

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Application of the Dramaturgical Approach in Teaching Classical Texts: Innovative Strategies for Teachers in Iran's Educational System

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ABSTRACT

In educational systems, the effective transmission of cultural heritage to new generations is one of the most significant challenges. Classical texts, as a key part of this heritage, embody not only literary values but also the cultural and historical identity of society. However, understanding and engaging with these texts, particularly for younger generations immersed in contemporary languages and cultures, requires the adoption of innovative educational approaches. This study employs the dramaturgical approach to examine the teacher's role as a dramaturge in teaching classical texts and analyzes how the principles of this approach can enhance the teaching and learning process. The research is qualitative and descriptive-analytical in nature, designed to explore and evaluate the effective use of classical texts in classrooms through a dramaturgical lens. The research methodology involves applying Frankena's deductive method to elucidate the application of the dramaturgical approach in the use of classical texts in classrooms, as well as to define the knowledge and skills required for this approach. The primary aim of this research is to propose strategies for localizing, rewriting, and effectively utilizing classical narratives to enhance students' understanding and connection with these texts. The findings indicate that adopting a dramaturgical approach can significantly improve students' ability to analyze, comprehend, and achieve conceptual coherence when engaging with classical texts. This study also presents practical strategies and exercises for effectively integrating classical texts into classroom instruction.

KEYWORDS

Dramaturgy, Classical Texts, Dramatic Analysis, Formal Education, Teacher Education.



Introduction

Classical Persian literature constitutes one of the most significant intellectual and cultural foundations of Iranian civilization, offering profound insights into ethics, philosophy, identity, and human experience. Works such as *Shahnameh*, *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi*, *Golestan*, *Khosrow and Shirin*, and *Mantiq al-Tayr* have long served as educational resources through which generations have encountered moral values, historical consciousness, and cultural traditions. Nevertheless, the teaching of these texts in formal education often remains dominated by teacher-centered methods that emphasize vocabulary, literary history, and textual explanation while providing limited opportunities for students to engage in interpretation and reflective learning. As a result, learners frequently perceive classical literature as linguistically difficult and disconnected from their contemporary experiences.

Recent developments in educational philosophy emphasize learner-centered approaches that promote dialogue, interpretation, and active meaning-making rather than passive knowledge acquisition (Bruner, 1996; Schön, 1983). Within this context, dramaturgy provides an innovative pedagogical framework that enables teachers to organize literary narratives as meaningful educational experiences. Rather than being restricted to theatrical practice, dramaturgy functions as an interpretative approach through which narrative structure, characterization, dramatic conflict, and symbolic meaning are analyzed to facilitate students' intellectual engagement with literary texts (Carlson, 1993).

From a philosophical perspective, dramaturgy transforms the teacher's role from a transmitter of information into a facilitator of reflective inquiry. Students are encouraged to examine literary narratives critically, interpret ethical dilemmas, explore cultural contexts, and construct personal understanding through dialogue and collaborative interpretation. Despite the educational potential of this approach, limited research has explored its application to the teaching of classical Persian literature. Therefore, this study aims to provide a philosophical explanation of dramaturgy as a pedagogical approach and to examine how it can enrich literary interpretation, strengthen reflective learning, and enhance students' understanding of classical Persian texts within formal education.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive–analytical approach to investigate the educational potential of dramaturgy as a pedagogical framework for teaching classical Persian literature. Rather than examining dramaturgy as a theatrical practice, the research conceptualized it as an interpretative educational approach through which literary texts can be reconstructed into meaningful learning experiences that foster reflection, critical thinking, and active student engagement.

The philosophical framework of the study was grounded in Frankena's model of practical educational reasoning, which establishes logical relationships among educational aims, normative principles, theoretical assumptions, and pedagogical practices (Bagheri, 2015). This framework provided a systematic basis for translating philosophical concepts into applicable instructional strategies.

Purposeful sampling was used to select representative narratives from major works of classical Persian literature, including *Shahnameh*, *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi*, *Golestan*, *Mantiq al-Tayr*, and *Khosrow and Shirin*. These texts were selected because they contain rich narrative structures,

ethical dilemmas, symbolic representations, and educational themes that are particularly suitable for dramaturgical interpretation. Data analysis was conducted through iterative interpretative reading and conceptual analysis. Each narrative was examined according to seven interconnected dramaturgical dimensions: structural organization, characterization, dramatic conflict, historical and cultural context, conceptual interpretation, dramaturgical reconstruction, and narrative coherence. These dimensions were subsequently interpreted from an educational perspective to identify their potential contributions to classroom teaching and learning. To enhance the credibility of the analysis, the findings were continuously compared with theoretical perspectives in philosophy of education, hermeneutics, literary criticism, and dramaturgical studies. Rather than seeking empirical generalization, the study aimed to develop a philosophically coherent framework that demonstrates how dramaturgy can enrich literature education by promoting interpretation, dialogue, reflective inquiry, and meaningful engagement with classical Persian texts. The conceptual framework was developed based on previous philosophical analyses of dramaturgy (Faghedi et al., 2024).

Findings

The findings indicate that dramaturgy provides a comprehensive pedagogical framework that significantly enriches the teaching of classical Persian literature by transforming literary texts into interactive and reflective learning experiences. Instead of approaching literary works solely through textual explanation, dramaturgy enables teachers and students to engage in a multidimensional process of interpretation in which narrative structure, characterization, dramatic conflict, cultural context, and philosophical concepts are examined as interconnected educational components. The analysis identified seven complementary dimensions that characterize the educational function of dramaturgy. The first dimension, structural organization, helps learners understand the internal logic of literary narratives by recognizing relationships among exposition, conflict, climax, and resolution. This process enables students to interpret stories as coherent educational narratives rather than isolated events. The second dimension, characterization, demonstrates that literary figures function as educational models whose decisions, motivations, and transformations provide opportunities for discussing ethical responsibility, identity formation, wisdom, and moral development. Students are therefore encouraged to analyze characters critically instead of merely describing them. The third dimension concerns dramatic conflict, which serves as a catalyst for reflection and learning. Conflicts presented in classical Persian narratives encourage students to examine complex moral dilemmas, evaluate alternative perspectives, and understand the educational significance of choice and responsibility. The fourth and fifth dimensions involve historical-cultural contextualization and conceptual interpretation. Dramaturgical analysis connects literary narratives with their historical and cultural environments while simultaneously uncovering philosophical concepts such as justice, freedom, love, truth, and human perfection. This dual perspective strengthens students' cultural literacy and promotes deeper conceptual understanding. The sixth dimension, dramaturgical reconstruction, emphasizes transforming literary narratives into learner-centered educational activities through dramatic reading, guided dialogue, collaborative interpretation, reflective writing, and creative narrative reconstruction. These strategies increase students' participation and encourage active meaning-making.

Finally, narrative coherence integrates all previous dimensions into a unified educational framework, enabling learners to recognize meaningful relationships among literary structure, philosophical ideas, cultural values, and educational objectives.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that dramaturgy extends beyond literary analysis and functions as a philosophy of teaching that promotes reflective learning, critical thinking, creativity, interpretative competence, and meaningful engagement with classical Persian literature. Consequently, it offers a practical and philosophically grounded approach for improving literature education within formal educational settings.

Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that dramaturgy provides a philosophically grounded and educationally effective approach for teaching classical Persian literature. By integrating literary interpretation with reflective inquiry, dialogue, and learner-centered pedagogy, dramaturgy transforms students from passive recipients of textual information into active interpreters of meaning. This approach strengthens critical thinking, ethical reasoning, creativity, cultural understanding, and interpretative competence while establishing meaningful connections between classical literary heritage and contemporary educational practice. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of preparing teachers to employ dramaturgical principles in designing classroom activities that encourage participation, reflection, and collaborative learning.

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Authors' Contribution

The sole author was responsible for the study's conceptualization, methodology, data collection, analysis, writing, and final approval of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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