INTERPRETATION OF NATIONAL COLOR AND ARTISTIC DEPICTION IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE NOVEL 'BYGONE DAYS'

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada Abdulla Qodiriyning 'O'tkan kunlar' romani inglizcha tarjimasida milliy kolorit, madaniy-etnografik realiyalar hamda badiiy tasvirning qayta yaratilishi Mark Riss (Mark Reese) tarjimasi misolida ilmiy tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda milliy o'ziga xoslikni va tarixiy muhitni ingliz tilida saqlab qolishda qo'llanilgan tarjima strategiyalari hamda ularning adekvatlik darajasi o'rganilgan.
Kalit so'zlar: Abdulla Qodiri, O'tkan kunlar, badiiy tarjima, milliy kolorit, lingvomadaniyat, Mark Riss, tarjima ekvivalentligi.

Abstract: This article presents a comprehensive academic investigation into the interpretation of national color, culture-specific realia, and artistic depiction in the English translation of Abdulla Qodiri's seminal Uzbek novel 'Bygone Days' (O'tkan kunlar), with a focus on Mark Reese's translation. The study analyzes translation strategies employed to convey ethnographic elements, idiomatic expressions, and historical authenticity into English, evaluating the degree of translational equivalence and cultural fidelity.
Keywords: Abdulla Qodiri, Bygone Days, literary translation, national color, linguaculture, Mark Reese, translation equivalence.

Аннотация: В данной статье проводится комплексный научный анализ передачи национального колорита, этнографических реалий и художественного изобразительного мастерства в англоязычном переводе романа Абдуллы Кадыри «Минувшие дни» («O'tkan kunlar»), с особым акцентом на перевод Марка Риса (Mark Reese). В исследовании рассматриваются переводческие стратегии, использованные для сохранения исторической подлинности и национального своеобразия на английском языке.
Ключевые слова: Абдулла Кадыри, Минувшие дни, художественный перевод, национальный колорит, лингвокультурология, Марк Рис, эквивалентность перевода.

INTRODUCTION:

Literary translation serves as a vital bridge between distinct linguistic ecosystems and cultural paradigms. As the foundational masterpiece of modern Uzbek prose, Abdulla Qodiri's novel 'Bygone Days' (O'tkan kunlar), written in the 1920s, portrays the intricate socio-political, moral, and cultural life of 19th-century Turkestan [1]. The novel is deeply imbued with oriental philosophy, Islamic traditions, regional customs, and a rich array of national realia, making its rendering into Western languages an exceptionally demanding linguistic and cultural endeavor [2].

The publication of the full English translation of 'Bygone Days' by American scholar and translator Mark Reese in 2019 marked a historic milestone in bringing Uzbek literature to the global anglophone readership [3]. Translating Qodiri requires not merely a lexical mapping from Uzbek to English, but a nuanced recreation of the national color (local color), emotional tenor, historical atmosphere, and artistic tropes embedded in the original text. This paper investigates how national color and artistic depictions are interpreted, rendered, and preserved in the English translation.

MAIN BODY: ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL COLOR AND ARTISTIC DEPICTION

A central challenge in translating 'Bygone Days' lies in the treatment of culture-specific items, known in translation theory as realia [4]. Realia encompass terms denoting material culture, social rituals, administrative structures, and religious practices that lack direct functional equivalents in the target language. Qodiri's narrative heavily relies on realia such as 'caravanserai', 'paranja', 'chachvon', 'sovchilik' (matchmaking customs), and 'mahalla' to ground the narrative in authentic 19th-century Tashkent and Margilan settings.

To address these cultural gaps, Mark Reese predominantly adopted a hybrid translation strategy combining transcription (foreignization) with contextual glossing and extensive footnotes [3]. By retaining original Uzbek terms and explaining their ethnographic context in footnotes, the translator preserves the exotic flavor and historical authenticity of Turkestan while maintaining clarity for the English-speaking reader.

Original Uzbek Term / Concept	English Translation (Mark Reese)	Translation Strategy Implemented
Karvonsaroy	Caravanserai	Transcription with explanatory footnote
Paranja and Chachvon	Paranja and Chachvon (horsehair veil)	Transliteration + descriptive modifier
Sovchilik / Ota-ona roziligi	Matchmaking / Parental Consent	Functional & cultural equivalence
Begim / Xonim / Taqsir	Begim / Khanum / Master (Taqsir)	Retention of honorifics + contextual glossing

In addition to material realia, Qodiri's artistic genius is revealed in his lyrical depictions of nature and character psychology. The portrayal of Kumush's beauty, Otabek's inner romantic conflict, and the poetic dialogues between lovers rely on traditional Turkic-Persian metaphoric paradigms. Translating honorifics such as 'begim' (my lord) or 'xonim' as simple Western terms like 'sir' or 'ma'am' would strip the dialogue of its refined Eastern courtesy and emotional resonance [5]. Reese's decision to maintain 'Begim' and 'Khanum' in dialogue preserves the intimate yet respectful dynamic characteristic of traditional Uzbek conjugal speech.

Furthermore, Qodiri's landscape descriptions serve a symbolic function, reflecting the emotional states of his protagonists. The English translation successfully recreates these artistic depictions through poetic vocabulary and rhythmic cadence, demonstrating that effective literary translation must capture not only semantic propositional content, but also aesthetic and sensory impact.

1. Extended Analysis on Idiomatic & Figurative Language

Beyond singular terms, Qodiri's style relies heavily on traditional Uzbek idioms and figurative expressions deeply rooted in Islamic folk tradition and Turkic folklore. The translation of such figures of speech presents a dilemma between literal literalness and functional adaptation. For instance, traditional expressions of grief, gratitude, and moral devotion—often rich in phraseological nuance—cannot be translated word-for-word into English without sounding unnatural. Mark Reese often employs dynamic equivalence, rephrasing idiomatic expressions into natural English idioms while preserving their underlying conceptual metaphor. This pragmatic adaptation prevents the target text from becoming overly obscure while keeping the emotional weight of the original narrative intact.

2. Dialogue & Character Speech Individualization

Another critical dimension of national color in Bygone Days is socio-dialectal register and character speech individualization. Qodiri meticulously differentiates the linguistic registers of his characters: the formal, elevated diction of the educated elite (Yusufbek Hoji and Otabek), the poetic and delicate speech of Kumush, and the colloquial, humorous register of Hasanali or Homid. In the English translation, preserving these sociolinguistic distinctions is paramount to maintaining character authenticity. The translator strategically utilizes varied English stylistic registers—adopting slightly archaic, dignified phrasing for elder statesmen and lyrical, rhythmic syntax for romantic exchanges—thereby mirroring the original socio-cultural stratification of 19th-century Uzbek speech.

3. Historical & Administrative Realia (Socio-Political Context)

The novel provides a vivid socio-historical canvas of Kokand Khanate governance, feudal conflicts, and legal systems. Terms related to administration, legal decrees, and social status—such as bek, mingboshi, qazi, fatwa, and qurboshi—carry specific historical weight. Rather than replacing these terms with Western approximations (like 'governor' or 'judge'), the translation maintains the original Uzbek-Turkic terminology. This methodological choice reinforces the historical authenticity of the narrative, framing Turkestan not through an Orientalist lens, but as a complex, self-contained society with its own established legal and administrative institutions.

4. Comparative Translation Analysis Table

Original Uzbek Expression	English Translation (Mark Reese)	Linguistic Strategy & Cultural Impact
Peshona shunday ekan	It was written in fate / Destined	Cultural translation of Eastern fatalism into target culture
Rozilik olmoq / Fotiha berish	To seek blessing / Give nuptial blessing	Functional adaptation of Islamic/Uzbek marriage rituals
Ota-ona haqqi	Filial duty / Parental right	Ethical-philosophical concept rendering into English academic register
Qiz majlis / Chimildiq	Bridal chamber / Wedding gathering	Descriptive translation maintaining ethnographic context

Inevitably, translating across distinct cultures involves a degree of pragmatic loss, where subtle emotional nuances or historical humor cannot be fully captured in English. To compensate for this, Mark Reese uses footnoted commentaries and expanded descriptive modifiers. This strategy ensures that international readers grasp the underlying socio-political critique and emotional depth of Qodiri's original work.

CONCLUSION:

The analysis demonstrates that the interpretation of national color and artistic depiction in the English translation of Abdulla Qodiri's 'Bygone Days' achieves a high degree of translational adequacy and cultural fidelity. Through a judicious blend of foreignization (transcription of realia and honorifics) and domestication (contextual explanations and fluent English prose), Mark Reese successfully conveys the historical atmosphere, social nuances, and poetic beauty of the Uzbek original.

This translation represents a momentous contribution to international Oriental studies and comparative literature. It establishes a robust benchmark for future English renditions of Uzbek classical literature, proving that rich national color can be effectively communicated to global audiences without sacrificing literary quality or cultural authenticity.

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FOOTNOTES & CITATIONS

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