توزیع جنسیتی در صنعت ترجمۀ ایران: چه کسی بیشترین سهم را دارد؟[1]

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چکیده

ترجمه در سراسر جهان به‌عنوان شغلی شناخته می‌شود که غالباً بانوان به آن اشتغال دارند. با این حال، دستمزد مترجمان یکسان نیست و دستمزد یک مترجم به عوامل مختلفی مانند تجربه، مدرک دانشگاهی، سطح زبان و مهارت‌های ترجمه بستگی دارد. پردرآمدترین بخش صنعت ترجمه در ایران، ترجمۀ رسمی است که نیاز به مجوز از قوه قضائیه دارد. برای به‌دست آوردن مجوز تأسیس یک دفتر ترجمه رسمی یا کار به‌عنوان مترجم رسمی قوۀ قضاییه، ابتدا باید در آزمون رقابتی و استانداردی که مهارت زبان، ترجمه و دانش حقوقی شما را ارزیابی می‌کند، موفق شوید. این تحقیق به بررسی مسئلۀ توزیع جنسیتی در پرسودترین بخش صنعت ترجمه می‌پردازد. نتایج این مطالعه نشان می‌دهد که ۷۲٫۶ درصد از مترجمان رسمی در ایران مرد و تنها ۲۷٫۴ درصد آنها زن هستند. با این حال، در برخی استان‌های ایران تعداد زنانی که به‌عنوان مترجم رسمی مشغول کار هستند بیشتر است. به‌عنوان مثال، ۷۵ درصد از مترجمان رسمی در زنجان زن و تنها ۲۵ درصد مرد هستند.

واژه‌های راهنما: توزیع جنسیتی، شکاف دستمزد، صنعت ترجمه، مترجمان زن

Gender Distribution in Iran's Translation Industry: Who Gets the Largest Piece of the Pie?[1]

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Abstract

Translation is seen around the world as a female-dominated industry. However, translators are not paid equally and one's salary as a translator depends on various factors, including experience, university degree, language proficiency, and translation skills. The most lucrative sector of the translation industry in Iran is official translation, which requires a license from the Judiciary. To obtain a license to establish an official translation bureau or work as a sworn translator, one must pass highly competitive standardized exams that assess their language proficiency, translation skills, and knowledge of the law. This study attempts to shed some light on the gender distribution of translators working in the most profitable sector of the industry. The results of this study show that 72.6% of certified translators in Iran are men and only 27.4% are women. Nevertheless, there are some provinces where women outnumber men as sworn translators. For instance, 75% of certified translators in Zanjan are female and only 25% are male.

Keywords: Certified Translators, Gender Distribution, Pay Gap, Translation Industry, Female Translators

1. Introduction

The demand for translation services has increased as businesses expand globally and seek to communicate with customers in different languages. This has created more opportunities for women to work as translators and earn a good income while still being able to take care of their families. Translation seems to be an industry dominated by women. This trend can be attributed to the fact that

translation is a profession that offers flexibility and the ability to work from home, which is particularly attractive to mothers who want to balance their work and family responsibilities. The rise of the internet and advancements in technology have made it possible for translators to receive projects online, eliminating the need to commute to a physical workplace. This is a major advantage for women living in traditional societies where safety concerns may limit their ability to travel outside the home. Moreover, according to Costa et al (2001), women tend to be more agreeable than men, which may mean that they are more likely to accept lower salaries. In addition, Iran has a traditional society where men are the main breadwinners and responsible for the family's financial problems. This means women may work part-time and may not have to rely on their own income to make ends meet, which also means they may not have to bargain for higher wages like men do. However, this should not be generalized to all women in the translation industry. It is important to recognize that each individual has their own unique set of skills, experiences, and negotiation abilities that can impact their earning potential. Additionally, societal expectations may discourage men from pursuing careers in fields that are traditionally female-dominated or undervalued, further perpetuating gender imbalances in certain industries. Golaver (2009) suggests that project managers in various organizations seem to prefer female translators over their male counterparts. Other research indicates that as the number of women in a particular profession increases, its perceived prestige tends to diminish. (Pan, 2015). Cohen (2016) also points out that when there are more women in an industry, all workers tend to be paid less. This phenomenon is often referred to as the "feminization" of a profession or industry. When a field becomes dominated by women, it can be seen as less desirable or less prestigious in the eyes of society. This may be due to gender stereotypes and biases that associate certain qualities or skills with men or women. For example, nursing and teaching were once male-dominated professions that became feminized over time, and as a result, they were often undervalued and

underpaid. Similarly, fields like social work and childcare are still predominantly female and are often considered low-paying and low-status jobs. The reasons for this trend are complex and multifaceted, but it highlights the ongoing challenges of gender equality in the workforce.

Moghaddas (2013) suggests that there is no significant difference between the quality of translations produced by male translators compared to those of their female colleagues and the quality of the final work has nothing to do with the translator's gender. This highlights the fact that gender should not be a determining factor in evaluating the quality of work produced by professionals in any field. In the context of translation, it is important to recognize that the skills and expertise required to produce high-quality translations are not inherently tied to one's gender. Rather, they are developed through training, experience, and a deep understanding of the language and culture being translated. Therefore, gender should not be a factor in hiring decisions or in setting pay rates for translators. Instead, employers should focus on evaluating candidates based on their skills, experience, and qualifications. It is also worth noting that the final quality of a translated work is not solely dependent on the translator's skills. Other factors, such as the quality of the source material, the deadline for the project, and the client's expectations, can all impact the final product. Therefore, it is important to evaluate translators based on their ability to work collaboratively with others and to adapt to changing circumstances in order to produce the best possible result.

The existing literature on the translation industry has focused on the increasing demand for translation services and the opportunities it presents for women. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the potential imbalances in gender distribution of translators in the more profitable sub-sectors of the translation industry.

2. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the gender distribution of certified translators in Iran. Certified or sworn translators are those who have received approval from the I.R. Judiciary and whose seal and signature confirm the authenticity of foreign documents, giving their translations official status before legal authorities. This study seeks to provide comprehensive information on the gender distribution of certified translators in all provinces of Iran, shedding light on any potential gender disparities that may exist in this field. However, exploring potential factors that may contribute to any imbalances in representation, such as gender bias in hiring practices, differences in educational opportunities, socioeconomic pressures on men to make more money and compete for status are beyond the scope of this research. By raising awareness of any disparities that may exist, the findings of this study will be valuable for policymakers and stakeholders in the translation industry. Additionally, it can serve as a starting point for further research on the underlying reasons behind the current trend.

3. Method

Holmes' (1988) map of translation studies, while comprehensive in many aspects, falls short in its failure to prioritize translators as a central research topic. The map primarily emphasizes the theoretical and methodological aspects of translation. In his work, Chesterman (2009) highlighted a significant gap in Holmes' renowned map of translation research, identifying an area that he termed Translator Studies. This field, which had been overlooked in Holmes' original framework, focuses on the study of translators themselves and their role in the translation process. Chesterman's contribution shed light on this previously neglected aspect of translation research, emphasizing the importance of understanding translators as key actors in the field. Using Holmes' map alone does not provide a consistent

description of this research, so the Sketch of Translator Studies (Chesterman, 2006) is used instead.
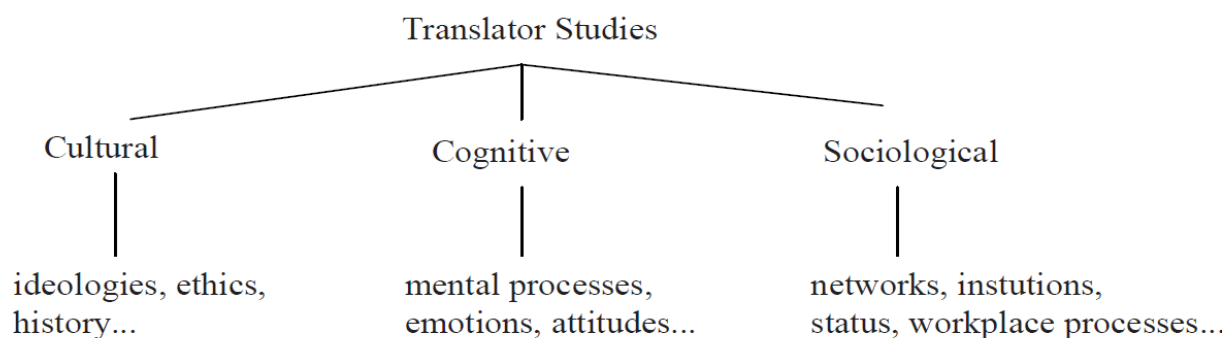
Translator Studies

Cultural	Cognitive	Sociological
ideologies, ethics, history...	mental processes, emotions, attitudes...	networks, instutions, status, workplace processes...

Figure 1. *Sketch of Translator Studies.*

According to the diagram in Figure 1, this study falls into the category of Sociological Translator Studies. The proportion of male and female certified translators are investigated in this research. To this end, a comprehensive list of all certified translators in Iran was obtained through General Department of Documents and Affairs of Official Translators of the Judiciary. Furthermore, these translators were grouped into either male or female based on their biologically assigned gender. The number of male and female certified translators was also written separately for each province of Iran to facilitate easy comparison. Moreover, the percentages for male and female certified translators were provided for all provinces to show the gender distribution among translators. Finally, a pie chart was used to illustrate the total percentage of female and male certified translators in Iran.

4. Research Questions

1. How many male and female sworn translators are there in the provinces of Iran?

2. What percentage of certified translators working in Iran are men or women?

5. Results and Discussion:

Table 1. *Gender Representation of Certified Translators in Provinces of Iran.*

	Province	Total	Female	Male	Female Percentage	Male Percentage
1	Tehran	557	170	387	30.52%	69.48%
2	Razavi Khorasan	31	6	25	19.35%	80.65%
3	Isfahan	35	8	27	22.86%	77.14%
4	Fars	23	4	19	17.39%	82.61%
5	Khuzestan	13	3	10	23.08%	76.92%
6	East Azerbaijan	23	2	21	8.7%	91.3%
7	Mazandaran	10	1	9	10%	90%
8	West Azerbaijan	29	3	26	10.34%	89.64%
9	Kerman	23	8	15	34.78%	65.22%
10	Sistan & Baluchestan	6	3	3	50%	50%
11	Alborz	25	10	15	40%	60%
12	Gilan	19	2	17	10.53%	89.47%
13	Kermanshah	6	1	5	16.67%	83.33%
14	Golestan	5	1	4	20%	80%
15	Hormozgan	9	4	5	44.44%	55.56%
16	Lorestan	3	1	2	33.33%	66.67%
17	Hamedan	7	0	7	0%	100%
18	Kurdistan	12	2	10	16.67%	83.33%
19	Markazi	8	3	5	37.5%	62.5%
20	Qom	6	1	5	16.67%	83.33%
21	Qazvin	7	1	6	14.29%	85.71%
22	Ardabil	9	4	5	44.44%	55.56%
23	Bushehr	5	0	5	0%	100%
24	Yazd	3	2	1	66.67%	33.33%
25	Zanjan	4	3	1	75%	25%
26	Chaharmahal & Bakhtiari	2	0	2	0%	100%
27	North Khorasan	2	0	2	0%	100%
28	South Khorasan	4	0	4	0%	100%
29	Kohgiloyeh & Boyerahmad	0	0	0	0%	0%
30	Semnan	3	1	2	33.33%	66.67%
31	Ilam	0	0	0	0%	0%

Table 1 provides an overview of the number of male and female certified translators in Iran. The table contains details regarding the names of provinces, the total number of certified translators in each province, the number of male and female certified translators and the percentages of male and female certified translators in all provinces of Iran.

According to table 1, Tehran has the largest number of certified translators, while there is no certified translator in Ilam and Kohgiloyeh & Boyerahmad. Zanjan has the highest percentage of female certified translators at 75%, followed by Yazd with the second-highest percentage of female certified translators. However, there are only a small number of certified translators in these cities. For instance, there are only 3 official translators in Yazd and two of them are women; therefore, 66.67% of the certified translators in Yazd are female.

There are five provinces where you cannot even find one female certified translator. In Hamedan, for example, there are 7 certified translators all of whom are men. Also in Busher, Chaharmahal & Bakhtiari, North Khorasan, and South Khorasan provinces, there are no female certified translators.
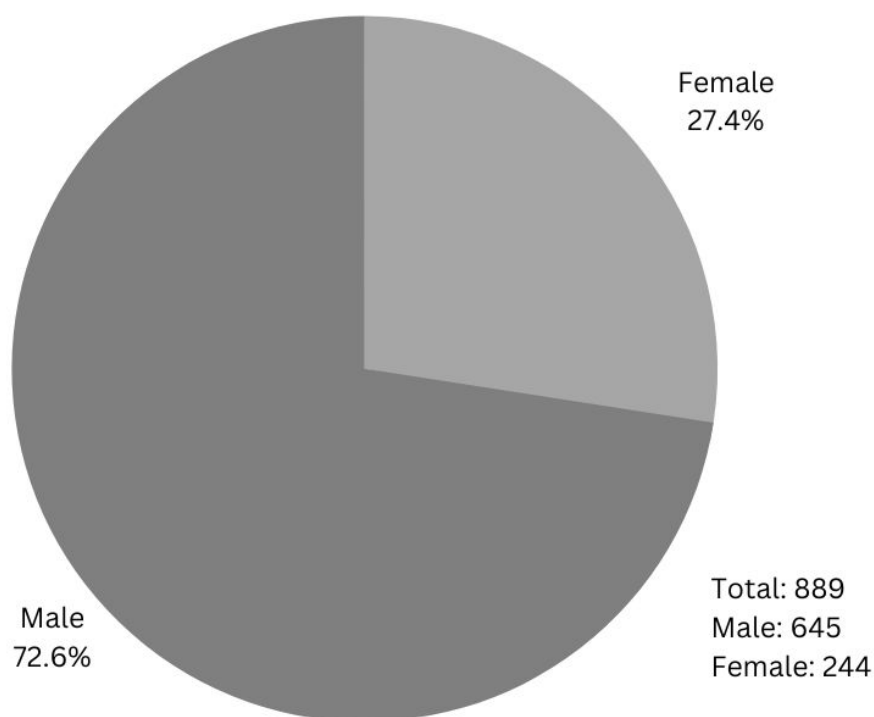

Female
27.4%

Male
72.6%

Total: 889
Male: 645
Female: 244

Figure 2. *Gender Distribution of Iranian Certified Translators in 2022.*

Figure 2 shows the proportion of Iranian men and women working as sworn translators in 2022.

Out of a workforce comprising 889 individuals, only slightly more than a quarter are women. The majority of Iranian certified translators are men and this sector of the translation industry could be considered as male-dominated. It is also important to note that gender disparities in the field of certified translation may not solely be due to external factors such as societal expectations or discrimination. It is possible that some women may have a preference for other career paths or may not have the same level of interest in pursuing certification in this field.

Overall, the information in the chart shows that men make up 72.6 % of the certified translators, while women's share of the pie is only 27.4%.

Table 2. *Gender Representation of Candidates in Iran's Certified Translator Interviews of 2023*

	Province	Total	Female	Male	Female Percentage	Male Percentage
1	Tehran	408	168	240	41.18%	58.82%
2	Razavi Khorasan	21	10	11	47.62%	52.38%
3	Isfahan	19	5	14	26.32%	73.68%
4	Fars	13	4	9	30.77%	69.23%
5	Khuzestan	14	3	11	21.43%	78.57%
6	East Azerbaijan	43	15	28	34.88%	88.37%
7	Mazandaran	5	4	1	80%	20%
8	West Azerbaijan	25	10	15	40%	60%
9	Kerman	2	1	1	50%	50%
10	Sistan & Baluchestan	9	2	7	22.22%	77.78%
11	Alborz	5	3	2	60%	40%
12	Gilan	7	1	6	14.29%	85.71%
13	Kermanshah	6	0	6	0%	100%
14	Golestan	3	1	2	33.33%	66.67%
15	Hormozgan	11	4	6	36.36%	54.55%
16	Lorestan	8	2	6	25%	75%
17	Hamedan	14	5	9	35.71%	64.29%
18	Kurdistan	6	3	3	50%	50%
19	Markazi	0	0	0	0%	0%

20	Qom	10	3	7	30%	70%
21	Qazvin	6	1	5	16.67%	83.33%
22	Ardabil	17	6	11	35.29%	64.71%
23	Bushehr	1	0	1	0%	100%
24	Yazd	0	0	0	0%	0%
25	Zanjan	11	6	4	54.55%	36.36%
26	Chaharmahal & Bakhtiari	10	4	6	40%	60%
27	North Khorasan	3	2	1	66.67%	33.33%
28	South Khorasan	5	1	4	20%	80%
29	Kohgiloyeh & Boyerahmad	5	2	3	40%	60%
30	Semnan	3	2	1	66.67%	33.33%
31	Ilam	0	0	0	0%	0%

Table 2 presents a comprehensive summary of the male and female candidates who were invited to the recent interview in 2023. The purpose of the interview was to assess their oral translation skills and award them with the prestigious seal of certified translators in Iran. This recognition would enable them to become future certified translators. The table provides detailed information on the names of provinces, the total number of candidates in each province, and the corresponding number and percentage of male and female candidates.

Based on the data presented in table 2, it is evident that Tehran boasts the highest number of candidates in 2023, while Ilam, Yazd, and Markazi have no candidates at all. Mazandaran stands out with the highest percentage of female candidates at a staggering 80%, closely followed by Mazandaran and North Khorasan, both at 66.67%. Interestingly, all candidates invited for interviews from Kermanshah and Bushehr were male.

The number of candidates in Tehran surpasses the combined number of candidates in all other provinces. Additionally, there are five provinces where the number of female candidates exceeds that of male candidates: Alborz, Mazandaran, North Khorasan, Semnan, and Zanjan. The case of Zanjan is particularly intriguing as Table 1 reveals that 75% of the current certified translators

there are female. This trend is further reflected in Table 2 by the number of female candidates in 2023, suggesting that the official translation sector in Zanjan will likely remain dominated by women for several years to come.
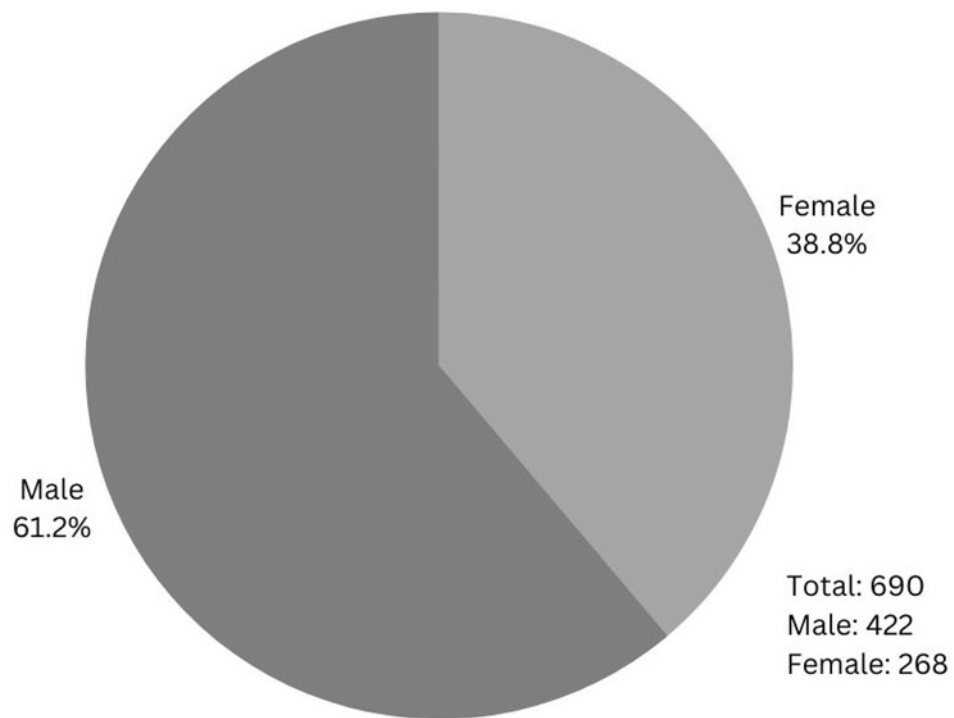

Figure 3. *Gender Representation of Candidates in 2023.*

Figure 3 illustrates the gender distribution among Iranian candidates invited for interviews to qualify as certified translators of the judiciary in 2023. Out of a total of 690 individuals, women accounted for 38.8 percent, while the majority of candidates, comprising 61.2 percent, were men. Specifically, there were 422 male candidates and only 268 female candidates.

6. Conclusion

This study shows that the industry of certified or official translation in Iran is male-dominated. However, there are two provinces in which female translators form a majority namely, Zanjan and Yazd.

To recap, 72.6 % of the certified translators are men, while only 27.4% of them are women. This indicates that men hold a stronger presence in the most profitable sector of the translation industry in Iran. The reasons behind this trend require further investigation in future studies. The reasons behind this trend require further investigation in future studies. Nevertheless, it is likely that the higher number of certified female translators in Zanjan and Yazd is simply a coincidence due to the low overall number of certified translators working there. However, it is worth noting that in Zanjan, the number of female candidates invited to interviews in 2023 was higher than the number of male candidates. This suggests that becoming a certified translator may be an attractive option for women in this province for various reasons, which could be explored further through additional research. Overall, it appears that the official translation industry tends to attract more men than women, potentially leading to an increase in male certified translators. With that being said, it is worth noting the gender representation of candidates in the 2023 exam compared to the current gender distribution of certified translators in Iran. Remarkably, there has been an 11% increase in female representation in the interview rooms in 2023 as compared to the total number of current female certified translators. The increasing representation of female candidates in the 2023 exam suggests that there may be a growing interest among women in pursuing careers in certified translation. It will be intriguing to see the outcome of this exam and observe how many female candidates successfully pass this particular entrance test.

Investigating the underlying reasons for this trend is an interesting topic which is beyond the scope of this research. The data from this study cannot explain the observed trend, but its existence is well inferred.

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