

Journal of Language Pedagogy and
Innovative Applied Linguistics
May 2024, Volume 2, No. 5, pp: 57-67
ISSN: 2995-6854
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Features of Translating the Novel "The Days Gone by" into German

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Abstract

This article examines the significance of Abdulla Qodiriy's novel "The Days Gone by" within Uzbek literature and the complexities involved in translating it into German. Through a comparative analysis of translations by Arno Specht (1968) and B. Aripova (2020), the study highlights linguistic and cultural challenges, translation methodologies, and their impact on text perception. The findings underscore the importance of preserving cultural nuances in literary translations and suggest avenues for further research in this field.

Key Words: *Abdulla Qodiriy, The Days Gone by, Uzbek literature, translation challenges, cultural nuances, linguistic fidelity, comparative analysis*

Paper/Article Info

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Berdialiev, B. (2024). Features of Translating the Novel "The Days Gone by" into German. Journal of Language Pedagogy and Innovative Applied Linguistics, 2(5), 57-67.
<https://doi.org/10.1997/hvy96r04>

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1997/hvy96r04>



Introduction. "The Days Gone by" (originally "O'tkan kunlar") is a seminal novel written by Abdulla Qodiriy, first published in 1926. This work is widely regarded as the cornerstone of modern Uzbek literature, marking a pivotal moment in the cultural and literary history of Uzbekistan. The novel provides a rich, intricate depiction of the daily life, traditions, and social dynamics of the Uzbek people during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Through the lens of its main characters, Atabek and Kumush, Qodiriy weaves a compelling narrative that explores themes of love, honor, societal change, and resilience.

Set against the backdrop of the waning days of the Khanate of Kokand and the increasing influence of Russian imperial rule, "The Days Gone by" captures the tension between tradition and modernity. The novel's portrayal of the struggles and triumphs of its characters reflects the broader societal transitions of the time. Qodiriy's masterful storytelling and his deep understanding of Uzbek culture and values make this novel a significant cultural artifact that continues to resonate with readers.

The significance of "The Days Gone by" extends beyond its historical and cultural content. It also showcases the beauty and richness of the Uzbek language. Qodiriy's use of classical and colloquial Uzbek, interspersed with proverbs, idioms, and local expressions, adds layers of meaning and authenticity to the narrative. This linguistic richness not only enhances the reader's experience but also

serves as a preservation of the Uzbek language and its literary traditions.

Abdulla Qodiriy's novel is more than just a story; it is a reflection of the Uzbek identity and a celebration of its cultural heritage. Its influence on Uzbek literature is profound, inspiring future generations of writers and establishing a framework for modern Uzbek prose. "The Days Gone by" remains a beloved classic, cherished for its timeless themes and its contribution to the literary and cultural tapestry of Uzbekistan.

History of Translations

The First Translation Attempt by Arno Specht (1968)

The initial effort to translate Abdulla Qodiriy's novel "The Days Gone by" into German was undertaken by Arno Specht in 1968. This translation, titled "Die Liebenden von Taschkent" (The Lovers of Tashkent), marked a significant step in introducing Uzbek literature to a broader audience. However, the circumstances and characteristics of this translation highlight the challenges and complexities involved in rendering such a culturally rich text into a different language.

Circumstances of the Translation

Arno Specht's translation came at a time when cultural and literary exchanges between the Soviet Union and Germany were becoming more prominent. Specht, a German translator, embarked on the ambitious task of bringing Qodiriy's work to German readers. Notably, Specht did not translate directly from the original Uzbek text. Instead, his work was

based on the Russian translation by L. Bat and V. Smirnov, which had been published in 1958.

The use of an intermediary language, in this case, Russian, was a common practice during that era, especially for works coming from non-Western cultures. This method aimed to bridge linguistic gaps but also introduced additional layers of interpretation and potential distortion. Despite not knowing Uzbek, Specht relied on the Russian version to convey the essence of Qodiriy's narrative to a German-speaking audience.

Features and Shortcomings of the Translation

While Specht's translation made "The Days Gone by" accessible to German readers, it had several notable features and shortcomings:

Features:

1. **Title Adaptation:** Specht's choice to title the novel "Die Liebenden von Taschkent" (The Lovers of Tashkent) rather than a direct translation of "O'tkan kunlar" (The Days Gone by) reflects an attempt to appeal to the German audience's sensibilities and to highlight the romantic aspect of the story.

2. **Cultural Bridging:** By translating the novel, Specht played a crucial role in cultural exchange, providing German readers with a glimpse into Uzbek society and traditions that were otherwise unfamiliar.

Shortcomings:

1. **Indirect Translation:** The reliance on the Russian translation as the source text introduced several inaccuracies and misinterpretations. The nuances and subtleties of the original Uzbek language were often lost or altered, affecting the authenticity of the narrative.

2. **Cultural Misinterpretations:** Some cultural elements and idiomatic expressions specific to Uzbek society did not translate well through the Russian intermediary. This sometimes led to a loss of context and meaning, making it challenging for German readers to fully grasp the cultural richness of the original work.

3. **Omissions and Alterations:** Specht's translation, influenced by the Russian version, included omissions and alterations that reflected the political and social constraints of the time. For example, certain critiques of Russian imperialism present in the original text were either softened or omitted, reducing the political impact of Qodiriy's work.

Despite these shortcomings, Arno Specht's translation of "The Days Gone by" was a pioneering effort that laid the groundwork for future translations. It highlighted the need for direct translations from the original language to preserve the integrity and cultural essence of literary works. Specht's attempt, while imperfect, was an important milestone in the journey of Uzbek literature's global dissemination.

Translation by B. Aripova (2020)

The most recent and significant translation of Abdulla Qodiriy's novel



"The Days Gone by" into German was undertaken by B. Aripova in 2020. This translation represents a major advancement in accurately conveying the nuances and cultural depth of the original text. The circumstances surrounding this translation and its notable differences from Arno Specht's earlier attempt highlight the progress made in the field of literary translation and the ongoing effort to bring Uzbek literature to a global audience.

Circumstances and Purpose of the Translation

B. Aripova, an associate professor at Humboldt University in Germany, embarked on the translation of "The Days Gone by" as part of a broader initiative to celebrate the 120th anniversary of Abdulla Qodiriy's birth. This project aimed to honor Qodiriy's legacy and introduce his seminal work to a new generation of readers. Aripova's deep personal and academic connection to Uzbek culture and literature provided her with the unique qualifications necessary to undertake this complex task.

Unlike Specht's translation, which relied on the Russian intermediary text, Aripova's work was based directly on the original Uzbek manuscript. This approach was driven by the desire to preserve the authenticity and cultural richness of Qodiriy's narrative, ensuring that the translation would accurately reflect the original author's voice and intentions.

The purpose of Aripova's translation extended beyond mere

linguistic conversion. It aimed to provide German readers with a faithful representation of Uzbek life, traditions, and values as depicted in Qodiriy's work. This translation was part of a larger effort to foster cultural exchange and understanding between Uzbekistan and the German-speaking world, bridging gaps in knowledge and appreciation for Central Asian literature.

Differences from Specht's Translation

Aripova's translation of "The Days Gone by" differs significantly from Specht's earlier attempt in several key areas:

Direct Translation from Uzbek:

- **Authenticity:** By translating directly from the Uzbek original, Aripova was able to capture the nuances, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references that are integral to Qodiriy's narrative. This direct approach ensured a higher degree of fidelity to the source material.

- **Language Nuances:** Aripova's command of both Uzbek and German allowed her to navigate the complexities of the languages, ensuring that subtle meanings and cultural nuances were preserved in the translation.

Cultural Accuracy:

- **Preservation of Cultural Elements:** Aripova took great care to retain the cultural elements of the novel, such as traditional customs, social norms, and historical context. She provided extensive footnotes and glossaries to help German readers understand specific Uzbek terms and

practices that have no direct equivalent in German.

- **Transliteration and Explanation:** Unlike Specht, who often altered or omitted culturally specific terms, Aripova used transliteration for names and terms that were unique to Uzbek culture. She included detailed explanations to aid reader comprehension, thus maintaining the integrity of the original text.

Narrative Fidelity:

- **Unaltered Content:** Aripova's translation remained true to the original structure and content of Qodiriy's novel. Where Specht's version had been influenced by political and social constraints, leading to omissions and alterations, Aripova presented the text in its entirety, including politically sensitive passages that had been previously softened or omitted.

- **Enhanced Reader Experience:** By preserving the original narrative structure and cultural richness, Aripova's translation provided German readers with a more immersive and authentic reading experience. This approach allowed readers to gain a deeper understanding of Uzbek history, culture, and the literary prowess of Abdulla Qodiriy.

Modern Translation Techniques:

- **Contemporary Language:** Aripova employed contemporary German language techniques to make the text accessible and engaging for modern readers while respecting the historical context of the original work.

- **Editorial Support:** The translation benefited from modern editorial practices, including peer reviews and feedback from both literary scholars and native speakers, which helped to refine the translation and ensure its accuracy and readability.

Difficulties in Translating Culturally Specific Terms and Expressions

Translating a novel as culturally rich and linguistically nuanced as "The Days Gone by" presents several challenges, particularly when it comes to culturally specific terms and expressions. Abdulla Qodiriy's work is deeply embedded in the fabric of Uzbek culture, reflecting its traditions, social norms, and historical context. Translating such a text into another language, like German, involves more than mere word-for-word substitution; it requires a careful and sensitive approach to ensure that the cultural essence of the original is preserved.

Cultural References and Idiomatic Expressions

One of the primary difficulties lies in translating cultural references and idiomatic expressions that have no direct equivalents in the target language. These elements are often deeply rooted in the social and historical context of the source culture, making them challenging to convey accurately. For instance, Uzbek idioms and proverbs carry specific cultural connotations and wisdom that may be lost or misunderstood if translated literally.

For example, the Uzbek idiom "Yuragi qora" (literally "black-hearted") conveys a deeper meaning related to a person's malicious nature. A direct translation might not fully capture this nuance for German readers unfamiliar with Uzbek cultural context.

Examples of Using Transliteration and Adaptation

To address these challenges, translators like B. Aripova employed a combination of transliteration and adaptation techniques. These methods help bridge the cultural and linguistic gaps, providing readers with a more authentic understanding of the original text.

Transliteration

Transliteration involves converting words from the original script into the alphabet of the target language while preserving their pronunciation. This method is particularly useful for names, places, and culturally specific terms that have no direct equivalents in the target language.

Example: The word "qorachopon," which refers to a traditional Uzbek garment, might be transliterated directly as "qorachopon" in the German text. By doing so, the translator preserves the cultural specificity of the term. To aid comprehension, the translator can include a footnote or a glossary entry explaining the meaning and cultural significance of the term.

Example of Transliteration:

- Uzbek: "qorachopon"
- German Transliteration: "qorachopon"

- Explanation: A traditional Uzbek garment, typically a black coat worn during certain ceremonies or events.

Adaptation

Adaptation involves modifying the original term or expression to fit the cultural context of the target language, making it more understandable and relatable to the reader. This approach often requires creative solutions to convey the original meaning and cultural essence.

Example: The phrase "ko'zlari yashnadi" (literally "his/her eyes sparkled") might be adapted to "sein/ihr Gesicht leuchtete vor Freude" (his/her face lit up with joy) in German. This adaptation captures the emotional essence of the original expression while making it more accessible to German readers.

Example of Adaptation:

- Uzbek: "ko'zlari yashnadi"
- Literal Translation: "his/her eyes sparkled"
- German Adaptation: "sein/ihr Gesicht leuchtete vor Freude" (his/her face lit up with joy)

Analysis of Approaches to Translating Specific Words and Idiomatic Expressions

Different strategies are employed to handle the translation of specific words and idiomatic expressions, ensuring that the target audience can appreciate the cultural and linguistic nuances of the original text.

Contextual Translation

Contextual translation involves interpreting the meaning of a word or phrase based on the context in which

it is used, rather than relying solely on a direct translation. This approach helps preserve the intended meaning and emotional impact of the original text.

Example: The Uzbek expression "dilini ocha" (literally "open one's heart") might be contextually translated as "sein Herz ausschütten" (pour out one's heart) in German. This translation maintains the emotional and cultural connotations of the original expression.

Example of Contextual Translation:

- Uzbek: "dilini ocha"
- Literal Translation: "open one's heart"
- German Contextual Translation: "sein Herz ausschütten" (pour out one's heart)

Use of Annotations and Glossaries

To aid comprehension and preserve cultural specificity, translators often include annotations and glossaries. These tools provide readers with additional context and explanations for culturally specific terms and expressions, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the text.

Example: In B. Aripova's translation, a glossary at the end of the book might include entries for terms like "qipchoq" and "paranji," providing detailed explanations of their meanings and cultural significance.

Example of Annotation:

- Term: "qipchoq"
- Annotation: A historical term referring to a group of Turkic nomadic people in Central Asia. In the context

of the novel, it may denote a particular cultural or historical reference.

By employing these strategies, translators can effectively convey the rich cultural and linguistic tapestry of "The Days Gone by" to a German-speaking audience. This careful balance of transliteration, adaptation, contextual translation, and the use of annotations ensures that the essence of Qodiriy's work is preserved, allowing readers to fully engage with and appreciate the novel's cultural depth and literary beauty.

Comparison of Translations by Specht and Aripova

The translations of Abdulla Qodiriy's novel "The Days Gone by" by Arno Specht (1968) and B. Aripova (2020) offer a fascinating study in contrasts, showcasing different approaches to translating a culturally rich and linguistically nuanced text. Each translator's methodology and context resulted in distinct versions, highlighting the complexities and challenges of literary translation.

Arno Specht's Translation (1968)

Arno Specht's translation, titled "Die Liebenden von Taschkent" (The Lovers of Tashkent), was based on the Russian translation by L. Bat and V. Smirnov rather than the original Uzbek text. This indirect approach influenced the translation in several ways:

- Cultural Mediation: Specht's translation was mediated through the lens of the Russian language and culture, which affected the authenticity of the cultural references

and idiomatic expressions in the original Uzbek text.

- **Title Adaptation:** The choice of title, "Die Liebenden von Taschkent," shifted the focus to the romantic aspect of the story, possibly to make it more appealing to a German audience.

- **Omissions and Alterations:** Due to political and social constraints, certain parts of the original text, especially those critical of Russian imperialism, were softened or omitted, altering the narrative's tone and impact.

B. Aripova's Translation (2020)

B. Aripova's translation, published in 2020, marked a significant improvement over Specht's version by translating directly from the original Uzbek manuscript:

- **Direct Translation:** Aripova's work maintained a higher degree of fidelity to the source material, preserving the nuances, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references inherent in Qodiriy's narrative.

- **Cultural and Linguistic Accuracy:** Aripova's translation retained the original title, "The Days Gone by," and included detailed footnotes and glossaries to explain culturally specific terms and expressions, ensuring that German readers could fully appreciate the cultural context.

- **Complete Content:** Unlike Specht's version, Aripova's translation included all parts of the original text, including politically sensitive passages, thereby maintaining the integrity and impact of Qodiriy's work.

Identification of Key Differences and Their Impact on Text Perception

The key differences between Specht's and Aripova's translations significantly impacted how German readers perceived the novel.

Linguistic Fidelity and Cultural Authenticity

Specht's Translation:

- **Linguistic Gaps:** The indirect translation from Russian introduced several inaccuracies and misinterpretations, diluting the original's linguistic richness.

- **Cultural Dilution:** The cultural nuances of Uzbek society were often lost or misrepresented, affecting the authenticity of the narrative.

Aripova's Translation:

- **Direct Translation:** By translating directly from Uzbek, Aripova captured the linguistic and cultural subtleties, providing a more authentic reading experience.

- **Cultural Clarity:** The inclusion of footnotes and glossaries helped German readers understand the cultural context, enhancing their appreciation of the novel.

Narrative Integrity and Political Sensitivity

Specht's Translation:

- **Omissions:** Political and social critiques in the original text were often omitted or softened, reducing the narrative's impact and altering its tone.

- **Narrative Alterations:** The changes made to accommodate political constraints affected the story's flow and authenticity.

Aripova's Translation:

- Complete Content: Aripova retained all original content, including politically sensitive passages, ensuring the narrative's integrity and impact were preserved.

- Authentic Voice: The direct translation allowed Qodiriy's original voice and intentions to shine through, providing a more faithful representation of the author's work.

Examples of Changes and Improvements

Example 1: Transliteration and Cultural Explanation

Specht's Version:

- Original Term: "qorachopon"
- Specht's Translation: "Schwarzer Mantel" (Black coat)

- Impact: The cultural significance of the traditional garment was lost in the generic translation.

Aripova's Version:

- Original Term: "qorachopon"
- Aripova's Translation: "qorachopon" (with footnote explanation)

- Impact: Retaining the original term with an explanation preserved the cultural context and provided readers with a deeper understanding of its significance.

Example 2: Political Content and Narrative Integrity

Specht's Version:

- Original Passage: Critique of Russian imperialism

- Specht's Translation: Omitted or softened

- Impact: The omission altered the narrative's tone and reduced its political impact.

Aripova's Version:

- Original Passage: Critique of Russian imperialism

- Aripova's Translation: Fully included

- Impact: The inclusion maintained the narrative's integrity and allowed readers to engage with the historical and political context of the time.

Example 3: Idiomatic Expressions

Specht's Version:

- Original Expression: "Yuragi qora" (black-hearted)

- Specht's Translation: "böse" (evil)

- Impact: The idiomatic richness and cultural nuance were lost in the simple translation.

Aripova's Version:

- Original Expression: "Yuragi qora"

- Aripova's Translation: "sein Herz ist schwarz" (with footnote explanation)

- Impact: The direct translation with explanation preserved the idiomatic expression's cultural and emotional depth.

Conclusion

Final Evaluation of the Translations

The translations of Abdulla Qodiriy's novel "The Days Gone by" by Arno Specht and B. Aripova represent two distinct approaches to the complex task of literary translation. Arno Specht's 1968 translation, "Die Liebenden von Taschkent," while pioneering in its effort to introduce Uzbek literature to a German-speaking audience, faced significant limitations due to its reliance on an intermediary Russian text. This indirect translation

method resulted in a loss of linguistic and cultural nuances, omissions of politically sensitive content, and a somewhat diluted representation of the original narrative.

In contrast, B. Aripova's 2020 translation offered a more faithful and comprehensive rendition of Qodiriy's work. By translating directly from the original Uzbek manuscript, Aripova preserved the linguistic richness and cultural specificity of the novel. Her use of transliteration, detailed footnotes, and glossaries ensured that German readers could fully engage with the cultural and historical context of the story. Aripova's translation maintained the narrative integrity and political impact of Qodiriy's original, providing a more authentic reading experience.

Importance of Translations for the Dissemination of Uzbek Literature

Translations play a crucial role in the dissemination of Uzbek literature, allowing works like "The Days Gone by" to reach a global audience. Through translation, the rich cultural heritage, history, and societal values embedded in Uzbek literature can be shared with readers worldwide, fostering greater cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

The translation of "The Days Gone by" into German exemplifies how literature can act as a bridge between cultures. It opens a window into the Uzbek way of life, their traditions, and their historical experiences, providing insights that are invaluable for cultural exchange. Furthermore, translations help preserve and

promote the Uzbek language and literary traditions, ensuring that they continue to thrive and be recognized on the global stage.

Prospects for Further Research and Translations

The translation of "The Days Gone by" sets a precedent for further research and translations of Uzbek literature. As global interest in Central Asian cultures and histories grows, there is a significant opportunity to translate more works from Uzbek and other Central Asian languages into various global languages.

Future translations can build on the methodologies employed by B. Aripova, prioritizing direct translations from original texts and incorporating comprehensive cultural annotations to aid reader understanding. Additionally, collaborative efforts involving scholars and native speakers can enhance the accuracy and cultural fidelity of translations.

Research into comparative literature and translation studies can further explore the challenges and strategies involved in translating culturally rich texts. Such research can provide valuable insights and guidelines for future translators, ensuring that the essence of the original works is preserved while making them accessible to a broader audience.

In conclusion, the translations of "The Days Gone by" by Arno Specht and B. Aripova highlight the evolution and importance of literary translation. While Specht's translation laid the

groundwork, Aripova's work exemplifies the strides made in achieving linguistic and cultural fidelity. These translations underscore the vital role of literary translation in promoting Uzbek literature and

fostering global cultural exchange. The prospects for further research and translation efforts are promising, paving the way for a deeper appreciation and understanding of Uzbekistan's rich literary heritage.

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