A Historiographical Analysis of Translation Histories in Iran: The Case of Iranian Scholarly Journal Articles

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ABSTRACT

Translation history has emerged as a vibrant field of inquiry stimulating a wealth of scholarship on translation traditions. There is a need for a historiographical metareflection of the relevant scholarly publications to delineate diverse features of translation histories. This study thus aims to offer a historiographical analysis of the Iranian scholarly journal articles concerned with the history of translation in Iran. The aim was to unravel different historiographical aspects therein, including the examined historical periods, text genres, language pairs, individuals (translator and authors), and works, as well as the frequent research themes and employed theoretical frameworks. The findings indicate that the study of translation history in Iran houses diverse methodologies and points of emphasis. This body of research reflects the historical and contextual particularities of Persian translation tradition as well as Iranian academia, displaying a unique historiographical tradition at work. Although the relevant scholarship remains fragmented, recent advancements in translation studies in Iran have the potential to introduce new perspectives, guiding the scholarly community towards a more cohesive and informed approach to doing translation history in Iran.

KEYWORDS: historiographical tradition, historiography, Iran, metareflection, translation history

Introduction

The recent surge in scholarship on translation in Iran has prompted a critical need for metareflection to illuminate both past and present trajectories, at the same time as anticipating future prospects. Translation history, in particular, has emerged as a vibrant field of inquiry fostering a wealth of scholarship on the history of translation in Iran. This burgeoning body of research necessitates a comprehensive investigation into diverse aspects of history writing. The objective of this study is to provide a historiographical analysis of research on the history of translation in Iran. Such historiographical analysis, meaning the analysis of publications on translation history, can be useful for identifying potential gaps and avenues in the field. Findings of historiographical analysis carry significant implications for both academia and policymaking, not only enhancing our understanding of the historiographical discourse on translation history in Iran but also informing research policy and educational planning initiatives. The present study examines Iranian scholarly journal articles concerned with the history of translation in Iran. The articles published during 1350/1971–1399/2021 were analyzed to investigate which historical periods, text genres, language pairs, individuals (translator and authors), and works were subjected to scholarly analysis, as well as the frequent research themes and employed theoretical frameworks. These eight distinct points correspond to the following eight research questions that are addressed in this study:

1   Which **historical periods** are investigated?
2   Which **textual genres** are explored?
3   Which **language pairs** are examined?
4   Which **translators** are studied?
5   Which **authors** are analyzed?
6   Which **works** are examined?
7   Which **themes** are explored?
8   Which **theoretical frameworks** are employed?

Literature Review

Any reflection on translation history and translation historiography is bound to a recognition of two controversial terms: *history* and *historiography*. The controversy over the definitions of these terms extends far beyond translation studies. *History* is generally said to have three senses: "the field of knowledge, its results, and what is spoken about" (Vašíček 2009:27). In

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any sense, *translation history* aligns with a broader conception of *history* as Tucker writes, "the scope of history is all of the past: societies have a history, but so do rocks, languages, species, and indeed the universe" (2009:2–3)—so one might say, so does translation. However, the term *historiography* has proved to be even more difficult to define. Cheng (2012:1) lists the possible definitions of *historiography*: "the writing of history, the study of historical methodology, the analysis of the different schools of interpretation on a particular historical topic, or the history of historical writing." A common theme running in all these definitions is the emphasis on a metareflection practiced on historical writings. In this light, historiography can be seen as "meta-history or the study, from various standpoints, of the writing of history by others" (Cartledge 1997:2).

The definitional controversy also finds its way into translation studies, albeit characterized with more confusion and indeterminacy compared to the field of historical studies. As for the distinction between *history* and *historiography*, history is "understood as the events of the past recounted in narrative form", while historiography "is the discourse upon historical data, organized and analysed along certain principles" (Woodsworth 1998:101). According to Gürçağlar (2013), *translation history* denotes two different meanings among translation scholars: one is the history of translation theories, practice, and function and the other, which is normally called *translation historiography*, refers to the exploration of how scholars have written the history of translation. A neat categorization can be found in D'hulst (2010), where three levels of historical focus are proposed. The first one is *history*, which refers to "the proper sequence of facts, events, ideas, discourses, etc." (D'hulst 2010:397). *History* "is also understood as … an oral or written mode of presentation of these facts, events, etc.; a strong tradition favors a narrative mode of presentation" (D'hulst 2010:397; cf. Vašíček 2009). The second level is "Historiography in its traditional sense," which can be defined as "the history of histories, i.e., the history of the practices of history-writing." The third one is "metahistoriography," meaning "the explicit reflection on the concepts and methods to write history" (D'hulst 2010:397). In a more or less similar fashion, Rundle (2020) states that historiography investigates how history of translation "is written about from a theoretical and methodological point of view" (2020:232).

The literature on translation history and historiography has offered different definitions of historiography; however, they share one specific aspect, namely a metareflection on historical

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writings about translation. This is the sense which is meant in the present analysis; specifically *historiography* as "the study of historical knowledge, that is, how histories are produced, which includes the study of the works of individual historians" (Fernández-Sánchez 2016:98). Terminological confusion aside, there are several studies representing a historiographical metareflection in the field. They have emerged either from translation historians' reflections on their own research projects or from independent research efforts. An example of the former is a series of metareflections by Pym (1992a; 1992b; 1998) originated from his focus on Hispanic translation history. Yet the studies originating from independent research efforts are more than a few. For instance, Singerman (2002) complied a bibliography of Jewish translation history. Venuti (2005) used Hayden White's theory of history as narrative to analyze different pieces of writings on translation history. Venuti's study is an instance of a historiographical analysis based on a specific methodology and analytical framework. The literature has also addressed specific issues of historiography, such as the problematic of periodization (Foz 2006; Herrero-López 2019) or history of translation during colonialism (Howland 2003).

More important is the research on different historiographical traditions operating in researching translation history in different parts of the world. The exemplary studies include the historiography of translation in Brazil (Wyler 2005), in the Latin American culture (Bastin 2006; Vega and Pulido 2013), in the Japanese context (Wakabayashi 2012), in Spain (Pérez-Blázquez 2013), in Finland (Paloposki 2013), in seventeenth-century English translation history and criticism (Belle 2014), and in Portugual (Seruya 2016). Analyzing individual histories of translation and scholarly publications, each of these studies shows how research trends and traditions in doing translation history are shaped by the very context in which the historian works.

There are also a few studies about analyzing histories of translation in Iran. For instance, Azadibougar (2010) examined the historiographical narrative on translation between 1851 and 1921 in Iran. Although his analysis is neither systematic nor representative of histories of translation in Iran, it merits further attention in its questioning of epistemological foundations in the historical conception of translation in Iran. In another attempt, Khazaeefarid and Malekshahi (2016) adopted Pym's methodology to analyze an excerpt of history of translation and the evolution of modern Persian poetry in a book on the history of literature in

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Iran. The researchers found consistencies between Pym's methodology and the underlying foundations used—wittingly or unwittingly—by the respective historian. The same line of research can be seen in Noura and Malekshahi (2020) in which Pym's methodological principles were used to analyze a number of general histories of translation in Iran, as well as histories of literature that included some data on translation and translators. Moroever, Abdolhossein Azarang's seminal book *History of Translation in Iran: From Antiquity to the End of the Qajar Era* has been subjected to a series of critical reviews (Amini 2021; Odabaei 2022). Mousavi Razavi and Gholami's (2019) analysis of two major translation movements is yet another attempt to advance the scholarly understanding of translation history through a comprehensive examination of the cultural and socio-political impacts. In a different study, Farahzad, Mohammadi Shahrokh and Ehteshami (2016) focused on women translators in contemporary Iran and explored the relation of women translators' choices and their social presence. These studies point to contested aspects of the field of translation history in Iran; however, they are limited to individual cases and suffer from a lack of methodical treatment of the topic. The present inquiry intends to offer a holistic analysis of research on translation history in Iran, relying on a larger dataset and a comprehensive analytical focus.

Theoretical Framework

The study used D'hulst's reflections as the analytical framework to examine a set of research articles on translation history in Iran. D'hulst (2010) outlines several items in the form of *wh-*questions that should be addressed by histories of translation. These potential research subjects are summarized below:

- Who? – focused on the single translator, a group of translators, or translation scholars;
- What? – focused on (non)selection of works for translation, establishment of bibliographies, and writings on translation or (theoretical) discourse on translation;
- Where? – focused on geographical and spatial characteristics of translation process (printing, editing, publishing, distributing, etc.) and the agents involved, geographical space and places where translators and translation scholars or students live and work, the origin of theoretical trends, and the educational and research centers hosting translation studies;
- By what means? – focused on support, patronage, mechanisms of control, and social-political power relations directed at translators, translations, and translation scholars;

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- Why? – focused on the reason behind translation, characteristics of translations, and TT-ST relations;

- How? – focused on process of translation, spatial and temporal evolution of translation norms, and construction and evolution of translation theories and conceptualizations;

- When? – focused on periodization and on the time when translation practice or theory emerges, evolves, and declines under different circumstances;

- To whom is it a benefit? – focused on the effect, function, use, and reception of translation in society.

D'hulst's *wh*-questions were initially designed to guide research on translation history. However, they can also be effectively used to analyze how these histories are written and constructed from a historiographical perspective.

Methodology

To collect data for the present project, first a list of Persian and English keywords relating to the history of translation in Iran was developed. The lists are presented below:

List of Persian keywords:

تاریخ ترجمه، سنت ترجمه، نهضت ترجمه، مکتب ترجمه، نقش ترجمه، کارکرد ترجمه، تأثیر ترجمه، سیر ترجمه، ترجمه در گذر، ترجمه در دوره، ترجمه در دوران، ترجمه در عصر، ترجمه در سده، ترجمه در عهد، نقش مترجم، نقش مترجمان، دیرینه‌شناسی ترجمه، اسامی مترجمان، تاریخ‌نگاری ترجمه، تاریخ نشر، تاریخچه ترجمه، ترجمه متون تاریخی، کتابشناسی ترجمه، ترجمه و تألیف، فهرست ترجمه

List of English keywords:

History of translation, translation history, translation movement, movement, history, Persian, Farsi, Arabic, Baghdad, Persia, Iran, translation, translator.

These English and Persian keywords – which refer to general and specific points in translation history in Iran – were used to guide data collection and search process. The starting point for the data collection was set at 1971 since access to works published prior to this date was either difficult, impossible or irrelevant. The endpoint of data collection period was determined as 2021, aligning with the project's commencement in 2022. The list of Persian keywords was used to conduct the search in three databases: Noormags

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(www.noormags.ir), Magiran (www.magiran.com), and Humanities Portal (www.ensani.ir). These databases are well-regarded for their extensive archives of Persian-language academic journals, articles, and other scholarly resources, making them essential for thorough research in the humanities and social sciences.

In the advanced search available at these databases, each keyword was inserted in the field assigned for the exact search of keywords. In the case of Magiran, which hosts various types of articles, the type of article was also delimited to the scholarly article. The keywords were inserted in the fields of TITLE, ABSTRACT, and KEYWORDS in the case of Magiran which lacks the search function in the body text of articles. Concerning Noormags and Humanities Portal, the keywords were looked for in TITLE, ABSTRACT, KEYWORDS, and in TEXT of the articles. Unlike Magiran whose search function concerning publication year did not work properly, both Noormags and Humanities Portal enabled the researchers to retrieve the works published during 1971–2021. In addition, there were a few significant journals (e.g. Iranian Journal of Translation Studies) that were not indexed in the three aforementioned databases. In such cases, the journals' official websites were checked to identify relevant articles.

The whole search process at Magiran, Noormags, Humanities Portal, and the journals' official websites led to 1006, 6401, 230 and 117 records, respectively. In each instance, the initial records were briefly examined in terms of their content and publication year (1971–2021) and irrelevant records were excluded. Moreover, the status of each journal was verified to ensure it held a "scientific-research rank" – a designation in the Iranian system granted exclusively to academic journals by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology. Articles published in journals classified as "review journals" or "cultural journals" were therefore excluded. Finally, the filtering of the records (database search and autonomous search in journals' websites) resulted in a total of 370 scholarly journal articles that were published during 1971–2021 in Iran and were primarily concerned with history of translation in Iran.

The bibliographical information of the final list of scholarly articles was recorded in an Excel file. The bibliographical items included publication year, document title (Persian and non-Persian), journal title (Persian and non-Persian), journal series, translated/authored, authors'

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first and last names, translators' first and last names, number of authors, document language, document type (i.e., journal article), document status (i.e., scholarly), journal affiliation, and place of publication. Moreover, academic and professional information of authors, as far as it was available, was also collected and saved in the same Excel file. This included information on academic affiliation (university and department), academic field, and academic rank of authors at the time of publication.

After preparing the bibliographical information for 370 scholarly journal articles, the historiographical analysis of these articles commenced, involving a thematic analysis and full reading of each article. Relying on D'hulst's theoretical framework (2010), the analysis focused on identifying eight categories within these articles: 1) time periods, 2) text genres, 3) language pairs, 4) specific translators, 5) specific authors, 6) specific works, 7) themes, and 8) theoretical frameworks.

The historiographical analysis initially started with a team of five researchers which was later expanded with the recruitment of 12 more research assistants. The team structure was organized as follows: one project director, three senior research assistants, and thirteen junior research assistants. In collaborative sessions involving the project directors and senior research assistants, a protocol was designed to train junior assistants in order to analyze the identified articles in terms of the eight categories, and document them in an Excel template for further analysis. One of the senior assistants took responsibility for training the junior assistants. An online session was organized, during which the thirteen junior assistants were instructed on the procedure for conducting thematic analysis of the articles. Each junior assistant was tasked with reading 28 articles, analyzing their abstracts, and skimming through the main body of each article. They were required to input the data from the 28 articles into the designated template and then submit the completed template to the assigned senior assistant. Within the online session, a few articles were examined as samples, followed by a question-and-answer session at the conclusion to make sure everyone learnt how to carry out the task.

In the next step, the three senior assistants reviewed the data submitted by the junior assistants. This review included cross-checking the data with the article title and abstract. In cases where the title and abstract did not clearly reveal all the eight categories, the body of the article was meticulously examined by the senior assistants. Following this initial review,

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one senior assistant undertook the final consistency check. This rigorous process involved addressing discrepancies, such as instances where different terms were used to describe the same feature. For example, if one junior assistant described the text genre of an article as *literary* while another used *literature*, these terms were integrated and recorded consistently as *literary*. Similarly, if varying terms like *linguistic analysis*, *linguistic investigation* and *comparative linguistics*, were all identified as themes of articles, they were reconciled and recorded uniformly as *linguistics*.

The finalized data was subsequently analyzed in terms of the eight categories separately. The results of the analysis are presented in the following sections.

Findings

1. Time Periods

Almost any research on translation history confines itself to a specific historical period in which translation activity occurred. This section addresses the question: Which historical periods are investigated in the journal articles?

Among the 370 papers, the temporal scope in 94 instances was left unspecified. This absence of specificity may be attributed to the extensive temporal span encompassed by these articles, making it impractical to confine them to a particular period. Alternatively, some works might have delved into multiple time periods, possibly exploring four or more distinct historical eras, thereby eluding a precise temporal demarcation. Consequently, 276 articles in which the time period was explicitly specified, either by name or by date, remained for further analysis.

For these 276 articles, the specified time periods were subsequently marked and tabulated. This process was followed by the identification of recurring and analogous categories, ultimately resulting in a classification of 25 distinct time periods, which are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1. Analysis of Time Periods

No.	Time Period	Frequency of Works
1	Modern (18th century onwards)	66
2	Qajar (1794–1925)	41
3	Abbasid (750–1258)	39
4	Islamic Republic of Iran (1979 onwards)	33
5	Pahlavi (1925–1979)	19
6	Safavid (1501–1736)	14
7	Ghaznavid (977–1186)	10
8	Samanid (819–999)	7
9	Illkhanid (1256–1335)	6
10	Ancient Iran and Early Islam (before the 9th century)	5
11	Early Islam (c. 7th–8th centuries)	4
12	Timurid (1370–1507)	4
13	Ancient Iran (before the 7th century)	3
14	Mongol/Ilkhanid (c. 1219–1335)	3
15	Pre-Mongol (before the 13th century)	3
16	Renaissance in Europe (15th–17th centuries)	3
17	Victorian Era in England (1837–1901)	3
18	Ghaznavid and Seljuq (10th–12th centuries)	2
19	Khwarazmian (1077–1231)	2
20	Middle Ages in Europe (500–1400)	2
21	Ottoman in Turkey (1300–1922)	2
22	Salghurid (1148–1282)	2
23	Ilkhanid and Timurid (1256–1507)	1
24	Post-Soviet Russia (1992 onwards)	1
25	Seljuq (1037–1194)	1
	Total	276

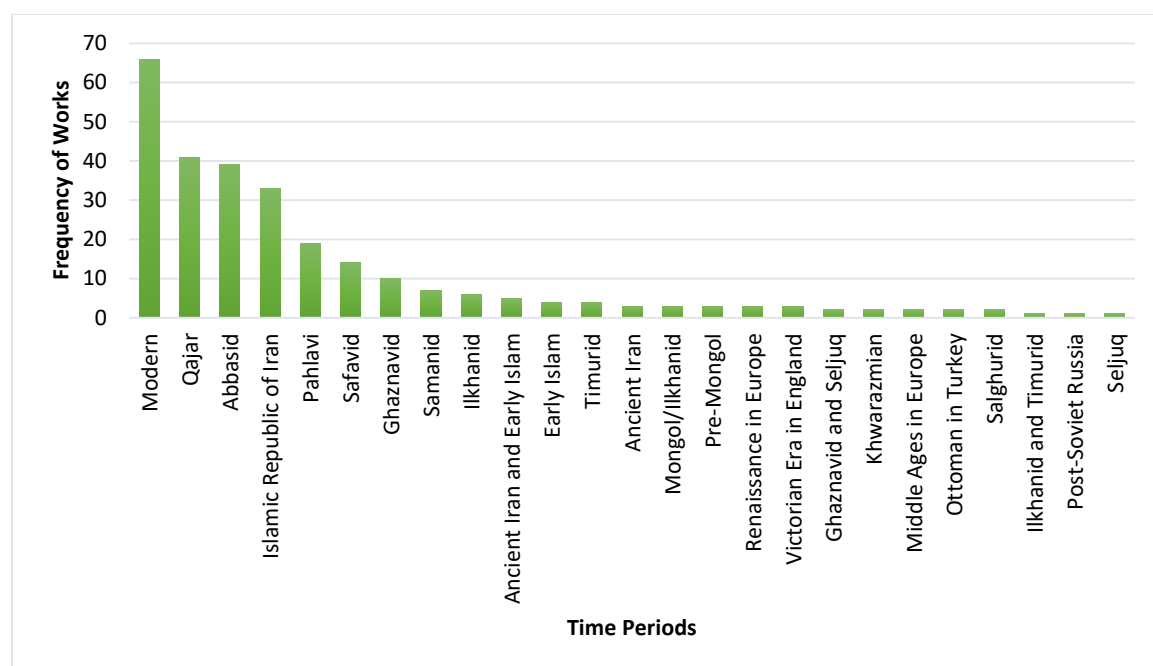Most articles focused on a single historical period (e.g., *Timurid* or *Safavid*), which allowed
for straightforward categorization. However, some articles spanned one to three periods.
These were grouped under broader terms such as *early Islam*, *ancient*, *pre-Mongol*, or

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Modern, reflecting the exploration of multiple time periods or comparative examinations within a single study. Articles that addressed four or more periods were excluded from further analysis due to the difficulty of categorizing them into a specific timeframe.

The designation of *Modern* corresponds to the timeframe starting from the 18th century, encompassing the Qajar and Pahlavi eras, as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran. This nomenclature (i.e. *Modern*) was chosen to account for instances where certain articles concurrently examined all these historical periods in a single piece of research.
The categories *post-Soviet*, *Renaissance*, *Victorian Era*, and *Middle Ages* are indicative of articles focusing on Europe as the target society. These categories were explicitly mentioned in the respective articles.

Figure 1. Historical Periods Addressed in Iranian Scholarly Journal Articles

As Figure 1 indicates, the notable frequencies observed in the categories of *Modern*, *Qajar*, *Islamic Republic of Iran*, and *Pahlavi* may be ascribed to the increased availability of the sources related to these periods. Furthermore, the prevalence of a robust translation movement since the Qajar period has likely contributed to the heightened attention these eras received in research. Additionally, the establishment of new connections between Iran and Europe might underscore the growing significance of translation in modern times, thereby prompting a surge in research activities on the subject.

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Similarly, the increased frequency of references to the Abbasid period can be attributed to the occurrence of a significant translation movement during this historical era, rendering it a focal point for extensive scholarly inquiry. Among the 39 articles dedicated to examining the Abbasid period, a substantial majority centered around the topic of translation movement.

2. *Themes*

Different researches tend to focus on different topics or themes. The present section addresses the question as to which themes are explored in Iranian scholarly journal articles on the history of translation in Iran.

All 370 articles had dealt with specific topics, meaning that each had a distinct theme. The search for topical themes made clear the recurring patterns which were later categorized under 56 distinct thematic categories, as presented in Table 2. *Linguistic feature*, *bibliographical features*, and *translation movement* were the most frequently occurring themes, with 58 (15.68%), 49 (13.25%), and 42 (11.36%) instances, respectively.

Table 2. Analysis of Themes

No.	Themes	Frequency	
1	Linguistic Features	58	15.68%
2	Bibliographical Features	49	13.25%
3	Translation Movement	42	11.36%
4	Reception of Translation	28	7.57%
5	Translation Trend	27	7.30%
6	Bibliography	16	4.33%
7	Literary System	12	3.25%
8	Bibliographical and Linguistic Features (*both themes within a single piece of research*)	11	2.97%
9	Historical Discourse	11	2.97%
10	Function of Translation	9	2.43%
11	Gender and Translation	8	2.16%
12	Evolution of Translation	8	2.16%
13	Concept of Translation	6	1.62%

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14	Translation Discourse	6	1.62%
15	(Un)translatability	5	1.35%
16	Translation Criticism	4	1.08%
17	Adaptation	3	0.81%
18	Agency	3	0.81%
19	Censorship	3	0.81%
20	Exegesis	3	0.81%
21	Historiography	3	0.81%
22	Translation Center	3	0.81%
23	Translation Norms	3	0.81%
24	Translation Theory	3	0.81%
25	Book Review	2	0.54%
26	Habitus	2	0.54%
27	Identity	2	0.54%
28	Literary Forms	2	0.54%
29	Modernization	2	0.54%
30	Paratextual Narrative	2	0.54%
31	Poetics of Translation	2	0.54%
32	Pseudo-translation	2	0.54%
33	Re-writing	2	0.54%
34	Translation Field	2	0.54%
35	Translation Mode	2	0.54%
36	Translation Purpose	2	0.54%
37	Translation System	2	0.54%
38	War	2	0.54%
39	Activism	1	0.27%
40	Domestication	1	0.27%
41	Ideology	1	0.27%
42	*Illusio*	1	0.27%
43	Imprisoned Translators	1	0.27%
44	Intertextuality	1	0.27%
45	Knowledge Production	1	0.27%
46	Literary Narrative	1	0.27%
47	Manipulation	1	0.27%

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48	Minority Languages	1	0.27%
49	Orientalism	1	0.27%
50	Postcolonialism	1	0.27%
51	Re-translation	1	0.27%
52	Self-translation	1	0.27%
53	Agents of Translation	1	0.27%
54	Translation Editing	1	0.27%
55	Translation Policy	1	0.27%
56	School of Translation	1	0.27%
	Total	370	100%

The recurring theme of *linguistic features* suggests that historical research on translation has predominantly remained at a foundational level, focusing primarily on linguistic analyses of works. The prevalence of linguistic issues and discussions in research on translation in Iran over several decades further contributes to this trend. Another contributing factor may be that the articles examined in this project do not exclusively originate from translation studies; some belonged to neighboring fields where a linguistic approach to translation holds prominence. The prominence of the second most frequent theme (i.e., *bibliographical features*) indicates that analysis in many works have been confined to the textual and bibliographical aspects of STs and TTs. This observation suggests that novel methods of historical research in translation studies may not have fully developed in the Iranian context or may not have been widely employed. *Translation movement* is the third most frequent theme in the scholarly articles. Iran has experienced several significant translation movements in its history. The historical importance of these movements, particularly the movement during the Islamic golden age, has received substantial attention from researchers.

3. Theoretical Frameworks

The development of translation studies as a discipline or an interdiscipline has highlighted the relevance of theoretical frameworks in analyzing the translation phenomenon. The subfield of translation history is no exception, given the recent methodological influx from the neighboring disciplines. In the case of the present study, it can prove helpful to see which theoretical frameworks are employed by Iranian scholarly journal articles concerned with the history of translation in Iran.

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Among the 370 articles examined, 280 lacked a specific theoretical framework, which suggests that a substantial portion of the studies lack a robust methodological basis. This finding supports the claim that historical research on translation in Iran lacks the methodological rigor characteristic of the mainstream historiography of translation, especially in the Western academia (e.g., Belle and Hosington 2017; Munday 2014).

Concerning the remaining 90 articles that incorporated theoretical frameworks, they were predominantly authored by specialists in translation studies. The majority of these articles relied on a single framework, with only a small number utilizing two frameworks for the purpose of the study. The specific frameworks employed are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Analysis of Theoretical Frameworks

No.	Theoretical Frameworks	Frequency
1	Polysystems – Even-Zohar	15
2	Theory of Social Fields – Bourdieu	9
3	Reception Theory	8
4	Discourse Analysis	7
5	Norms – Toury	6
6	Narrative Theory	5
7	Patronage and Rewriting – Lefevere	5
8	Theory of Translation – Ladmiral	3
9	Postcolonial Theory	3
10	Agency Theory	2
11	Bibliometrics	2
12	Social Systems Theory – Luhmann	2
13	Microhistory	2
14	Model of Historiography – Pym	2
15	Pseudo-translation – Toury	2
16	Poetics of Translation	2
17	Domestication – Venuti	2
18	Activism Theory – Baker	1
19	Comparative Literary Theory – Gayen	1
20	Content Analysis – De Shazer and Harlow	1

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21	Manipulation Strategies – Dukat	1
22	Hypertextuality – Genette	1
23	Imagology	1
24	Hermeneutics of Dithey – Burckhardt	1
25	Types of Translation – Jakobson	1
26	Classification of Equivalents – Koller	1
27	Classification of Equivalents – Nida	1
28	Paratext Theory – Pellatt	1
29	Actor-Network Theory – Latour	1
30	Gender Theory – Sandra Bem	1
31	Speech Representation – Simon and Shorts	1
32	Skopos Theory – Reiss and Vermeer	1
33	Socio-Historical Literary Translation Model	1
34	Socio-linguistics – Edwards and Gonzalez	1
35	Time Series Analysis	1
	Total	95

4. Text Genres

What concerns us here is the often-accepted assumption that translation deals with some kind of text genre, so does any analysis of translation. The historical research on translation is often oriented towards text genres, be they literary, non-literary, etc. This section offers the results concerning the textual genres investigated in Iranian scholarly journal articles on the history of translation in Iran.

Out of the 370 articles examined, it was found that 103 did not focus on any specific text genre. In the remaining 267 articles, the examination of a specific text genre was evident, as these articles explicitly declared their focus on a distinct genre. The identified text genres are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Analysis of Text Genres

No.	Text Genre	Frequency	
1	Historical	15	5.61%
2	Historical Inscriptions	1	0.37%

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3	Legal	1	0.37%
4	Literary	131	49.06%
5	Mystical	5	1.87%
6	Philosophical	18	6.74%
7	Political	2	0.74%
8	Religious	68	25.46%
9	Scientific	26	9.73
	Total	267	100%

As indicated by the results of the genre analysis in Table 4, the two predominant genres are literary and religious, with frequencies of 131 (49.06%) and 68 (25.46%), respectively. The notable prevalence of the literary genre may be attributed to the literary heritage of Iran as well as the rich literary character of translation activities in Iran, thus capturing the interest of numerous researchers. In modern Iran, literature has witnessed increased popularity and accessibility due to the influx of foreign literature into Persian book market, potentially contributing to its higher representation in research endeavors. It is worth noting that more specialized genres may have a narrower audience, potentially receiving less attention from researchers. Furthermore, the religious genre is also prevalent, and this could most probably be attributed to the religious context of the country, particularly the historically significant role of the Quran translation in Iran as an Islamic territory.

5. Language Pairs

Almost any research on translation (history) deals with two or more languages. The present section attempts to answer the research question: Which language pairs are examined in the journal articles?

Out of the 370 articles examined, 54 did not specify any particular language pairs. In the remaining 316 articles, translation was analyzed in relation to specific language pairs, as illustrated in Table 5. In the table, the symbol (↔) denotes bi-directional translation. For instance, *Arabic ↔ Persian* indicates translation both from Arabic into Persian and from Persian into Arabic. The arrow symbol (→) signifies one-directional translation. For example, *Arabic → English* denotes translation from Arabic into English.

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Table 5. Analysis of Language Pairs

No.	Language Pairs	Frequency	
1	Arabic ↔ Persian	1	0.32%
2	Arabic → Daylami	1	0.32%
3	Arabic → English	3	0.95%
4	Arabic → German	3	0.95%
5	Arabic → Latin	4	1.26%
6	Arabic → Miscellaneous	5	1.58%
7	Arabic → Persian	73	23.10%
8	Arabic → Persian-Kurdish	1	0.32%
9	Arabic → Russian	1	0.32%
10	Arabic → Tabari	1	0.32%
11	Arabic → Urdu	1	0.32%
12	Aramaic → Judeo Persian	1	0.32%
13	Avestan → Miscellaneous	1	0.32%
14	Avestan → Pahlavi	2	0.63%
15	Chinese → Persian	1	0.32%
16	English-French → Persian	4	1.26%
17	English → Persian	15	4.74%
18	French → Persian	20	6.32%
19	German → Persian	1	0.32%
20	Greek-Hebrew → Judeo Persian	1	0.32%
21	Greek → Arabic	10	3.16%
22	Hebrew → Persian	2	0.63%
23	Hindi → Persian	1	0.32%
24	Miscellaneous ↔ Persian	1	0.32%
25	Miscellaneous → Arabic	16	5.06%
26	Miscellaneous → Arabic-Persian	1	0.32%
27	Miscellaneous → Armenian	1	0.32%
28	Miscellaneous → Azerbaijani	3	0.95%
29	Miscellaneous → French	1	0.32%
30	Miscellaneous → Persian	78	24.68%
31	Miscellaneous → Turkish	1	0.32%

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32	Pahlavi → Arabic	11	3.48%
33	Pahlavi → Persian	3	0.95%
34	Persian ↔ Armenian	2	0.63%
35	Persian → Russian	1	0.32%
36	Persian → Arabic	11	3.48%
37	Persian → English	10	3.16%
38	Persian → French	4	1.26%
39	Persian → Georgian	2	0.63%
40	Persian → German	2	0.63%
41	Persian → Hungarian	1	0.32%
42	Persian → Miscellaneous	2	0.63%
43	Persian → Russian	1	0.32%
44	Persian → Turkish	4	1.26%
45	Persian → Turkish-Arabic	1	0.32%
46	Persian → Uzbek	1	0.32%
47	Turkish → Persian	5	1.58%
	Total	316	100%

The language pair analysis reveals that *Miscellaneous → Persian* (78 instances or 24.68%) and *Arabic → Persian* (73 instances or 23.10%) are the most frequently addressed language pairs in the examined articles. The term *Miscellaneous → Persian* denotes translations from several foreign languages into Persian. This prominence could be attributed to the historical significance of Persian and Arabic, both being important and dominant target languages in Iran's history. Persian has served as the official language of the country, and at certain periods, Arabic has held official status for religious purposes in Iran. Arabic is also recognized as the language of Quran and Islam, the predominant religion in Iran with a long history. Additionally, translation from various Latin languages into Persian has been a continual practice, particularly in the contemporary history of Iran.

6. Specific Translators

Recently, the surge of interest in translator studies has found its way into historical translation studies as well. In fact, the biographical and professional investigation into translators throughout history is now a legitimate field of analysis in translation studies. In this respect,

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this section provides the answer to the research question of which translators are studied in the journal articles.

Among the 370 examined articles, 305 instances did not focus on any specific translator. In only 65 articles, a particular translator was the subject of the study and a case of analysis. It is worth noting that articles exploring two or three translations comparatively are excluded from this count.

Table 6. Analysis of Specific Translators

No.	Specific Translators	Frequency
1	Abu Ali Bal'ami (10th century)	2
2	Habib Esfahani (1835–1893)	3
3	Ibn al-Muqaffa (c. 724–759)	2
4	Mahvash Ghavimi (1947–)	2
5	Matthew Arnold (1822–1888)	2
6	Mohammad Taghi Ghiasi (1932–2024)	3
7	Nasrollah Monshi (12th century)	2
8	Zabihollah Mansouri (1899–1986)	2
9	Sadegh Hedayat (1903–1951)	2
10	Khalil Khan Thaqafi (1862–1944)	2
11	Abban ibn Abd al-Hamid Laheqi (c. 750–815)	1
12	Subhi Salih (1926–1986)	1
13	Abdul Latif Tasuji (–1879)	1
14	Abdul Rasul Khayampoor (1898–1979)	1
15	Abdul Wahab Azzam (1894–1959)	1
16	Abolfazl Rashiduddin Meybodi (12th century)	1
17	Abu Ali Osmani (11th century)	1
18	Abu Ishaq al-Kubunani (15th century)	1
19	Agha Jamal Khansari (18th century)	1
20	Ali ibn Hasan Zavareh-i (16th century)	1
21	Ali Asghar Hekmat (1892–1980)	1
22	Ali Shariati (1933–1977)	1
23	Amir Alishir (1441–1501)	1

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24	André Gide (1869–1951)	1
25	Avicenna (c. 970–1037)	1
26	Coleman Barks (1937–)	1
27	Edward FitzGerald (1809–1883)	1
28	Emad al-Din Esfarayeni (11th century)	1
29	Etemad al-Saltanah (1843–1896)	1
30	Hassan Gilani (17th century)	1
31	Hunayn ibn Ishaq (809–873)	1
32	Ibn Zafir al-Shirazi (14th century)	1
33	Jami (1414–1492)	1
34	Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1859)	1
35	Rashid al-Din Hamedani (1247–1318)	1
36	Mirza Abdul Ghaffar Najm al-Dawlah (1839–1908)	1
37	Mirza Jahangir Khan Hosseini (1858–1933)	1
38	Mirza Zaki Mazandarani (19th century)	1
39	Mohammad Aref Espanaqchi Pashazadeh (–1892)	1
40	Mohammad Qazi (1913–1998)	1
41	Mohammad Taghi Tabrizi (17th century)	1
42	Mohammad Taher Mirza (1834–1899)	1
43	Molana Shoghi Baghdadi (15th century)	1
44	Naser Khusraw (1004–1072/77)	1
45	Nasrollah Salehi (1964–)	1
46	Qutb al-Din Shirazi (1236–1311)	1
47	Sahl bin Haroun (758–830)	1
48	Saadi (c. 1210–1292)	1
49	Sayyed Muhammad ibn Muhammad Baqir Husayni Mukhtari (1669–c. 1717)	1
50	Sirajuddin Abdulaziz al-Yazdi (13th–14th century)	1
51	Talibov Tabrizi (1834–1911)	1
52	Teimour Ghaderi (1956–)	1
53	Yussef Etessami (1874–1938)	1
	Total	65

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The top three analyzed translators (i.e., Abu Ali Bal'ami, Habib Esfahani, and Ibn al-Muqaffa) are known as prominent figures in the literary and intellectual history of Iran. Abu Ali Bal'ami was a 10th-century Persian historian and writer who translated (or rewrote) al-Tabari's *History of the Prophets and Kings* – a significant work of history in Iran. Mirza Habib Esfahani (1835–1893) is known as one of the pioneers of modern Persian prose, thanks to his Persian translation of *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* by James Morier. This work brought the translator into focus, hence the research significance attached to him. Among the translators analyzed, perhaps the most well-known is Ibn al-Muqaffa. He played a crucial role in translating and transferring ancient Iran's intellectual heritage into the Arabic language and context. Ibn al-Muqaffa was a key figure in the translation movement that took place during the early Islamic age in Iran.

7. Specific Authors

Similar to the previous case on translator studies, several research endeavors tend to take the author of the so-called original text as the starting point for analysis. This section provides the answer to the question as to which authors are studied in the journal articles.

In the examination of 370 articles, 259 did not specifically address any author. However, in 111 instances, the translations of works of a particular author have been the subject of the study. The list of these authors is provided in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Analysis of Specific Authors

No.	Specific Authors	Frequency
1	Ferdowsi (940–1020)	8
2	James Morier (1782–1849)	6
3	Saadi (c. 1210–1292)	6
4	Aristotle (384–322 B.C.)	5
5	Sayyid Razi (970–1015)	4
6	Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari (839–923)	4
7	Omar Khayyam (1048–1131)	4
8	Rumi (1207–1273)	4
9	Suhrawardi (1154–1191)	4
10	Albert Camus (1913–1960)	2

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11	Avicenna (c. 970–1037)	2
12	Emile Zola (1840–1902)	2
13	Ibn al-Muqaffa (c. 724–759)	2
14	Mohammadreza Shafiei Kadkani (1939–)	2
15	Sheikh Saduq (c. 923–991)	2
16	Abu al-Qasem Qushayri (986–1072)	2
17	Al-Damiri (1341–1405)	2
18	Wassaf (c. 1265–1328)	1
19	Abdul Jabbar Khojandi (13th century)	1
20	Abdul Qadir Gilani (c. 1077–1166)	1
21	Abu Bakr ibn Abdallah (16th century)	1
22	Abu Muhammad Joveiri (10th century)	1
23	Abu Tahir Tarsusi (12th century)	1
24	Ahmad Shamlou (1925–2000)	1
25	Alexandre Dumas (1802–1870)	1
26	Ali ibn Abdolsamad Tamimi Neyshabouri (12th century)	1
27	Ali Shariati (Chandelle) (1933–1977)	1
28	Al-Jahiz (c. 776–868)	1
29	Al-Raghib al-Isfahani (11th century)	1
30	Attar Neishaburi (c. 1145–1221)	1
31	Badi' al-Zaman ibn al-Razzaz al-Jazari (1136–1206)	1
32	Charles Darwin (1809–1882)	1
33	Christian Bobin (1951–2022)	1
34	Dioscorides (c. 40–90)	1
35	Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961)	1
36	Etemad al-Saltanah (1843–1896)	1
37	Euclid (c. 300 B.C.)	1
38	Forugh Farrokhzad (1934–1967)	1
39	Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805)	1
40	Graham Greene (1904–1991)	1
41	Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880)	1
42	Guy de Maupassant (1850–1893)	1
43	Hafez (c. 1325–1390)	1

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44	Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850)	1
45	Ibn Farez (1181–1235)	1
46	Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio (1940–)	1
47	Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980)	1
48	Jules Simon (1814–1896)	1
49	Kahlil Gibran (1883–1931)	1
50	Kriziz Namsavi (19th century)	1
51	La Fotaine (1621–1695)	1
52	Mirza Ahmad Mirza Khodaverdi (19th century)	1
53	Mirza Ghalib Dehlavi (1797–1869)	1
54	Mohammad ibn Abdullah Kisai (c. 1100)	1
55	Morteza Motahhari (1919–1979)	1
56	Naser Khusraw (1004–1072/77)	1
57	Nasr ibn Ya'qub Dinawari (11th century)	1
58	Plato (c. 428–348 B.C.)	1
59	Sadeghi Beig Afshar (940–1017)	1
60	Samuel Beckett (1906–1989)	1
61	Sayyid ibn Tawus (1193–1266)	1
62	Shakespeare (c. 1564–1616)	1
63	Sheikh Bahaei (1547–1621)	1
64	Talibov Tabrizi (1834–1911)	1
65	Tughra'i (1061–c. 1121)	1
66	Walter Whitman (1819–1892)	1
67	Zoroaster (c. 1000 B.C.)	1
	Total	111

Among the most studied authors, Ferdowsi, Saadi, Omar Khayyam, and Rumi are esteemed figures in Persian poetry whose works have been extensively translated and examined. Additionally, James Morier, the author of *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, is notable. The Persian translation of Morier's work by Mirza Habib Esfahani is regarded as a pioneering effort in modern Persian prose. Furthermore, the works of Aristotle, Suhrawardi, and al-Tabari proved to be significant not only in Iran but also globally. Most of these

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authors, as well as their works (see below), do belong to classical canon of Persian literature, hence their importance as the subject matter of research studies.

8. Specific Works

In most cases, a single piece of work, mostly chosen due to its significance, is the subject of investigation in research on translation history. For the sake of the present inquiry, the relevant research question is: Which works are examined in the journal articles?

Out of the 370 articles, 149 addressed a specific work, while 221 articles did not focus on any particular work. Among the frequently studied works, the Holy Quran stands out with 35 instances (23.48%). This prominence could be attributed to the Quran's status and significance as a sacred and sensitive text in Iran's historical and intellectual trajectory. Other works frequently referred to include *Shahnameh*, *Kalila and Demna*, *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan*, *Gulistan*, *One Thousand and One Nights*, *Awarif al-Ma'arif*, *Omar Khayyam's Poems*, and *Tafsir al-Tabari*. This may be due to their widespread recognition and popularity in Persian classics, as well as their seminal status in the Persian translation tradition. The list of works addressed in Iranian scholarly journal articles is presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Analysis of Specific Works

No.	Specific Works	Frequency	
1	The Quran (610–632)[*]	35	23.48%
2	Shahnameh (c. 977–1010)	8	5.36%
3	Kalila and Demna (8th century)	7	4.69%
4	The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan (1824)	6	4.02%
5	One Thousand and One Nights (9th century)	5	3.35%
6	Gulistan (1258)	4	2.68%
7	Awarif al-Ma'arif (13th century)	4	2.68%
8	Omar Khayyam's Poems (10th–11th century)	4	2.68%
9	Tafsir al-Tabari (c. 10th century)	4	2.68%
10	Nahjolbalagheh (11th century)	3	2.01%
11	Old Testament	3	2.01%
12	Al-Risala Al-Qushayriyya (1045)	2	1.34%

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13	Ba Cheragh va Ayeneh (2011)	2	1.34%
14	Mathnavi (13th century)	2	1.34%
15	Organon (A Collection of Aristotle's Works) (c. 40 B.C.)	2	1.34%
16	Aristotle's Poetics (c. 335 B.C.)	2	1.34%
17	Qisas al-Anbiya (10th–12th century)	2	1.34%
18	Tarikh al-Tabari (10th century)	2	1.34%
19	Theologia Aristotelis (9th century)	2	1.34%
20	Treatise on Time & Space (1892)	2	1.34%
21	Zand-i Wahman Yasn (the late antiquity in Iran)	2	1.34%
22	Akhbar-Nameh (1883)	1	0.67%
23	Al-Hasha'ish (1st century)	1	0.67%
24	Ali ibn Abi Talib's Letter to Malik al-Ashtar (7th century)	1	0.67%
25	Al-Qadiri fi 'l-Ta'bir (11th century)	1	0.67%
26	Al-Risala tul-Ghausia (c. 11th century)	1	0.67%
27	Al-Zari'a Men al Makarem al-Shari'a (12th century)	1	0.67%
28	Belauhar and Buzasaf (c. 2nd–4th century)	1	0.67%
29	Bisotun Inscription (c. 522–486 B.C.)	1	0.67%
30	Euclid's Elements (c. 300 B.C.)	1	0.67%
31	Bustan (1257)	1	0.67%
32	Hayat al-Hayawan (14th century)	1	0.67%
33	Jame' al-Qisas (17th century)	1	0.67%
34	Jame' al-Hikmatayn (1069)	1	0.67%
35	Kashf al-Asrar wa 'Uddat al-Abrar (1126)	1	0.67%
36	Kharnameh (1860)	1	0.67%
37	Khavas al-Hayvan (14th century)	1	0.67%
38	Khwadaynamag (6th–7th centuries)	1	0.67%
39	Khordeh Avesta (4th century)	1	0.67%
40	Kitab al-Hiyal (850)	1	0.67%
41	Lamia al-Ajam (11th century)	1	0.67%
42	Lohoof (c. 12th century)	1	0.67%
43	Metaphysics (350 B.C.)	1	0.67%
44	Miftah al-Falah (16th–17th centuries)	1	0.67%

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45	Mirza Ghalib Dehlavi's Poems (19th century)	1	0.67%
46	Molana Shoghi's Poems (15th century)	1	0.67%
47	Namsavi's Physics (19th century)	1	0.67%
48	Osman Pasha's History (2001)	1	0.67%
49	Qiran-i Habashi (12th century)	1	0.67%
50	The Quran and Hadith	1	0.67%
51	Rumi's Poems (13th century)	1	0.67%
52	Taiyeh Kubra (12th–13th centuries)	1	0.67%
53	Tankalusha (3rd–7th centuries)	1	0.67%
54	Tanksugh Nama (13th–14th centuries)	1	0.67%
55	Tarikh-i Bayhaqi (11th century)	1	0.67%
56	Tarikh-i Wassaf (12th–13th centuries)	1	0.67%
57	The Avesta (Vandidad) (141 B.C.–224 A.D.)	1	0.67%
58	The Avesta (Zend-Avesta) (3rd–7th centuries)	1	0.67%
59	The Bible	1	0.67%
60	The Cambridge History of Islam (1970)	1	0.67%
61	The Canon of Medicine (1025)	1	0.67%
62	The Origin of Species (1859)	1	0.67%
63	The Power and the Glory (1940)	1	0.67%
64	The Three Musketeers (1844)	1	0.67%
65	The Wisdom of Philosophy (1846) Cours élémentaire de philosophie	1	0.67%
66	Zakhirat ul-Akhera (c. 12th century)	1	0.67%
67	Majma' al-Khawas (1607)	1	0.67%
68	Gulistan and Bustan (13th century)	1	0.67%
	Total	149	100%

*The years indicate the publication or writing year of the original text.

Conclusion

In the field of historical studies, the distinction between history and historiography has become increasingly appreciated, although confusing variations in definitions still persist. In translation studies, these terms have often been used haphazardly and sometimes interchangeably. However, recent literature emphasizes the importance of differentiating between histories of translation and metareflections on how those histories are shaped and

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written. The latter corresponds to the increasing interest in historiographical analysis, which proves to be a useful way of uncovering underlying patterns shaping histories of translation in a given context. The diverse approaches by scholars and historians to the history of translation underscore the unique characteristics inherent in doing and writing translation history within any particular context, which may point to multiple historiographical traditions around the world.

Translation assumes a central position in historical and intellectual trajectory of the Persianate world and has thus become a well-received topic of investigation among scholars of translation and related fields. The increasing number of studies on translation history in Iran provided the impetus for the present study, which aimed to analyze various elements in research on translation history in Iran. The analysis uncovered various theoretical, methodological, disciplinary, and technical aspects of doing or writing translation history in Iran, allowing a historiographical tradition to emerge from the findings. This tradition indicates both heterogeneity and homogeneity. The homogeneity can be seen, for example, in cases of language pairs and text genres selected by the studies, while other categories, such as the study of a specific translator, author, or work are shown to be more heterogeneous than expected.

Both the diversity and unity in the research focus, alongside their instances, significantly reflect the influence of contextual specifications, both of the Iranian academia and of Persian translation tradition, on scholarly approaches to the topic. Nevertheless, the historiographical landscape revealed here appears fragmented, especially in terms of theoretical frameworks and themes examined. This fragmentation may be attributed to the nascent nature of the field in Iran, which often finds itself in a limbo between indigenous perspectives and trends of Western academia—albeit tending toward the latter. Though it might seem premature to assign the research on translation history in Iran a distinct place of its own, recent advancements in translation studies in Iran, alongside the increasing historical consciousness of humanities scholars, could introduce fresh perspectives and guide the scholarly community towards a more cohesive and informed approach to doing translation history in Iran.

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