

LANGUAGE, CULTURE, COMMUNICATION**ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF MEDIEVAL CLASSICAL AZERBAIJAN LITERATURE****Elnara Abdullayeva**Doctor of Philosophy on Philology,
Ganja State University, Azerbaijane-mail: ib1303@mail.ru, orcid.org/0000-0002-5173-6953**Summary**

After the restoration of state independence in Azerbaijan, within 20–25 years, a rich translation literature covering various types and genres of our national word art was created in English. At the same time, books and monographs, literary-critical and theoretical-scientific articles were written in English about Azerbaijani literature. Many of the publications in English were published in the USA, Great Britain and other foreign countries, and some of them were published in Baku. At that time, it was impossible to fully cover the translation literature created by translating from our mother tongue within the framework of one article. The translated works we reviewed show that our literary examples translated from our mother tongue into English have been successfully presented. However, each of the translations we talked about in the form of a summary deserves a wider analysis and study from the point of view of translation studies.

The purpose of the article. It is a comprehensive study of the relations of Azerbaijani literature in the context of world literature.

Methodology and methods used. The methodological basis of the article is based on historical-comparative, comparative-typological, analytical-critical methods of approach. In the context of Azerbaijani-Western scientific-aesthetic thought, as well as in the level of scientific-theoretical parallels of Azerbaijani-English relations in the medieval period and XIX–XX centuries, in 1991–2011, the translation of examples of modern Azerbaijani literature into English and the study of these works in English-language literary studies were dedicated.

The main scientific innovation put forward. In the presented article, the author made innovations in the field of translation studies and scientific-theoretical aspects of the problems of studying Azerbaijani literature in the English-language literary studies of 1991–2011. Here, the materials have been filtered by literary and critical analysis, and the adequacy of the same theory of translation has been evaluated. The scientific novelty of the research was also developed by the analysis of the problems of studying Azerbaijani literature in English-language literary studies.

The following result was obtained in the article: Summarizing our analysis and research on the subject, we come to the following conclusions.

1) There is a history of approximately four hundred years of translation of a number of examples of classical and modern Azerbaijani literature into English and studying them in English-language literary studies.

2) Many examples of Azerbaijani literature in different types and genres have been translated into English and published separately as books. So, a rich material has been created for the study and research of the translated literature of the mentioned period.

3) Classical Azerbaijani literature, at different stages of historical development, has more or less established relations with a number of Eastern and Western literatures through more translations. The research conducted on existing translations has led to further expansion of our relations.

Classical masterpieces of Azerbaijani artistic thinking have been the focus of English literary thought for many centuries, and hundreds of our ancient historical manuscripts have become rare exhibits of individual libraries, scientific centers, and museums of Great Britain. There is no doubt that the works of our rich literary treasure – especially the works of Nizami, Nasimi, Fuzuli, Vagif, Akhundzade, Mirza Jalil, Sabir, Jabbarli, Vurgun, Anar, Elchin have created a high aesthetic appeal in English literary circles, have given impetus to the translation of their works into English and the study of their creativity in the international world.

Key words: Azerbaijani-English mutual literary relations, classical Azerbaijani literature, literary translation, comparative literary studies.

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1. Introduction

A comprehensive study of the relations of Azerbaijani literature in the context of world literature means, first of all, an examination of the creativity of literary luminaries of individual world nations on the basis of mutual comparison, literary influence and translations. This is a very relevant and important issue for our comparative literary studies. Each new look at the history of literary and cultural relations, each new scientific research and search, serves to uncover the unopened pages of Azerbaijan's history and literature. Azerbaijan-Europe, including Azerbaijan-English literary relations have a history of about 400 years.

After regaining state independence, the people of Azerbaijan took the path of cultural integration into the globalized world and Western values. In this regard, Azerbaijani literature has begun to attract more attention in foreign countries, especially in places where English-speaking people live. Issues of publication and research of classical Azerbaijani literature in English: the ancient and rich literature of the Azerbaijani people has always been in the center of attention of oriental studies; the works of our classics have been published many times in the East and in the West, and have been brought to different peoples through translation. Studies on our artists have been conducted at different levels and volumes. In these studies, the point of view was not only the translation of Azerbaijani literature into another language, but also the quality of the translated works, the concept of man and personality, and the alignment with the priority directions of modern world literature. The study of classical Azerbaijani literature abroad, in Europe, including English-language literature, is one of the most urgent problems. It should be noted that compared to our modern literature, the classical Azerbaijani literature has attracted more attention of western researchers, and the study of these texts was carried out in a sequence in specific periods. The continuous interest of the West in Eastern, including classical Azerbaijani literature is conditioned by purely scientific-ideological features rather than exotic ones, because sustainable research is, as a rule, ideologically sustainable in nature.

Researcher Leyli Aliyeva writes: “Regardless of distance and proximity, along with socio-political and economic relations, cultural relations are important means that bring them closer to each other. In particular, translated literature opens great opportunities for close contact with the customs, culture, outlook and social and political life of this or that nation” (*Aliyeva, 1997:3*). The translation of our national folklore, classic Azerbaijani literature into English, especially its study in English oriental studies, is one of the main topics of our comparative literary studies. In human history, the era of globalization – the integration of cultures, the formation and formation of the world civilization – has begun. There is no event of more or less importance in the life of this or that nation that does not reverberate throughout the world. The prerequisite and driving force for this kind of rapprochement of the peoples of the world is the cultural relations that have always existed between peoples and have become one of the most important attributes of our life today.

It has not yet been possible to determine the exact date of the translation of Azerbaijani literature into European languages. Nicholas Nikolay, who traveled to Istanbul as a French ambassador in 1551, mentioned Nasimi, an outstanding Azerbaijani poet who lived in the 14th century, characterizing religious sects in Turkey, but the translation of classical Azerbaijani literature into Western European languages dates back to the 17th, especially the 18th centuries. Since then, the works of such classics as Khagani, Nizami, Nasimi, Fuzuli have been studied in Europe, and at the same time, they have been translated into the languages of foreign nations. Azerbaijan's literature, which has a very rich and comprehensive heritage, has always attracted the attention of world orientalists. The acquaintance of Western orientalists with the classical Azerbaijani literature began in the 16th century, and from the 17th-18th centuries, this literature was studied by being translated into European languages.

Therefore, the comprehensive translation of Azerbaijani literature samples into European languages, especially English, coincides with the 17th-18th centuries. During this period, European researchers, as well as English-speaking researchers, studied the works of individual Azerbaijani poets and also showed a tendency to translate them. However, more work was done in the field of translation of examples of Azerbaijani literature in the 19th and early 20th centuries. One point should be noted that a comprehensive study of any country begins with travel and translations.

For the first time in British oriental studies, the researcher-scientist Charles Rio compiled the catalogs of Persian and Turkish manuscripts of the British Museum. These catalogs, consisting of three volumes and an appendix, cover the years 1879-1895. Theology, history, geography, linguistics, etc. are included in the catalogs compiled by Rio. He carefully systematized valuable manuscripts about sciences in a collective form. Along with the European classics, the catalogs include Khagani, Mujiraddin Beylgani, Nizami Ganjavi, Shams Tabrizi, Hasanoglu, Avhedi, Assar Tabrizi, Imadedin Nasimi, Süruri, Khatai, Muhammad Amani, Govsi Tabrizi, Saib Tabrizi, as well as a broad description of manuscript of Fuzuli's “Divan” (a collection of works) is given in Persian and Turkish. This fact, that is, providing a comprehensive description of cultural examples of the classical period, is very valuable from the point of view of not losing the classics, preserving them, and looking for examples that have been overlooked after years and centuries have passed. According to classical literary traditions, there were several versions of a collection of works by any poet. Providing a detailed description of the examples that came into the hands of Western scholars later opened the way for extensive scientific comparison, and thus the differences between variants, even the differences between different copies of the same poetic example, were of great importance in terms of opening the way for new researches. The difference

and complementarity of cultures is more evident in the process of translation, creating great opportunities for writing fundamental studies. Taking the manuscripts created in one place to other countries and keeping them in museums was of great importance in terms of both preservation and research of those texts.

Academician Hamid Arasli, first of all, opened a detailed conversation about the collection of the manuscripts of Azerbaijani classics in the British museum since the 17th century and their introduction to the world of science through the catalogs compiled by the English orientalist Ch. Rio (*Arasli, 1998:6-7*).

As in the literature of all European countries, Nizami Ganjavi's work occupies a central place in English-language literature, both in the studies written by orientalists and in translation. In 1786, William Jones translated the poem "Treasure of Secrets" into English in prose, and this translation was published in London in 1804 after V. Jones's death (*Khalilli, 2002:21*). It should be noted that the aforementioned researcher was an unparalleled connoisseur of Eastern literature, and his book "Grammar of the Persian Language" written in 1771 gained great fame worldwide.

In general, the interest in Nizami's work in English-language literature has been quite great. It is no coincidence that special studies and articles have been devoted to the history of studying and publishing the famous Azerbaijani poet in English. In different years, A. Krymski, Y. Bertels, A. Seyidzade, A. Agayev, S. Devek, V. Destgerdi, R. Qayibova, S. Nafisi, H. Arasli, R. Azade, R. Aliyev, Sh. Khalilli and other research scholars have discussed the history of Nizami's study in English and also made certain opinions about the quality of the translation of Nizami's works into English. The majority of experts are of the opinion that Nizami Ganjavi is the best-known representative of Azerbaijani literature in English-speaking countries. Excerpts from separate works of the thoughtful poet, as well as whole works, have been translated into English in different years. James Atkinson, one of the English-speaking poets, also applied to Nizami's work and translated the poet's poem "Leyli and Majnun" directly from Persian into English. The delicate, romantic work of the Azerbaijani poet was published in 1836, at a time when romanticism flourished in Europe and America, and aroused the great interest of hundreds of readers in those countries. As a result of this interest, the same translation by J. Atkinson was republished in 1894. As we mentioned above, the translation of classic Azerbaijani literary examples into English (also by various translators and especially linguists- !) had a strong influence on the literary process in Europe.

In his study "The Influence of Persian Sufism on English Romantic Poetry", Elham Nilchain wrote: "English (British) Romantics were strongly influenced by Eastern culture and literature mainly through two aspects: exoticism and mysticism" (*Jafar, 1982:7*). According to him, on the one hand, the romantics admired the East's individuality, charm, sensuality, passion, sensuality, tyranny, and vindictiveness. They learned such characteristics of the East from fairy tales and legends and studied the social and political conditions of their own countries in comparison with the characteristics they studied. Thus, writers such as Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864), Robert Susey (1774–1843), Thomas Moore (1779–1852), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) and Byron (1788–1824) depicted the wild exoticism and unusualness of the East with inspiration their literary works.

Although the study of the relationship between Nizami's heritage and the literature of the world's peoples began a long time ago, in fact, the study of these relationships coincides with the translation of individual works of the genius poet into different languages (*Agayev, 1996:4*). Professor Akbar Aghayev took the first steps in the field of studying the problem of Nizami and

world literature (*Agayev, 1964*). Starting from the 1940s, articles on this topic were published in "Nizami" almanacs published today.

After Nizami, Muhammad Fuzuli was one of the poets that English researchers turned to more often. The great Azerbaijani poet Mehmed Fuzuli is an artist who has enriched the treasury of world literature with his poetic gems. It is no coincidence that his works, which gained fame during his lifetime, were translated into the languages of the world's peoples and attracted the attention of research scientists in the Near and Middle East, as well as in Europe. The first information about Fuzuli, whose literary heritage has been studied in European oriental studies since the first half of the 19th century, was given by the German orientalist Hammer Purgstal. The study of the poet's literary heritage from a scientific point of view, mainly, starts from the second half of the 19th century. We can find scientific notes about the life and work of the great poet in the catalogs of Ch. Rio, in the works of E. Gibb, Brown, Kassel, A. Bombachi, S. Khouri and other orientalist philologists (*Aliyeva, 188:4*).

Academician Hamid Arasli wrote: "The famous English orientalist Gibb was not wrong when he compared it to the Sun. Indeed, Fuzuli's poetry shone like a sun on the horizons of Azerbaijani literature, and Azerbaijani poets received light from it for centuries" (*Arasli, 1998:13*).

In the West, in Europe, the German orientalist Hammer Purgstal is considered the first researcher of Fuzuli, but due to his poor knowledge of the Turkish language and the subtleties of this language, he could not properly introduce the poet to the Western readers, on the contrary, he made wrong assumptions about him. The description of the manuscripts of Fuzuli's works in the catalogs compiled by the English orientalist Charles Rion, as well as the study of Fuzuli by other English researchers, is a good example of the great interest in the poet's literary heritage. The services of Elias John Wilconson Gibb, an English orientalist and a great connoisseur of Oriental poetry, who studied him scientifically for the first time in introducing the Azerbaijani poet in Western Europe, are incomparable. Indeed, the opinions of the English scientist about Fuzuli's life and work are distinguished by their scientificity, and their translations by their artistic nature. It was Gibb who, contrary to all European orientalists, once and for all put an end to the wrong and controversial opinions about the artist saying that "Fuzuli is an Azerbaijani poet" and considered them unfounded (*Aliyeva, 1997: 140*). We find writings about Fuzuli in the works of orientalists who belong to other nations and write in English. Thus, although researchers such as Najibullah, Mugdet Mansuroglu, Abdulgadir Karakhan briefly discussed Fuzuli, they did not go further than their predecessors. The Italian scientist A. Bombachi showed special interest in the literary heritage of Fuzuli and tried to carefully study his life and creativity. Either in the work entitled "History of Turkish Literature" published in 1956, or in the voluminous preface written by the Turkish poetess Sofi Huri to "Leyli and Majnun", which was translated into English in its entirety, or in the work of the Italian scholar "Iran and Islam" published in 1972. His opinions about Fuzuli are interesting from a scientific point of view.

In addition to giving theoretical opinions about the poet, researchers translated Fuzuli's gems whenever possible. The poet's works have been translated into English since the 19th century. Gibb was the first to translate Fuzuli's works into English. Gibb's translations were successful because he knew the Turkish language well. The poet's works have been translated into English by Sophie Houri, Alessio Bombachi, Bernard Lewis, Irina Zheleznova and others.

2. Translation of Azerbaijani literature of the 19th-20th centuries into English and its literary-theoretical evaluation in English-language literary studies

The place and importance of literature in the history of Azerbaijani-English and English-Azerbaijani mutual cultural relations and attitudes and in their modern development is very great. The history of literary translation in Azerbaijan and national translation studies show that we have a wide range of examples of literary translations of classical oriental literature from Arabic and Persian languages, and later from Russian language. A number of outstanding examples of world literature have often been translated into our mother tongue through the Russian language. Although some famous works of Western literature are mainly translated from Russian, that is, from a third language, this situation contributed to the enrichment of Azerbaijani culture and literary and artistic thought. From this point of view, A.A.Bakikhanov, G.Zakir, M.F.Akhundzade and “Akinchi” magazine, including “Kashkul”, “Fuyuzat”, etc., published in the end of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century. such magazines and individual literary figures had a great role. In the last century, Ali Bey Huseynzade, Abbas Sahhat, Hashim Bey Vazirov, Mirza Jalil, A. Hagverdiyev, Abdulla Shaig, Nariman Narimanov and other writers considered it necessary to pay special attention to the translation and publication of foreign literature, including English-language works.

English-USA-Azerbaijan and Azerbaijan-English-USA literary relations and attitudes emerged and developed as a bilateral process. In other words, just as the English-language literature was studied and studied in Azerbaijan through translation and publication, Azerbaijani literature was also translated into English and delivered to readers in Great Britain and the United States in the form of various publications. In this sense, the history of the translation of Azerbaijani classic literature and folklore into English, its distribution and research in the Western world and the United States covers a period of about 400 years. Especially since the second half of the 19th century, the classics of Azerbaijani literature such as Khagani, Nizami, Nasimi, Fuzuli, M.F. Akhundzade have been analyzed and studied in English translations and publications.

From the beginning of the 20th century to the present day, the publication of individual works of Azerbaijani poets and writers, as well as their entire books, has been widespread in England and the United States. If in that period, including the 80s of the last century, the works of Azerbaijani authors were mainly translated into English through the Russian language, after the restoration of our state independence, our writers and poets were presented in Great Britain and the United States, mainly through direct translation from the Azerbaijani language. This has undoubtedly made it possible to deliver our national literature to the English-speaking readers in a more level and qualitative way. From this point of view, we should especially mention the publication in English of the books of the famous writer Mir Jalal Pashayev and the folk poet Bakhtiyar Vahabzade in the United States. In the last 15-20 years, the book of writer and publicist Azer Aliyev was translated into English and published in the United States. At the same time, Piruz Khanlu and his wife, editor Betty Blair, have done great work in the direction of spreading our historical and cultural truth, as well as the pearls of ancient and rich Azerbaijani literature to the whole world through the illustrative magazine “Azerbaijan International” – “AI” (“International Azerbaijan”) and these works are continued with creativity (*Azerbaijan International*, 2010). The translation of the 19th century Azerbaijani literature into English has taken a unique path, and it should be noted that rich experience has been gained in terms of translation theory.

3. Issues of Azerbaijani literature in “Azerbaijan International” magazine

The founder-publisher Pirous Khanlou and his wife, editor-in-chief Betty Blair, have been publishing the color-illustrated magazine “Azerbaijan International” since 1993 in Los Angeles, USA. This magazine, published in English and read in more than 50 countries of the world, covers the history, culture, socio-political, economic life of the Azerbaijani people. As already confirmed, this publication has done invaluable work in the direction of introducing Azerbaijan in the world arena in terms of the most diverse relations, and has succeeded in introducing the intricacies of the vocabulary of our people to the world press.

Among the materials printed here, there are articles and information directly related to oral folk literature of Azerbaijan, our classical poetry and our modern word art. The scientific-theoretical analysis and evaluation of those materials from the position of translation studies is an urgent issue. In this regard, let's consider the 1996 spring issue of “Azerbaijan International” magazine, which meets its readers four times a year (spring, summer, autumn, winter). In the magazine's 1996 spring issue (*Azerbaijan International, 1996*), editor Betty Blair's main article called “Contemporary Literature” (“Editorial: Contemporary Literature”) talks about some nuances and characteristic features of modern Azerbaijani literature and the modern literary process. Mrs. Betty Blair shows that Azerbaijan has been known as a nation of poetry lovers for centuries. There are many statues of literary figures who wrote and created from the 12th century to the present day in Baku. But the most important thing is the legacy of the classics, whose statues were erected for her. But is the legacy of great writers now preserved and continued? Are new themes and new forms emerging? (Has the legacy of great writers continued? Are new themes and new forms emerging?) (*Azerbaijan International, 1996:4*). In this regard, he mentions the names of Anar, Elchin, Chingiz Abdullayev, Yusif Samadoglu and other prominent writers. B. Blair shows that humanism has always been the leading theme in Azerbaijani literature. (The dominant theme of Azerbaijani literature has always been humanism) (*Azerbaijan International, 1996:68*). Humanism is such a category that after a literary period has passed and reached its end at one point or another in this history, it is necessary to create the first embryos of a new literature, otherwise, the “blood circulation” of the literary process will stop, and the humanist concept of literature, which depicts a person in the past, will become old and it's useless. According to him, new literature is emerging in Azerbaijan, albeit in embryonic form. But in order to further develop and speed up this process, it needs to be supported by the international community (A new literature is beginning to emerge in Azerbaijan though it's still embryonic in form. But the process needs support from the international community if it is to flourish) (*Azerbaijan International, 1996:68*).

4. Conclusion

Translation, which plays the role of a spiritual bridge between literatures, has always been the leading form of literary relations and has become the main criterion in its development and enrichment. Because throughout the centuries in human history, peoples learning from each other and benefiting from each other's spiritual treasure was based mainly on translation. Thus, the rich wealth of each national culture and literature served to enrich the national spiritual wealth of other nations precisely through the mediation of translated works. From this point of

view, publications of translated works at certain stages of development of Azerbaijani-English mutual literary relations were revealed, and their ideological-artistic features, merits and defects were evaluated from the point of view of translation studies.

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