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# COMPARISON OF RUSSIAN AND UZBEK TRANSLATIONS OF "A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS" BY KHALED HOSSEINI

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**Abstract**

This article provides a comparative analysis of the Russian and Uzbek translations of Khaled Hosseini's novel "A Thousand Splendid Suns." The study examines how cultural and linguistic nuances are handled in both translations, highlighting the approaches taken by translators Sergei Sokolov and Rustam Jabborov. The analysis focuses on the translation of culture-bound words, narrative style, and the emotional impact of the text. It is found that while Sokolov's Russian translation retains cultural references through footnotes, Jabborov's Uzbek translation adapts certain terms to be more relatable to the target audience. Both translations successfully preserve the emotional depth and lyrical quality of Hosseini's original work, albeit through different stylistic choices. This comparative study underscores the importance of understanding the target audience and making thoughtful translation choices to ensure the story resonates with readers across different cultural contexts.

**Keywords**

Translation, culture-bound words, Russian translation, Uzbek translation, cultural adaptation, stylistic analyses

## Introduction

Khaled Hosseini's "A Thousand Splendid Suns" is a novel that resonates deeply with readers worldwide due to its powerful narrative and exploration of profound themes such as love, hardship, and resilience. As with any significant literary work, translating "A Thousand Splendid Suns" into different languages requires not just linguistic skill but also a sensitive understanding of cultural contexts and nuances. This article delves into the comparison of the Russian and Uzbek translations of Hosseini's novel, examining how each translation preserves the essence of the original text while adapting to the linguistic and cultural frameworks of the target languages. The Russian translation by Sergei Sokolov and the Uzbek translation by Rustam Jabborov each bring unique perspectives and challenges to the fore. By analyzing their approaches to cultural references, narrative style, and the emotional undertones of the story, we can gain insights into the art of translation and its impact on readers' experiences. This comparison highlights the delicate balance translators must maintain between fidelity to the source material and the adaptation needed to make the story accessible and relatable to new audiences. Through this exploration, we aim to appreciate the intricate work of translation and its role in bridging cultural divides, enriching our understanding of "A Thousand Splendid Suns" in the process.

## Culture-bound words

Sergei Sokolov retains the word **"kolba"** and provides a footnote explaining its meaning in Russian translation. This approach helps Russian readers understand the cultural context without altering the original term. Rustam Jabborov replaces **"kolba"** with a more familiar term to Uzbek readers. But when translated into Uzbek, the word **"kolba"** is said to be **"uy"**. This adaptation makes

the text more relatable and understandable for the target audience. Sokolov translates **"villagearbab"** as **" Деревенский староста "** which means **"qishloq oqsoqoli"** in uzbek translation Jabborov uses this word. The word **"mullah"** is kept unchanged in the Russian translation, as it is widely recognized and understood in both Russian and Uzbek. The word **" Тахамул "** is often retained in its original form and might be accompanied by a footnote explaining its meaning related to endurance and patience. Sokolov uses this approach to preserve the cultural context while providing clarity. Similarly, the term is directly borrowed and used in the text. Given that **"tahammul"** has Arabic roots and is familiar in both Uzbek and Russian cultures, it does not require extensive adaptation. Jabborov ensures that the term's significance in expressing endurance is retained. In Russian translation by Sergei Sokolov the word **"harami"** is transliterated and left in its original form, often with an explanatory note. The term **"haromi"** is directly used in its original form in the Uzbek translation as well, as it carries the same connotations and is easily understood by Uzbek readers due to shared linguistic heritage. The word **" Ахунд "** is an explanatory note or contextual information within the narrative typically accompanies it to explain its significance as a religious leader or teacher. In some instances, **"akhund"** might be adapted to **"oqsoqol"** (which means elder or wise person) to make it more relatable in the Uzbek context, while still conveying the same respect and cultural significance. In Russian translation **"hijab"** is retained as **"хиджаб"** a word that is widely recognized and understood across various cultures, including Russian. Sokolov saves the original term due to its universal recognition. **"Hijob"** is directly borrowed and remains unchanged in the Uzbek translation, as it is a common and easily understood concept in Uzbek culture, maintaining its cultural and religious significance. The idiom **"mashallah"** is kept in its original form **"машаллах"** often with a note explaining its usage as an expression of praise or appreciation in Russian translation. Likewise, the phrase **"mashallah"** is used directly in the text without adaptation in the Uzbek translation, as it is commonly used and understood within the culture.

**Main part**

1."What's the sense schooling a girl like you? It's like shining a spittoon. And you'll learn nothing of value in those schools. There is only one, only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life, and they don't teach it in school. Look at me."

2. "– Что толку учить девчонку вроде нее? Все равно что выставлять плевательницу на яркий свет. И чему полезному ее научат в этой школе? Женщинам вроде нее и меня в жизни нужно только одно. Ну-ка, посмотри на меня."

3. "– Бунга ўхшаганларга ўқишни ким қўйибди? Ўқиб гўр бўлармиди? Вей, менга қара? Ҳали мактабда ўқигинг кеп қолдими?"

In the English text, the word **"spittoon"** is used, which is directly translated into Russian. In the Uzbek translation, the phrase is adapted to **"ўқиб гўр бўлармиди?"** which reflects a more colloquial and contextual expression. The phrase **"There is only one, only one skill"** in the English text is similarly expressed in Russian and Uzbek: **"женщинам вроде нее и меня в жизни нужно только одно"** (Russian) and **"ўқишни ким қўйибди"** (Uzbek). The Uzbek translation carries a slightly more informal and straightforward tone. When translating into Russian and Uzbek, each language's unique expressions and styles are retained. For example, the Russian phrase **"Ну-ка, посмотри на меня"** is rendered in Uzbek as **"Вей, менга қара?"** both preserving their respective linguistic flavors. All three texts maintain the cultural and social context of the original, reflecting the roles and expectations of women in society. The emphasis on traditional skills and roles is preserved across translations. The core meaning and message of the text remain intact across all translations. Each translation closely aligns with the original content while adapting to the nuances of the respective languages.

4. "And you, akhund sahib, with all due respect, you should know better than to encourage these foolish ideas of hers. If you really care about her, then you make her see that she belongs here at home with her mother. There is nothing out there for her. Nothing but rejection and heartache. I know, akhund sahib. I know."

5. “– А вы, ахунд-сагиб, при всем моем к вам уважении, лучше не потакали бы девчонке в ее глупостях. Ее место здесь, рядом с матерью. Больше ей податься некуда. Везде только презрение и боль. Уж я-то знаю, ахунд-сагиб.”

6. “– Охун соҳиб, илтимос, – шартта унинг гапини бўлди Нана. – Бунинг ҳамма гапларигаям қулоқ солаверманг. Унинг жойи шу ерда, онасининг ёнида. Бошқа ҳеч қаерга бормайди. Ҳамма жойда уни турткилашади, озор беришади. Биламан-ку, охун соҳиб!”

The phrase **"with all due respect"** in the English text is translated as **"при всем моем к вам уважении"** in Russian, which directly corresponds to the original. In Uzbek, the expression is adapted more freely as **"илтимос,"** maintaining the respectful tone but using a more casual expression. In the English text, the term **"akhund sahib"** is a respectful title. This is preserved in both Russian **("ахунд-сагиб")** and Uzbek **("охун соҳиб").** The cultural context of showing respect to an elder or a religious figure remains intact. The Russian translation adds the phrase **"Уж я-то знаю, ахунд-сагиб,"** which emphasizes the speaker's personal experience and knowledge. The Uzbek translation also includes a similar personal touch: **"Биламан-ку, охун соҳиб!"** both translations aim to convey the speaker's certainty and personal conviction. The English version uses formal language and respectful tone. The Russian translation maintains this formality but adds a direct and somewhat strict tone. The Uzbek translation also preserves the respectful tone but adapts it to a more colloquial and culturally contextual expression.

7. “Mariam loved having visitors at the kolba. The village arbab and his gifts, Bibi jo and her aching hip and endless gossiping, and, of course, Mullah Faizullah. But there was no one, no one, that Mariam longed to see more than Jalil.”

8. “Мариам любила, когда приходили гости. Деревенский староста с гостинцами, сплетница Биби-джо, мулла Фатхулла. Но ни по кому, ни по одному человеку Мариам так не скучала, как по Джалилю.”

9. “Марям меҳмонлар келишини ёқтирарди. Қишлоқ оқсоқоли, ғийбатчи кампир Бибижо, мулла Фатҳулла... Аммо, Марям ҳаммадан кўра Жалилнинг келишини кўзи тўрт бўлиб кутарди.”

The original English sentence describes Mariam’s enjoyment of having visitors, highlighting specific characters and their traits, with an emphasis on her longing to see Jalil. In this example, there is no explicit metaphor like in the previous example with **"shards of glass."** However, the emotional significance of Jalil’s visits to Mariam is emphasized in the original English text, and this is carefully carried over into the Russian and Uzbek translations. **“Мариам любила, когда приходили гости...”** - This directly translates the idea that Mariam loved having visitors. The roles and characteristics of the visitors are preserved**: "деревенский староста"** (village chief), **"сплетница Биби-джо"** (gossipy Bibi jo), and **"мулла Фатхулла"** (Mullah Faizullah). The phrase **"Но ни по кому, ни по одному человеку Мариам так не скучала, как по Джалилю"** maintains the emotional emphasis on Mariam’s longing for Jalil by repeating the structure, emphasizing her strong feelings. **“Марям меҳмонлар келишини ёқтирарди...”** - This also directly translates the enjoyment Mariam finds in having visitors. The characters' roles and traits are conveyed: **"қишлоқ оқсоқоли"** (village elder), **"ғийбатчи кампир Бибижо"** (gossipy old woman Bibi Jo), and **"мулла Фатҳулла"** (Mullah Faizullah). The phrase **"Аммо, Марям ҳаммадан кўра Жалилнинг келишини кўзи тўрт бўлиб кутарди"** uses an Uzbek idiom **“кўзи тўрт бўлиб кутарди”** to effectively convey Mariam's deep longing and anticipation. Both the Russian and Uzbek translations use direct translation strategies while making cultural adjustments to ensure the vividness and emotional depth of the original are maintained. The translations effectively communicate Mariam’s emotional state, preserving the narrative’s intent and enhancing readers' understanding of the characters’ emotional dynamics.

10. “Mariam would leap to her feet when she spotted him hopping stones across the stream, all smiles and hearty waves. Mariam knew that Nana was watching her, gauging her reaction, and it always took effort to stay in the doorway, to wait, to watch him slowly make his way to her, to not run to him.

She restrained herself, patiently watched him walk through the tall grass, his suit jacket slung over his shoulder, the breeze lifting his red necktie."

11. "Мариам вскакивала на ноги, и взору ее, точно, представал Джалиль. Он пускал камешки по воде, источал улыбки, приветственно махал рукой. Мариам знала, что Нана поглядывает на нее, следит, как она себя поведет, и ей стоило немалых усилий не броситься отцу навстречу, а стоять неподвижно и ждать, пока он сам подойдет к ней (ужасно медленно). Застыв на месте, Мариам смотрела, как Джалиль шагает по высокой траве, пиджак наброшен на одно плечо, красный галстук треплется по ветру."

12. "Марямга илкис жон киргандек бўларди. Отасини узоқдан кўриши билан ўрнидан сапчиб турарди. Отаси анҳорнинг нариги қирғоғига етиб келгач, у тарафга қараб қўл силкитар ва майин жилмаярди. Бу пайтда Марям онасининг ундан кўз узмай турганини сезар, шу боис, отасининг истиқболига ошиқишга журъат этолмас, Жалилнинг ўзи у томонга келишини кутишдан бошқа иложи қолмас, аммо назарида отаси жуда секин юриб келаётганга ўхшарди."

The original English sentence vividly describes Mariam's excitement and restraint as she watches Jalil approach. The translations aim to capture this emotional intensity and detail. The original English text uses vivid imagery to convey Mariam's excitement and longing, such as **"leap to her feet"** and **"breeze lifting his red necktie."** The translations attempt to maintain this vividness and emotional depth**. "Мариам вскакивала на ноги..."** captures Mariam's excitement. The phrase **"ей стоило немалых усилий не броситься отцу навстречу"** effectively conveys her restraint. Descriptions like **"источал улыбки, приветственно махал рукой"** and **"красный галстук треплется по ветру"** preserve the original's vividness. The phrase **"ей стоило немалых усилий"** emphasizes the effort Mariam exerts to stay still, mirroring the English text's sentiment. **"Марямга илкис жон киргандек бўларди. Отасини узоқдан кўриши билан ўрнидан сапчиб турарди"** vividly conveys her excitement. The idiomatic expression **"кўзи тўрт бўлиб кутарди"** (from the previous example) is similarly effective in conveying deep anticipation. The translation captures the scene's details, such as **"Анҳорнинг нариги қирғоғига етиб келгач"** and **"майин жилмаярди,"** which convey the same visual and emotional elements. The phrase **"отасининг истиқболига ошиқишга журъат этолмас"** emphasizes her self-restraint, reflecting the original's sentiment. Specific idiomatic expressions are adapted to fit cultural contexts. For instance, in Uzbek, expressions like **"кўзи тўрт бўлиб кутарди"** (previously used idiom) add a culturally resonant nuance.

13. "After tea with Nana, Mariam and Jalil always went fishing in the stream. He showed her how to cast her line, how to reel in the trout. He taught her the proper way to gut a trout, to clean it, to lift the meat off the bone in one motion. He drew pictures for her as they waited for a strike, showed her how to draw an elephant in one stroke without ever lifting the pen off the paper. He taught her rhymes. Together they sang: Lili Mi birdbath, Sitting on a dirt path, Minnow sat on the rim and drank, Slipped, and in the water she sank."

14. "Напившись с Наной чаю, Мариам и Джалиль отправлялись на рыбалку. Отец учил ее, как надо забрасывать удочку, как подсекать, как чистить и потрошить форель, как одним быстрым движением выдергивать из рыбы хребет. Пока они ждали поклевки, Джалиль рисовал ей картинки, показывал, как можно изобразить слона, не отрывая карандаша от бумаги. Он научил ее рифмовать слова, они вместе пели песенку. Лунку воробьи нашли И купаются в пыли. Рыбка в речке поскользнулась — С головою окунулась."

15. "Нана билан чой ичиб бўлишгач, Жалил Марямни олиб, балиқ овига жўнарди. Отаси унга қармоқни қандай ташлаш, балиқни қандай тозалашни қунт билан ўргатганди. То пўкак қимирлагунча, Жалил қаламни узмасдан туриб, қандай қилиб фил суратини чизишни кўрсатиб берар, турли шеър ва қўшиқларни ёдлатарди."

The original English text vividly describes the enjoyable and educational experiences Mariam has with Jalil, highlighting the father-daughter bond. The Russian and Uzbek translations aim to capture this

sense of warmth, activity, and learning. **"Напившись с Наной чаю..."** translates to **"After drinking tea with Nana,"** keeping the context clear. The descriptions of fishing and drawing are preserved with phrases like **"как чистить и потрошить форель"** (how to clean and gut the trout) and **"как можно изобразить слона, не отрывая карандаша от бумаги"** (how to draw an elephant without lifting the pencil). The rhyme is adapted to fit Russian cultural and linguistic norms while maintaining a playful tone: **"Лунку воробьи нашли И купаются в пыли. Рыбка в речке поскользнулась — С головою окунулась." "Нана билан чой ичиб бўлишгач..."** translates to **"After having tea with Nana,"** preserving the original sequence of events. The detailed activities are maintained with phrases like **"қармоқни қандай ташлаш"** (how to cast the line) and **"қаламни узмасдан туриб, қандай қилиб фил суратини чизиш"** (how to draw an elephant without lifting the pen). The Uzbek translation does not include a direct translation of the rhyme but focuses on capturing the essence of learning and singing together with the phrase **"турли шеър ва қўшиқларни ёдлатарди"** (taught various poems and songs). Both Russian and Uzbek translations aim to closely follow the original text's structure and meaning, preserving the main idea and emotional undertone. Specific idiomatic expressions and cultural references are adapted to fit the cultural context of each language. For example, the rhyme in the Russian translation is adjusted to be playful and familiar to Russian readers. Both translations strive to maintain the vivid imagery and emotional depth of the original text, ensuring that the activities and bond are clearly conveyed. In the Uzbek translation, the rhyme is simplified to focus on the general activity of singing and learning together, making it more accessible to the target audience.

Overall, the translations of **"A Thousand Splendid Suns"** from English to Russian and Uzbek effectively capture the emotional intensity, detailed imagery, and cultural nuances of the original text. By utilising direct translation techniques, cultural adaptations, and simplifications, the translations maintain the vividness and emotional depth, allowing readers to connect with the characters and their experiences. The careful preservation of names, titles, and essential details ensures that the narrative's impact remains strong across different languages and cultural contexts.

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