Translation censorship is unavoidably everywhere but what makes it quite different in Iran from anywhere else in the world is the unique characteristics of the field of translation in this country. The indispensable status of translation and translators, the availability of multiple translations of the same works, and the strict censorship imposed by a totalitarian theocratic regime on translators are among...
numerous features that make the Iranian situation a promising object of translational research, well beyond its areal provenance. Yet despite the distinctive peculiarities of the field, the question of translation censorship in Iran has not received the academic attention it deserves. Project 882688 (sTUCk) aimed at studying the under-researched phenomenon of translation censorship in Iran. More specifically, the main scientific objectives of the research project were as follows:
1) Describing the main characteristics of the field of literary translation in contemporary Iran with a special focus on the problem of censorship;
2) Clarifying the exact nature of censorship-related limitations and constraints that Iranian translators are exposed to in the field of literary translation; and
3) Identifying and explaining the translational strategies Iranian literary translators have developed to deal with the constraints and censorship imposed on them.

Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far

To achieve the first and second scientific objectives of this research, the social conditions in which translations as cultural products were produced as well as the dynamics between different agents who were competing with each other in the field of literary translation in Iran (translators, publishers, censorship authorities, and readers) were analyzed objectively. The researcher investigated the strategies that the dominant agents were using in this field to preserve its structure as well as the built-in symbolic violence that was institutionalized in the field in the form of dominant sociocultural norms. To this end, he devised a new conceptual framework to redefine the censorship in which this notion was conceived as a Bourdieusian field. The designed framework then was used to describe and explain the behaviors of different agents in the specific field of translation censorship in Iran. As regards the third objective of the study, the availability of multiple synchronic Persian translations of the novel The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini provided an opportunity for the researcher to conduct a case study to investigate and compare different strategies used by Iranian translators.

The main results of the project are expected to be reported in form of three articles that have been submitted to top-tier peer-reviewed journals in the field of Translation Studies. The first article depicts a detailed picture of translation censorship in Iran, its ideological and legal foundations, its mechanism of action, and the different role players involved in it. It provides readers with sufficient information so that they may have a thorough understanding of how translation censorship is practiced in this particular context. The second article deals with general theories of censorship (and/in translation). It proposes to redefine censorship by putting forward a new conceptual framework in which censorship is conceived as a Bourdieusian field. This theoretical model could represent a valuable contribution to the Translation Studies subfield of translation and censorship. The third article provides a detailed description of censorship-related translation strategies used in different Persian translations of the novel ‘The Kite Runner’.

Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)
This research project can serve as a starting point to raise public interest and awareness of the peculiarities of the field of cultural production in Iran in general and the field of literary translation and state censorship in this country in particular. Focusing on how translation shapes the development of politics and culture, the project will undoubtedly deepen our understanding of contemporary cultural and social developments in this country. The research project identifies the limitations and constraints that Iranian translators face as they pursue their vocations within Iran and explores the translational strategies they resort to in the presence of these constraints and the censorship imposed on them. A better understanding of these limitations and constraints can lead to the promotion of freedom of expression and free access to information in the cultural arena of Iran and consequently help remove the obstacles on the path of further cultural development of this country. It can also help to gain better insight into the mentality of the censorship authorities in Middle Eastern countries such as Iran. The project will help European readers gain deeper insight into everyday life in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Finally, this research project can help the European nations engage with Iranians directly at the level of culture, education, language, and values. It can raise the awareness of the European policy and decision makers of contemporary cultural and social developments in Iran and the Middle East, a world region that has always been of great interest to European countries with multicultural societies.

Related documents

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