

THE ROLE OF JADID LITERARY FIGURES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UZBEK TRANSLATION

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Abstract: *The Jadid movement played a significant role in the cultural and intellectual modernization of Central Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although Jadid figures are frequently discussed as educators, writers, journalists, and political thinkers, their contribution to translation and intercultural communication also deserves systematic attention. This thesis examines the role of prominent Uzbek Jadid literary figures in the development of translation culture in Uzbekistan. It argues that their contribution should not be reduced to individual translated texts. More broadly, the Jadids created intellectual, linguistic, educational, and publishing conditions in which translation could function as an instrument of cultural renewal. Through multilingual reading, adaptation of educational and literary ideas, development of terminology, journalism, and modern genres, Jadid intellectuals widened the horizons of Uzbek readers. Particular attention is given to Mahmudhoja Behbudiy, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Abdulla Avloniy.*

Keywords: *Jadidism, Uzbek translation, literary translation, cultural transfer, modern Uzbek language, Behbudiy, Fitrat, Avloniy.*

Introduction

Translation is not merely the transfer of words between languages; it is also a mechanism through which societies encounter new intellectual traditions, literary forms, educational concepts, and social ideas. In the history of modern Uzbek culture, the Jadid movement occupies an important position in this process. From the late nineteenth century, Jadid reformers advocated new-method education, literacy, journalism, modern literature, and engagement with intellectual developments beyond the traditional cultural environment. Their activities created a demand for texts, concepts, and genres that were not previously widespread in Uzbek written culture.

The historical importance of the Jadids for translation can be understood at two interconnected levels. The first is textual: Jadid intellectuals read, adapted, interpreted, and circulated ideas originating in other linguistic and cultural contexts. The second is institutional and cultural: they established schools, newspapers, journals, and publishing initiatives that made the movement of ideas between languages more systematic. This second dimension is important because translation develops not only through translators but also through readers, publishers, educational institutions, terminology, and genres capable of receiving translated knowledge.

This thesis explores how prominent Jadid literary figures contributed to these processes. Particular attention is given to Mahmudhoja Behbudiy, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Abdulla Avloniy. The central argument is that their role in Uzbek translation development was multidimensional: they encouraged multilingual intellectual exchange, expanded the functional possibilities of Uzbek, introduced and adapted modern concepts, supported modern literary and journalistic genres, and helped establish translation as part of cultural modernization.

1. Jadidism and the Emergence of a Modern Translation Environment

The Jadid movement emerged within a multilingual cultural space in which Turkic, Persian, Arabic, Russian, and other intellectual traditions interacted. This environment shaped reformers' understanding of language and education. Their interest in modern sciences, geography, history, pedagogy, literature, and social thought required access to materials beyond the traditional curriculum. Translation and adaptation consequently became practical tools for educational reform.

A major contribution of the Jadids was their effort to make new knowledge accessible to a broader readership. The new-method schools needed textbooks and teaching materials; newspapers needed explanations of current political and social developments; and the emerging literary public needed new forms of prose, drama, criticism, and journalism. These needs stimulated linguistic innovation and encouraged the movement of ideas across languages.

The Jadid press was particularly important. Newspapers and journals functioned as cultural intermediaries, presenting information from different parts of the Muslim world and the wider Russian Empire. Even when a text was not translated literally, summarising, adapting, interpreting, and contextualising foreign information represented a form of cultural translation. This broadened the semantic and stylistic resources of Uzbek written discourse.

2. Mahmudhoja Behbudiy and Cultural Mediation

Mahmudhoja Behbudiy is one of the central figures of the Turkestan Jadid movement. His educational, journalistic, and literary activities contributed to the formation of a modern public sphere. His work demonstrates that translation development is closely connected with the circulation of knowledge. Through journalism, educational initiatives, and engagement with several cultural traditions, Behbudiy participated in cultural mediation in which new concepts had to be explained in forms accessible to Uzbek-speaking readers.

Behbudiy's importance for translation history also lies in the development of readership. A translation culture cannot become established without readers prepared to encounter unfamiliar ideas and textual forms. His press activity helped create such a readership. The publication of news, educational materials, social commentary, and literary texts encouraged readers to become familiar with new vocabulary and ways of discussing modern institutions and social change.

His drama *Padarkush* (1911), although an original literary work rather than a translation, is relevant to translation history because it demonstrates the movement toward modern dramatic form and social discourse. The emergence of such forms made the Uzbek literary system more receptive to translated drama and other modern genres.

3. Abdurauf Fitrat and Linguistic-Literary Modernization

Abdurauf Fitrat occupies a particularly significant place in the intellectual history of Uzbek literary language. His writings on literature, language, education, and society reflect engagement with a broad range of intellectual traditions. Fitrat's multilingual intellectual background enabled him to function as a mediator between cultural systems and to contribute to the development of a literary language capable of expressing modern philosophical, social, and educational concepts.

Fitrat's contribution to translation development can be considered through his approach to literary form and terminology. His discussions of literature encouraged attention to genre, style, artistic expression, and the relationship between language and intellectual content. Such reflection was important for translators because modern translation requires more than lexical substitution; it requires decisions about genre, register, terminology, and cultural context.

In this sense, Fitrat helped strengthen the intellectual infrastructure of translation. By expanding the conceptual capacity of Uzbek literary discourse, he contributed to the conditions under which texts from other languages could be translated and understood. His activity illustrates a broader Jadid principle: linguistic modernization and translation development are mutually reinforcing processes.

4. Abdulla Avloniy and Translation through Education

Abdulla Avloniy was strongly associated with education, pedagogy, ethics, journalism, and literary activity. His educational writings demonstrate the need for accessible language capable of communicating modern concepts to young learners and the general public. This educational orientation is directly relevant to translation because translated knowledge becomes socially effective only when it can be understood by its intended audience.

Avloniy's work helped establish a functional relationship between language, education, and social development. The development of school materials and modern pedagogical discourse created demand for terminology related to science, morality, citizenship, society, and educational practice. In this context, adaptation and translation were important mechanisms for filling lexical and conceptual gaps.

The Jadid educational project also promoted the idea that Uzbek could serve as a language of modern knowledge. When a language becomes capable of carrying scientific, pedagogical, literary, and social concepts, translation ceases to be a peripheral activity and becomes an element of national intellectual development.

Main Channels of Jadid Influence on Translation

Figure / sphere	Main contribution	Relevance to translation
Mahmudhoja Behbudiy	Press, education, journalism, modern drama	Created readership and publishing conditions for cultural and textual transfer.
Abdurauf Fitrat	Literary theory, language, intellectual modernization	Expanded conceptual and stylistic resources needed for modern translation.
Abdulla Avloniy	Education, pedagogy, ethics, journalism	Strengthened accessible Uzbek discourse and terminological adaptation.
Jadid press and schools	Publishing, new-method education, public communication	Institutionalised circulation and adaptation of knowledge across cultures.

Table 1. Main channels through which Jadid activity contributed to Uzbek translation development.

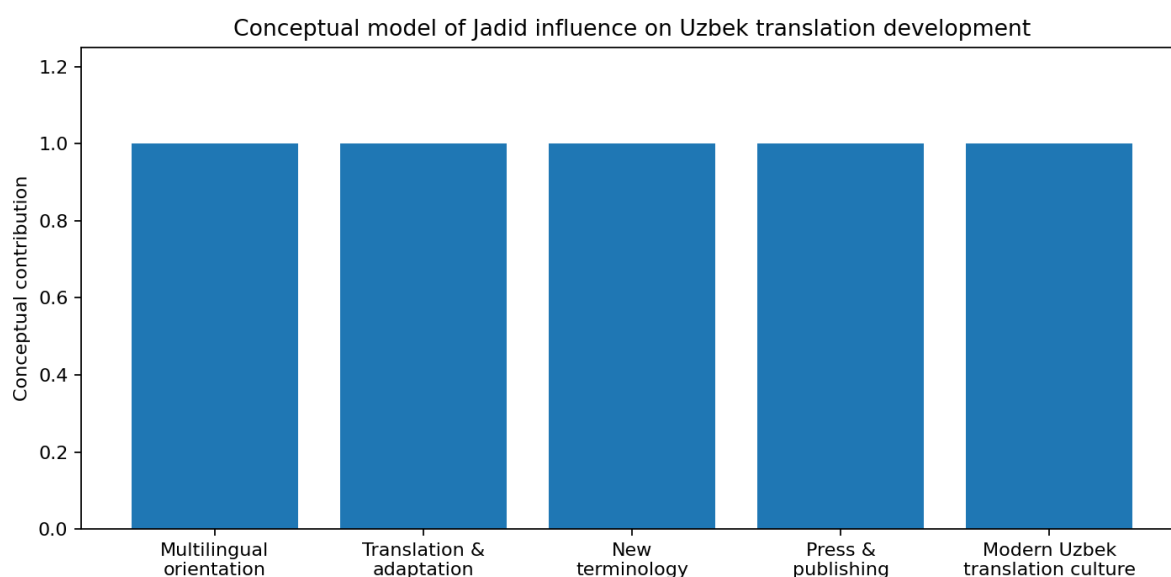


Figure 1. Conceptual model of Jadid influence on Uzbek translation development. The figure is analytical rather than statistical.

Conclusion

Jadid literary figures played a foundational role in the development of Uzbek translation culture. Their contribution was multidimensional and extended beyond direct translation. Mahmudhoja Behbudiy helped develop the modern reading public and publishing environment; Abdurauf Fitrat strengthened the intellectual, literary, and linguistic resources of Uzbek; and Abdulla Avloniy connected language

modernization with education and accessible knowledge. Together with the wider Jadid press and school movement, these activities created conditions for the circulation of ideas between languages and cultures.

The development of Uzbek translation in the early twentieth century should therefore be viewed as part of a wider modernization process. Translation, adaptation, terminology building, journalism, education, and literary innovation were interconnected. The Jadids helped transform Uzbek into a more flexible medium for modern knowledge and literary expression, preparing cultural and linguistic foundations for the later development of professional translation in Uzbekistan.

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