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**The Role of the Translator in Shaping National Identity: A Study of Early 20th Century Translations in Central Asia**

Azimova Laylo Faxriddin qizi

Philologist

[layloazimova74@gmail.com](mailto:layloazimova74@gmail.com)

**Abstract:**

This thesis investigates the pivotal role of translators in shaping national identity in Central Asia during the early 20th century. As cultural intermediaries, translators contributed to the emergence of national consciousness by selecting and interpreting foreign literary works that resonated with local values, aspirations, and historical contexts. This study focuses on the impact of translation choices on the construction of national identity, examining key translations, the motivations behind them, and their reception in Central Asian societies. Through a critical analysis of translators' work, the thesis aims to highlight how translation facilitated cultural exchange and influenced the development of a distinct national identity in a time of sociopolitical change.

**Introduction**

**Background**

The early 20th century was a period of significant transformation for Central Asia, characterized by colonialism, social upheaval, and the quest for national identity. As the region grappled with the influences of both colonial powers and revolutionary ideas, translation emerged as a critical tool for cultural negotiation and identity formation. Translators played a crucial role in mediating foreign literary works and ideas, thus shaping the intellectual landscape of their societies.

**Research Questions**

This thesis seeks to answer the following questions:

- How did translators in early 20th century Central Asia contribute to the formation of national identity through their translation choices?
- What literary works were prioritized for translation, and what criteria influenced these decisions?



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- How did the reception of translated works reflect and shape the evolving notions of national identity in Central Asian societies?

### **Objectives**

- To analyze the role of translators as cultural intermediaries in Central Asia.
- To examine the translation strategies employed in the context of national identity formation.
- To explore the relationship between translation, literature, and sociopolitical developments in early 20th century Central Asia.

### **Significance**

This research contributes to the understanding of translation studies, particularly in the context of national identity formation. It highlights the significance of translators in shaping cultural narratives and the impact of their choices on the collective identity of societies undergoing transformation.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Translation and National Identity**

The connection between translation and national identity has been widely explored in translation studies. Works by scholars such as Lawrence Venuti (1995) emphasize the political implications of translation choices and their role in shaping cultural perceptions. In the context of Central Asia, translators were not only language experts but also cultural agents who influenced public discourse.

#### **Historical Context of Central Asia in the Early 20th Century**

This section provides an overview of the historical and sociopolitical landscape of Central Asia during the early 20th century, highlighting the impact of colonialism, the rise of nationalism, and the search for cultural autonomy. The translation of foreign literature served as a means of asserting national identity and challenging colonial narratives.

#### **The Role of Translators as Cultural Agents**

Translators in Central Asia acted as cultural intermediaries, negotiating between foreign literary traditions and local contexts. Their choices reflected their ideological leanings and aspirations for national identity. This section discusses notable translators of the period and their contributions to the literary landscape.



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### **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This thesis employs a qualitative research design, focusing on textual analysis of translated works and historical documents. Case studies of specific translations will illustrate the themes of cultural negotiation and identity formation.

### **Data Collection**

Data will be gathered from a variety of sources, including:

- Translated literary works from the early 20th century.
- Biographies and writings of prominent translators.
- Historical accounts and scholarly articles on nationalism and cultural identity in Central Asia.

### **Analytical Framework**

The analysis will draw on a combination of translation theory and cultural studies to examine how translation practices intersect with the construction of national identity.

### **Case Studies**

#### **The Translation of Russian Literature**

This section examines the translation of Russian literary works, focusing on how these translations influenced perceptions of Russian culture and contributed to the development of a modern Central Asian literary canon. Notable translators, such as Abdulla Qodiriy, played a significant role in shaping literary tastes and cultural aspirations.

#### **The Influence of European Ideologies**

This chapter explores translations of European works that introduced revolutionary ideas and concepts of nationalism. The choices made by translators in selecting texts and interpreting them for local audiences reflect broader cultural and ideological shifts.

#### **The Revival of National Languages**

The revival and standardization of national languages were critical to the formation of national identity. This section investigates the translations of literary works into local



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languages, emphasizing how these efforts contributed to linguistic nationalism and cultural pride.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

#### **The Impact of Translation Choices on National Identity**

This chapter analyzes the implications of translators' choices on the development of national identity in Central Asia. It discusses how translation facilitated the emergence of a shared cultural narrative and collective memory.

#### **The Reception of Translated Works**

The reception of translated works reveals how they were perceived by contemporary audiences and their role in shaping national consciousness. This section includes reader responses, critical reviews, and the influence of translated literature on public discourse.

#### **The Translator as a Cultural Mediator**

This section emphasizes the importance of the translator as a cultural mediator who navigates between different literary traditions and local contexts. Translators not only convey meaning but also shape cultural identity through their interpretive choices.

### **Conclusion**

The thesis concludes by summarizing the key findings regarding the role of translators in shaping national identity in early 20th century Central Asia. It reiterates the importance of translation as a tool for cultural negotiation and identity formation.

### **Implications for Future Research**

This study highlights the need for further research on the role of translation in post-colonial contexts and its impact on national identity in contemporary societies. It encourages scholars to explore the continuing influence of translators in shaping



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