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TRANSLATION STUDIES IN UZBEK LITERATURE (1930–1970): ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Gulrux Doniyorova
Independent Researcher
E-mail:gulruxdoniyorova92@gmail.com
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Abstract:
This article provides a scientific analysis of the formation of translation studies in the Uzbek literary environment between 1930 and 1970. It examines the expansion of literary translation practices, the establishment of a school of writer-translators, the institutionalization of theoretical thought, and the methodological and practical challenges characteristic of this period. Translation during this era is interpreted not merely as a linguistic transposition of texts, but as a cultural-communicative system that enriched the national literary language, expanded genre-poetic thinking, and connected Uzbek literature with world literature. The article reveals the aesthetic and scientific profile of the period through the activities of such prominent writer-translators as Gafur Gulyam, Abdulla Qahhor, Oybek, Hamid Olimjon, Mirtemir, Zulfiya, and Maqsud Shayxzoda.

Keywords:
translation studies, literary translation, equivalence, adequacy, intermediary language, national color, translation criticism, writer-translator, sociocultural transfer, Uzbek literature.

INTRODUCTION

The period from 1930 to 1970 represents a phase of significant activity for translation and translation studies in the history of Uzbek literature. During this time, the translation process became a vital tool for delivering masterpieces of world literature to Uzbek readers, testing the stylistic potential of the Uzbek language, assimilating new poetic forms, and broadening the horizons of national literary thought. Because this process occurred within the ideological environment of the Soviet era, criteria for selecting works, methods of text adaptation, and mechanisms for adjusting to the target culture were constrained by specific ideological limitations. It was during this stage that not only did literary translation practices expand, but theoretical discourse on translation began to systematize. Recent educational and scientific sources on Uzbek translation studies identify the 20th century, particularly the Soviet period, as an era when translation began to be implemented as a specialized academic discipline and developed with particular intensity.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND TASKS

To analyze the achievements and challenges of translation studies in Uzbek literature between 1930 and 1970 based on historical-literary, theoretical, and poetic criteria, the following tasks were defined:

- To reveal the historical-cultural context of the period's translation practice;
- To evaluate the formation of the school of writer-translators;
- To demonstrate the influence of literary translation on the development of language, style, and poetics;
- To identify the stages of the formation of translation theory;

- To analyze the main methodological and practical problems inherent in the translation of that era.

Research Methodology The article employs historical-comparative, typological, hermeneutic, and poetic analysis methods. The phenomenon of translation is evaluated not merely as linguistic transfer, but as cultural transfer, inter-literary connection, and aesthetic reconstruction. Furthermore, the dialectical relationship between translation practice and theory, as well as the connection between the literary process and scientific institutionalization, serve as the primary methodological foundations.

Main Body Between 1930 and 1970, translation became a large-scale cultural activity in the Uzbek literary environment. During this period, numerous works from world and Russian literature were introduced into the Uzbek language; as a result, translation became an active factor in literary influence, stylistic innovation, and genre enrichment. Educational and scientific sources identify creators such as Hamza, Abdulla Qodiriy, Cholpon, Hamid Olimjon, Gafur Gulyam, Abdulla Qahhor, Oybek, Mirtemir, and Zulfiya as authors of the first brilliant examples of Uzbek literary translation. This list itself shows how intrinsically linked translation practice was with the work of major writers. This intensification of translation practice led to two important results. First, the Uzbek reader gained the ability to engage continuously with world literature. Second, the Uzbek literary language was enriched with new syntactic structures, new figurative expressions, dialogic and dramatic speech forms, and philosophical and artistic vocabulary. Educational resources on translation studies also note that the works of world literature representatives—such as Maupassant, Hemingway, Dreiser, Jules Verne, Kafka, Camus, Pushkin, Lermontov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Nekrasov—reached Uzbek readers through translation.

One of the greatest achievements of translation in the 1930–1970 period was the stabilization of the "writer-translator" phenomenon as a literary event. That is, translation was carried out primarily by poets and writers with fully formed artistic thinking, rather than by professional linguists. This expanded the possibilities for not just content transfer, but also stylistic reconstruction, the preservation of poetic tone, and the recreation of systems of imagery. The involvement of creators like Hamid Olimjon, Gafur Gulyam, Abdulla Qahhor, Oybek, Mirtemir, Zulfiya, and Maqsud Shayxzoda turned the era’s translation practice into a creative school rather than simple "mediation". Specifically, Abdulla Qahhor’s recognition as one of the best translators of A.P. Chekhov’s works signifies that translation also exerted a creative influence on Uzbek storytelling. Sources emphasize that Qahhor’s translations of Chekhov served as a school of mastery for writer-translators. This fact demonstrates that translation functioned both as an act of reception and as a tool for shaping the poetics of national prose.

This is even more evident in the case of Gafur Gulyam, who translated works by Pushkin, Lermontov, Griboyedov, Mayakovsky, Nazim Hikmet, Rustaveli, Nizami, Shakespeare, Dante, and Beaumarchais into Uzbek; notably, he translated Shakespeare’s Othello in 1940 and King Lear in 1956. Sources describe Gafur Gulyam as a master of language who knew the "secrets" of reflecting the ideological content, artistic characteristics, authorial intent, and language and stylistic aspects of a work in translation.

Translation practice during 1930–1970 significantly expanded the expressive-stylistic possibilities of the Uzbek literary language. In the process of translating examples of drama, novels, novellas, stories, and poetry, translators tested new semantic layers, new speech registers, and stylistic structures suitable for various genres. Analyses of Gafur Gulyam’s Shakespeare translations note that he used simpler, more "Uzbek-like" images and comparisons to make the work understandable to the public, and attempted to naturalize the emotional layer of the characters'

speech. Furthermore, under the influence of Mayakovsky, Gafur Gulyam himself attempted to actively introduce poetic construction, boldness in metaphor, and rhetorical power into Uzbek poetry. This information implies that translation was not a one-sided process but a mechanism of mutual influence: as the translator absorbed foreign poetic experience, they also renewed the style of their own national literature.

Another important achievement of the period is that translation gradually became an object of theoretical reflection. Recent sources note that translation studies began to be implemented as a specialized science in 20th-century Uzbek literature, and that this stage was one of its most productive periods. Here, the concept of "science" does not immediately imply a fully institutionalized system, but rather a scientific-reflexive space that developed based on practice.

One of the main problems in the translation of the period is the ratio of direct to indirect translation. Educational resources on translation studies note that during the Soviet era, Russian translators often translated examples of Uzbek literature primarily through taglama, or a literal intermediary text; in these materials, taglama is defined as a tool "prepared specifically for a translator who does not know the language of the original". The study of "direct and indirect translations" as a separate topic in the same materials indicates that this was a serious theoretical and practical problem.

The main danger of indirect translation is the double filtering of semantic layers, the blurring of the author's style, and the reduction of national color. In a work translated from an intermediary language rather than the original, rhythm, tone, connotation, cultural cues, and intertextual layers are often weakened. Therefore, when evaluating Uzbek translation during the 1930–1970 period, it must be acknowledged that while there was a large volume of translation output, not all of it was of the same quality from the perspective of textual and equivalence criteria.

Since 1930–1970 was the Soviet era, the translation process was not free from ideological selection and editing. Although the available sources do not reveal this in full detail, educational and historical materials regarding the period show that translation choices, the reception of works, and translation policy were shaped not only by literary-cultural tasks but also by ideological necessities. Therefore, it can be scientifically assumed with caution that texts translated from world literature were often selected not only for their aesthetic value but also for their ideological "compatibility". This is an interpretive conclusion based on the sources.

Ideological editing had two consequences in translation. The first was that in some works, the ideological accent was strengthened, smoothing out the subtleties of the author’s original artistic intent. The second was that during the "localization" of works of world literature, socio-class terminology was excessively amplified. This likely compromised the adequacy and stylistic neutrality of the translation. Therefore, in evaluating the translation studies of the period, it is necessary to consider not only the achievements but also the deformations caused by normative ideology.

One of the most difficult points in literary translation is finding the balance between semantic equivalence and aesthetic adequacy. The translators of the period were forced to consider both the author's style and the horizon of expectation of the Uzbek reader. As seen in the example of Gafur Gulyam's translations, he sometimes chose a variant closer to the Uzbek cultural code instead of directly transferring the original image. While this method is functionally useful, it does not always provide "full equality" from a philological point of view.

For this very reason, one of the main points of debate in 1930–1970 translation studies was the boundary between "free translation" and "creative translation". It is not a coincidence that these issues were raised as separate questions and theoretical topics in educational materials, with special

attention paid to issues such as preserving the style of the period in translation, national color, the complexity of poetic translation, and the translation of proverbs and idioms. This, in turn, shows that as translation practice matured, its theoretical problems became more acute.

Another relative shortcoming of the period is that translation criticism had not yet fully matured into a systematic and independent scientific institution. Of course, there were articles, reflections, and reviews about translation, but they often remained within the scope of general literary criticism. In specialized bibliographic and educational sources, it can be seen that "translation criticism" was consolidated as a separate field later; for example, materials related to the Uzbekistan Translators' Forum highlight that G'aybulla Salomov developed curricula for the history of translation, translation theory, and translation criticism.

Based on this, it can be said that in the 1930–1970 period, translation criticism was in the process of formation but did not yet possess a strict methodological apparatus, consistent terminological standards, or a system of independent expertise. This implies that even if some translations had high artistic value, the criteria for their scientific evaluation did not function uniformly.

The development of Uzbek translation studies in 1930–1970 should be viewed on two layers. The first layer is practical achievements: the formation of a school of writer-translators, the translation of masterpieces of world literature into Uzbek, the enrichment of the literary language, the expansion of genre-poetic thinking, and the transformation of translation into an independent aesthetic school. The second layer is systemic problems: dependency on an intermediary language, ideological filtering, the problem of balancing equivalence and adequacy, differences in recreating national color, and the lack of sufficiently stabilized specialized translation criticism.

If one relies on result-based criteria to evaluate achievements, it is clear that Uzbek translation of this period was extremely productive. If one relies on methodological criteria to evaluate the problems, one sees that this was a transitional stage where perfect philological standards were not yet fully established. In this sense, 1930–1970 translation studies was simultaneously an "era that created a school" and a "period of theoretical maturation".

CONCLUSION

Between 1930 and 1970, translation studies in Uzbek literature became one of the key factors in the development of national literary thought. The main achievement of this period was the elevation of translation from an incidental activity to the level of a literary school, scientific reflection, and cultural strategy. Writer-translators such as Hamid Olimjon, Gafur Gulyam, Abdulla Qahhor, Oybek, Mirtemir, Zulfiya, and Maqsud Shayxzoda brought the translation process to a high artistic level, expanded the expressive possibilities of the Uzbek language, and assimilated the experience of world literature into the national foundation.

However, the translation of this period cannot be evaluated as an absolutely ideal state. The use of intermediary languages for translation, working based on taglama texts, ideological editing, the difficulties in recreating national color and individual style, and the lack of a fully systematized translation criticism remained its main problems. Therefore, this period should be considered not only as an "era of increased translation" but also as a "period of struggle for the quality and theoretical criteria of translation".

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