Development of Drama Translation Field in Pahlavi II (1941–1979)[1]

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Abstract

This study, through the theoretical framework of Bourdieu's sociology, examines the development of drama translation field in an Iranian context. Pahlavi II was a period of profound social, cultural, economic and political changes, which saw the structural transformation of Iran from an underdeveloped country into a developing society. The last two decades of Pahlavi II were the heyday of the drama translation. This diachronic study draws on archival material, following a socio-historical path, in order to reveal the roles of translators, artistic events, the state policies, and modernization of Iran to explain drama translation field development. The result of the research shows that this field was strengthened through the participation and cooperation of the state. The state offered opportunities to the participants and agents for agency. Accordingly, this period witnessed the homology between various agents and socio-cultural institutions which made the development of the field possible. In addition, drama translation developed from translating for stage to translating for page. All these technically enhanced the visibility and recognition of drama translation field and the value of this literary genre.

Keywords: Agents, Drama translation field, Social field

Introduction

According to Dictionary of the Social Sciences (Calhoun, 2002) sociology is the systematic study of society which deals with patterns of social relationships, and cultural interactions. Tischler (2007) points out that the primary goal of sociologists is to investigate social conditions and identify recurring patterns in society. They attempt to examine the forces that influence individuals' behavior and shape their actions which ultimately lead to social events.

The emergence of the sociology of translation in Translation Studies (hereafter TS) was not sudden. It took a long time for translation scholars to address the social aspects of translation (Simeoni, 1998, p. 492). Translation studies has gradually expanded its scope from an emphasis on linguistics and cultural studies and then to a more sociological approach. The question that might be raised here is: why Bourdieu's theoretical framework?

According to Gouanvic (2010, p. 121), Bourdieu's framework was not designed for translation studies, but it can be used to research and understand the process of translation. The premise of the Bourdieusian theoretical framework in TS is that translation is a social product that is created in society. Bourdieu, in the framework he presents, emphasizes the dynamics of cultural production in society, that is, the process of cultural goods production. By introducing concepts such as field, habitus, and capital, he makes it possible to examine the interactions between agency and structure (Inghilleri, 2005, p. 127). It can be said that these concepts enable researchers in the field of TS to examine the relations between agents and the structures that limit or encourage them.

Translation, as a social practice, is always a reflection of the historical and cultural conditions in which it is produced (Wolf, 2007). Bourdieu's thinking tools will be incorporated in the following parts to investigate drama translation as one of the neglected areas in translation studies research. Furthermore, by taking into account

the role and agency of agents in the production and distribution of translated works in Persian context, this study aimed at finding answer to this question: what socio-cultural factors prompted the development of drama translation field in Pahlavi II (1941–1979)? It is noteworthy that we are simply examining those historical events that give us a clear picture of Iranian society. We do not intend to explain the details of historical events during this period as other researchers have already provided detailed explanations of those events elsewhere.

Literature Review

An Overview of Bourdieu's Theory of Social Practice

Bourdieu introduces the concept of field to explain and elaborate on social reality, and to study cultural production process in relation to a complicated network of social interactions. Field is defined by Bourdieu (1996) as "a network of objective structure of positions" (p. 231) which are available to be occupied by members of the field. Fields have their own "logic and taken-for-granted structure of necessity and relevance which is both the product and producer of the habitus which is specific and appropriate to the field" (Jenkins, 1992, p. 84). According to Bourdieu, habitus is the product of history which produces individual and collective behavior of a group of agents in a social space (Jenkins, 1992, p. 79). Moreover, Bourdieu (1986) recognizes four types of 'capital':

- Cultural capital which refers to non-financial social assets, e.g., accumulated cultural competencies, skills, qualifications, which enable holders to have a higher rank, prestige or authority in society.
- Economic capital which refers to commodities and financial assets that an individual has,
- Social capital which is related to network of social relations that an agent may use to his/her advantage. For Bourdieu (1986) clear profit is the main reason that actors engage in and maintain links in a network.
- Symbolic capital which becomes visible as, for instance, authority and diplomas. That is to say, it is social agent's prestige or social honor. In the case

of a translator, his/her symbolic capital may be acquired by recognition (Gouanvic, 2005). For example if a translator holds a good academic degree and has translated a number of literary works, people usually take that translator more seriously.

For Bourdieu, social space refers to multiple social fields and all his major concepts—capital, habitus, trajectory, and so on—are inseparable from it. The agents operate within these fields. They struggle over the appropriation of certain species of capital (Hanna, 2006). In the struggle within each field, if an agent has the power to impose his own view of the structure on others, he will have an advantage of maintaining his position.

In many recent studies conducted in TS, Bourdieu's theoretical framework has been widely adopted by translation scholars, including Simeoni (1995, 1998), Gouanvic (2005), Inghilleri (2005), Chesterman (2006), and Heilbron and Sapiro (2007), to explore the role of social agents in TS. All these studies have seen a new trend or research perspective which aims to gain a better understanding of the translation practice in its social context that facilitates its production (Wolf, 2007).

Moreover, within the framework of Bourdieu's theory of social fields, Parastesh (2014) focuses on the analysis of the emergence and formation of the literary production field in Iran in the book *Narrative of Pure Destruction*. In this book, he explores how literary field has evolved and been structured within Iranian cultural and social contexts. Parastesh (2014) not only focuses on literature but also extends Bourdieu's framework to analyze other cultural fields such as painting and architecture in Iran. Torkaman and Nasiripur (2016) in their research titled 'Evaluating Theater as an Artistic Field in Iran based on Bourdieu's Theories' examine types of cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capitals within the field of theater.

Methodology

The present study, which is analytical and descriptive, aimed at investigating the process of the development of drama translation field in an Iranian context. In so

doing, three Bourdieusian elements (Grenfell, 2008, pp. 219–20) have been employed:

a. The relationship between the field in question (here the field of drama translation) and the field of power;
b. The 'objective structure of positions' that makes up the field, and the relationships between them in terms of the struggle over the capital characteristic of the field;
c. The habitus of the agents within the field of activity.

To address the above elements, the following steps were taken:

For the first element, the study takes the reader to Mohammad Reza Shah period which was the age of a boost for modern theater and drama translation development. Then, the role and contribution of the field of power was examined.

For the second element, the researcher provides an overview of the major artistic, cultural and literary events that had a close correlation with the field in order to find the position of drama translators, theater agents and other cultural agents and their agency within the field.

Finally, the biographies of some renowned drama translators of the period such as Sa'idi, Forough, Meskoob and Behazin were studied to shed light on their drama translation habitus.

As the research covers a period of almost 37 years, historical and archival materials had been gathered from National Library and Central Library of Tehran University. A list of translated plays and performed theaters from 1941 to 1979 was reviewed. The concentration here is on drama translation as a socially situated activity without taking into consideration linguistic dimensions of the source and target texts.

Data Analysis
A social field does not stand alone in isolation; rather it connects with a network of other social fields that interact with each other (Jenkins, 1992). More specifically, in the examination of cultural products external factors should also be

considered. Understanding the social aspects of drama translation helps us to see that "the viability of a translation is established by its relationship to the cultural and social conditions under which it is produced and read" (Venuti, 1995, p. 18). The following part provides a description of the socio-historical scene in which the cultural sector was structured in Pahlavi II and the way this sector functioned.

The Socio-historical Scene

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (henceforth referred to as Shah), was the second Shah of Pahlavi dynasty from 1941 until his overthrow by the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Shah began with modest programs designed to complete those started by his father Reza Shah (1925–1941). He launched the White Revolution to facilitate the context for the modernization of Iran. According to Huntington (1968) Western civilization was presented as the goal for Iran to emulate. Modernization was gradually transforming Iranian society and people's life-style. Economic development and social transformation are two key aspects of modernization. Literacy, education, and urbanization led to profound social mobilization (Ghaninejad, 2015, pp. 30–41). Basic education improvement policies across the country led to an increase in the number of literate people. It has been accompanied by an increase in the population of potential readers of books, newspapers and magazines. Therefore, Iranian society witnessed growing urbanization and also industrialization. Abrahamian (198۳, p. 86) states that economic development led to an increase in citizens' incomes, which in turn increased their purchasing power and led to the introduction of consumer goods to the market, which were not readily available until then. Cinema, radio and television as new forms of mass media were also other sources of consumption. Indeed, the State's task of creating a renaissance resulted in Iran's subsequent transition to a multi-field society. In addition to the emergence of economic, political, scientific and educational fields, Iran saw the birth of different cultural fields and sub-fields (Parastesh, 2014, p. 174).

Important Cultural Organizations and Institutions

The reign of Shah can be considered as a continuation of Reza Shah's (1925–1941) policies for modernization and westernization (Abrahamian, 1983). To achieve these aims various cultural organizations were established which, amongst others, the followings are worthy of being mentioned: Faculty of Fine Arts, The Institute for Translation and Publication of Books, Franklin Institute, National Bureau of Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture and Art, The National Center for Iranian Theater, Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Faculty of Theater, The Theater Department of the University of Tehran (Abrahamian, 1983; Shirjian, 2002, pp.127–138).

This period witnessed the interplay between various institutions which concerned themselves with the production, distribution and consumption of cultural commodities. Institutions that deserve to be mentioned in terms of the socio-cultural context of cultural activities include: The Pen Society, Iranian Culture Foundation, Pahlavi Foundation, and Farabi Foundation to name just a few (Boroujerdi, 1996, p. 165). The most significant of these was the Pahlavi Foundation, established as a court patronage for social and cultural activities in 1958 (Shirjian, 2002, pp. 121–143). The Ministry of Culture and Arts, the Faculty of Fine Arts at Tehran University, and the Iranian National Television all patronized special schools, workshops, and festivals which patronized drama translation, playwriting and dramatic activities.

In order to promote cultural and literary domains, government-funded institutions provided some budget to promote culture. In particular, theater was more highly subsidized than any other cultural area. In addition to establish new organizations, theater buildings including Ferdowsi, Farhang, Sa'di, etc., and theatrical groups, radio and television programs which encouraged the employment of dramatists gained the state's support. Due to the initiatives made by such institutes, it was one of the most productive periods in the history of drama translation. These

factors led to a change in the status of artistic and cultural productions in society, moving away from marginality (Bozorgmehr, 2000, pp. 271–292).

The Main Literary Trends and Events

According to Bozorgmehr (2000, p. 47), following Pahlavi II the volume of translations from English sources increased. The cultural field witnessed an increase in the publication of contemporary literature and also the availability of printed versions of translated drama texts. Most drama translators have belonged to the literary field and they did not directly involve in the theatrical activities. Many of drama translators were themselves literary agents, a fact reflected by their understanding of drama translation for literary purposes. For example, the Anahita Theater often collaborated with well-known translators such as M. Etemadzadeh and A. Aryan Pour. Very few of them were also playwrights (Aryanpur, 1972).[3]

In addition, different publishers such as The Institute for Translation and Publication of Books and Franklin Institute have encouraged translations, publications and disseminations of literary works. The activities of these publishers in the publishing market led to the visibility of drama translation which in turn had a significant impact on the field of cultural production (Aryanpur, 1972).

Another stimulant for modern theater was congresses and various state festivals which provided opportunities for playwrights, drama translators and theater practitioners to experiment, to compete, to learn and to show their art. Many courses on drama have been taught at colleges, universities, or at actor training theater schools or in literature departments (Fanaeian, 2008, p. 12). Similar activities were also sponsored by the Ministry of Art and Culture. The Ministry built more theaters in Tehran and in major cities. The market for performing arts had expanded over these

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3. For detailed statistics of the plays which were published and staged during Pahlavi II, see Bozorgmehr (2000, pp. 413–438).

decades. As Floor (2005) puts it "without the support of the Ministry of Art and Culture, Radio and Television of Iran, modern theater might have died a quiet death. Shiraz Art Festival and some radio and television programs kept it alive" (p. 185).

Most translations of dramatic works took place up to the end of the 1960s and 1970s in which the situation of national and translated drama hit the stages. A new group of translators, most of them university graduates or upper-echelon civil servants, emerged (Bozorgmehr, 2000). During this time, the literary agents rather than theater agents had focused on drama translation. New agents preferred loyalty to the source text, and tried to transfer the original text with minimal changes. One of the functions of such translations was to create a new theatrical taste (new collective habitus), at least among elites. Their views on theater, its modes of production, and the ways in which theater directors should approach the translation of drama texts changed over time. Anahita Theater, as one of theater troupes commissioned translations that responded to this need. Behazin's translations are exemplary of this mode of drama translation in producing a translation that is free from the dictates of commercial production but is still accessible to theater-goers (Bozorgmehr, 2000).

Results and Discussion

Tracing the Development of Drama Translation as a Field

Tymoczko and Gentzler (2002) point out that "translation as an activity occurs in a social and political environment, with agents who have vested interests in the production and consumption of texts across linguistic and cultural boundaries" (p. xxi). The researcher tried to trace the development of the field of drama translation by offering a descriptive analysis of some of the important cultural and political changes Iran experienced during Pahlavi II. Here we consider Bourdieu's three-stage analysis of what constructs drama translation field in Iran:

1. *Relationship between the field of drama translation and the field of power*

According to Bourdieu (1999) agents and institutions within the field of power shape their power relations and constantly struggle to collect more capitals to occupy dominant positions in different fields. During Pahlavi II, Iran witnessed the evolution and the relative autonomy and status of various social fields and the cooperation between the field of power and the field of cultural production. The rise of the modern state and development of mass media led the state to assume the function of the main agents nearly in every social field. It is seen as one of the sparks that ignited the formation of social fields and the emergence of various sub-fields.

The state as the field of power established a multi-field society through investing types of capitals in various fields. The establishment of different cultural organizations and public institutions such as the Ministry of Culture and official culture planning were the embodiment of the state's efforts to set the course for social reforms which motivated literature and translation. The state tried to promote and develop the cultural field by opening up publication and printing houses, theaters, organizing cultural and artistic festivals and awarding prizes in almost all branches of the arts. These types of social organization and institution as means of domination shaped the collective habitus of citizens and their taste.

The state has been particularly successful in promoting cultural productions, notably through subsidies. The field of power established many cultural institutions, thus the necessary resources were made available to the cultural agents. At the same time, the prestige of producing cultural works increased. The state also played a key role in legitimizing literary products.

The Iranian drama translation field tends towards centralization. It means the state which was rich in every type of capital was positioned in the center of the field. The agents (translators, publishers, theater agents, literary agents, etc.) and various institutions participated in the dissemination of cultural products within or between various literary fields. It is important to remember that in the field of cultural

production, agents strive to acquire symbolic and cultural capitals, since competition amongst agents in the field is focused around prestige and recognition (Johnson, 1993, p. 7). Considering Bourdieu's framework, it can be argued that the state, due to its possession of different types of capital, established its position at the center of the literary field which generates much symbolic capital (see figure 1). The findings indicate that translation of a drama text as a literary work was not always profitable, and the translators tended to acquire more cultural and symbolic capitals than economic capital.

In addition, the field of power had much influence on shaping everyday cultural practices and consumptions. Due to the Individual agents' lack of sufficient economic and political means, they were unable to compete with the state. The state as the field of power was able to disseminate its culture planning project to different sections of the society through a network made up of educational systems, the state-run organizations and institutions, radio and television. Being a part of the field of power, all these cultural organizations set up the necessary mechanism to further the state's control over the cultural field.

2) The 'objective structure of positions' that makes up the field, and the relationships between them in terms of the struggle over the capital characteristic of the field in question;

The accumulation of cultural capital for its own sake is the defining characteristic of cultural fields for Bourdieu. In this view, the tension between two different literary and theatrical habitus shaped two different trends of translation for page and translation for stage in the field of drama translation in early Pahlavi II. Economic and cultural capitals motivated the practices of drama translators in theater field. Appealing to the taste of consumers was the only criterion of success. But symbolic and cultural capitals motivate drama translators to practice in the literary field. Their translations did not reap immediate economic capital. Theater translators became marginalized and the translation of drama for theater field was being

replaced by translating drama for literary field (see figure 2). The translators did not want to produce texts that could only be performed on stage. By contrast to drama translations for stage by theater agents, literary agents' version of translated plays for page tended to be more literary and their primary consumers seemed to be predominantly intellectual readers of literature and academics. Drama translators from literary field had a great deal of cultural and symbolic capitals because most of them made a living through an occupation or profession in other social fields. Therefore, they did not have the economic concerns of commercial theater translation. But, these agents had an important impact on the fields within which they took positions.

3. The habitus of the agents within the field of activity

In Pahlavi II the field of drama translation developed as a result of the arrival of new intellectual literary agents. Almost all of them were from the middle class. The new generation of translators included a distinguished group of university graduates appeared on the cultural scene of Iran from the 1950s onwards. They had gone to university and all possessed a high volume of certified cultural capital. Translations were often carried out by renowned literary figures such as Sai'di, M. Forough, Behazin and Meskoob. All these drama translators who were also writers, critics and journalists engaged in this cultural production. In fact, these agents acquired a form of cultural capital by earning educational capital, that is years spent in school and universities or academic degrees obtained, as well as other forms of capitals. But, these translators as literary agents supported themselves financially by activities in different social fields other than drama translation. For example, many of the agents who produced cultural products in the literary field were also active in newspapers and magazines or in cultural institutions.
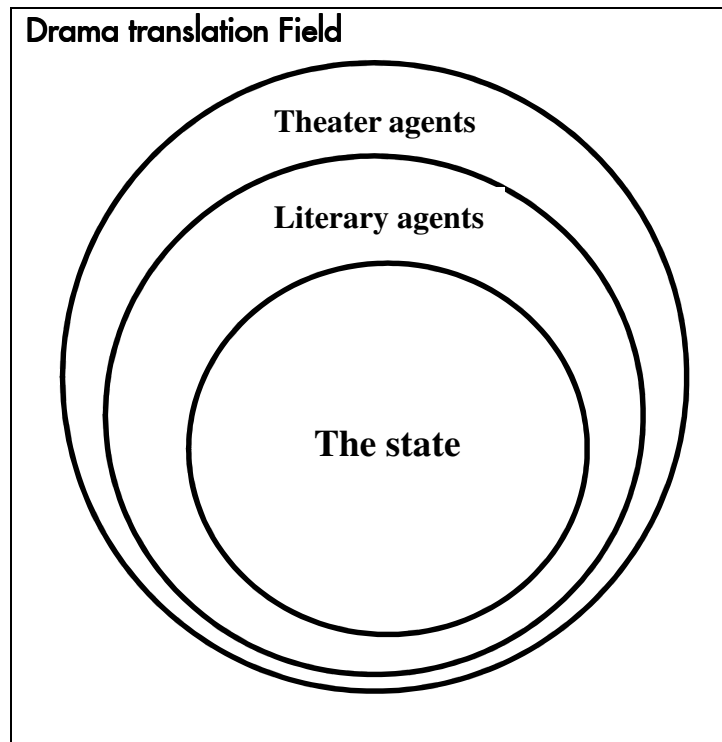
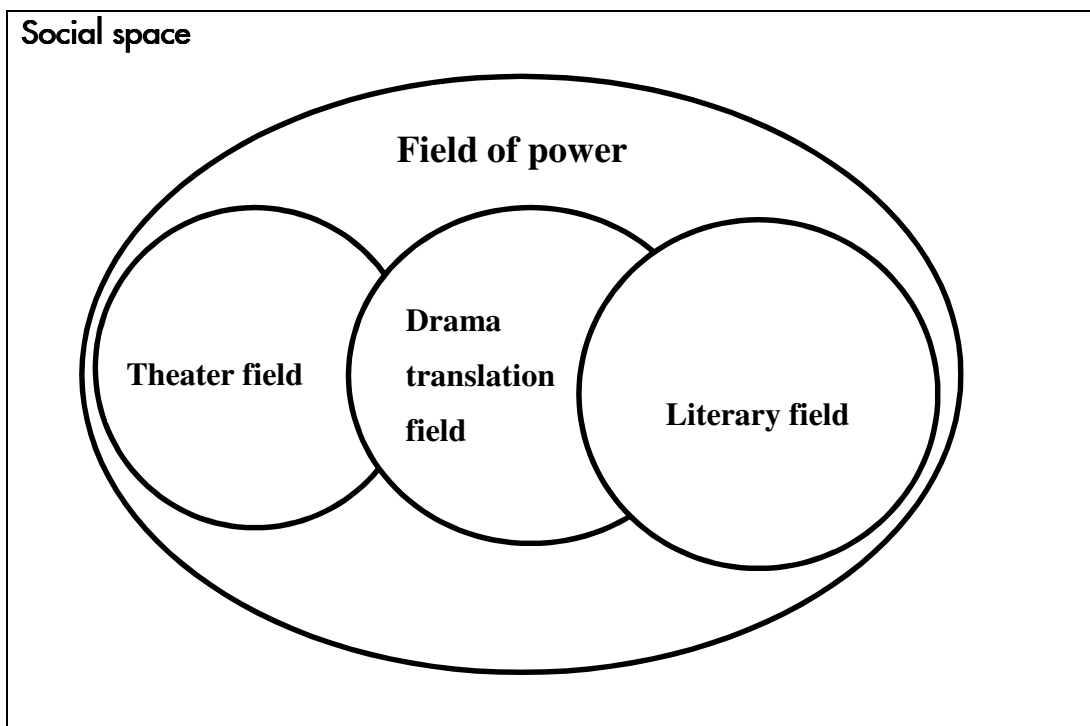*Figure 1. The positions of agents in drama translation field in Pahlavi II*

Figure 2. Drama translation field in Pahlavi II

Conclusion

The results of the study showed that drama translation field evolved like any other social field—gradually, through the efforts of its agents and relation with the relevant fields. By studying the macro-level contextual factors, the researcher shed light on the causation behind the development of drama translation field. The findings also revealed that the intervention of the state was influential in setting the course for drama translation. The state offered opportunities to the participants for agency, playing the game which took place in that field. Therefore, the structure and boundaries of the field of drama translation were influenced by its interaction with the field of power.

In addition, we see the emergence of the new group of translators on the literary scene. The leading characters were the agents from literary field who struggled over social, cultural and symbolic capitals rather than economic capitals. Producing drama translation primarily for publication was increasingly becoming a norm for members of this field. This mode of production gained much ground in comparison with translation produced for the stage.

A promising area for future studies is to apply Bourdieu's theoretical framework in the field of short story, novel and poetry translation and translation of children's literature in Iran. Another study is also necessary to show the interaction among various positions in the literary field, for example the power relations between senior and novice translators, between literary agents, editors and publishers, between target readers and translators, etc.

All in all, findings of this research can be beneficial for the historiography of translation, as well for dramatists, professors and students of theater who are interested in the history of drama translation.

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