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**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AND EDUCATION:** a collection scientific works of the International scientific conference – London, England, 2026. Issue 6

**Languages of publication: Uzbek,** English, Russian, German, Italian, Spanish

The collection consists of scientific research of scientists, graduate students and students who took part in the International Scientific online conference «**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AND EDUCATION**». Which took place in London 2026.

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## THE REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL AND CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN TRANSLATION (ON THE EXAMPLE OF “UTKAN KUNLAR” – “PAST DAYS”)

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**Abstract:** This article examines the representation of national and cultural elements in the English translation of the Uzbek novel O‘tkan Kunlar (Past Days) by Abdulla Qodiriy. The study focuses on how culture-specific concepts, traditions, customs, social values, and historical realities are conveyed from Uzbek into English. It discusses the main translation strategies used to preserve the national identity of the original work, including transliteration, cultural adaptation, and descriptive translation. The article also highlights the challenges translators face when dealing with culturally bound expressions and concepts that have no direct equivalents in the target language. The analysis demonstrates that successful literary translation requires not only linguistic accuracy but also cultural sensitivity. The preservation of national and cultural elements in Past Days helps introduce international readers to Uzbek culture and ensures that the artistic and historical value of the original novel is maintained.

**Keywords:** literary translation, national elements, cultural elements, cultural identity, translation strategies, transliteration, cultural adaptation, Uzbek literature, O‘tkan Kunlar, Past Days, Abdulla Qodiriy, intercultural communication.

**Introduction.** Translation is not only the transfer of words from one language to another but also the transmission of culture, traditions, values, and national identity. When translating literary works, preserving national and cultural elements is essential because they reflect the unique worldview of a nation. One of the best examples of this is the Uzbek novel O‘tkan Kunlar by Abdulla Qodiriy, which has been translated into English as Past Days. The novel contains many cultural references, traditions, customs, and historical realities of Uzbek society, making it an important case for studying the representation of national and cultural elements in translation.

Literary translation plays a significant role in introducing national cultures to the world. Through translated works, readers gain access not only to a literary text but also to the history, customs, and values of another nation. Therefore, translators must pay special attention to preserving culture-specific elements that contribute to the uniqueness of the original work.

The novel depicts the social, political, and cultural life of nineteenth-century Uzbekistan. It includes various national elements such as:

Traditional clothing and household items;

Family relationships and social hierarchy;

Wedding customs and ceremonies;

Religious practices and beliefs;

National values such as respect for elders and hospitality;

Historical and geographical references.

These elements create the cultural atmosphere of the novel and help readers understand Uzbek society of that period. Through its vivid descriptions, the novel presents a realistic picture of everyday life, family traditions, and social norms. The





characters' behavior and interactions reflect the moral principles and cultural values that were important in Uzbek society.

The successful translation of national and cultural elements requires the use of specific translation techniques. The most common strategies include:

1. **Transliteration.** Transliteration involves preserving the original Uzbek term in the English translation. This method is useful when there is no equivalent term in the target language. Words such as mahalla, khan, and paranja may be retained to preserve cultural authenticity.
2. **Cultural Adaptation.** Cultural adaptation replaces a source-language expression with a target-language equivalent that is more familiar to readers. This strategy helps improve comprehension while maintaining the intended meaning.
3. **Explanatory Translation.** In cases where a cultural concept is unknown to foreign readers, translators may provide explanations within the text or through footnotes. This allows readers to understand the cultural significance of specific terms and practices.
4. **Descriptive Translation.** Descriptive translation explains the meaning or function of a cultural item instead of providing a direct translation. This strategy is especially useful for customs, traditions, and social institutions that do not exist in the target culture. These strategies enable translators to balance readability and cultural preservation, ensuring that the translated text remains both understandable and authentic.

#### Challenges in Translating Cultural Elements

The translation of national and cultural elements presents several challenges:

Many Uzbek concepts have no direct English equivalents;

Certain traditions and customs may be unfamiliar to foreign readers;

Historical and social references often require additional explanation;

Idioms, proverbs, and figurative expressions can lose their cultural meaning during translation;

Maintaining both accuracy and cultural authenticity is often difficult.

As a result, translators must make careful decisions regarding word choice and translation techniques. Their goal is to preserve the original cultural context while making the text accessible to an international audience.

Preserving cultural identity is one of the primary objectives of literary translation. A translated literary work should not only communicate information but also convey the spirit of the original culture. Through the English translation of O'tkan Kunlar, readers around the world can learn about Uzbek traditions, values, and historical experiences. The preservation of cultural elements contributes to intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding among nations. It also helps promote national literature internationally and increases awareness of Uzbekistan's rich cultural heritage. By maintaining culture-specific references, translators ensure that readers experience the uniqueness of the source culture rather than a simplified version of it.

The translator serves as a cultural mediator between two linguistic communities. In translating O'tkan Kunlar, the translator must possess not only linguistic competence but also a deep understanding of Uzbek culture and history. Successful translation requires sensitivity to cultural nuances and the ability to convey them effectively in the target language. A translator's decisions significantly influence how foreign readers perceive the original work. Therefore, preserving national and cultural elements is a responsibility that goes beyond language and enters the sphere of cultural representation.





**Conclusion.** The translation of O‘tkan Kunlar into Past Days demonstrates the importance of representing national and cultural elements in literary translation. A successful translation should not only convey the language and storyline of the original text but also preserve its cultural essence. Through the use of transliteration, cultural adaptation, explanatory translation, and descriptive translation, translators can effectively communicate culture-specific concepts to foreign readers. The preservation of national and cultural elements allows international audiences to appreciate the richness of Uzbek culture and understand the historical and social context of the novel. Thus, literary translation serves as a bridge between cultures, promoting mutual understanding and cultural exchange while maintaining the integrity of the original work.

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