

**THE EVOLUTION OF TRANSLATION STRATEGIES IN RUSSIAN VERSIONS OF
GAFUR GULYAM'S "THE MISCHIEF-MAKER": A COMPARISON OF F.
SHAIKHUTDINOVA'S ABRIDGED TRANSLATION (1968) AND A. NAUMOV'S
COMPLETE VERSION (2017)**

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Abstract: Gafur Gulyam (1903–1966) is one of the most prominent representatives of twentieth-century Uzbek literature, a People's Poet of Uzbekistan whose works combine elements of autobiography, folklore, and social satire. His novella "The Mischievous Boy" (original title "Shumbola," 1936–1962), written in the first person, tells the story of a naughty boy's adventures in an old Tashkent mahalla (neighborhood) at the turn of the century. It is a depiction of childhood in a world of bazaars, teahouses, jinnis (eccentric characters), and street games, filled with humor, the vivid colors of Uzbek daily life, and a critique of social injustice. The novella, rich in culture-specific elements—from descriptions of plov and chilims to proverbs and superstitions—has become a classic of Uzbek children's literature and has been translated into Russian several times.

Keywords: translation, cultural transfer, reflection of national color, Uzbek literature, children's literature, translation studies.

The Russian translations of "*The Mischievous Boy*" reflect the evolution of translation studies during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods — from the literal, word-for-word renderings of the 1930s to adapted versions tailored for ideologically controlled audiences, and finally to complete and faithful translations that remain true to the original text.

In this article, we compare two key versions: Fatima Shaikhutdinova's **abridged translation (1968)**, aimed at young readers and subject to significant omissions, and Alexander Naumov's **complete translation (2017)**, based on the 1970 edition, which is considered the most successful.

The analysis draws on **Lawrence Venuti's translation strategies** — *domestication* (adapting the text to the target culture) and *foreignization* (preserving the foreignness of the original) — revealing how the historical context influenced the rendering of humor, cultural color, and narrative structure.

Review of Translations

F. Shaikhutdinova's Translation (1968): Domestication for the Soviet Child.

Published in the *Children's Literature* series (Moscow, 126 pages), Shaikhutdinova's version represents the third Russian translation of "*The Mischievous Boy*", completed directly from Uzbek. During the Soviet period, children's literature was strictly regulated: texts were adapted to fit ideological standards, simplified for readers aged 10–14, and stripped of "excessive" ethnographic detail. Shaikhutdinova, a translator of Uzbek prose, reduced the novella by one-third, omitting scenes with social subtext (such as depictions of child poverty or satire of the wealthy bey) and simplifying dialogues. In the foreword, L. Kayumov emphasizes the "cheerful" nature of the protagonist, focusing on the story's educational value.

The dominant translation strategy is **domestication** — cultural elements (*ayvan*, *chilim*) are explained or replaced (for example, Uzbek *salo* replaced with "cottonseed oil") to make the text accessible to Russian-speaking children without footnotes.

This approach reflected the spirit of the 1960s, when translations prioritized the "universality" of Soviet children's literature, sacrificing authenticity for readability.

A. Naumov's Translation (2017): Balancing Fidelity and Impact.

Alexander Naumov — a poet and translator personally familiar with Gafur Gulyam's work — created the fourth Russian version in 1970 (*Tashkent: Yangi asr avlodi*, 184 pages; reissued in 2017). His translation presents the **complete text**, preserving the original structure (three parts, twenty chapters), with a strong emphasis on humor and ethnographic color. Naumov avoids omissions, retaining cultural terms (*teahouse*, *dzhinni*, *dastarkhan*) with minimal commentary, thereby strengthening the strategy of **foreignization**.

Humor is conveyed through vivid dialogues and metaphors that remain close to the original Uzbek tone. The translation has been praised for its naturalness and authenticity; it served as the basis for the 1977 film adaptation and continues to be regarded as a benchmark, reflecting the post-Soviet shift toward **cultural pluralism** and respect for national identity.

Comparative Analysis of Translation Strategies

The comparison reveals a clear evolution of translation approaches — from Shaikhutdinova's abridged version, which diminishes depth and nuance, to Naumov's complete rendition that fully preserves the author's artistic intent. The analysis focuses on three key aspects: omissions, cultural color transmission, and humor, illustrated through examples from the opening chapters ("Children of the Old Mahalla" and the "Fat Scene").

Omissions and Structure: From Reduction to Completeness.

Shaikhutdinova deliberately omits several episodes to accelerate the pacing and eliminate what she viewed as "excessive" descriptive details. However, this simplification weakens the narrative cohesion. For instance, in the original scene describing plov (pilaf) preparation — portrayed as a ritual of the mahalla (neighborhood community) — her translation reduces it to a schematic account, losing the comic effect of collective participation.

Naumov, by contrast, retains every element: the dialogues, character roles (Khusnibiy as the cook, Abdullah-Dolvor bringing meat), and the lively rhythm of the communal process, thus emphasizing the spirit of unity and everyday humor embedded in the original.

Cultural color transmission: Domestication vs. Foreignization.

Shaikhutdinova's strategy of domestication adapts Uzbek cultural realities for the Soviet reader, replacing specific ethnographic terms with familiar equivalents — for instance, salo ("animal fat") becomes "vegetable oil," and ayvan (a traditional open terrace) is rephrased generically. These substitutions simplify the text but dilute its cultural texture and authenticity.

Naumov, on the other hand, practices foreignization, preserving the original Uzbek terms (ayvan, chilam, mahalla) while providing contextual clues instead of direct explanations. This approach immerses readers in the cultural environment of early 20th-century Tashkent, allowing them to experience the "otherness" of the setting.

Humor and style: Simplification vs. Vitality.

Gafur Gulyam's humor lies in irony, idiomatic speech, and vivid folk dialogue, often colored by proverbs and spontaneous street scenes — such as the antics of a madman (dzhinni) or a talking parrot in the teahouse.

Shaikhutdinova simplifies the dialogues, turning the parrot into a mere "talking bird," removing his playful mimicry and sharp wit.

Naumov, conversely, preserves the humor's liveliness and theatricality.

For example, in the teahouse scene, the parrot imitates the host's bustling commands:

"— Asra, Asra, serve the guest — one tea, one chilim... Mullah-aka, please, take a seat!"

This faithful rendering mirrors the chaotic charm and irony of the original Uzbek text, capturing Gulyam's subtle satire of everyday life.

Thus, the two translations represent two epochs and two translation philosophies — adaptation for accessibility versus authenticity for immersion — reflecting the broader evolution of Soviet and post-Soviet translation thought.

Example from the Teahouse Scene

(Original: The parrot imitates the teahouse owner)

Shaikhutdinova's version: Briefly rendered — "The parrot... talks!" (all dialogue lines omitted).

Naumov's version: "— Asra, Asra, serve the guest, one tea, one chilim... Mullah-aka, please, have a seat..." (reflecting the liveliness and chaos of real speech, the humor lies in imitation).

This contrast emphasizes the evolution from "safe," neutral humor to full-fledged satirical

expression.

Conclusion. The evolution of translation strategies in the Russian versions of *The Mischievous Boy* (Shumbola) mirrors the broader shifts in translation studies — from Shaikhutdinova’s domestication, aligned with Soviet ideological and pedagogical norms, to Naumov’s balanced approach, where foreignization and cultural authenticity coexist with natural readability.

If the 1968 translation reflected an era of unification and controlled adaptation, then the 2017 version embodies the age of globalization, where linguistic and cultural diversity is celebrated as a value in itself.

Such a transition not only enriches the Russian-speaking reader’s understanding of Gafur Gulyam’s world but also underscores the essential role of translation in preserving and transmitting national voices within the global literary dialogue.

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