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## EXPRESSION OF NATIONAL COLOR AND REALITIES IN TRANSLATION (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE NOVELS THE YEAR OF THE SCORPION AND THE SHROUDLESS BURIED)

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### Abstract

This article explores the representation of national color and cultural, social, and political realities in the German translations of two prominent works of Uzbek literature: *The Year of the Scorpion* (*Das Jahr des Skorpions*) by Uzbek writer Uchqun Nazarov, and *The Shroudless Buried* (*Die ohne Leichentuch Begrabenen*) by Shukrullo. The article examines how various aspects of Uzbek life – such as traditions, customs, political contexts, and the emotional-aesthetic layers of the Uzbek language – are reflected or transformed during the process of translation into German. Although the two novels differ in content and narrative approach, both deeply reflect the Uzbek people's way of life, cultural identity, and historical experience.

**Keywords:** *national color and realities, culturally specific vocabulary, customs and traditions, political realities, emotional-aesthetic layers of language, culture and history*

### Introduction

The art of translation is not merely a linguistic process, but a cultural bridge between nations. The accurate and expressive rendering of national color, historical, and social realities present in the original text into another language is a testament to the translator's skill. This becomes particularly significant in literary translation, where every word, image, and context reflects the worldview and culture of a particular people. Literary translation, therefore, is more than a simple linguistic conversion between two languages; it is a broader and deeper cultural phenomenon that involves transferring the aesthetic,

social, historical, and national layers of the original work into another language (Newmark, P., 1988).

One of the most pressing methodological and practical issues in this process is the way national color and cultural realities are conveyed in translation. In this article, we will analyze how such elements are represented in the German translations of two notable works of Uzbek literature: “Chayon yili” (translated into German as *Das Jahr des Skorpions*) by the Uzbek writer Uchqun Nazarov, and “Kafansiz ko‘milganlar” (translated as *Die ohne Leichentuch Begrabenen*) by Shukrullo. These works depict various aspects of Uzbek life,

including customs, political realities, and the emotional-aesthetic layers of the language. The article explores how these aspects are transformed in the process of translation into German. Although different in content, both novels offer a deep reflection of Uzbek life, culture, and history.

### Main Part

#### 1. The Importance of National Color and Realia in Translation

National color refers to the folkloric spirit expressed in a literary work – that is, the unique cultural elements that reflect a nation's way of life, customs, traditional concepts, clothing, cuisine, depictions of urban and rural life, place names (toponyms), personal names, and elements of folklore. These components form a cultural layer within the text and help the reader form a comprehensive impression of the environment in which the work was created.

Realia, on the other hand, are specific elements tied to the socio-political context of a text. They represent historically and culturally bound terms and references, and incorrect translation of such elements may distort the meaning of the original work. This issue is especially critical in texts that contain historical and political contexts. For instance, terms such as *komsomol* (Komsomol), *mahalla* (neighborhood community), *hokim* (regional governor), and *xatna to'y* (circumcision ceremony) are deeply embedded in Uzbek culture and society (Bassnett, S., 2002).

In literary translation, these culturally specific elements are typically rendered using one or more of the following strategies:

- \* Transliteration (direct transfer of the term as is);
- \* Finding an equivalent (a culturally or semantically appropriate counterpart);
- \* Explanatory translation (with added clarification or commentary);
- \* Free or adaptive translation (adjusting to the target culture while preserving meaning).

#### 2. Thematic Features of the Novel "Chayon yili"

Uchqun Nazarov's novel "Chayon yili" (The Year of the Scorpion) portrays the socio-political transformations that occurred in Uzbek society during the final years of the

Soviet era and the early period of independence. The work reflects the cultural atmosphere of this transitional time and provides a deep insight into the lived experience of the Uzbek people.

In the German translation of the novel (*Das Jahr des Skorpions*), the following translation approaches can be observed:

The novel includes:

- Representations of both ancient and modern elements of Uzbek culture;
- Critiques of Soviet ideology and its eventual decline;
- Uzbek words, proverbs, names, and idiomatic expressions;
- Descriptions of local political figures and events.

In the translation, some realia are adapted through cultural accommodation, while others are rendered using explanatory translation techniques. These choices help bridge the cultural gap for the target audience while attempting to retain the authenticity of the original text.

### Discussion and Analysis

One of the distinguishing features of the German translation of the original novel *Das Jahr des Skorpions* lies in translator Ingeborg Baldauf's deliberate effort to preserve as much of the Uzbek cultural identity as possible. Through the analysis process, several noteworthy aspects have emerged:

**First**, the use of transliteration for certain Uzbek words plays a key role in maintaining the national color of the text. Words such as *mahalla*, *hokim*, *dugona*, *halol*, and *so'zana* are left in transliterated form, and in some cases are accompanied by brief explanations. This strategy helps preserve the original cultural context.

Example: "Die Dugona, eine traditionelle enge Freundin, die wie eine Schwester betrachtet wird..." (Shukrullo. 1990).

("Dugona, a traditional close female friend who is regarded as a sister...") ("Die ohne Leichentuch Begrabenen". 2005).

**Second**, realia are translated using a combined approach of direct translation and explanatory commentary. Some political and historical realia are translated directly, while others are given contextual explanations. For instance, *kompantiya majlisi*

(Communist Party meeting) or KGB are rendered with clarification:

“Kompartiya majlisi” → “Parteiversammlung der KPdSU” (Kommunistische Partei der Sowjetunion).

Original: “KGB qamoqxonasining yakka xonasida yotganimga mana bir necha kun bo‘ldi” (Shukrullo. 1990).

Translation: “Seit einigen Tagen saß ich nun schon in einer Einzelzelle im KGB-Gefängnis” (“Die ohne Leichentuch Begrabenen”. 2005).

**Third**, proverbs and idiomatic expressions in Uzbek are translated using either equivalent expressions in German or free adaptation.

Example: Uzbek: “Tergovchining xonasida u bergan soroqlarni o‘ylab o‘tirib, xayolimdan xalqimizning ‘suvdan holva yasash’ degan maqoli o‘ta berdi.”

German: “Während ich im Zimmer des Untersuchungsrichters saß und über seine Fragen nachdachte, ging mir plötzlich die volkstümliche Redensart ‘Helwa aus Wasser machen’ durch den Kopf.”

Another example: Uzbek proverb: “It hurar, karvon o‘tar.”

German equivalent: “Die Hunde bellen, aber die Karawane zieht weiter.”

This is a well-known German proverb that successfully conveys the meaning and tone of the original Uzbek phrase.

**Fourth**, personal names and anthroponyms such as Murod, Saodat, Yo‘ldoshbek, etc., are retained without alteration in the translation. This supports the preservation of the original Uzbek setting. In some cases, the phonetic spelling of names is slightly adjusted to make them more accessible to German readers.

**Fifth**, cultural symbols, norms, values, and behavioral systems – such as sovg‘a-salom (gift-giving), to‘y marosimlari (wedding ceremonies), xatna (circumcision), and Navro‘z – are presented with brief explanatory notes in the translation. This demonstrates the translator’s role as a cultural mediator, enabling the German-speaking audience to grasp the cultural nuances embedded in the original text.

Overall, the German translation of this work succeeds in preserving Uchqun Nazarov’s poetic style and the spirit of Uzbek identity.

Our study also considers the second work under analysis – Shukrullo’s novel “Kafansiz ko‘milganlar”, translated into German as “Die ohne Leichentuch Begrabenen”. This translation offers further examples of how national color and culturally specific realia are handled.

Shukrullo’s novel sheds light on the tragic historical periods of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Stalin’s repressions, wartime hardships, and the devastating consequences of colonialism. Ingeborg Baldauf’s translation plays a significant role in introducing German-speaking readers to the historical-realist prose of Uzbek literature, faithfully conveying the complex emotional and cultural depth of the original.

a) General Characteristics of the Translation.

Ingeborg Baldauf, a specialist in Central Asian cultures and languages, pays particular attention to preserving the national context in her translation. She applies transliteration and explanatory translation with considerable care and sensitivity, aiming to maintain the authenticity of the original.

b) National Expressions and Cultural Imagery.

The original text includes many uniquely Uzbek expressions and images such as choyxo‘r (tea drinker), osh (pilaf), janoza (funeral prayer), xonadon (household), and mahalla (neighborhood community). These are mostly transliterated in the German translation and are either explained in the text or left to be understood from the context (Lotman Yu. M. Semiosphere. 2000).

Example: “Nach dem Tod seines Vaters wurde in der Mahalla eine Duaa gelesen” (B. Sh).

Here, the terms dua and mahalla are used without explicit explanation, but their meaning is understandable within the context.

c) Political Realia and Historical Repressions

The novel contains political references such as NKVD, Russian colonialism, repression (qatag‘on), and Gulag. These are presented either through direct translation or with accompanying explanations to support understanding.

Example: “Die Repressionen der Dreißigerjahre, bekannt als Qatagʻon unter den Usbeken...” (B.SH).

(“The repressions of the 1930s, known as Qatagʻon among Uzbeks...”) (Lotman Yu. M. Semiosphere. 2000).

This type of approach enables German readers to comprehend the historical depth and specificity of Uzbek experiences.

#### d) Cultural and Psychological Contexts

Shukrullo’s writing style is philosophical, introspective, and rich in internal monologue. The translator has made an effort to preserve this tone. The psychological depth of the novel – marked by themes such as endurance, patience, and moral strength, all of which are characteristic of the Uzbek worldview – is also reflected in the German translation (Kibrik, A. E., 2004).

### Comparative Analysis of Both Novels

In our article, we have analyzed the culturally specific language and realia in two distinguished Uzbek novels. Based on comparative analysis, we can conclude that the translation approaches differ according to the nature of each work:

In “Das Jahr des Skorpions” (The Year of the Scorpion), Baldauf employed a stylistically flexible, poetic, and interpretive translation strategy. She made greater use of explanatory methods and poetic liberty to convey cultural meaning.

In “Die ohne Leichentuch Begrabenen” (Those Buried Without a Shroud), Baldauf adopted an approach grounded in academic precision, historical fidelity, transliteration, and clarifying annotations.

Both novels reflect different historical periods and socio-cultural layers of Uzbek society. In both cases, the translator strives to preserve national color, yet the methods vary:

In “Kafansiz koʻmilganlar”, the translation emphasizes linguistic accuracy and loyalty to historical context;

In “Chayon yili”, national identity is conveyed through stylistic coherence and literary freedom.

### Conclusion

The German translation of “Chayon yili” demonstrates a balanced approach to preserving national color and cultural realia. The translator, Ingeborg Baldauf, has clearly understood the author’s stylistic and cultural intentions and successfully conveyed them into German with both objectivity and literary sensitivity. Techniques such as transliteration, explanatory translation, and the use of culturally equivalent proverbs were employed thoughtfully throughout the translation. Furthermore, the unique features of Uzbek culture are presented in a manner that is accessible and understandable for foreign readers. Both novels—“Chayon yili” and “Kafansiz koʻmilganlar”—portray different periods, social realities, and cultural layers of Uzbek society. In both cases, the translator has made a conscious effort to preserve the national spirit; however, the translation strategies differ: In the translation of “Die ohne Leichentuch Begrabenen” (Kafansiz koʻmilganlar), Baldauf prioritized linguistic precision and historical fidelity, ensuring accuracy in representing political and historical realities. In the translation of “Das Jahr des Skorpions” (Chayon yili), she favored stylistic harmony and artistic freedom to effectively convey the Uzbek cultural essence. This comparison illustrates that preserving national identity in literary translation is not only an aesthetic concern but also a humanitarian one, contributing to intercultural understanding and dialogue. Expressing national color and cultural realia in translation is a true test of both literary and cultural competence. The German translations of “Chayon yili” and “Kafansiz koʻmilganlar” clearly demonstrate that a translator’s task extends beyond linguistic transfer – it involves the translation of culture itself. Using different methods, both translations have succeeded in retaining the national spirit of the original Uzbek texts. As a result, Uzbek literature has moved closer to the global reader, and a strong foundation for cross-cultural communication has been established.

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