
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teaching Methods in Literature: A Comprehensive Analysis of Approaches, Methods, and Techniques with Emphasis on Persian-Dari Literature in Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide a comprehensive and analytical examination of teaching methods in literature, with particular emphasis on Persian-Dari literature within the educational context of Afghanistan. The teaching of literature, as one of the fundamental pillars of the education system, plays a decisive role in shaping cultural identity, strengthening linguistic skills, and fostering critical thinking among students. In the Afghan educational system, the subject of Dari language and literature holds a special position, as it serves not only as a means of familiarization with the rich literary heritage of the country but also as the primary vehicle for transmitting knowledge across all academic disciplines. Despite this paramount importance, traditional teaching methods continue to dominate the majority of schools and universities in Afghanistan, lacking the efficacy required to realize educational objectives. This article adopts an analytical-descriptive approach, drawing upon credible domestic and international academic sources, to first elucidate foundational concepts of teaching methodology and subsequently examine various theoretical approaches including constructivism, reader response, critical pedagogy, and cultural studies. Diverse teaching methods, encompassing both traditional and innovative approaches, are analyzed in detail. Findings indicate that the implementation of interactive and modern methods—such as group discussion, role-playing, storytelling, interactive reading, game-based learning, and project-based instruction—yields a statistically significant positive impact on student motivation, depth of comprehension, and learning retention. Furthermore, the status of literature instruction in Afghan schools and universities is analyzed alongside context-specific challenges, and recommendations aligned with the country's conditions are proposed.

KEYWORDS

Teaching Method, Literature, Persian-Dari Literature, Afghanistan, Innovative Teaching Methods, Constructivism, Reader Response, Critical Thinking, Educational Technology, Interactive Learning, Kabul University

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1. Introduction

Literature, as one of the most significant cultural and civilizational components of any society, carries the values, beliefs, and knowledge of past generations and plays a pivotal role in transmitting cultural heritage and shaping individual and collective identity. In Afghanistan, Persian-Dari literature possesses a long and illustrious history; poets and writers such as Rumi, Sanai, Attar,

Bedil, Khalili, and Herawi have produced works of paramount importance not only within Afghanistan but across the entire Persian-speaking world. In the Afghan education system, the subject of Dari language and literature occupies a special position, as it serves both as a vehicle for familiarization with literary works and the history of the nation's literature and as the most important instrument for transmitting knowledge and concepts across all other academic disciplines. Despite this fundamental importance, research evidence indicates that prevailing methods of teaching literature in Afghan schools and universities remain predominantly traditional, teacher-centered, and based on direct transmission of information, resulting in diminished student motivation and interest in learning literature (Taghawi & Amiri, 1401/2022; Darwishian, 1403/2024).

The central problem in this domain concerns how the process of learning literature can be transformed from a passive state to an active, interactive, and meaningful experience through the improvement and reform of teaching methods. Teaching methodology, or the systematic study of educational approaches, constitutes an organized set of principles, strategies, and techniques that instructors employ to achieve specified educational objectives. The selection of an appropriate teaching method has a direct impact on the quality of learning, the depth of student comprehension, and the durability of knowledge retention. In the field of literature, this selection assumes particular significance because literature possesses a transcendent, subjective, and interpretive nature that cannot be effectively taught through rote memorization and repetition alone. Darwishian's (1403/2024) research at the Faculty of Communication and Journalism of Kabul University demonstrated a direct correlation between professors' teaching methods and students' learning experiences, confirming that methodological selection can substantially elevate learning outcomes (JSS, 1403/2024).

In recent decades, profound developments in learning theories and educational philosophy have exerted extensive influence on the methodology of literature instruction. Theories of constructivism, reader response, social learning, and multiple intelligences have each provided novel frameworks for teaching literature. Concurrently, advancements in information and communication technologies have placed new possibilities at the disposal of literature instructors. However, a significant gap persists between available theoretical knowledge and actual educational practice in Afghan literature classrooms, with many instructors remaining loyal to traditional methods. Khan's (2015) research on the perceptions of instructors at Kabul Education University similarly revealed that despite awareness of innovative methods, many instructors continue to adhere to traditional approaches due to resource constraints and institutional limitations.

2. Review of Previous Studies

Considerable research has been conducted on literature teaching methods at both international and domestic levels. Internationally, scholars such as Rosenblatt (1978), through her formulation of reader response theory, engendered a fundamental shift in approaches to literature education. She posited that reading a literary text constitutes a transactional process between reader and text, wherein meaning is created through this interaction rather than residing inherently within the text. In the domain of constructivism, research by Diesbergen (2012) and Law and Wong (1995) has examined the application of constructivist principles in literature education, demonstrating that constructivist approaches, by emphasizing the active role of the learner, possess substantial potential for enhancing literary comprehension and interpretive capacity. Mustakim, Lebar, and Minghat (2018) found that technical and instrumental components predominate in literature classroom practice, while interpretive and creative dimensions receive insufficient attention.

Within the Afghan context, valuable research has been conducted in the field of education and instruction. Darwishian (1403/2024), in a study titled "Exploring Correlation Between Teaching Method and Students' Learning at the Faculty of Communication and Journalism of Kabul University," established a direct relationship between instructional methodology and learning outcomes. Taghawi and Amiri (1401/2022) investigated the quality of teaching at Kabul University and emphasized the necessity of pedagogical reform. Scholars contributing to *Khorasan Journal*, published by the Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan, have produced numerous articles in the field of Dari language and literary studies that have significantly advanced the understanding and teaching of literature (Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan, 1399/2020). Khan (2015), in her study of Afghan instructors' perceptions at Kabul Education University and the Sayed Jamaluddin Afghan Teacher Training Center, found that despite positive attitudes toward student-centered approaches, structural challenges impede their implementation. More recently, research on Afghan teachers' perceptions of active learning methods (ResearchGate, 2025) has confirmed that while Afghan educators hold favorable views of student-centered pedagogy, multiple structural barriers prevent effective adoption.

3. Defining Teaching Method and Foundational Concepts

A teaching method may be defined as an organized, logical, and purposeful set of principles, approaches, strategies, and techniques that an instructor employs to guide the learning process of students. Teaching methodology serves as a bridge between educational objectives on the one hand and learning outcomes on the other. In educational scholarship, distinctions are typically drawn among approach, method, and techniques. An approach refers to a set of theoretical and philosophical

assumptions about the nature of learning and education; a method constitutes a systematic and practical plan for delivering content based on a particular approach; and techniques are specific classroom activities and behaviors employed within the framework of a method. Anthony (1963) articulated these three concepts in his Approach-Method-Technique model, which continues to hold scholarly authority in educational literature (Taghawi & Amiri, 1401/2022).

In the context of teaching Persian-Dari literature, teaching methodology acquires distinctive dimensions. Unlike the empirical sciences, literature possesses a subjective, interpretive, and transcendent nature; the aim of literature education is not merely the transmission of information but the cultivation of imagination, the strengthening of aesthetic sensibility, the development of interpretive and critical thinking capacity, and the formation of students' cultural identity. Consequently, teaching methods for literature must be consonant with the unique nature of this discipline and provide opportunities for deep and personal engagement with literary texts. Methods that emphasize rote memorization and repetition are antithetical to the essence of literature and cannot achieve the lofty objectives of literature education. In the Afghan context, instructors face the particular challenge of implementing effective pedagogical approaches under conditions of limited resources and infrastructure.

4. Theoretical Approaches to Teaching Literature

Various theoretical approaches to teaching literature have been proposed, each providing distinct frameworks for education based on specific assumptions about the nature of literature, the reading process, and the roles of instructor and student. Familiarity with these approaches is essential for literature instructors, as the selection of methods and techniques is influenced by the prevailing theoretical orientation.

5. Traditional or Transmission Approach

The traditional or transmission approach represents the oldest and most prevalent orientation in literature teaching and remains the dominant approach in Afghan schools and universities. In this paradigm, the instructor is recognized as the primary source of knowledge, and the role entails the direct transmission of information to students. The foundational assumption is that the meaning of a literary text is fixed and objective, and the instructor's duty is to discover and articulate this meaning for students. Kabul University's official website acknowledges that the most common method in Afghanistan is the "content-centered approach," sometimes called the "table of contents method," wherein the instructor selects a list of topics from textbook contents and allocates time for each. While this method offers simplicity, its deficiency lies in insufficient attention to the quality of learning (Kabul University, Teaching Methods). Research has consistently demonstrated that this approach diminishes student motivation and interest in literature, yielding learning outcomes that are typically superficial and impermanent (Mustakim et al., 2018; Taghawi & Amiri, 1401/2022).

6. Constructivist Approach

The constructivist approach, grounded in the learning theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, posits that learning is an active and constructive process in which the learner builds new meaning based on prior knowledge and experiences. In literature education, constructivism holds that the meaning of a literary text is not predetermined but is created through the interaction between reader and text, with each reader producing a distinctive interpretation based on personal experiences, knowledge, and cultural background. In a constructivist literature classroom, the instructor's role shifts from transmitter of information to facilitator and guide. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) emphasizes that learning occurs most effectively through interaction with more capable others, a principle manifested in cooperative and group-based teaching methods (Diesbergen, 2012). However, full implementation of this approach in Afghan educational settings encounters obstacles including overcrowded classrooms, time constraints, and the requirement for high-level professional competence among instructors.

1. 7. Reader Response Approach

The reader response approach, rooted in the work of Louise Rosenblatt (1978), constitutes one of the most influential theoretical orientations in literature education in recent decades. Rosenblatt distinguished between efferent reading, in which the reader seeks to extract objective information from a text, and aesthetic reading, in which the reader attends to the personal and emotional experience of reading. Reader response pedagogy emphasizes aesthetic reading and maintains that readers should respond to texts freely and articulate their reading experiences. A key principle is that no response is inherently incorrect; each response reflects the reader's genuine experience and possesses its own validity. Research by Iskhak, Mujiyanto, and Hartono (2020) has demonstrated that this approach enhances student motivation, engagement, and comprehension of literary texts.

8. Critical Approach

The critical approach to literature education, derived from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and the work of Paulo Freire, maintains that literature instruction should not focus solely on understanding and appreciating texts but should empower students

to critique and analyze power structures, ideologies, and social representations within literary works. In the Afghan context, this approach assumes particular significance, as Persian-Dari literary texts—from Saadi's *Golestan* to contemporary Afghan poetry—contain deep social and political layers whose critical analysis can contribute to a better understanding of Afghan society and its cultural history. Freire emphasized that education should be a liberatory process, transforming students from passive recipients of information into active social agents.

1.9 Cultural Approach

The cultural approach is predicated on the assumption that literature reflects the culture of the society in which it is created, and that deep understanding of a literary work requires knowledge of its cultural, historical, and social context. In Afghanistan, this approach is especially valuable, as Persian-Dari literary texts—from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* to contemporary Afghan poetry—carry profound cultural values and symbols that cannot be fully understood without cultural contextualization. Professor Sakai (Mohammad Younis Toghyan Sakai), a distinguished professor at Kabul University who taught history of literature and epic literature for 38 years and authored six textbooks for literature students, exemplified the cultural approach in Afghan literature education. His works, including "Understanding Ferdowsi and the *Shahnameh*" and "History of Literature in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries AH," represent outstanding examples of culturally grounded literary pedagogy in Afghanistan.

1.10 Methods of Teaching Literature

Methods of teaching literature encompass a broad spectrum of pedagogical approaches, ranging from fully teacher-centered and traditional methods to fully student-centered and innovative ones. The following sections examine the most significant of these methods.

1) Table 1: Comparative Overview of Literature Teaching Methods

Method	Instructor Role	Student Role	Key Advantages	Key Limitations
Lecture	Information transmitter	Passive listener	Rapid information delivery	Student passivity
Group Discussion	Facilitator	Active participant	Critical thinking development	Unequal participation
Role-Playing	Director/Guide	Active performer	Deep character understanding	Time constraints
Storytelling	Narrator/Facilitator	Listener/Creator	Emotional engagement	Requires instructor skill
Interactive Reading	Reading guide	Active reader	Improved comprehension	Time-intensive
Problem-Solving	Question designer	Analyst/Solver	Critical thinking fostered	Difficult to design
Field Trip	Visit guide	Active observer	Direct experience	Cost and logistics
Game-Based	Game designer	Player/Learner	Increased motivation	Risk of distraction
Project-Based	Advisor/Guide	Producer/Creator	Multi-skill development	Complex and time-consuming
Flipped Classroom	Content designer/Facilitator	Self-directed learner	Optimal class time use	Technology access needed

1.11 Lecture Method

The lecture method remains the most widely used approach in Afghan educational institutions. The instructor devotes the majority of class time to oral presentation while students assume the role of listeners and note-takers. Kabul University's Faculty of National Languages and Literature employs various methods including lectures, seminars, practical work, CBL, and PBL approaches; however, lecturing continues to dominate (ku.edu.af, Teaching Methods). While effective for rapid information transfer, this method perpetuates student passivity and typically yields superficial learning outcomes (Darwishian, 1403/2024).

1.12Group Discussion Method

Group discussion represents one of the most effective interactive methods in literature teaching. Students are divided into small groups to discuss specific questions or topics related to a literary text, with the instructor serving as facilitator. Grounded in constructivist and Vygotskyan social learning principles, this method develops communication skills, strengthens critical thinking, and promotes deeper textual comprehension.

1.13 Role-Playing and Dramatic Reading

Role-playing and dramatic reading are interactive and creative techniques in literature instruction. Students assume the roles of characters from a story or play, engaging with texts from the characters' perspectives. In the Persian-Dari literary tradition, dramatic reading is particularly effective for teaching classical poetry and drama. Professor Seddiqa Rostampour, a graduate of the Faculty of Persian Language and Literature at Kabul University, conducts poetry recitation courses with a 30% theoretical and 70% practical methodology, exemplifying effective implementation of this approach in Afghanistan.

1.14 Storytelling Method

Storytelling is among the oldest and most natural methods of knowledge transmission in human history and holds particular relevance for Persian-Dari literature education. In Afghanistan, the tradition of narration and storytelling has deep historical roots, from Shahnameh recitation to traditional narrative performances. Qari Abdullah, Malik al-Shu'ara of Afghanistan, devoted over four decades to education and textbook authorship at the Ministry of Education's Dar al-Ta'lif, making foundational contributions to the institutionalization of what is today recognized as literature in Afghanistan (IranNamag; Wikipedia, Qari Abdullah).

1.15 Interactive Reading and Reader Response

Interactive reading, developed on the basis of Rosenblatt's reader response theory, emphasizes active student engagement with literary texts during the reading process. Students record their reactions, questions, and interpretations while reading and subsequently share these notes in class. Research demonstrates that interactive reading improves reading comprehension, enhances critical thinking, and elevates interpretive ability (Iskhak et al., 2020).

1.16 Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking

The problem-solving method emphasizes empowering students to analyze, evaluate, and render judgments about literary texts. Instructors pose challenging questions that require deep analysis and logical reasoning, pushing students beyond surface-level comprehension. In the Persian-Dari literary tradition, texts are rich in ambiguity, symbolism, and multiple layers of meaning that demand critical analysis and interpretation.

1.17 Field Trip Method

The field trip method is based on the principle of "learning through direct experience" and takes students beyond the classroom into real-world environments. In Afghanistan, this method can include visits to the tombs of great poets and writers, museums, historical libraries, and cultural sites. Afghanistan possesses numerous cultural and literary sites, including Bedil's tomb in Kabul, the Shahnameh memorial in Ghazni, and historical sites in Balkh and Herat, all of which can provide enriching educational experiences.

1.18 Game-Based Learning and Gamification

Game-based learning and gamification integrate game elements such as competition, scoring, challenges, and rewards into the educational process to enhance student motivation and engagement. In Persian-Dari literature education, poetry recitation competitions, vocabulary games, and interpretive challenges are practical applications of this approach. The tradition of musha'ira (poetry competition) holds a long-standing place in Afghan literary culture.

1.19 Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is an approach in which students learn concepts and skills through the execution of real and meaningful projects. In Afghan literature education, projects may include producing literary podcasts, creating promotional videos about literary works, designing literary exhibitions, compiling class literary magazines, and creative rewriting of classical stories. This method promotes active, self-directed, and collaborative learning while developing skills beyond literary knowledge per se.

1.20 Flipped Classroom

The flipped classroom inverts the traditional class structure: students study theoretical material before class through digital resources, and class time is devoted to interactive activities, discussion, and practical work. While this method shows promise for literature instruction, its implementation in Afghanistan requires student access to technology and digital resources, which remains challenging in many regions of the country.

1.21 Techniques and Strategies for Teaching Persian-Dari Literature in Afghanistan

Beyond general teaching methods, specific techniques exist for teaching Persian-Dari literature within the Afghan context, designed with attention to the unique characteristics of Dari literature and the cultural and social conditions of Afghanistan. These include: (1) Utilization of literary recitations and music, leveraging the unique musical qualities of Dari poetry; (2) Multimedia instruction, incorporating text, images, audio, and video—platforms such as Begum Academy, Afghanistan's first online educational

platform, have demonstrated the potential of multimedia in Afghan education; (3) Musha'ira and poetry recitation competitions, drawing on a deep-rooted tradition in Afghan literary culture; (4) Rewriting and creative reimagining of classical texts, which requires students to deeply understand original texts before producing contemporary adaptations; and (5) The concept attainment model, an inductive and discovery-based method developed by Bruner for teaching abstract literary concepts such as rhetorical devices and poetic styles.

1.22 The Status of Literature Teaching in Afghan Schools and Universities

Kabul University, established in 1932 (1311 AH) as Afghanistan's oldest and largest institution of higher education, houses the Department of Dari Language and Literature within the Faculty of Letters, tasked with training researchers, writers, translators, and professional instructors of Dari language and literature. The recent establishment of a doctoral program in Dari language and literature at Kabul University signals growing attention to elevating the standard of literary education at advanced levels (ku.edu.af; khorasanzameen.net). Kabul Education University (KEU) plays a significant role in training teachers and literature instructors, publishing the National Journal of Language and Literature and conducting training workshops for faculty members. A recent workshop titled "Utilization of the National Journal of Language and Literature" was conducted for faculty of the Language and Literature Department, demonstrating institutional commitment to academic development (keu.edu.af). At the school level, the Ministry of Education has developed the Dari language and literature curriculum for grades 1 through 12. Curriculum documents state that "reform and development of the educational curriculum is considered among the important priorities of the Ministry of Education" (moe.gov.af). Nevertheless, existing textbooks remain predominantly traditional in orientation, with limited interactive and creative activities. Qari Abdullah devoted over forty years to authoring and revising textbooks at the Ministry of Education's Dar al-Ta'lif, making seminal contributions to the formation of literature education in Afghan schools; however, systematic review and updating of textbooks in alignment with modern pedagogical approaches remains essential.

1.23 Technology Integration in Literature Instruction

Kabul University's official website references the use of e-learning, defined as "Internet-enabled learning," alongside PowerPoint presentations, Internet resources, digital libraries, and seminars as tools for improving educational quality (ku.edu.af, Teaching Methods). However, technology integration in Afghan literature education faces substantial challenges. Research on Afghan students' satisfaction with online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that the majority were dissatisfied due to limited access to technology and the Internet, with a preference for traditional classroom settings (Kandahar University, 2021). Green (2025) has demonstrated that strategic integration of digital technology in literacy learning can create new opportunities for deeper engagement with literary texts. In Afghanistan, developing the necessary technological infrastructure and training instructors in the pedagogical use of technology remain high priorities.

1.24 Assessment and Evaluation in Literature Teaching

Assessment in literature education assumes particular importance because the nature of literature and its educational objectives differ fundamentally from those of the empirical sciences. Literature education encompasses cognitive objectives (knowledge of rhetorical devices and stylistics), affective objectives (strengthening aesthetic sensibility and empathy with literary characters), and psychomotor objectives (skills in melodic recitation and dramatic performance). Assessment instruments must be capable of measuring all these dimensions. Recommended approaches include: formative assessment (observation of student participation in discussions, review of reading notes, immediate feedback); summative assessment (written examinations, final projects, oral presentations); and performance-based assessment (dramatic reading, storytelling, literary criticism, digital content production). Kabul University's official assessment methods encompass written and oral examinations, seminars, and practical work.

1.25 Challenges and Barriers in Afghanistan

The teaching of literature in Afghanistan confronts multiple challenges that must be identified and addressed to improve educational quality. First, the dominance of traditional methods persists, as confirmed by Darwishian (1403/2024) and Taghawi and Amiri (1401/2022), who both emphasized that paradigmatic shift requires transformation of instructor beliefs and sustained institutional support. Second, textbook inadequacy remains a concern: existing Dari language and literature textbooks are characterized by content density, organization by literary genre rather than skills and pedagogical approaches, and a dearth of interactive and creative activities. Third, resource and infrastructure deficiencies are widespread: many schools and universities lack libraries, computer laboratories, Internet access, and multimedia tools, impeding the implementation of innovative methods such as flipped classrooms and multimedia instruction. Fourth, curriculum density and time pressure compel instructors to select rapid and concentrated methods, leaving insufficient time for interactive and project-based approaches. Fifth, Afghanistan's unique circumstances—including decades of conflict, mass displacement, political instability, and economic poverty—have exerted profoundly negative effects on the education system. Many literature instructors lack adequate professional training, and professional development opportunities remain limited, particularly in rural and remote areas.

1.26 Recommendations and Solutions

1. Faculty Professional Development: Conduct regular training workshops for Dari literature instructors on innovative teaching methods, technology integration, and interactive activity design. Establish professional learning communities among university and school faculty to facilitate experience exchange.
2. Curriculum and Textbook Reform: Revise the structure and content of Dari language and literature textbooks to reduce theoretical content density and increase interactive and creative activities. Textbooks should be designed in alignment with modern pedagogical approaches and the cultural conditions of Afghanistan.
3. Diversification of Assessment Methods: Transition from exclusively written examination-based assessment to diverse approaches including portfolios, performance-based assessment, and creative projects that evaluate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions of literary learning.
4. Strategic Technology Integration: Systematically incorporate digital technologies into literature instruction, prioritizing applications that enable deeper textual engagement. Investment in technological infrastructure across schools and universities, coupled with instructor training in the pedagogical use of technology, is essential.
5. Strengthening Connections Between Literature and Students' Lives: Design activities and projects that establish meaningful connections between literary concepts and students' lived experiences in Afghanistan, including the use of contemporary Afghan stories and comparison of classical texts with modern works.
6. Institutional Support and Policy Action: The Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education should adopt supportive policies for promoting innovative teaching methods, allocate adequate budgets for infrastructure development, and create incentive systems for pedagogically innovative instructors.
7. Contextualized International Benchmarking: Study and selectively adapt successful literature teaching methods from other countries, with careful attention to the unique cultural, social, and economic conditions of Afghanistan.

1.27 Conclusion

The methodology of teaching in literature constitutes a broad and multidimensional domain that plays a decisive role in the quality of literature education and the realization of its lofty objectives. This article has provided a comprehensive examination of theoretical approaches, teaching methods, practical techniques, and the status of literature instruction in Afghanistan, offering a complete picture of the current situation and future horizons. Findings confirm that the transition from traditional, teacher-centered methods to innovative, interactive approaches is not only possible but imperative, with numerous domestic and international studies attesting to the effectiveness of modern pedagogical methods.

In the Afghan context, this transition encounters specific challenges including resource scarcity, the dominance of traditional methods, textbook inadequacy, and adverse socioeconomic conditions. Nevertheless, valuable efforts are underway at Kabul University, Kabul Education University, and other educational institutions. The establishment of a doctoral program in Dari language and literature, the conduct of faculty training workshops, and the publication of academic journals all represent positive steps toward improving the quality of literary education. It is hoped that this research will provide practical guidance for instructors, teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers in Afghanistan's education sector, contributing meaningfully to the improvement of Persian-Dari literature instruction in the country.

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