HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

THE ROLE OF INTERMEDIATE TRANSLATION IN THE REPRESENTATION OF EMOTIONAL MEANING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UZBEK, RUSSIAN AND ARABIC VERSIONS OF ABDULLA QODIRIY'S BYGONE DAYS

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23538472

Abstract: This article examines how an intermediate-language comparison can clarify, but cannot by itself establish, the origin of emotional shifts in the Arabic translation of Abdulla Qodiriy's Bygone Days (O'tkan kunlar). The investigation distinguishes a demonstrable textual relationship from a hypothetical route of transmission. The Uzbek original, a published Russian version used as a comparative witness, and Mohamed Nasr Eldin El-Gebaly's Arabic rendition are considered through a staged method combining lexical-semantic, figurative, and pragmatic analysis. One documented three-way alignment involving an idiom of embarrassment demonstrates that the Russian comparative version retains the Uzbek spatial metaphor, whereas the Arabic passage explicitly names embarrassment and describes an impending physical reaction. Additional Uzbek–Arabic comparisons are used as supplementary, not genealogical, evidence. The results show that preservation of imagery in a potential intermediate text prevents automatic attribution of Arabic figurative neutralization to Russian mediation. The article therefore proposes an evidence-tier framework for multilingual translation studies: verified source use, textually plausible mediation, and parallel comparison without causal attribution. Its contribution is primarily methodological; the limited documented three-way sample does not justify quantitative generalization or claims about the translator's actual drafting process.

Keywords: Bygone Days; O'tkan kunlar; Arabic literary translation; Russian comparative version; indirect translation; emotional meaning; translation genealogy; pragmatic equivalence.

1. Introduction

The translation of literary emotion is a problem of textual form as well as meaning. A sentence may continue to communicate fear, shame, or grief after translation while no longer presenting that feeling through the original metaphor, rhythm, or cultural association. When a literary work circulates through several languages, the analyst faces an additional difficulty: an observable shift in a later translation may have originated in a previous rendition, or it may reflect a new interpretative choice. Distinguishing these possibilities requires more than juxtaposing two texts.

Abdulla Qodiriy's Bygone Days is a productive case because its Uzbek narrative combines culturally marked speech with metaphorical representations of characters' emotional states. The novel has circulated in Russian, and an Arabic translation, al-Ayyām al-Khawālī (الأيام الخوالي), appeared in 2024. The existence of several language versions raises questions about possible textual mediation, but

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does not prove that any particular Russian edition functioned as the Arabic translator's immediate source. The present study treats this distinction as central rather than incidental.

The research asks: (1) what can a three-way comparison reveal about the location of a figurative-emotional shift; (2) under what conditions may the influence of an intermediate text be inferred; and (3) how should scholars describe emotional transformation when the precise translation genealogy is undocumented? Instead of claiming a comprehensive reconstruction of the translator's working process, the study develops a cautious comparative procedure and demonstrates it on available textual evidence.

2. Literature Review

Translation equivalence has long been understood as more than lexical correspondence. Nida (1964) distinguished referential and emotive dimensions of meaning and connected translation decisions to their communicative effects. Newmark (1988) discussed the competing pressures of semantic accuracy, communicative naturalness, and metaphor translation. Baker (2011) located equivalence at several linguistic and pragmatic levels, reminding analysts that contextual inference cannot be reduced to dictionary matching. These approaches help explain why an explicit target-language emotion label may preserve the basic psychological category while changing the literary experience through which the emotion is conveyed.

The literature on indirect translation adds a distinct methodological concern. Toury (1995) placed translated texts within historically conditioned norms, while Rosa, Pięta, and Maia (2017) emphasized the need to conceptualize indirect translation as a research object with specific empirical challenges. A chain of translations is not established simply because chronologically earlier versions exist. Documentary evidence, paratexts, translator testimony, and distinctive shared readings can strengthen an inference; without such evidence, a third-language version should be described as a comparative witness rather than a confirmed source.

This study joins these perspectives. Emotional transformation is treated as a difference between textual realizations; mediation is treated as a separate historical hypothesis. Keeping the two questions apart is essential to avoid turning similarity into proof of dependence.

3. Materials and Methods

The primary materials are Qodiriy's Uzbek Bygone Days, a Russian edition of Минувшие дни used for comparison, and the 2024 Arabic translation attributed to Mohamed Nasr Eldin El-Gebaly. The Uzbek and Arabic examples below follow the dissertation's aligned textual dossier; the quoted Russian wording is likewise drawn from that dossier. Before journal submission, all quotations and printed pagination should be collated against the exact physical or facsimile editions, especially where different editions paginate differently. No claim is made that the Russian comparison edition was necessarily consulted by the Arabic translator.

The unit of analysis is an aligned emotional expression in its narrative microcontext. Each comparison proceeds through five stages: (i) identifying the emotional situation in the Uzbek text; (ii) specifying the source image and its pragmatic work; (iii) examining the corresponding Russian formulation when available; (iv) comparing the Arabic lexicalization and imagery; and (v) assigning an evidentiary status to any claim of mediation. This separates descriptive observations, which can be

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directly read from the passages, from historical claims about the translator's sources, which require independent support.

Evidence tier	What the evidence supports	Permissible formulation
A: documented mediation	Translator statement, manuscript, or reliable paratext naming a source	"The translator used version X"
B: convergent textual indicators	Multiple distinctive shared readings plus chronological plausibility	"Version X may have influenced the Arabic rendering"
C: parallel comparison only	Corresponding passages, without proof of source use	"The Russian version provides a comparative control"

Table 1. Proposed evidence tiers for discussing intermediate-language influence. These are analytical categories proposed here, not experimentally validated thresholds.

The analysis is qualitative. It does not calculate corpus frequencies, reader-response scores, or statistically significant effects. Such claims would require a defined sample, independent annotation, and reproducible coding procedures beyond the material presently available.

4. Results

4.1. A three-way case: embarrassment and the survival of metaphor

The Uzbek passage describes Mohira oyim's embarrassment through a spatial hyperbole: "Mohira oyim bu yuzsizlikdan yer yorilsa yerga kirgundek bo'ladir" ("She felt as though she could disappear into the earth from shame"). The image makes shame perceptible not by naming its intensity directly but by presenting an imagined withdrawal from the social gaze.

The comparative Russian version reads: «Махира-бану готова была со стыда сквозь землю провалиться». This formulation preserves the image of falling through the earth. The Arabic passage in the aligned dossier is: «كانت ماهرة بانو على وشك أن يغمى عليها من شدة الإحراج» ("Mahira Banu was on the verge of fainting from intense embarrassment"). Here the emotion is explicitly named through الإحراج, while the magnitude is expressed through the near-fainting construction. The three passages thus share a broad emotional scenario but differ in the rhetorical vehicle that renders shame vivid.

Version	Form of emotional expression	Analytical observation
Uzbek original	yer yorilsa yerga kirgundek	Spatial hyperbole; disappearance from social view
Russian comparative text	со стыда сквозь землю провалиться	Closely parallel spatial hyperbole retained
Arabic translation	على وشك أن يغمى عليها من شدة الإحراج	Explicit emotion label plus physiological hyperbole

Table 2. One three-way alignment of the embarrassment episode. Translation and interpretation are the author's analytical glosses.

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The finding is deliberately narrow but important: the Russian comparator does not explain the Arabic loss of the earth/disappearance image by an already neutralized Russian expression. If this particular Russian text were a source, the image would have been available for retention; nevertheless, its Arabic replacement might still reflect a conscious adaptation. If a different Russian or English version was used, or the Uzbek original was consulted, a different history may obtain. The data therefore permit a claim about contrast, not a confident claim about causation.

4.2. Supplementary Uzbek–Arabic contrasts without an established Russian alignment

Two further contrasts help identify the kind of emotional changes for which a third-language comparison would be useful. First, "Qushbegi qo'lida bir qog'oz ushlab, go'yo es-hushidan ayrilgan kabi qotib o'ltiribdir" is rendered in the Arabic dossier as «كان نور محمد يجلس بلا حراك، ممسكًا ببعض الأوراق بين يديه». The Uzbek description joins immobility with a comparison to loss of consciousness; the Arabic emphasizes bodily stillness and the papers held in the character's hands. The psychological simile is not reproduced in the quoted Arabic segment. Without a matched Russian reading, this observation does not identify the point at which the simile disappeared.

Second, "Hatto hushi boshidan uchdi" corresponds to «كاد يغمى عليه من الذهول». The Uzbek expression presents a sudden emotional shock through a conventional metaphor of consciousness departing; the Arabic recasts the episode as near-fainting caused by astonishment. This is not straightforward emotional erasure: the strong affect remains, but its rhetorical and physiological presentation changes. Again, absent a securely aligned intermediate reading, the analyst must not attribute the change to Russian influence.

Uzbek emotional cue	Arabic realization	What can be concluded
go'yo es-hushidan ayrilgan kabi qotib o'ltiribdir	يجلس بلا حراك	Psychological simile not reproduced in cited segment
hushi boshidan uchdi	كاد يغمى عليه من الذهول	Metaphorical shock recast as near-fainting from astonishment

Table 3. Supplementary bilingual evidence. These examples are not presented as documented three-stage translation chains.

4.3. A methodological result: separating location from attribution

The three-way case and supplementary pairs suggest a practical distinction. The location of a textual difference can sometimes be established among the versions actually compared: in the embarrassment example, the image appears in both Uzbek and Russian but not in the cited Arabic formulation. Attribution, however, asks who introduced that change, which source was consulted, and why. Those are questions about production history, not merely about parallel passages. Their answers remain conditional until independent evidence is obtained.

5. Discussion

The embarrassment example complicates a common assumption in discussions of indirect translation: that loss of imagery in a later version must have been inherited from an intermediate one. A comparison text may preserve an idiom that the target version reformulates. This makes it unsafe to

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treat "intermediate-language effect" as a default explanation for every reduction of figurative specificity. Conversely, when a Russian and Arabic version share an unusual addition or error absent from the Uzbek original, that convergence may justify further investigation—but still needs corroboration.

The analysis also demonstrates the limits of binary judgments such as "emotion preserved" versus "emotion lost." In the embarrassment episode, the source's spatial image is replaced by an explicit affect label and a physiological consequence. The emotional category and high intensity are recognizable, yet the culturally and stylistically situated representation changes. Such shifts can be described in terms of semantic continuity, figurative substitution, explicitation, and pragmatic recalibration without pretending to measure actual reader responses.

The distinction between an Arabic translator's choices and a possible mediator's contribution has implications for research design. A stronger follow-up study would compare multiple Russian editions, available English versions, and the Arabic translation at the same narrative loci. It would record exact edition metadata, align complete sentences and surrounding context, and distinguish commonplace idiomatic correspondences from rare shared innovations. Paratextual evidence concerning the translator's sources would then be assessed separately. Only this combined approach could move particular cases from tier C toward tier B or A.

Several limitations are acknowledged. The documented three-way illustration is a single case and cannot establish prevalence. The Russian text used here is a comparative witness, not a verified production source. Some Arabic page references circulated in working materials are inconsistent with the stated length of the printed edition, so page numbers have deliberately not been assigned to unverified quotations. Finally, the study does not include independent reader testing or multiple annotators; its claims concern observable textual form rather than empirically measured emotional reception.

6. Conclusion

This article has shown that a multilingual comparison is most valuable when it is paired with disciplined claims about evidence. The three-way embarrassment passage demonstrates continuity of a spatial hyperbole from Uzbek into a comparative Russian version, followed by a different, explicitly psychological and physiological representation in Arabic. That contrast does not establish the Arabic translator's source, but it does rule out a simplistic explanation that the specific Russian comparator had already removed the image.

The proposed three-tier framework differentiates documented mediation, plausible textual influence, and comparison without causal attribution. This separation permits scholars to describe emotional-semantic changes with precision while keeping translation genealogy open to further verification. For Bygone Days, future research should enlarge the trilingual alignment, consult the precise editions and translator paratexts, and examine whether recurrent distinctive readings support a specific path of mediation. Until then, the responsible conclusion is that multilingual textual comparison identifies transformations more securely than it identifies their historical causes.

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