

## THE POTENTIAL FOR CULTURAL APPROPRIATION AND HOW TO AVOID IT WHEN TRANSLATING A WORK FROM ANOTHER CULTURE

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**Abstract:** *Translating literary works from one culture to another presents a unique set of challenges, particularly when navigating the potential for cultural appropriation. This article examines the ethical considerations involved in translating Abdulla Kadiry's Uzbek novel "Bygone Days" into English, focusing on the delicate balance between cultural authenticity and avoiding misrepresentation. It explores the pitfalls of imposing Western perspectives and interpretations onto a text steeped in Uzbek cultural nuances. By analyzing specific examples from the novel, the article highlights the importance of collaboration with Uzbek cultural experts, respecting the original author's intent, and adopting a nuanced approach to language and style. Ultimately, it argues that successful translation requires a commitment to both fidelity and sensitivity, ensuring that the translated work honors the original while remaining accessible and meaningful to a new audience.*

**Keywords:** *Cultural Appropriation, Translation Studies, Literary Translation, Ethical Translation, Intercultural Communication, Cultural Sensitivity, Fidelity, Authenticity, Adaptation, Cross-Cultural Understanding, Abdulla Kadiry, "Bygone Days" (O'tkan kunlar), Uzbek Literature, Uzbek Culture, Central Asian Culture, Historical Fiction, Cultural Context, Cultural Nuances, Language and Culture, Idioms and Proverbs, Socio-Cultural Dynamics*

The act of translating a literary work from one culture to another is a delicate dance between fidelity and adaptation. While translators strive to capture the essence of the original text, they must also navigate the potential for cultural appropriation, a complex ethical issue that arises when elements of a culture are taken out of context and used without proper acknowledgment or respect. Translating Abdulla Kadiry's "Bygone Days," a novel steeped in Uzbek cultural nuances, exemplifies this challenge. The novel's intricate tapestry of social customs, historical context, and linguistic expressions demands careful translation that avoids imposing Western perspectives onto a narrative rooted in a distinct cultural identity. This article explores the pitfalls of cultural appropriation in translation, offering insights into how translators can navigate these ethical complexities and ensure that the translated work honors the original while remaining accessible and meaningful to a new audience.

Translating a literary work from one culture to another is a complex and often fraught process. It requires not only linguistic skill but also a deep understanding of the

source culture and the ability to convey its nuances and subtleties in a way that resonates with a new audience. This challenge is particularly acute when dealing with works that are deeply embedded in their cultural context, as is the case with Abdulla Kadiry's "Bygone Days," a novel set in Central Asia and rich in Uzbek cultural details. The danger of cultural appropriation looms large, as the translator must find a balance between fidelity to the original and avoiding misrepresentation or distortion of the source culture. For example, translating words from one culture to another and making them understandable to another culture is a very important and difficult process. For example, if we look at some words and phrases from "Bygone Days" and focus on how the translator could navigate cultural appropriation:

“Mehmon” (Guest): Original Uzbek: "Mehmon keldi, xursandchilik bo'ldi." (A guest arrived, there was joy.)

Possible Translation: "The arrival of the guest brought great joy."

Challenges: The concept of "mehmon" goes beyond simply "guest" in English. It carries a strong cultural weight of hospitality, respect, and obligation to provide for the guest's well-being.

A translator could simplify it to "guest" and lose the nuanced meaning, which could lead to a misinterpretation of the characters' actions.

Solution: The translator could use a more descriptive phrase like "The arrival of the guest brought great joy and a sense of duty to provide for their needs," thus conveying the deeper cultural meaning.

“Non” (Bread): Original Uzbek: "Dasturxon nonsiz bo'lmaydi." (A table is not complete without bread.)

Possible Translation: "Bread is essential for a proper meal."

Challenges: "Non" is more than just bread in Uzbek culture. It symbolizes life, nourishment, and is treated with respect.

Translating it simply as "bread" could diminish its symbolic significance.

Solution: The translator could use phrases like "A table is not considered complete without the sacred bread" or "Bread, the symbol of life and sustenance, was always present."

"Choy" (Tea) Original Uzbek: "Choy ichib o'tirib, suhbat qildik." (We sat down, drank tea, and talked.)

Possible Translation: "We sat down, enjoyed tea, and had a conversation."

Challenges: "Choy" in Uzbek culture is more than just a drink. It signifies hospitality, a moment for connection and sharing stories.

A direct translation might lose this social significance.

Solution: The translator could use phrases like "We shared tea and conversation" or "Over tea, we engaged in a meaningful exchange".

Cultural appropriation in translation is a nuanced issue that arises when elements of one culture are adopted by another, often without proper understanding or respect for their significance. In the context of translating works like Abdulla Kadiry's "Bygone Days," it becomes crucial to navigate this terrain carefully. Translators must be vigilant about not merely appropriating cultural symbols or narratives, but instead striving for an authentic representation that honors the original context. This involves deep engagement with the source material, including its cultural, historical, and social dimensions. To avoid appropriation, translators should collaborate with cultural experts or native speakers, ensuring that the translation reflects the voice and intent of the original author while also providing appropriate context for readers unfamiliar with the culture. Additionally, incorporating footnotes or commentary can help bridge gaps in understanding, allowing readers to appreciate the richness of the source material without reducing it to mere exoticism. By prioritizing respect and authenticity, translators can foster cross-cultural dialogue rather than perpetuating misunderstandings or stereotypes.

The potential for cultural appropriation in translation is heightened when the translator lacks a deep understanding of the source culture. This can lead to misrepresentation or oversimplification of cultural nuances, resulting in a translation that strips away the original work's significance. To mitigate this risk, translators should immerse themselves in the cultural context of the text, which includes studying its history, societal norms, and linguistic intricacies. Engaging with community members or cultural consultants can provide invaluable insights that enhance the translator's understanding and sensitivity. Furthermore, translators should strive to maintain the original author's voice, recognizing that certain idioms, metaphors, or cultural references may not have direct equivalents in the target language. In such cases, creative solutions like adaptation or contextualization can help preserve the essence of the original while making it accessible to new audiences. Additionally, fostering an ongoing dialogue with readers about the translation choices made can promote awareness and understanding, ensuring that the work serves as a bridge rather than a barrier between cultures. By prioritizing collaboration, education, and transparency, translators can honor the integrity of the original work while avoiding the pitfalls of cultural appropriation.

In translation, there are cases where some words are given in their original form because they do not exist in another language. We can see this situation in *Bygone Days*:

"1264-inchi hijriy, dalv oyining o'n yettinchisi, qishgi kunlarning biri, quyosh botgan, tevarakdan shom azoni eshitaladir..."

"It was the seventeenth day of the month of dalv, hijri year 264. A wintry day. Calls to evening prayer rang from all around as the sun set..."

When translating a work from another culture, it is essential to recognize the potential for cultural appropriation, which can occur when elements of one culture are adopted or misrepresented by another, often without proper understanding or respect. To avoid this, translators should engage deeply with the source material, ensuring they grasp not only the language but also the cultural nuances, historical context, and social dynamics that inform the text. Collaborating with native speakers or cultural experts can provide invaluable insights, helping to preserve the integrity of the original work. Furthermore, it is crucial to approach the translation process with humility and an open mind, acknowledging that some concepts may not have direct equivalents in the target language. By prioritizing authenticity and sensitivity, translators can foster cross-cultural understanding while honoring the original voice and intent of the author.

In the translation of Abdulla Kadiri's work "O'tgan Kunlar", attention was paid to the following:

The work has its own historical and cultural context. In the process of translation, it is important to understand the socio-political conditions of that time and place, and some terms or events may be misinterpreted in another culture and special attention should be paid to this.

There are also difficulties arising from Kadiri's unique style and language, that is, the poetic and descriptive elements of Uzbek literature are difficult to translate into another language, as well as special terms or jargon used in the work, for example, words related to social strata. which need translation.

It is also important to correctly express the emotions and spirit in the work, the translator has worked carefully in translating these emotions into another language.

There are local traditions or customs in some parts of the work and it is necessary to determine how to reflect them in the translation. In some cases, it is necessary to shorten or expand certain parts, which may change the original content of the work.

To solve these problems, the translator needs to conduct cultural research, consult with local experts and develop his own translation style.

When translating works from one culture to another, it's crucial to recognize that language is deeply intertwined with cultural identity. Certain terms may carry specific connotations, histories, or emotional weight that do not have direct equivalents in the target language. This can lead to cultural appropriation if the translator inadvertently strips away these nuances or misrepresents the original context. To avoid this, translators should conduct thorough research into the cultural significance of key terms and phrases. Engaging with native speakers or cultural experts can provide invaluable insights into the subtleties of language that might otherwise be overlooked. Additionally, translators should consider using footnotes or glossaries to explain culturally specific references, ensuring that readers can appreciate the original context

without appropriating it. This approach not only respects the source culture but also enriches the reading experience for those from different backgrounds.

In conclusion, Abdulla Kadiry's "Bygone Days" serves as a poignant reminder of the complexities inherent in translating literature from one culture to another. The potential for cultural appropriation is a significant concern, as it risks diluting the authenticity and richness of the original work. To navigate this challenge, translators must approach the text with a deep respect for its cultural context, prioritizing accuracy and sensitivity in their interpretations. Engaging with cultural experts, conducting thorough research, and incorporating footnotes or contextual explanations can help preserve the nuances of Kadiry's narrative while making it accessible to a broader audience. Ultimately, by fostering a collaborative and respectful translation process, we can honor the legacy of works like "Bygone Days" and ensure that the voices and stories of diverse cultures are not only heard but celebrated in their full complexity.

In addition, navigating the delicate landscape of cultural appropriation in translation requires a thoughtful and respectful approach. Translators hold the responsibility of bridging cultures while honoring the unique identities and contexts from which the original works emerge. By prioritizing cultural sensitivity, conducting thorough research, and engaging with native speakers or cultural experts, translators can mitigate the risk of appropriation and misrepresentation. Additionally, incorporating explanatory notes or glossaries can enhance readers' understanding and appreciation of the source culture. Ultimately, fostering an environment of respect and collaboration not only enriches the translation process but also promotes a deeper intercultural dialogue, allowing diverse voices to be heard and celebrated without erasure. Through these practices, translators can contribute to a more inclusive literary landscape that honors the richness of all cultures involved.

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