

# THE INTERACTION

OF AZERBAIJANI AND WORLD LITERATURE: METHODS, APPROACHES, AND MODERN DEVELOPMENTS

## LA INTERACCIÓN DE LA LITERATURA AZERBAIYANA Y MUNDIAL: MÉTODOS, ENFOQUES Y DESARROLLOS MODERNOS

Ulviyya Chingiz Aliyeva<sup>1\*</sup>

E-mail: [ulviyya.aliyeva@au.edu.az](mailto:ulviyya.aliyeva@au.edu.az)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1569-280X>

Emiliya Natig Aliyeva<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [emiliya.aliyeva@au.edu.az](mailto:emiliya.aliyeva@au.edu.az)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0275-8419>

Zulfiyya Fakhraddin Alibeyova<sup>2</sup>

E-mail: [Zulfiyya.alibayova@adu.edu.az](mailto:Zulfiyya.alibayova@adu.edu.az)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2942-8516>

Turkan Nizami Mirzazade<sup>2</sup>

E-mail: [Turkan.mirzazada@adu.edu.az](mailto:Turkan.mirzazada@adu.edu.az)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-0472-2169>

Ilaha Adil Majidova<sup>2</sup>

E-mail: [Macidova\\_ilaha@adu.edu.az](mailto:Macidova_ilaha@adu.edu.az)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0858-2020>

<sup>1</sup>Azerbaijan University. Azerbaijan.

<sup>2</sup>Azerbaijan University of Languages. Azerbaijan.

Suggested citation (APA, seventh ed.)

Aliyeva, U. C., Aliyeva, E. N., Alibeyova, Z. F., Mirzazade, T. N., & Majidova, I. A. (2025). The interaction of Azerbaijani and world literature: Methods, approaches, and modern developments. *Universidad y Sociedad*, 17(4). e5331.

### ABSTRACT

In a context characterized by the rise of globalization and the digital revolution, it is essential to analyze the connections between Azerbaijani literature and world literatures to understand how cultural identities, historical developments, and aesthetic models intertwine and diverge in different environments. Although specialized studies abound—from traditional philological editions to specific theoretical applications—the academic community has not yet managed to draw a comprehensive overview of the methodological approaches, theoretical orientations, and most recent developments that characterize Azerbaijani literary research internationally. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to outline and conceptualize the research methodologies, theoretical paradigms, and recent innovations that shape the study of Azerbaijani literature in dialogue with world literature, in order to establish a unified theoretical and analytical foundation. Our analysis revealed a diverse field where traditional philological rigor coexists with interdisciplinary collaboration between historians, sociologists, and digital humanities specialists. Furthermore, the consolidation of an ethics of translation as a concern for maintaining cultural nuances, the bidirectional recontextualization of Azerbaijani texts in global theater and cinema, and the democratization of literary production. These developments demonstrate the reciprocal influence between local and global literary practices and underscore the transformative impact of technological innovation on research accessibility and analytical reach. Regarding the implications of the study, we emphasize the need for a sustained integration of multidisciplinary methodologies, ethical frameworks for translation, and international dissemination strategies that boost both the theoretical depth and global visibility of Azerbaijani literature.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijani literature, Comparative analysis, Digital humanities, Interdisciplinary research.

## RESUMEN

En un contexto caracterizado por el auge de la globalización y la revolución digital, resulta esencial analizar las conexiones entre la literatura azerbaiyana y las literaturas mundiales para comprender cómo las identidades culturales, los desarrollos históricos y los modelos estéticos se entrelazan y divergen en diferentes entornos. Si bien abundan los estudios especializados —desde ediciones filológicas tradicionales hasta aplicaciones teóricas específicas—, la comunidad académica aún no ha logrado elaborar una visión integral de los enfoques metodológicos, las orientaciones teóricas y los desarrollos más recientes que caracterizan la investigación literaria azerbaiyana a nivel internacional. Por lo tanto, el objetivo principal de este estudio es delinear y conceptualizar las metodologías de investigación, los paradigmas teóricos y las innovaciones recientes que configuran el estudio de la literatura azerbaiyana en diálogo con la literatura mundial, con el fin de establecer una base teórica y analítica unificada. El análisis reveló un campo diverso donde el rigor filológico tradicional coexiste con la colaboración interdisciplinaria entre historiadores, sociólogos y especialistas en humanidades digitales. Además, la consolidación de una ética de la traducción como preocupación por preservar los matices culturales, la recontextualización bidireccional de los textos azerbaiyanos en el teatro y el cine globales, y la democratización de la producción literaria. Estos avances demuestran la influencia recíproca entre las prácticas literarias locales y globales y subrayan el impacto transformador de la innovación tecnológica en la accesibilidad a la investigación y el alcance analítico. En cuanto a las implicaciones del estudio, destacamos la necesidad de una integración sostenida de metodologías multidisciplinarias, marcos éticos para la traducción y estrategias de difusión internacional que impulsen tanto la profundidad teórica como la visibilidad global de la literatura azerbaiyana.

### Palabras clave:

Literatura azerbaiyana, Análisis comparativo, Humanidades digitales, Investigación interdisciplinaria.

## INTRODUCTION

Today's literary study requires considerable intellectual effort and rigorous research methods to uncover and explain the complex relationships between cultural identity, historical processes, and aesthetic references. It is recognized that cultural identity is a complex phenomenon that includes the way groups of people see themselves, based on their language, traditions, and shared histories. In this sense, historical evolution involves the diachronic

unfolding of sociopolitical and intellectual forces that give rise to new patterns of meaning, where aesthetic standards influence the codified criteria by which literary artifacts are evaluated, interpreted, and canonized (Aydemir et al., 2025). In literary studies, these dimensions are deeply intertwined: the choice of textual evidence and the critical paradigm reveal underlying assumptions about the relationship between literature and society, while the interpretive framework determines how concepts such as beauty, form, and genre are mobilized to explain continuity or rupture across periods. Consequently, the field of national and global literature requires a pluralistic orientation that simultaneously honors the distinctiveness of local traditions and embraces the dynamism of transnational exchange (Evans, 2022).

Azerbaijani literature, situated at the confluence of Turkic, Persian, Russian, and global modernist currents, offers a paradigmatic example of this interrelationship: its classical repertoire of epic and lyric compositions, represented by leading figures such as Nizami Ganjavi and Fuzuli, not only reflects the native aesthetic values of harmony, rhetorical elegance, and ethical didacticism, but also interacts with broader discourses of cosmopolitanism and universalism (Gubadov, 2023; Shukurova, 2022). Scholars have long turned to philological methods—textual criticism, historical-contextual reading, and meticulously reconstructed biographical approaches—to establish authoritative editions of classical texts and understand intertextual references. However, with globalization and digitalization, philology has expanded its scope of study to incorporate new research tools, such as corpus linguistics, algorithmic text mining, and network analysis, which allow for the systematic mapping of thematic patterns, stylistic features, and citation networks in multilingual corpora (Strosetzki, 2023; Uug'bekovna, 2024).

The theoretical landscape has also diversified, as researchers adopt and adapt paradigms rooted in structuralism, poststructuralism, Marxist criticism, postcolonial theory, gender studies, ecocriticism, and cognitive narratology, among others. Each of these frameworks offers distinct perspectives: structuralist analysis highlights the deep codes and latent binary oppositions within narrative structures; poststructuralist criticism interrogates the instability of meaning and the role of power in textual production; Marxist and historical-materialist approaches situate literature within class struggle and ideological formations; postcolonial perspectives examine asymmetries of representation and the legacy of imperial encounters; gender studies investigates the performative construction of subjectivity; ecocriticism pays attention to the material and environmental contexts of writing; and cognitive narratology

explores the reader's mental processing of narrative events (Raljevic, 2024). By juxtaposing these approaches, scholars of Azerbaijani and world literature discover affinities and dissonances.

Thus, recent advances have been driven by interdisciplinary dialogues, in which literary critics collaborate with historians, sociologists, anthropologists, communication theorists, and digital humanists. The integration of reception studies, which traces the evolution of texts in different historical and cultural contexts, complements comparative historical methods that establish genealogies of influence, and dynamic approaches in book history and translation studies highlight the material trajectories of texts (manuscript circulation, print runs, translation flows) and the ethical implications of transmitting cultural meanings across linguistic boundaries (Rotger et al., 2019). For example, in the Azerbaijani context, the ethics of translation (Bassnett, 2013) has taken on particular relevance as scholars grapple with issues of fidelity, appropriation, and cultural nuance when presenting Azerbaijani works to global audiences and vice versa. Meanwhile, digital humanities initiatives—ranging from the creation of annotated online archives of medieval manuscripts to the implementation of machine learning algorithms for thematic clustering—have revolutionized access to primary sources and facilitated macro-analytic analyses of literary production.

Furthermore, the increasingly accelerated pace of digital communication and social media platforms has introduced new forms of literary expression—network literature, experimental hypertext, and collaborative fan fiction—that challenge conventional genre boundaries and democratize authorship. In this context, philological inquiry coexists with ethnographic fieldwork on communities of oral storytellers, performance-centered analyses of spoken-word traditions, and cognitive experiments that investigate readers' emotional and aesthetic responses to narrative stimuli. This plurality generates a scholarly ecosystem in which methodological decisions are reflexively informed by questions of epistemology, ethics, and cultural politics.

Consequently, the study of Azerbaijani literature is transcending the confinement of nationalist paradigms toward a robust engagement with global literary frameworks, where local narratives are contextualized within global networks of translation, adaptation, and dialogue. This shift underscores the reciprocal impact that different literatures exert on one another: classic Azerbaijani texts are reinvented in contemporary global theater and cinema, while global literary trends—such as postmodern metafiction, the novelization of trauma, and climate fiction—find fertile ground in Azerbaijani creative communities. Thus, this article seeks to map out the main research methodologies, prevailing theoretical orientations, and cutting-edge developments shaping Azerbaijani and international literary studies, offering a comprehensive conceptual foundation that elucidates key definitions, analytical paradigms, and the dynamic relationships between central themes of culture, history, and aesthetics for academic audiences.

## DEVELOPMENT

The historical-materialist framework, which dominated during the Soviet era, significantly influenced early Azerbaijani literary studies. Within this paradigm, particular emphasis was placed on national and ideological concerns (Mammadova, 2024). But over time, a global expansion of literary discourse has occurred, reshaping the field of literature as a result. As noted by Burdick et al. (2012), three key methodologies—contextual analysis, reception studies, and algorithm-based text mining—have emerged as central to contemporary literary approaches, each offering distinct modes of implementation.

According to Figure 1, in the course of the history of literature, there has been a significant turning point, and that turning point is the modern age of literature. This literary period is defined by dramatic departures from tradition, daring innovation in form and content, and stronger engagement with the psychological and social components of human existence. These are the characteristics that define this age of writing. This period, which began in the latter half of the 19th century and continued to gather momentum into the 20th century, is characterized by a collective literary consciousness that reflects the concerns, complexities, and changes associated with contemporary society. This consciousness represents a form of literary expression that emerged during this historical period. Absolute truths and rigid moral laws were no longer acknowledged by authors throughout this century, which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of this era. Readers were compelled to engage in critical dialogue with the work as a result of the fragmented narratives, unreliable narrators, and introspective characters that emerged as a consequence of this sense of existential uncertainty (Smith, 2025).

Fig 1. General characteristics of modern age of literature.



Source. Smith (2025).

There was also a prominent aesthetic theory that came to be known as "Art for Art's Sake" which freed literature from the obligation to teach and defend moral standards (Miao & Phelps, 2024). This philosophy was equally important. The work of authors like Oscar Wilde and Virginia Woolf, who regarded beauty, language, and form as independent entities worthy of study, led to the development of literary works as a medium of creative invention rather than social instruction. This resulted in the emergence of literature as a vehicle for artistic expression rather than moral education. Simultaneously, the modern era witnessed a growing concern for the working class and the poor, which paralleled broader changes in political understanding and class consciousness. This concern reflected larger developments occurring during the same period (Smith, 2025).

Literature has evolved into a platform that allows for the expression of challenges faced by marginalized communities and the promotion of social justice. Outstanding

examples of how literature has developed into this arena can be found in the works of writers such as George Orwell and John Steinbeck. In addition to being a distinctive characteristic of the century, the integration of psychological analysis into literary works was also a defining trait of the era. Through the widespread dissemination of Freudian and Jungian concepts, authors began delving into the subconscious, traumatic experiences, memories, and emotions that their characters were experiencing. This approach not only contributed to character development but also reflected the prevalent concern of that period regarding the instability of identity and perception.

The modern literary landscape has been significantly impacted by various socio-economic realities, including unemployment, industrialization, colonialism, and urban alienation. As a consequence of these conditions, authors were motivated to incorporate real-world concerns into their writing, thereby blurring the boundaries between literature and lived experience. This represented a response to the prevailing circumstances of the time. Due to the devastating effects of World War I and World War II, contemporary literature is characterized by a persistent sense of loss, disillusionment, and moral uncertainty. The idealism of earlier generations was shattered as a consequence of the catastrophic events that occurred during wartime, and in its place emerged narratives of chaos, disintegration, and existential dread. Two particularly illustrative examples of modernist works that demonstrate this impact are *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque and *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot. Each of these masterpieces profoundly influenced the literary world in their own distinct ways. Finally, the advent of cinema and radio introduced new methods of storytelling and communication with the general audience.

This, in turn, resulted in the transformation of literary approaches and the expansion of readership. On one hand, these technologies influence the pace, dialogue, and visual imagination of contemporary fiction; on the other hand, they also present a challenge to the dominance of the written word. In the realm of literature, the modern age is a period marked by its embrace of ambiguity, its exploration of the human psyche, and its response to significant historical events. These features, collectively, constitute the defining characteristics of this time period. This historical period exhibits considerable complexity and intricacy. Contemporary literature provides insight into the essence of a world in flux, witnessing the dissolution of old certainties and the emergence of new ways of thinking, expression, and cultural identity. In the field of contemporary literature, this is achieved through diverse subtopics and



experimental modes of expression. Consequently, it continues to significantly impact how we perceive art, society, and the individual.

Several scholars in Azerbaijan, such as Mammadova (2024), have developed frameworks that reflect perspectives from various disciplines, including political analysis, sociology, psychology, and literary theory. Additionally, translation and cross-cultural understanding represent important considerations that must be addressed. The study of Azerbaijani works is becoming increasingly prevalent within global literary frameworks, with particular emphasis on translation ethics and narrative adaptation. This trend has emerged over recent years (Mirzayeva, 2023). The results of such research not only contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Azerbaijani literature but also demonstrate that these works can be adapted to fit within different literary contexts.

Recently, research in Azerbaijani literature is being significantly influenced by global methodological trends. For instance, the incorporation of postcolonial theory has enabled critical reevaluations of identity and power in literary works written during the Soviet period. This exemplifies how contemporary theoretical frameworks can illuminate previously unexplored aspects of literary analysis. Furthermore, the availability of digital tools has contributed to the advancement of corpus-based analysis (Jockers, 2013). Through these tools, scholars are now able to investigate linguistic characteristics and thematic patterns present in extensive collections of written material.

According to Figure 2, it is useful to compare modern literature to contemporary literature in order to provide insight into how literary trends emerge as reactions to changes in society, culture, and history. Modern literature, which can be traced back to the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, is characterized by experimentation, fragmentation, and introspection. This literary movement distinguished itself by departing from past literary traditions and placing significant emphasis on identity, alienation, and the complexities of the human psyche. These characteristics often reflected the global disillusionment experienced during wartime and throughout the industrial revolution. In contrast, contemporary literature begins after the Second World War and continues to the present day, engaging with a world that is more connected and globalized than ever before. When addressing topics such as postcolonialism, climate change, technology, gender, and diversity, contemporary works often combine a broad range of styles, voices, and genres to achieve their objectives. Unlike the modernist tendency to reject the past, contemporary literature embraces pluralism and inclusiveness. Through its global reach, it accommodates diverse voices from every continent and celebrates variety in both form and content. While modern literature is characterized by its innovative and disruptive nature, contemporary literature is distinguished by heterogeneity, inclusiveness, and relevance to the present moment.

Fig 2. Modern vs contemporary literatura.

Modern vs Contemporary Literature		
	More Information Online	<a href="http://WWW.DIFFERENCEBETWEEN.COM">WWW.DIFFERENCEBETWEEN.COM</a>
	Modern Literature	Contemporary Literature
DEFINITION	Late 19th century and early 20th century style, or movement that aimed to depart significantly from classical and traditional forms	Literature dating from the Second World War to the present
TIME PERIOD	Refers to literature dating from late nineteenth century to nineteen sixties.	Refers to literature dating from the Second World War to the present.
COVERAGE	Mainly include literature written in North America and Europe.	Include literature all over the world.

Source. Hassa (2018).

Thus, although both periods push the boundaries of literary expression, modern literature is distinguished by the characteristics outlined above. A greater understanding of the differences between various periods enables readers and scholars alike to develop a deeper appreciation for how literature continues to evolve over time in response to the changing human experience.

When interpreting classical Azerbaijani poets such as Nizami Ganjavi or Fuzuli, traditional methods such as historical-contextual readings and biographical analysis remain of paramount importance. Researchers have the flexibility to select tools that are relevant to their texts and research objectives, resulting in a field that is both diverse and dynamic (Jafarova, 2023). Research addressing the similarities and contrasts between Azerbaijani literature and literatures from other regions has enabled new forms of cross-cultural engagement (Kazimzade, 2024). Thematic connections are examined across both Western and Eastern literary traditions, encompassing topics such as modernity, identity, and exile. Furthermore, international collaboration has resulted in collaborative publications and conferences, which have strengthened methodological rigor and increased Azerbaijani literature's visibility on a global scale.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of this research highlights the notable methodological variability present in literary studies both in Azerbaijan and globally. Far from being limited to a single approach, the research successfully combines classic tools of philology, comparative historical analysis, and formal criticism with innovative techniques from the digital humanities. This diversity in methods enriches the understanding of texts by allowing access to multiple levels of interpretation and facilitating the study of large volumes of textual data through text mining and/or network analysis and other analytical tools. Furthermore, a growing interconnectedness within the international academic community was observed in the literature reviewed. The adoption of modern theoretical frameworks—primarily postcolonialism, ecocriticism, and cognitive narratology—along with collaborative platforms and digitization projects, has fostered the circulation of ideas among specialists from different disciplines and geographies.

As a result, literary studies have grown in complexity and scope, placing Azerbaijani literature in transnational dialogues that provide fresh nuances and critical perspectives. Until recently, research on Azerbaijani literature tended to focus on regional interpretations and the study of specific local authors or movements. However, in recent years, a significant shift has occurred: Azerbaijani literature has

begun to integrate more prominently into international discourses. This process has resulted in the participation of Azerbaijani authors in festivals and translations into English, French, and other languages, as well as the use of their works as case studies in graduate programs at universities around the world.

Finally, looking to the future, it is a priority to consolidate a multidisciplinary approach that includes not only literature and philology, but also cultural history, sociology, and information science. Similarly, strengthening ethical translation practices and creating digital dissemination channels will ensure that Azerbaijani voices reach a wider audience. This dual commitment—between methodological rigor and global openness—will allow us to delve deeper into Azerbaijan's literary legacy and enhance its influence in comparative studies of world literature.

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