

THE EVOLUTION OF LITERARY TRANSLATION IN UZBEKISTAN: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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The evolution of literary translation in Uzbekistan reflects the country's rapid cultural journey. From early translations of Persian and Arabic classics to the widespread influence of Russian literature during the Soviet era, translation has played a pivotal role in shaping Uzbekistan's literary landscape. The Soviet period saw a surge in translated works, introducing Uzbek readers to global classics, though often filtered through ideological lenses. Following independence, Uzbekistan entered a new phase - focusing on both translating world literature into Uzbek and promoting Uzbek literary works internationally. Modern technologies, global partnerships, and rising interest in Central Asian culture have paved the way for more accurate and culturally sensitive translations. However, challenges remain, including a shortage of skilled translators and the need to preserve linguistic authenticity while adapting to global audiences. This article explores Uzbekistan's literary translation journey - past, present, and future - highlighting key milestones, challenges, and prospects for connecting Uzbek literature to the world.

Introduction. The introduction provides an overview of Uzbekistan's rich literary tradition and the role translation played in bringing world literature to Uzbek readers. Literary translation in Uzbekistan has long served as a bridge between cultures, shaping the

nation's intellectual and artistic development. Beginning with translations of Persian and Arabic classics during the Timurid era, Uzbek literature absorbed diverse influences. The Soviet period intensified this process, bringing Russian and global works into Uzbek while shaping local literature through ideological narratives. After independence, Uzbekistan prioritized both translating world literature into Uzbek and promoting Uzbek literature globally, marking a new era of cultural exchange. This article examines the historical evolution, current trends, and future directions of literary translation in Uzbekistan.

Historical Analysis of Literary Translation in Uzbekistan

The evolution of literary translation in Uzbekistan is a reflection of the country's historical, cultural, and political transformations. To understand this journey fully, it's essential to analyze the literary landscape across different eras and examine the methods used to adapt foreign works to Uzbek audiences.

- **Classical Period.** Early translations emerged during the era of the Samanids and later flourished under the Timurids. Works from Persian, Arabic, and Turkic languages were adapted to spread religious, philosophical, and scientific knowledge. Prominent figures like Alisher Navoi incorporated Persian poetic traditions into Chagatai literature, blending foreign influence with local expression.(Bartold, V, V 1928).

- **Tsarist and Soviet Period.** The Russian colonization in the 19th century introduced translations of Russian literature, initially driven by political motives to assimilate Central Asia into the empire's cultural sphere. However, this also brought exposure to European classics. During the Soviet era, translation became a tool of ideological propaganda. Russian works dominated, and global literature was filtered through Russian-language versions before reaching Uzbek audiences. Despite the political control, notable Uzbek translators like G'afur G'ulom, Oybek, and Abdulla Qahhor managed to maintain literary integrity, preserving the emotional and cultural essence of original works.(Abdulla Qahhor 1985).

- **Post-Independence Era.** After gaining independence, Uzbekistan redirected its translation efforts to restore its national literary identity while promoting Uzbek authors worldwide. Global classics, from Shakespeare to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, were translated directly into Uzbek, bypassing Russian intermediaries. Additionally, Uzbek literature began reaching international audiences, with works by authors like Abdulla Qodiriy, Said Ahmad, and Erkin A'zam gaining broader recognition. The rise of modern technologies, including computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools and online platforms, further accelerated this progress.(Baker, Mona 2018)

Analyzing the impact of translation

This study employs a combination of qualitative and analytical methods to ensure a thorough exploration of Uzbekistan's translation evolution.

1. **Comparative Literature Analysis:** Compares original works with their Uzbek translations to assess how cultural nuances are preserved or adapted. Examines Soviet-era translations versus post-independence translations to identify stylistic and ideological shifts.

2. **Linguistic Analysis:** Investigates how language adaptation reflects historical and cultural contexts. Studies how translators balance literal accuracy with maintaining the emotional and artistic essence of the source text.

3. **Historical Contextualization:** Places translations within their historical periods to understand how political, social, and cultural factors influenced translation choices. Focuses on key historical milestones that affected literary translation policies, such as Soviet censorship and the cultural revival after 1991.

4. **Technological Impact Study:** Investigates how modern translation technologies, such as machine translation, AI-based language tools, and online literary platforms, are transforming the translation landscape. Evaluates whether technological advancements enhance accuracy and accessibility or risk losing cultural authenticity.

5. **Cultural Adaptation:** Uzbek translators consistently prioritize cultural relevance over literal translation, ensuring works feel authentic to local audiences.

6. **Soviet Influence:** While many Soviet-era translations served ideological purposes, skilled translators managed to preserve artistic value.

7. **Post-Independence Revival:** Uzbekistan's renewed focus on promoting its literary heritage globally marks a significant shift, with more direct translations from original languages instead of relying on Russian intermediaries.

This analysis not only highlights the resilience and adaptability of Uzbek literary translation but also demonstrates how historical shifts and technological advancements continue to shape the field.

The Evolution of Literary Translation in Uzbekistan: Key Result and Insights.

The results of the study outline three major phases of literary translation in Uzbekistan, each reflecting the country's evolving cultural, political, and linguistic landscape. This multi-phase transformation highlights Uzbekistan's resilience in preserving and promoting its literary heritage.

1. Past: The Classical Period (9th–15th centuries):

During this era, literary translation served as a bridge for scientific, religious, and philosophical knowledge. Uzbek scholars and poets adapted works from Persian, Arabic,

and Turkic sources, enriching the local literary tradition. Under the Timurids, cultural exchange flourished -key figures like Alisher Navoi and Babur integrated Persian poetic styles into Chagatai Turkic literature, laying the foundation for classical Uzbek literary language. Translations were not merely word-for-word renderings; they involved creative adaptation, ensuring the works resonated with local audiences. For example, Navoi's poetic masterpieces drew inspiration from Persian classics but reflected Uzbek values and linguistic beauty.

2. Soviet Era: Russian Influence and Ideological Control (19th–20th centuries):

The Soviet period reshaped Uzbekistan's literary landscape, with translation becoming a tool of ideological influence. Russian literature was prioritized, introducing Uzbek audiences to works by Pushkin, Tolstoy, Gorky, and other Soviet-approved global authors. However, most translations were done indirectly through Russian, causing linguistic and cultural distortions.

Despite this, talented Uzbek translators like G'afur G'ulom, Oybek, and Abdulla Qahhor managed to preserve artistic integrity. They adapted the emotional depth and cultural context of foreign works, blending them with Uzbek literary style. Additionally, Uzbek literature was translated into Russian to promote Soviet ideals of unity and diversity, though many nuances were lost in translation.

3. Present and Future: Independent Uzbekistan's Literary Revival (1991–Present):

After gaining independence, Uzbekistan prioritized reclaiming its cultural identity. Translation efforts shifted toward: Bringing world classics directly into Uzbek, bypassing Russian intermediaries. Works by Shakespeare, Hemingway, Paulo Coelho, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez were translated directly from their original languages. Promoting Uzbek literature globally- notable authors like Abdulla Qodiriy, Said Ahmad, and Erkin A'zam have gained international recognition through translations into English, French, German, and Turkish. Leveraging modern technology -computer-assisted translation (CAT), AI-based tools, and online literary platforms have accelerated the translation process, making Uzbek literature more accessible worldwide. Looking ahead, Uzbekistan aims to expand global partnerships, train skilled translators, and develop translation technologies to ensure both literary authenticity and global reach.

The evolution of literary translation in Uzbekistan is marked not only by historical milestones but also by ongoing challenges and transformations. This section delves into the key challenges faced by Uzbek translators and the role of modern technology in reshaping the field.

1. Balancing Cultural Authenticity and Global Standards:

One of the most pressing issues for Uzbek translators is the delicate balance between cultural authenticity and global accessibility. Uzbek literature carries a rich, poetic, and philosophical heritage, which often relies on symbolism, idioms, and historical references that may lose their depth when translated into other languages. For example, classical works by Alisher Navoi are deeply rooted in Chagatai Turkic culture and Islamic mysticism. Translating such works requires more than linguistic accuracy-it demands cultural reinterpretation to convey the original emotional depth and philosophical essence. Conversely, when translating foreign literature into Uzbek, translators must decide how much to adapt the content. Some argue that overly domesticating a text might erase the original author's voice, while literal translations might feel distant or unnatural to Uzbek readers. This is particularly evident in the Soviet era translations, where ideological constraints led to distortions, yet skilled translators still managed to retain artistic value.

2. Challenges in Literary Style and Emotional Transfer:

A significant challenge lies in translating literary style and emotions. Uzbek poetry and prose are known for their melodic rhythm and metaphorical expressions. These elements are often lost in translation, particularly when dealing with English, German, or French, where the sentence structure and literary traditions are fundamentally different. For instance, Navoi's ghazals and Qodiriy's prose reflect an emotional tone that might feel diluted in more concise, Westernized languages. Translators must creatively rebuild the mood and aesthetic appeal without deviating from the author's intent- a task that requires artistic intuition beyond linguistic skills.

3. The Rise of Modern Technology: A Double-Edged Sword:

Technology has brought both opportunities and challenges to the translation industry. Modern tools like Machine Translation (MT), Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT), and AI-based platforms (Google Translate, DeepL) have accelerated the translation process, making global literature more accessible than ever.

In Uzbekistan, this shift has enabled faster distribution of foreign works and allowed Uzbek authors to reach global platforms. Online archives, digital libraries, and crowd sourced translation communities have further contributed to this accessibility.

However, technology still struggles to capture cultural nuances and literary artistry. Machine translations often miss: Emotional subtleties, Poetic rhythm, Contextual symbolism, Historical and cultural references

For example, an AI-based translation of Erkin Vohidov's poetry might yield a grammatically correct result but fail to preserve his unique patriotic tone and symbolic metaphors. Human intervention remains crucial for literary works to retain their soul and authenticity.

Uzbekistan's literary translation landscape reflects resilience and adaptability, evolving through historical shifts, cultural challenges, and technological disruptions. While modern tools have accelerated translation efforts, human creativity remains essential to capture the soul of literature. By blending traditional methods with innovative technologies, Uzbekistan can ensure its rich literary heritage not only survives but thrives on the global stage.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan's literary translation history reflects its cultural resilience and evolving identity. From early translations of Persian and Arabic classics to Soviet-era adaptations and the post-independence revival, translation has played a key role in shaping the nation's literary landscape. While modern technologies like AI and computer-assisted translation tools have made the process faster and more accessible, human creativity remains vital to preserve emotional depth and cultural authenticity. Moving forward, Uzbekistan's efforts to train skilled translators, embrace technological advancements, and promote its literature globally will ensure its rich literary heritage continues to thrive on the world stage.

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