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THE BEGINNING OF TRANSLATION MOVEMENT IN EARLY SAFAVID ERA FROM 907 TO 1038, A.H/1502-1633

Dr. Helia Vaezian¹, Moloud Goldar²

¹ Assistant Professor, Khatam University, Department of English Language, Tehran, Iran

Email: Vaezian.Helia@gmail.com

² M.A in Translation Studies, Khatam University, Department of English Language, Tehran, Iran

Email: Goldar1385@yahoo.com

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Abstract

One of the most important dynasties was Safavid dynasty for translation movement. Shah Tahmasp and Shah Ismail ordered translation of some books to the translators of that period. These translated religious books were beneficial for layman Iranians to have access to Shi'ism teachings. However, the review of the related studies shows that there are limited studies on the translation history in Iran. The researcher tried to investigate the influential translators and their translations which other researchers did not survey before. The aim of the present research was to investigate the beginning of the translation movement in Safavid dynasty from 907 to 1038 A.H. This research used two models of Polysystem theory (Even-Zohar, 1990) and Bourdieu (1990a)'s model to investigate biography of translators of Safavid era and translated religious books from 907 to 1038 A.H. Because of Shia religion, some translators decided to translate religious books. The researcher found 10 influential translators and nearly 26 books which were translated from Arabic into Persian in the respective time. Translators of Safavid era were persons like Sheikh Bahai, Ali ibn-e Hassan Zavarei, Mohammad Bagher Sabzevari. The results can provide the most important translated religious books such as Al-Ehtejaj, Kashf al-Gommeh, Tafsir al-Quran, etc.

Keywords: Polysystem, Habitus of Bourdieu, Field of Bourdieu.

1. Introduction

Translation studies have an interdisciplinary nature. Not only it focuses on translation history, but also investigates translation methods and classic works that are related to it. According to Hosseini (2014), study of translation history plays an important role in the studies which are associated with the development of linguistic politics. Also the survey of this field is beneficial to the study of general history. Translation history in fact has to do with the study of changes and obstacles related to translating and translation and involve studying behaviors and situations that lead to translation.

As highlighted by Baker (2009), in the early 1970s, Itamar Even-Zohar developed the concept of Polysystem model which is beneficial in understanding, analyzing and describing the function and evolution of literary systems, while its particular focus was on the study of translated literature, an area frequently marginalized by literary theory.

According to Even-Zohar (1990), "literary Polysystem includes genres as children's literature, popular fiction and translated works as well as masterpieces and revered literary forms" (as cited by Baker, 2009, p.198). According to Munday (2012), Polysystem is defined as "multiple systems, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partially overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent" (p.166). When it comes to Safavid era, as stated by Mohammadi Shahrokh Abadi (2013), Iran experienced a turning point by the officialization of Islam and as a result translated religious texts occupied the center of literary Polysystem in Iran. In other words it can be said that translated literature especially the subsystem of translated religious texts assumed a central system under the shadow of government patronage during Safavid era. In this research, translation of religious books in Safavid dynasty is the main focus of the researcher. To this end, two theories will be used, namely Polysystem theory (Even-Zohar, 1990) and Bourdieu's theory (1990a).

1. Review of the Related Literature

1.1 Polysystem Theory

According to Even-Zohar (1990), when translated literature assumes a central position, participating in the shaping of the center of the literary Polysystem. "Translators might regard as their main work the introduction of new models and repertoires, rather than the preservation of those existing in the system of home" (as cited by Venuti, 2000, p.194). Under the preservation of those existing in the system of home" (as cited by Venuti, 2000, p.194). Under such special circumstances, "the chances that the translation will be closed to the original in terms of adequacy [...] are greater than otherwise" (Even-Zohar, 1990, pp. 50-51). When translated literature occupies a peripheral position, the translators tend to find ready-made secondary models for the foreign text, and "the result turns out to a non-adequate translation" (Even-Zohar, 1990, pp.50-51).

This is what exactly happened in the Safavid dynasty. As cited by Mohammadi Shahrokh Abadi (2013), Shi'a religion was set the official religion. This was a turning point in the history of Iran. As a result, translated literature especially the subsystem of translated religious texts were opted as a central position. The kings were patronages for the translators in the Safavid era. So, translation of religious texts increased. With regard to the need of Safavid kings to this axis of their legitimacy (religion), the translation was considered as the central position of the Polysystem.

1.1 Bourdieu's Theory

Bourdieu's theory concludes of the concepts of habitus, field and capital. The researcher defines each one of them.

1.1.1 Habitus

The term "Habitus" is a Latin word referring to a "habitual or typical condition, state or appearance, especially of the body" (Ahed, 2014, p.79). Bourdieu (1990b) asserted this concept "by retaining the essence of the concept's original meaning namely, the relationship between dispositions of the body and the mind" (p.101). According to Bourdieu (1990b), the habitus, at every moment, structures new experiences according to the structures constructed by past experiences, which are modified by the new experiences within the limitations redefined by the "power of selection", brings about a "unique integration dominated by the earliest experiences, of the experiences common to the same class's members. (p.60)

2.2.2 Field

Bourdieu (1989) uses the term Field (or cultural field) to explore structured, social context that conclude rules and practices that product particular ways of being and thinking. Climbing, education, religion, art, politics are instances of fields. Each field has "its own logic, traditions of necessary behavior, and networks of relations that are created and retained by both individuals and institutions" (Beams & Telford, 2013, p.82). Furthermore, "it is within these cultural fields that habitus extends as a 'product' of what is accepted as logical, suitable and relevant within the field" (Beams & Telford, 2013, p.82).

2.2.3 Capital

Essential characteristic of a field is what Bourdieu (1986) refers to as the forms of Capital. Capital is anything that designed as being of value within a presupposed field. According to Bourdieu (1986), "capital classifies to four kinds: economical capital (money, property), social capital (informal networks), cultural capital (knowledge, skills, and aesthetic presences) and symbolic capital (prestige, recognition)" (p.45). Bourdieu (1993) reminds us that "capital is effective in relation to an essential field" (p.73).

3. Methodology

A selection of relevant and available historical and historiographical, linguistic sources on Safavid period were considered together with books on religious texts translated during this time. This research used the first-hand sources on the Safavid era as well as the second-hand ones. It is worth mentioning that first-hand English resources were scarce on the topic studied in this research. After going through all the available sources, the relevant information about translators and their productions were extracted and studied.

According to Williams and Chesterman (2002), "Data used in historical research include texts about texts: documentary material concerning translations and translators, translation reviews, translators' 'correspondences, book covers, bibliographies of translated works, biographies of translators and so on" (p.91).The researcher attempted to analyze the translators' biographies and their translated religious books based on Polysystem's theory (Even-Zohar, 1990) and concepts of habitus and field and capital by Bourdieu (1990a).

4. Results

Identifying Translators of Safavid Era

In line with the theory of Polysystem (Even-Zohar, 1990), few translators were identified as the influential translators in the Safavid era. Based on this theory, the researcher opted to study translators who either translated a large number of (religious) books or their translations were considered important and thus at the center of the polysystem in the respective time period. These translators were considered as influential translators. Therefore, from among all the translators working in the respective time in Safavid era, only the influential ones were studied in this research. It is worth to mention that Iran then experienced a turning point by officialization of Shi'i religion and the subsystem of translated religious texts occupied the center of Persian literary Polysystem.

Table 4.1 The Influential Translators in Translation Movement during the Safavid Era from 907 to 1038 A.H

No	The Name of Translator	Date	The King's Name
1.	Sheikh Bahai	1547-1622 A.D (953-1030A.H)	Shah Abbas I
2.	Ali Ibne Hassan Zavarei	Tenth Century	Shah Ismail & Shah Tahmasp
3.	Mohammad Bagher Sabzevari	1017-1090 A.H	Shah Abbas I Shah Safi I, Shah Abbas II
4.	Elahi Ardabili	870-950 A.H	
5.	Molla Fath Allah Kashani	Death: 1580 A.D (988 A.H)	Shah Tahmasp's Court
6.	Muhaqqiq Karaki	Death: 940 AH	Shah Ismail, Shah Tahma
7.	Nezam al-din Ahmad Araghi	From 920-975A.H	
8.	Mohammad Sharif	Death: 988 A.H	Shah Tahmasp
9.	Abdul Ali Birjandi	9th and 10 th Centuries	
10.	Mohammad Bagher Ghazvini Roqani	1019-1117 A.H	Shah tahmasp & Shah Abbas I

4.3.1. Habitus, Field, and Capital of Sheikh Bahai

According to Agand (2014, pp.324-325), Baha al-Din Mohammad ibn-e Hussein ibn-e Abd-al Samad Ameli or Shaykh Bahai was born in February of 953 A.H or (1546CE). He was a scholar, architect, mathematician, astronomer and poet in 16th century Iran. He was born in Baalbek, Lebanon, but immigrated to Iran in his childhood with his father. According to Khamenei (2009, p.40), "Sheikh Bahai's father, Sheikh Hussein Ibn Abd al-Samad, was one of Jurisprudents who immigrated from Lebanon and Sham to Iran under the pressure of prejudice Ottoman rulers' cruelty and massacre of Shiite".

As asserted by Khamenei (2009), he lived in Jabal Amil "a village called 'Jaba'. Jabal Amil has always been one of the main Shi'i centers of west Asia. There are a lot of Shiite families. They have played an important role in establishing Shiism in Iran" (Khamenei, 2009, p.40).

According to Agand (2014, p.324), he came to Iran with his father and completed his studies in Isfahan. Sheikh Bahai visited many Islamic countries including Iraq, Syria, and Egypt and after spending four years there, he returned to Iran.

As noted by Safakhah (2009, p.7), Sheikh Bahai was not only an outstanding philosopher, poet but also was an expert architect and civil engineer. He designed the monument of Isfahan's Imam square, Imam Mosque. He also made a sun clock in the west of the Imam mosque. He "designed a canal called Zarin Kamar. This canal distributed the water between different cities. This work was known as Tomar Sheikh Bahaei" (Safakhah, 2009, p.6). This canal was made with the special engineering and was exploited after three centuries in Isfahan.

As noted by Stewart (1996), "Sheikh Bahai trained a lot of students who 'Mullah Mohammad Taghi Majlesi' and 'Mullah Sadra' were the most famous. Mullah Sadra became one of the eminent philosophers of Shi'ite Islam" (as cited by Velayati, 2012b, p.18). According to Khamenei (2009), Sheikh Bahai just like a few of the great men of Shi'i and erudite, was familiar with Shi'i ascetic practices. He had spent a part of his life on "meditation, thinking over forty-day periods of prayer, God's invocation, and fasting, i.e. avoiding from eating, drinking" (Khamenei, 2009, p.50). The biography of the kings, tyrants of the past reveals their childish and beastly views. In the contrast, the piety of God's men and their position indicates the intelligence and ideal perfection. Sheikh Bahai is one of those sagacious poets that can, more or less, be known through his Kashkul and al-Mikhlat. As noted by Khamenei (2009), "when he decided to write a book on syntax, the result was 'Samadiyyah' like Isfahan's art of inlaid³ and miniature painting, is full of beauty and power. Each of its parts is like a coherent, integrated and artistic elegy" (p.70).

As cited by Khamenei (2009), he was the first person who wrote a book under the title of Feqh. His other important work is the Kashkool, which includes stories, news, scientific topics, and Persian and Arabic proverbs. He also wrote Khulasat al-hisab "Essentials of arithmetic", an Arabic textbook that became popular throughout the Islamic lands from Egypt to India until the 19th century. It was translated into German in Berlin by G. H. F. Nesselmann and published in 1843.

4.3.1.1. Sheikh Bahai's Non-Translated Works

He had expertise in different fields. He wrote over 88 books on different topics mostly in Persian but also in Arabic.

- Kashkul
- Touti Nameh
- Naan o Paneer
- Sheer O Shekar
- Naan O Halva

- Al-favayed as-Samadieh
- Mashregh osh-Shamsain wa Eksir os-Sa'adatain
- Al-Athna Ashariyah
- Zobdat ol-Osul (Agand, 2014, p.345)

4.3.1.2. Sheikh Bahai's Translated Book

According to Miri (1988, p.372), he translated "Resaleye Emamiye" which was attributed to Imam Reza. Sheikh Bahai had an important book in the Safavid era. It can be as an evidence for his fame as an influential translator. Also, he had a lot of books about different topics which had studied the whole of them.

4.3.2. Habitus, Field, and Capital of Ali Ibn-e Hassan Zavarei

According to Moazeni and Shokrai (2011, p.25), Muhaqqiq Karaki trained a lot of scholars who one of the most significant of them was called Ali Ibn-e Hassan Zavarei. He was born in Banjire Zavare (a village that was close to Isfahan city). That village was called Gharyat al- Sadaat. He went to Isfahan after his preliminary educations and then left there towards Harat. It was narrated that this scholar devoted his entire life to give advice and preaches. 'Seyed Qiaso al-Din Jamshid Zavarei' who was famous to "Seyed Qazer" was considered as the teacher of Seyed Hassan Zavarei. Also, "Seyed Qazer was one of the students of Mohaqqiq Karaki. Zavarei mentioned the name of his teacher in the book of Lavame al-Ancar" (as cited by Moazeni & Shokrai, 2011, p.25). According to Abisaab (2004), "Zavarei (alive around 947 A.H, 1540 CE), was a student of Al-Karaki. 'Muhaqqiq Karaki' was the same person who was invited by Safavid kings from Jabal Amil to Iran" (p.28). Zavarei attempted to translate Karaki's sayings and writings in that time. According to Zavarei (2015, p.29), he was recognized as one of the founders of Shia religion. He knew Arabic and literature and mastered on the commentary, Feqh, Kalam science, theology and natural sciences.

4.3.2.1. Hassan Zavarei's Translated Works

According to Zavarei (2015), "Seyed Hassan Zavarei focused on Shitte doctrinal works, tradition, Quran, exegesis and literature. He carried out the serious translations among other Persian scholars" (p.29).

As noted by Abisaab (2004, p.28), Zavarei translated various works into Persian, such as Al-Ehtejaj by al-Fadil b. Hassan al-Tabarsi (d. 548 A.H), Tafsir al-Quran, Kashf al-Ghommeh, translation and Tafsir attributed to Imam Hassan al-Askari and Sharh al-Arba'in Hadithan by al-Shahid. Zavarei also wrote a commentary on the popular work Nahj al-Balagha, translation of the book of Makarem al-Akhlagh by son of Sheikh Abo-Ali Tabarsi by the request of Shah Tahmasp (as cited by Hussein-Zade Shanechi, 2009, p.38).

According to Zavarei (2015, p.39), "translation of Jafari-ye is a commentary of Mohaqqueq Karaki (d. 940 A.H) which was about praying and its introductions". This book was translated by Seyed Hassan Zavarei and a version of it exists in the Yazd library. As asserted by Hussein-Zade Shanechi (2009), "Zavarei had translated 18 books which nearly all of them were into Persian language" (p.38).

4.3.3. Habitus, Field, and Capital of Mohammad Bagher Sabzevari

According to Miri (1988, p.375), Mohammad Bagher Sabzevari was son of Mullah Mohammad Momen Khorasani, known as 'Fazel' and 'Muhaqqiq Sabzevari', is one of the main scholars, and thinkers of the eleventh century A.H. He was born in the year 1017 A.H (1608) in 'Namen' village of Sabzevar. He was a student of Mirza Abolghasem Fenderski and Ghazi Moez.

He had the position of Sheikh al-Islam for several years from Shah Abbas. He taught in Mullah Abdullah Shoshtari School and was a like-minded contemporary of Feyz Kashani. In Sha'ban 1068 A.H., Shah Abbas issued an order in which he had praised the scientific position of Muhaqqiq highly, asked the minister Mostofi al-Saltaneh Isfahani to give an amount of money to him every year from the funds and products of Dar al-Saltaneh.

4.3.3.1. Mohammad Bagher Sabzevari's Translated Work

As cited by Miri (1988), "he translated Rowzat al-Anvar Abbasi from Arabic to Persian. This book contains explanations about kings' traditions, practical wisdom, and civil politics, treatises on richness and congregational prayer, and political treatise are best-known works" (p.375).

4.3.4. Habitus, Field, and Capital of Elahi Ardabili

According to Pour-Javadi (2011), Elahi Ardabili or Kamal al-Din Hussein Elahi Ardabili was an Iranian author and scholar. He was born in Ardabil in 870 A.H. His father Sharaf al-Din Abd al-Haqq was apparently a state official. He had a pen-name as "Elahi". After completing his preliminary education, "he moved to Shiraz and Khorasan with the help of Sheikh Heydar and completed his education in the presence of the great scholars of that period like Jalaladdin Davani and Amir Ghiasaddin Shirazi" (Pour-Javadi, 2011, pp.41-44). He spent some years in "Herat with Prince Gharib Mirza Valad Soltan. After the death of Gharib Mirza, Elahi returned to Azarbayjan" (Pour-Javadi, 2011, p.41).

4.3.4.1. The Elahi Ardabili's Translated Works

As cited by Pour-Javadi (2011), he was the first scholar who translated writings of Shia Islam into the Persian language. Elahi was the writer of more than 30 books in Turkish, Arabic and Persian. He began teaching Islamic sciences and died in 1543 in Ardabil. He was written interpretations of Quran in Persian and Arabic. According to Aghajari (2010), "He had a lot of religious texts like Menhaj al-Daavat Seyed ibn-e Tavoos and Ershad al-Ezhan Allameh Helli" (p.87).

4.3.5. Habitus, Field, and Capital of Mullah Fath Allah Kashani

According to Sattar (2009, p.186), Fath Allah ibn-e Shokr Allah was known to Mullah Fath Allah Sharif Kashani, he was born in Kashan city. He was a 15-century jurisprudence, theologian and commentator. Periods of Mullah Fath Allah were very significant from the viewpoint of religion. He had lived in the reign of Shah Ismail I (908 A.H), Shah Tahmasp (930-984 A.H) and Shah Ismail II.

4.3.5.1. Mullah Fath Allah Kashani's Translated Works

As noted by Sattar (2009), "his works included the translation of Quran in Persian, translation of Ehtejaj Tabarsi which is known as Kashf al- Ehtejaj, the book which was written for Shah Tahmasp. An old manuscript is kept by Sheikh Safi's treasury in Ardabil" (p.189). Other works were Tanbih al-Qafelin, Tazkerat al- Arefin and translation of Qavaed al-Ahkam.

'Razi al-din Shah Morteza' was the only student of Mullah Fath Allah Kashani. He was a great commentator, man of letters and exegetist. According to Sattar (2009, p.206), "with the change of political circumstances of Iran in the Safavid era, Mullah Fath Allah Kashani and his teacher, Zavarei were tried so much in the way of translation of the religious books like Nahj al-Balaghe and Ehtejaj Tabaresi". These books were in the first place after four centuries especially in related to the subject of the prophet's family.

As noted by Sattar (2009), Mullah Fath Allah Kashani passed away in 988 A.H. The grave of Mullah Fath Allah was considered as a sacred place for Kashan's pilgrims and his home was located there.

4.3.6. Habitus, Field, and Capital of Muhaqqiq Karaki

According to Abisaab (2004), Muhaqqiq Karaki was known as al-Karaki. He was born in 870 A.H. He was the first scholar who immigrated in the early 16th century CE4 from the Jabal Amil to Najaf and from there to Persia. He was known as a Mujtahid, namely, a scholar who used rationalist methods to arrive at a legal opinion. His most important teacher was Ali ibn-e Helal Jazayeri (d. 928). Al-Karaki immigrated from Khuzestan to Jabal Amil. Safavid reign "praised him because of his profound religious knowledge and piety. He was born in a family of the jurist from Karak-Nuh in Balabak" (Abisaab, 2004, 19). According to Abisaab (2004), he studied with Ibn-e Khatun al-Amili. Karaki left Jabal Amel for Najaf around 1504 to become the first major Ameli jurist in the service of Shah Ismail (r. 1501-24) in Iran. Beyond his Amili scholarship, al-Karaki continued his education in the countries like Syria, Egypt and Iraq. He was Imam's deputy during the reign of Shah Tahmasp and controlled the governmental affairs. He had a profound power and penetration in that time.

According to Abisaab (2004), Muhaqqiq Karaki wrote Jame al-Magased for removing of the vacuum in the field of Feqh texts in Iran. Karaki established the Shi'i religion bases in the country. As cited by Ghafari Roghani (1964), Shah Tahmasp addressed Al-Karaki in one of the sessions as "you are a governor, I am one of your servers". According to Abisaab (2004), His important books were Jame al-Maqased and Nafahat al-Ons" (p. 27).

4.3.7. Habitus, Field, and Capital of Nezam al-Din Ahmad Araghi

According to Hussein-Zade Shanechi (2009, p.38), Nezam al-din Ahmad Araghi Mazandarani was one of the authors of this period. He was born in 920 A.H in Tehran and passed away after his travel from Mecca in 975 in the 'Dibel' harbor. His other books were Tarikh Jahan Ara and translation of Al- ehtejaj Tabarsi which were done for Seyed Ahmad Khan Mar'ashi.

4.3.8. Habitus, Field, and Capital of Mohammad Sharif

According to Hussein-Zade Shanechi (2009, p.39), Mohammad Sharif was a translator in Safavid dynasty. He has been one of the kinsmen of Shah Tahmasp. Therefore, he was entitled to 'Khadem'. Kefayat al-Momenin is known as a translation of Al-kharaej and Jaraeh was written by Ravandi.

4.3.9. Habitus, Field, and Capital of Abdul Ali Birjandi

Some sources indicated that Abdul Ali Birjandi was born at the end of the 9th century. According to Velayati (2012a, p.58), Birjandi translated the book of Taqvim al-Boldan into Persian in 927 A.H.

Table 4.2 The Translated Religious Books in Translation Movement of Safavid Era from 907 to 1038 A.H

No	The Name of Book	Translator
1	Menhaj al-Daavat Seyed ibn-e Tavoos	Elahi Aredebili
2	translation of Ershad al-Ezhan Allameh Helli	Elahi Ardebili
3	Khulasa-yi Figh	Elahi Aredebili
4	Al-Ehtejaj	Ali ibn-e Hassan Zavarei
5	Kashf al-Gommeh	Ali ibn-e Hassan Zavarei
6	Tafsir al-Quran	Ali ibn-e Hassan Zavarei
7	Tafsir attributed to Imam Hassan al-Askari	Ali ibn-e Hassan Zavarei
8	Sharh al-Arba'in Hadithan by al-Shahid	Ali ibn-e Hassan Zavarei
9	Makarem al-Akhlagh	Ali ibn-e Hassan Zavarei
10	Taravat al-Latayef	Ali ibn-e Hassan Zavarei
11	Manhaj Al-Sadeghin	Molla fath allah Kashani
12	translation of Quran	Molla fath allah Kashani
13	Kashf al-Ehtejaj	Molla fath allah Kashani
14	Resaleye Emamiye	Sheikh Bahai
15	Meftah al-Fallah	Sheikh Bahai
16	Tarikh Jahan Ara	Nezam al-din Ahmad Araghi
17	Al-ehtejaj Tabarsi	Nezam al-din Ahmad Araghi
18	Kefayat al-Momenin	Mohammad Sharif
19	Barakato al-mashhad al-moghadad	Mohammad Bagher Ghazvini Roghani
20	translation of Ahd nameh Malek Ashtar	Mohammad Bagher Ghazvini Roghani
21	Translation of Tohid Mofazzal	Mohammad Bagher Ghazvini Roghani
22	Sahife-ye Sajjadiye	Mohammad Bagher Ghazvini Roghani
23	Rozat al-Anvar Abbasi	Mohammad Bagher Sabzevari
24	Translation of Bab Hadi-ya Ashar	Abd al- Hussein Kashani
25	Translation of Nafahat al-Lahut	Mosavi Astarabadi
26	Taqvim al-Boldan	Abdul Ali Birjandi

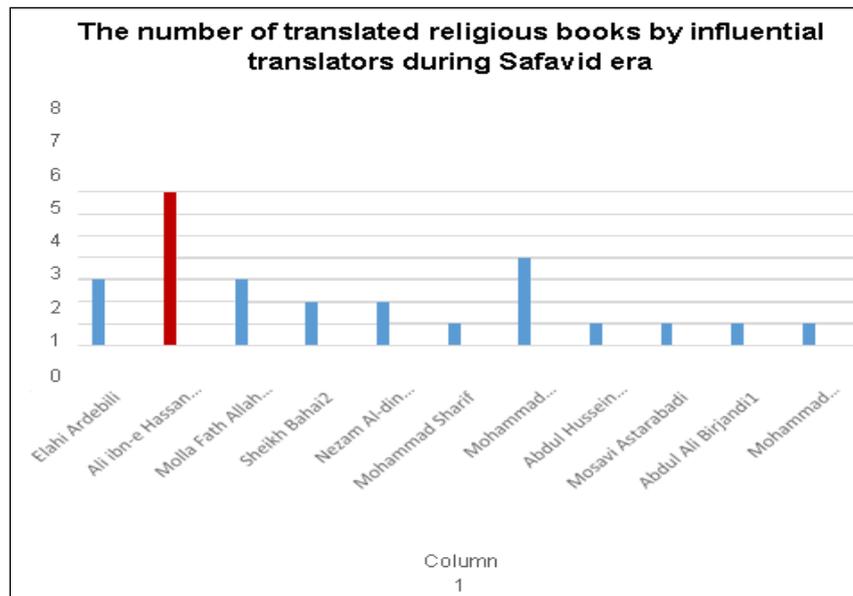


Figure 4.1. The Number of Translated Religious Books by Influential Translators during the Safavid Era

Ali Ibn-e Hassan Zavarei had the highest number of translated works among all the translators in the Safavid era.

5. Conclusion

According to Mohit Tabatabai (1967), being attacked by Arabs, the Safavid unified the borders of Iran and officialized the Shi'i religion. In this era, Persian had special status and so many books were translated from Arabic into Persian. As the research findings demonstrated, Seyed Hassan Zavarei was a professional translator in Safavid era because he had the highest number of translated books among all the translators in the Safavid era. In the studied period, the results of the study revealed that Seyed Hassan Zavarei and Sheikh Bahai were two professional translators who had a large number of translated books. According to Khamenei (2009), Shaikh Bahai was regarded as a professional scholar of his age and a revivalist. His erudition won him the admiration of Shah Abbas I, and he was appointed as the Shaikh Al-Islam or the Chief Theologian of Isfahan. Sheikh Bahai contributed numerous works in philosophy, logic, astronomy and mathematics. His works included over 100 articles, epistles and books.

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