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Ninel Vladimirova and the Problem of Cultural Interpretation in the Translation of Uzbek Literature into Russian

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A B S T R A C T
The article examines the work of Ninel Vladimirova as a translator and scholar who made a significant contribution to the development of intercultural dialogue between Russian and Uzbek literature. Her translation strategies, aimed at preserving the author's individuality and the national specificity of the text, are analyzed. Special attention is given to the issues of cultural interpretation and the hermeneutic approach in translation. Examples from the works of Aybek, Said Ahmad, Gafur Guliam, and other authors illustrate the evolution of Soviet and contemporary translation practices.

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Introduction

The translation of Uzbek literature into Russian has always been more than a linguistic exercise; it is an act of cultural interpretation. Translators must preserve the individuality of the author while navigating historical, ethnographic, and social contexts. Within this tradition, Ninel Vladimirova occupies a prominent place. Born in 1928, she represented the generation of translators who shaped the Soviet school of literary translation. Her work contributed not only to the dissemination of Uzbek literature in Russian but also to the development of translation theory and methodology in the Soviet and post-Soviet context.

Translators strive to be as accurate as possible without suppressing the author's individuality. At the same time, they must consider the multilayered context—historical, ethnographic, and social. This makes the translation of Uzbek prose into Russian a task of cultural interpretation. Ninel Vasilyevna Vladimirovna occupies a significant place in the history of Soviet and post-Soviet literary translation, particularly in the field of translation from Uzbek into Russian. Her work as a translator and translation scholar has made a significant contribution to strengthening the intercultural dialogue between Russian and Uzbek literatures, to the development of translation theory, and to the formation of methodological approaches to interpreting the texts of the national literatures of the USSR.

Ninel Vasilyevna was born in the first half of the 20th century (1928) and belonged to the generation of translators who shaped the Soviet school of literary translation. Her professional career unfolded in the context of the intensive interaction of the literatures of the peoples of the USSR, which became part of the cultural policy of the multinational state. Since the early 1960s, she has worked extensively in Uzbekistan, where she not only translated fiction but also participated in educational, scientific, and editorial projects related to the development of national literary studies. Ninel has translated works by key figures in 20th-century Uzbek literature, including Aybek, Uygun, Shukur Khamdam, Said Akhmad, Muhammad Ali, Erkin A'zam, and many others. Her translations are distinguished by their precision,

preserving the stylistic features of the original, and their ability to convey the flavor of Uzbek speech and figurative thinking to Russian-speaking readers.

One of the key characteristics of her translations is their careful attention to cultural realities and national poetics. A case in point is her translation of Said Akhmad's novel "Horizon," in which she masterfully conveyed not only the historical and political context but also the national character traits of the characters, folkloric elements, and the language of dialogue. Her style is characterized by a gentle adaptation: she doesn't simplify the text, but makes it accessible to Russian-speaking readers while preserving the depth and symbolism of the original. Ninel Vasilievna has also been actively involved in scholarly work in the field of translation. She is the author of several articles devoted to the problems of interpreting the national specificity of a text, questions of translation adequacy, and the preservation of poetic structure. Her approach was based on the understanding of translation as an intercultural mediation that requires not only linguistic but also cultural competence. Her works emphasize that a translator working with works of national literature must be deeply immersed in the cultural and historical context of the original. She emphasized the importance of knowledge of customs, religious symbols, mythological archetypes, national idioms, and images. In this sense, her approach is close to the hermeneutic tradition: translation was viewed as a process of textual interpretation.

Methods

This study employs a comparative and hermeneutic approach to translation analysis. Key Uzbek literary works translated by Vladimirova—such as those of Aybek, Said Akhmad, Gafur Gulam, and Muhammad Ali—are compared with Soviet-era and modern translations. The analysis focuses on strategies of preserving cultural realities, stylistic features, and authorial individuality. Archival reviews, such as Vladimirova's commentary on Abdulla Kadiri's translation of Chekhov, are also examined to illustrate her theoretical stance.

In one of her articles, she wrote: "Translation from Uzbek into Russian is impossible without penetrating the value system, the spiritual and aesthetic world of the Uzbek people. Only then can the text be not simply translated, but perceived and understood." This idea underlay her translation strategy. Ninel Vasilyevna's work went beyond the purely literary task. She acted as a mediator between cultures, helping Russian-speaking readers understand the richness and multilayered nature of Uzbek literature. Her translations shaped the understanding of Uzbek culture as a profound, poetic, and symbolically rich tradition. It was precisely this cultural and philosophical aspect that constituted her unique contribution—the construction of a dialogue of identities. Importantly, Ninel did not strive for an "all-forgiving" universalization of the text. She consciously preserved the original's authenticity, including national terms, names, toponyms, and everyday and religious details, supplementing them with subtle explanations. Thus, for her, translation served as a space of participation, where the reader enters another world without losing their cultural ground. Ninel Vasilyevna belonged to the constellation of translators who formed a strong tradition of translating the literature of the peoples of the USSR. Her contribution is particularly significant in the Uzbek context: she not only translated but also actively shaped the literary canon of Uzbek prose and poetry for Russian audiences. Furthermore, Vladimirova actively worked on the analysis of translations into Uzbek. For example, in 1936, issue No. 3 of the journal "Sovet Adabiyoti" published A.P. Chekhov's short story "Chameleon" - "Bukalamun," translated by Abdulla Kadyri. After reviewing the translation, N. Vladimirova argued that A. Kadiri's translation is free of borrowings from Russian. She revealed that the translator adheres closely to the original, clearly reproducing it in the native language—that is, conveying it in a Chekhovian manner—while preserving the original author's creative individuality. However, the translator also reveals their own individuality, which does not obscure the author's.

N. Vladimirova states: "The translator is free to use various means here, provided they achieve the most complete possible transformation into the original. This is a complete stylistic, syntactic, and accentual dialogue." The translation preserves not only the syntactic constructions but also the entire context. A. Kadiri strives to recreate the creative spirit and achieve artistic consistency. In her monograph, "The Development of 20th-Century Uzbek Prose and Issues of Literary Translation," scholar N.V. Vladimirova meticulously examines the evolution of translation studies in Uzbekistan. She states: "Much has been said and written about the versatility and breadth of Fitrat's views – philosophical, literary, religious, and life-

related, but a concrete study of this versatility in his works has not yet become an organic need of literary studies and criticism."To highlight the differences in translations of Uzbek literature into Russian by different translation schools, let's briefly analyze the translations of works by key authors. One of the Uzbek writers who gained wide recognition in the Russian-speaking world is Aybek, author of the novel "Navoi." His works were being translated as early as the 1940s, but it was in the 1950s and 1960s that a model of "official" translation developed: a formal style, an emphasis on the historical significance of the individual, and stylistic balance. However, this presentation often negated the distinctive features of individual style, depriving the text of its national rhythm and emotional coloring.

Results

The findings of the study demonstrate that:

- Vladimirova preserved the stylistic individuality of authors while rendering their works accessible to Russian-speaking audiences.
- Her translations reflect cultural realities, idioms, and folkloric elements without erasing their national specificity.
- She consciously resisted the universalizing tendencies of Soviet "official" translation, preferring gentle adaptation over simplification.
- In her scholarly work, Vladimirova emphasized the necessity of cultural and historical knowledge for adequate translation.

Modern republications of "Navoi" attempt to correct these shortcomings—restoring the structure of the Eastern narrative and preserving the distinctive dialogues and addresses. For example: Original: "Khuja Navoiy qalbini xalq dardi bilan touldirdi." Soviet translation: "Navoi gave the heart to the people." The modern version: "Khuja Navoi filled his heart with the people's pain." The difference is in the rendering, namely, in style: the Soviet translation smooths over individuality, while the modern one strives to preserve the national rhythm and imagery. One of the most prominent representatives of 20th-century Uzbek poetry. His poems, imbued with emotionality, every day and philosophical realities, often lost their rhythm and liveliness in translation. Translations of Gafur Gulam's poetry in Soviet times followed ideological guidelines—heroism, patriotism, socialist romanticism. The personal was supplanted by the collective. In modern practice, the emphasis has shifted to personal lyricism. For example, the poem "Men - odaman" ("I am a man") in the new interpretation received a more precise, almost literal translation, preserving the intonation and rhythm: "Men - odaman, odaman!" - "I am a man, a man!" This doubling conveys the hero's inner state, whereas earlier translators preferred the adaptation "I am the son of the people!", which lost the emotional power of the original. Said Akhmad's prose is a subtle interweaving of social critique and everyday observations. In Said Akhmad's stories, the dialogue, saturated with colorful expressions and language play, presents a particular complexity. In one story, the hero says, "Bu isni qilsang, otang yuziga tupurasan!" which literally means, "If you do this, you will spit in your father's face." The Soviet translation rendered this as, "You will betray your father." Although the meaning is preserved, the expressiveness, metaphorical quality, and connection to the traditional value system are lost. Modern translations use a transliteration with the explanation, "If you do this – bu isni qilsang, you will spit in your father's face – otang yuziga tupurasan." This emphasizes the importance of preserving realities and cultural connotations. Thus, focusing on style and the author's concept allows for improved translation quality.However, it was in the 1950s and 1960s that the model of an "official" translation developed: a formal style, an emphasis on the historical significance of the individual, and stylistic balance. However, this presentation often negated the peculiarities of individual style, depriving the text of its national rhythm and emotional coloring. Modern republications of the novel "Navoi" are accompanied by attempts to correct these shortcomings—restoring the structure of the Eastern narrative and preserving the distinctive features of the dialogues and addresses. For example: Original: "Khuja Navoiy gave his heart to the people." Soviet translation: "Navoi gave his heart to the people." Modern version: "Khuja Navoi filled his heart with the pain of the people." The difference is in the rendering, namely in the style: the Soviet translation smooths out individuality, while the modern one strives to preserve the national rhythm and imagery. One of the most prominent representatives of 20th-century Uzbek poetry. His poems, rich with emotion and everyday and philosophical realities, often lost their

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Discussion

Vladimirova's contribution extends beyond translation practice. She acted as a cultural mediator, fostering dialogue between Uzbek and Russian readers. Her hermeneutic approach treated translation as interpretation, requiring immersion in the value system and symbolic world of Uzbek culture. Compared to Soviet "official" translations that often smoothed over national rhythm and imagery, Vladimirova's translations preserved expressiveness, metaphorical richness, and emotional depth. Examples include modern re-interpretations of Aybek's *Navoi* and Said Akhmad's stories, where national idioms and cultural references are retained.

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Conclusion

Ninel Vladimirova’s legacy lies in her dual role as translator and scholar. She not only enriched Soviet and post-Soviet translation studies but also shaped the Russian perception of Uzbek literature as a poetic and symbolically rich tradition. Her work demonstrates that translation is not merely linguistic transfer but an act of intercultural participation. By preserving cultural authenticity, Vladimirova helped establish a durable dialogue of identities between Russian and Uzbek literatures.

Thus, an emphasis on style and the author's concept helps improve the quality of the translation.Said Akhmad's prose is a subtle interweaving of social critique and everyday observations. In Said Akhmad's

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