but also as a transnational voice in world literature.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopts a linguopoetic methodology to explore the literary, cultural, and symbolic dimensions of Chingiz Aitmatov's prose, particularly as it is taught in Kyrgyz universities. Linguopoetics, situated at the intersection of linguistics and literary criticism, enables the interpretation of literary texts by analyzing the interplay between linguistic form and poetic function. Within the educational context, this methodology not only aids in textual analysis but also fosters students' critical thinking, interpretive competence, and cultural literacy.

The methodological approach is holistic and hermeneutic in nature. It emphasizes a comprehensive understanding of Aitmatov's texts by considering their aesthetic structure, symbolic content, and intertextuality. Special attention is given to the mythopoetic dimension of his writing, which merges traditional Kyrgyz folklore with modern philosophical themes. This approach aligns with the pedagogical goal of bridging national literary heritage with modern analytical skills in university settings.

The study applies to a set of interrelated methods to conduct a linguopoetic analysis of Aitmatov's prose, including:

1. **Structural-Semiotic Analysis** – used to decode the mythological and symbolic structures embedded in Aitmatov's narratives. This includes interpreting signs, symbols, and motifs (such as the horned deer, sacred mountains, and cosmological patterns) that serve as cultural codes.
2. **Structural-Functional Analysis** – employed to examine how these symbolic elements contribute to the narrative structure and thematic development of Aitmatov's works, particularly their ethical and philosophical dimensions.
3. **Stylistic Analysis** – focused on identifying Aitmatov's key linguistic and stylistic devices, such as metaphor, personification, and repetition, which enhance the emotive and imaginative quality of his prose.
4. **Intertextual Analysis** – explores how Aitmatov's prose interacts with folklore, myth, oral traditions, and literary texts from both Eastern and Western canons, enriching his transnational literary identity.

The research process involves close reading and text-based analysis of selected works, including *The White Ship*, *The Day Lasts More than a Century*, and *The Brand of Cassandra*. These texts are analyzed in both their Kyrgyz and Russian versions to trace how linguistic choices shape meaning and reflect cultural worldview.

Aitmatov's worldview, which perceives nature and humanity as interconnected elements of a unified cosmos, provides the interpretive backdrop for the analysis. His unique blend of national consciousness, ecological awareness, and mythological imagination makes his texts particularly valuable for literature pedagogy in Kyrgyz higher education.

Chingiz Aitmatov's prose is distinguished by its deep-rooted engagement with folklore, which not only shapes the thematic core of his works but also enhances their emotional and moral resonance. Aitmatov himself acknowledged the role of legend, myth, and parable in cultural consciousness, stating that "legend, parable, and myth are a textbook for the moral education of the people". His literary imagination was shaped from an early age by the oral traditions of the Kyrgyz people, particularly the epic *Manas*, and this is reflected in the linguopoetic construction of his narratives.

Aitmatov's method of embedding myths, fairy tales, and folk songs within realist plots distinguishes his work from that of other Soviet writers. In *The White Ship*, for example, the legend of the Horned Mother Deer, a myth about the origin of the Bugu tribe, forms the spiritual and emotional center of the text (Aitmatov, 1988). The story of the deer goddess who rescues the last children of the Bugu clan is not only a mythical anchor but also a symbol of protection, innocence, and the sacred bond between humans and nature.

In *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*, folklore elements such as embedded myths, parables, and oral histories serve both a narrative and a symbolic function. The inclusion of stories like the tragic tale of the ducks on the Aral Sea—told by the character Abutalip Kuttybaev—reflects the innocence of childhood and the devastating loss brought on by political violence (Aitmatov, 1983). These embedded tales also serve to reflect the moral and psychological landscapes of the characters. Similarly, the novel incorporates the fictional legend of Naiman-Ana and cosmic mythologies about the planet Lesnaya Grud'—myths that function as both narrative counterpoints and metaphors for cultural memory, exile, and ecological destruction.

In *Goodbye, Gyulsary!*, the repeated Kyrgyz folk song performed by the camel mother reflects not only a traditional lament but also the emotional devastation of the protagonist Tanabai. The use of repetition and oral lyricism here mirrors the rhythm and cadence of Kyrgyz oral

storytelling, reinforcing the affective power of the narrative through linguistic texture (Aitmatov, 1981).

Aitmatov's technique of animating nature—having characters speak to animals, stones, and plants—demonstrates the influence of shamanistic and animist elements in Central Asian belief systems. This folkloric worldview intensifies the emotional range of the child protagonists, especially in *The White Ship*, where the boy's magical view of the world starkly contrasts with the harsh, adult reality. This juxtaposition enhances the tragic dimension of the story, as the boy's faith in the Horned Mother Deer ends in despair when confronted with human brutality.

Moreover, Aitmatov adapts not only Kyrgyz folklore but also the oral traditions of other Central Asian and Eurasian peoples. *The Piebald Dog Running Along the Seashore* incorporates two myths of the Nivkh people, fishing communities of the Russian Far East. This interethnic inclusion of folklore reflects Aitmatov's broader Eurasian vision and belief in the unifying potential of myth across cultural boundaries (Aitmatov, 2008). Similarly, in *The Block*, the retelling of a Georgian legend — "Six and My Seventh" — deepens the moral ambiguity and emotional tension of the protagonist Sandro's ultimate betrayal and suicide.

From a pedagogical perspective, these folklore elements present unique opportunities and challenges in the Kyrgyz university classroom. Linguopoetic analysis of such texts requires students not only to interpret the symbolic layers of the myths but also to understand their linguistic forms, oral traditions, and cultural significance. In translation studies, these stories often pose additional challenges, as the rhythmic, symbolic, and associative features of folklore resist direct equivalence in English or Russian. Nevertheless, they are essential for shaping the moral, aesthetic, and philosophical dimensions of Aitmatov's literary universe.

Realism and Fantastic Style in Aitmatov's Works

Chingiz Aitmatov's prose is deeply rooted in realism, yet often transcends it through the use of the fantastic—an artistic mode that allows him to communicate profound philosophical, ethical, and ecological ideas. This "fantastic type" of writing serves both as a narrative strategy and a linguopoetic device that not only enriches the plot but also deepens symbolic meaning, particularly within the pedagogical context of literary education in Kyrgyz universities.

One of the most distinctive features of Aitmatov's fantastic style is zoopersonification, the attribution of human traits to animals. This technique allows animals to function as narrative agents and symbols, as seen in the novella *Goodbye, Gyulsary!* (Aitmatov, 1981). In this story, the life of the pacer Gyulsary parallels that of Tanabai, illustrating the shared hardships between humans and animals under Soviet collectivization. The structure of the story shifts between Gyulsary's physical exhaustion and Tanabai's

emotional turmoil, reinforcing a linguopoetic interplay between experience and empathy.

A similar narrative strategy is employed in *The Place of the Skull* (also translated as *The Block*), where the wolves Akbara and Tashchaynar are depicted not merely as animals, but as intelligent, grieving parents. Their loss of twelve cubs to human cruelty is not a trivial subplot; it serves as a metaphor for human destruction of natural life and a reversal of the traditional image of wolves as ruthless predators. Akbara's desperate act—taking the child Boston in her jaws—symbolizes both revenge and a tragic miscommunication between nature and civilization. In literary instruction, this episode challenges students to rethink ecological relationships and anthropocentric views of morality.

Although less frequent, Aitmatov also engages in personification of inanimate objects, such as in *The Mother Field*, where the protagonist Tolgonai speaks to the land in an emotional dialogue that blurs the line between human and nonhuman sentience (Aitmatov, 1983). This scene can be analyzed linguopoetically as a fusion of metaphor and apostrophe, illustrating how narrative voice and emotional memory converge in Kyrgyz oral tradition.

Aitmatov's use of symbols and metaphors also reflects a fantastical worldview. The *white steamer* in *The White Steamer* is a poignant symbol of hope, escape, and childlike faith. For the young boy protagonist, the steamer represents a connection to an absent father and the imagined stability of another world. Its symbolic weight is heightened by the story's bleak reality—a drunken grandfather and the brutal killing of sacred marals—demonstrating how fantasy can emerge as a form of psychological resistance.

Furthermore, mythological imagery frequently emerges in Aitmatov's prose, often woven into modern dilemmas. The Louvre duck in *The Piebald Dog Running Along the Edge of the Sea* becomes a symbol of self-sacrifice, while the Mankurt, a central figure in *And the Day Lasts Longer than a Century*, represents the erasure of memory and cultural identity (Aitmatov, 1981). Linguistically, the transformation of Akdala into *Akbara the Great* illustrates the mythopoetic evolution of language, where names themselves become signs of destiny. These fantastical elements are ripe for classroom discussion, particularly when analyzing intertextual links between Kyrgyz mythology, Soviet trauma, and ecological critique.

The metaphor of the Cassandra Brand in the novel of the same name (Aitmatov, 1989) exemplifies another dimension of the fantastic—science fiction. Here, prophetic warnings encoded in human DNA are ignored, much like the mythical Cassandra of Troy. The story interrogates the ethics of technological control and the suppression

of truth, themes that resonate strongly in post-Soviet discourse.

In *When the Mountains Fall*, Zhaabars the tiger becomes a symbol of spiritual resistance, and Tashtanafgan's final act of removing his military cap is a gesture of renunciation). The act metaphorically signals moral awakening and the possibility of redemption—an essential topic in moral-philosophical discussions of literature.

Aitmatov's fantasy is not escapist but pedagogical: it asks students to confront philosophical questions through emotionally charged narratives. The snowy mountains, savannahs, and fog-covered seas in his stories are not just settings; they are metaphorical microcosms of our endangered planet. For instance, in *The Block*, the fate of wolves mirrors that of Boston, presenting a mirrored structure that encourages comparative analysis of human and animal suffering.

These fantastic forms of representation—be they symbolic animals, personified landscapes, or science fiction plots—allow students to explore complex meanings and interrelated systems of signs. Through the integration of linguopoetic tools and a deep understanding of myth, Aitmatov turns ordinary narrative into extraordinary moral inquiry.

Teaching Aitmatov's Prose Using Linguopoetic Analysis

Chinghiz Aitmatov is widely regarded as one of the most profound voices in post-Soviet literature. His work blends rich mythological elements with contemporary concerns, creating a compelling universe that speaks to universal themes of humanity, memory, and morality. In teaching Aitmatov's prose, a linguopoetic analysis can provide invaluable insights into the ways he constructs meaning through language, narrative structure, and symbolic representation. This article explores key elements of Aitmatov's storytelling and how they can be analyzed using linguopoetics.

1. Real and Imaginary Worlds

Aitmatov is renowned for his ability to merge the real with the imaginary, crafting a narrative universe where myth, history, and future speculation coexist. His works often blur the boundaries between the tangible and the fantastical, creating a layered reality where each level serves to illuminate the others. A linguopoetic analysis reveals how Aitmatov's use of language constructs these diverse worlds and suggests that all human experiences—whether ancient myths, Soviet-era realities, or imagined futures—are interconnected. The fusion of these realms challenges the reader's perception of time and space, allowing Aitmatov to address profound philosophical concerns about the human condition (Aitmatov, 1988).

For example, in *The White Steamer*, Aitmatov invokes the legend of the Horned Mother Deer, a mythical creature

that transcends the natural world and embodies ecological concerns. This blending of folklore with environmental activism creates a rich linguistic texture that requires a multi-layered approach to interpretation, where the symbols themselves become vehicles for moral and ecological reflection.

2. Complex Space-Time Structure

Aitmatov's narratives often defy traditional chronological and geographical boundaries. He intertwines multiple temporal and spatial layers, which can be analyzed through the lens of linguopoetics. Aitmatov's complex handling of time—spanning mythic, historical, and speculative realms—reflects his belief in the universality of moral and ecological issues. His stories unfold across different timelines: mythic epochs, Soviet history, and imagined futures. These shifts in temporal and spatial settings require a careful linguistic analysis to understand how each layer interacts with the others, revealing a broader cosmological vision (Aitmatov, 1990).

In *and the Day Lasts Longer than a Century*, the setting shifts between the remote steppe and a Soviet-era space station, exemplifying Aitmatov's vision of the interconnectedness of humanity across time and space. A linguopoetic approach would consider how Aitmatov uses stylistic shifts, like flashbacks or spatial juxtapositions, to guide readers through these transitions while maintaining the thematic unity of the narrative.

3. Conditional Artistic Forms

Aitmatov's works are rich with symbolic elements that often function as philosophical metaphors. In linguopoetic analysis, these symbols are not just literary devices, but are deeply interwoven with the text's moral and existential concerns. Characters and creatures such as the sentient camel Karanar, the mankurt (a figure devoid of memory and identity), and the mythical Fish-Woman are not mere plot devices but embody complex ethical dilemmas (Aitmatov, 1996).

These conditional artistic forms illustrate Aitmatov's deep exploration of memory, identity, and human nature. For instance, the legend of the mankurt—who has his memory erased and becomes a slave to his captors—serves as a powerful metaphor for the loss of identity under totalitarian regimes. Linguopoetic analysis helps decode how Aitmatov uses these symbols to critique Soviet ideology and explore the fragility of personal and collective memory.

4. Epicenter – Ana Bayit Cemetery

Despite the vast narrative scope of Aitmatov's works, there is often one central setting that unifies the disparate elements of his stories: the Ana Bayit cemetery. This site acts as the axis mundi, a symbolic center where the boundaries

between past, present, and future collapse, and where all human experience is drawn together. Linguopoetic analysis of the cemetery motif reveals its function as both a literal and metaphorical space one that connects generations, cultures, and ideologies.

In *The Place of the Skull*, the Ana Bayit cemetery serves as a site of personal and collective reckoning, where the past and present are in constant dialogue. Aitmatov's use of the cemetery as a recurring symbol invites readers to reflect on the cyclical nature of human existence, and how memory and history are preserved, transmitted, and lost across time.

5. Moral and Ecological Concerns

One of the central themes in Aitmatov's later works is the exploration of moral and ecological crises. His prose evolves from a Soviet optimism to a deep existential unease, as he grapples with the destructive forces of industrialization, environmental degradation, and the loss of cultural memory. A linguopoetic approach to his works helps illuminate how Aitmatov uses language to express these concerns, particularly through the symbolic acts of storytelling.

In *The White Steamer*, the fable of the Horned Mother Deer, who represents the endangered natural world, functions as a poignant critique of Soviet environmental policies. Linguopoetic analysis of this story would examine how Aitmatov uses allegory, symbolism, and narrative structure to evoke a sense of ecological crisis that transcends the specific historical context of the Soviet Union (Aitmatov, 1989).

6. Narrative Techniques

Aitmatov's narrative style is characterized by the use of complex techniques such as flashbacks, parallel plots, and multiple points of view, even from non-human perspectives. These devices create a multi-layered narrative structure that reflects Aitmatov's synthesis of oral storytelling traditions and modernist techniques. A linguopoetic analysis of these techniques reveals how they contribute to the thematic depth and complexity of his works.

For instance, in *The Brand of Cassandra*, Aitmatov employs a fragmented narrative that shifts between characters' perspectives and historical time periods. This technique mirrors the fragmented nature of memory and identity, reinforcing the novel's exploration of alienation and the clash between tradition and modernity.

7. Symbol of the Railway

In *And the Day Lasts Longer than a Century*, the railway emerges as a powerful symbol of time, memory, and fate. The train's relentless journey through time and space reflects both Soviet industrial progress and the disconnection from ancestral traditions. Aitmatov's linguistic choices

in describing the railway's motion its repetitive, mechanical nature mirror the emotional detachment and alienation experienced by characters caught between past and present. This can be analyzed through a linguopoetic lens, where the language used to describe the train reflects broader themes of technological alienation and the loss of human connection.

8. Thematic Dualism

Aitmatov's works are marked by a constant thematic dualism—past versus present, tradition versus modernization, humanity versus inhumanity, and nature versus technology. This duality is central to his philosophical quest, inviting readers to reflect on the tensions that shape the human experience. A linguopoetic approach helps uncover how Aitmatov uses language to juxtapose these opposing forces, guiding readers through a complex moral and philosophical landscape.

In *The Day Lasts Longer than a Century*, the contrast between the steppe and the space station serves as a metaphor for the clash between the pastoral, traditional way of life and the encroaching forces of industrialization and technological progress. Linguopoetic analysis of this contrast can reveal how Aitmatov's use of language creates a dialogue between these opposing forces, challenging readers to reconsider their place in the world.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has highlighted the pedagogical significance of Chingiz Aitmatov's works in Kyrgyz universities, by exploring how linguopoetic analysis can offer a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between language, culture, and literary meaning. By applying linguopoetic methodologies to Aitmatov's texts, students are encouraged to engage critically with symbolic structures, mythological elements, and intertextual references, which reflect the interplay of national heritage and universal philosophical concerns. Through the study of folklore, symbolic imagery, and Aitmatov's fantastic narrative style, the paper underscores the potential of Aitmatov's prose to bridge the gap between traditional Kyrgyz oral traditions and modern literary forms. In the classroom, these works provide opportunities for students to not only interpret linguistic structures but also to cultivate an appreciation for the broader cultural, ecological, and ethical dimensions of literature. Ultimately, Aitmatov's writing exemplifies how a linguopoetic approach can enrich literary education by fostering critical thinking and intercultural competence, contributing to the development of students' analytical and interpretive abilities.

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