

Disagreement Settlement in the Editing Process of Literary Translations in Iranian Publishing Houses: An Actor-Network Theory Perspective

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Abstract

Editing literary translations is a common practice in Iranian publishing houses, involving multiple actors whose interactions often give rise to disagreements. As a result, mechanisms for resolving disputes become necessary, and certain actors may exercise greater authority in decision-making processes. However, the power relations among those involved in the editing of literary translations remain insufficiently understood. To address this gap, the present study conducted interviews with 57 actors engaged in the editing process of literary translations. Drawing on actor-network theory and employing a qualitative thematic analysis approach, the interview data were examined to explore patterns of conflict resolution and authority. The findings revealed a range of conflict resolution practices, from direct bilateral negotiations among actors to the intervention of publishers. The publisher emerged as the actor with the highest decision-making authority, followed by the translator and the editor. In most cases, authority structures were predetermined, although in some instances authority remained undefined or developed during the process. The study also identified several recurring areas of disagreement, particularly concerning lexical choices and adherence to style guides. Additional sources of conflict included stylistic preferences, the use of colloquial language, title translation, fees and deadlines, censorship, and the inclusion of footnotes.

Keywords: Literary translation, translation editing, decision-making, final authority, actor-network theory

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1. Introduction

DeMaria (2020) addressing interactions with editors, remarks, “why did they ask my opinion if they were going to disregard it” (p. 245). Editing is a site of considerable contention. Literary translations, typically the result of negotiations among various individuals within and outside the publishing house, undergo multiple layers of scrutiny, incorporating the perspectives of numerous actors with varying degrees of authority to achieve the final version (Parham & Jahantigh, 2024; Buzelin, 2008; Feinauer & Lourens, 2020; Jaccopard, 2020; Scocchera, 2013).

Translated literature is quite popular in Iran, and numerous publishers produce such works. In the past three years alone, 18,160 translated literary books have been published in Iran (Publication Statistics, 2025). Even historical accounts show that Iranians have been avid consumers of translated literature, to the point where the emergence of modern Persian literature is attributed to the influence of translated works (Abdolahzadeh & Sabouri, 2015; Sadeqi, 2015).

Iranian readers have specific expectations of translated literature. They prefer translations that are fluent, readable, and free from textual or linguistic irregularities, which are characteristics of the source language structure. They value translations that faithfully reflect the meaning, style, tone, discourse context, and cultural elements of the source text (Bolouri & Jalali, 2023; Khoshsaligheh et al., 2020). These expectations naturally influence the translation and editing processes, as publishers strive to publish books that they know will sell well (Schiffrin, 2000). Any of these expectations may become a point of contention between the actors involved in the editing process.

As mentioned above, readers expect literary translations to be without irregularities, that is, to be well-edited. Indeed, translations are rarely published without being edited. However, the process of editing literary translations has received scant attention, particularly in the Iranian context. Precisely, the decision-making processes among involved actors in editing literary works and the types of disagreements that arise require further clarification. The present study aims to address this gap. More specifically, it seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What issues most often result in unresolved disagreements among actors in the editing process of literary translations?
2. What actions are taken to resolve disagreements among actors in editing tasks?
3. Who holds the authority to make the final decision when disagreements persist in editing projects?

2. Literature Review

Many researchers have investigated issues related to literary translation (e.g. Assadi Aidinlou et al., 2014; Atefmehr & Ehteshami, 2025; Bolouri, 2017; Fadaee, 2011; Salehian, 2024; Tahmasbi Boveiri & Mousavi Razavi, 2022; Khalili & Parham, 2026). However, a single definition of literary translation with which all scholars agree does not exist in Translation Studies. A group of scholars defines literary translation with a focus on literariness. For instance, according to Boase-Beier et al. (2018) literary translation refers to the translation of literary texts or any text that adopts a literary, stylistic, or artistic approach. Jones (2020) explores features that make a text literary, and lists characteristics such as high social validity, aesthetic or emotional effect, narrative, ambiguity, and poetic or stylistic language. He adds that a text does not have to exhibit all of the features to be considered literary (p. 295). Some scholars distinguish literariness by stylistic or narrative features (Miall & Kuiken, 1999). Another approach of a group of scholars to defining literary translation is to contrast it with other types of translation. France and Gillespie (2008, p. viii) describe literary translation as encompassing

all non-technical works read by the literate public. Similarly, Wittman (2013) defines it as distinct from technical or commercial translation (p. 438).

Literary translation is one of the most challenging types of translation. Some of the challenges of literary translation include culture-specific elements, such as idioms, customs, historical references, social norms, colloquialisms, and humor (Ababilova, 2023; Borg, 2023; Yousef, 2012). These elements rarely have an equivalent in the target language and, as a result, require special care and sensitivity from the translator.

2.1. Editing

The term “virāyesh” comes from the Persian root “virāstan”, where the prefix “vi” signifies “separation” or “apart” and “razis” refers to “order” or “arrangement.” It conveys the ideas of “refining” or “purifying” as well as “adorning” or “embellishing” (Zolfaqari 2017, p. 9). In English, “virāyesh” is translated as editing, and “virāstār” as editor.

According to Samiee Gilani (2013, p. 153), the English term “editor” corresponds to multiple Persian terms, including “virāstār,” “mossaheh” (revisor), “nāzer” or “series editor”, “sardabir” for journals and magazines, and “noskhepardāz” for copy editor. Assigning a single Persian term to the English word “editor” is not ideal and may cause ambiguity. Azarang (2000) describes editing in a broader sense as extending beyond the mere revision of authored or translated works (p. 846).

Addressing all typologies of editing is beyond the aim and scope of this article. However, a notable point is that they all consider translation editing as a distinct type, separate from formal and technical editing, and more related to content editing. Translation editing in these typologies mainly focuses on the translation’s fidelity to the source text (cf. also Azarang, 2000, 2015; Chesterman, 2009; Samiee Gilani, 2013; Skotarek, 2023; Zolfaqari, 2017).

Another noteworthy point is that “editing” is not the only term used in Translation Studies to refer to text revisions. While Koponen et al. (2021) believe another individual can perform that translation revision as “other revision”, they also highlight self-revision of translators (p. 2), whereas do Carmo and Moorkens (2021) believe that revision is something performed by someone other than the translator. As Mossop (2020) states, professional translators correct and improve the quality of texts. However, “the glamour of the finished translation hides the depths of a text’s Becoming” (Washbourne 2019, p. 2).

In the previous section, the challenges of literary translation were discussed. Despite a translator’s skill in navigating literary translation challenges, their work remains subject to manipulation, fine-tuning, and revision by third parties (Buzelin, 2008). These third parties are actors involved in the translation and editing process, to whom less attention has been devoted. Buzelin (2006) examined how different individuals work together to produce books or translated texts, and the complexities of their collaborations. Hajimohammadi (2025) identified various human and non-human actors in the editing process of literary translations. Five human actors were directly involved in the editing process, namely the editor, translator, lead translator, layout designer, and proofreader. Similarly, Borg (2024) identified the actors involved. Other studies have also examined the extent of these actors’ presence (Solum, 2017, 2018), the influence of a specific actor such as the editor (Sapiro, 2012), the decision-making process among them (Siponkoski, 2015), and the power dynamics among them (Borg, 2024; Marin-Lacarta & Vargas-Urpi, 2019; Mateo, 2002).

It is overly simplistic to assume that no conflict arises where multiple actors are involved. Not only are different actors involved in the editing process, but they also have different levels of power. Cavin (1993) elaborates on his personal experience, working with authors:

I've found most authors very willing to consider my comments. They mostly agree with what I suggest and when they don't, they have good reasons. Of course, occasionally there will be some disagreement that we can't resolve; unless the problem I see in the manuscript is especially egregious, I most often go along with the author, even if I don't really feel comfortable doing it. (p. 217)

Siponkoski (2013) argues that translators are negotiators who interact with various individuals of differing authority levels during the translation process. This dynamic also applies to the editing process, where translators and other stakeholders negotiate with individuals of varying authority to express their views. However, the question of who has the final say remains unanswered. To our knowledge, the study by Zlatnar Moe et al. (2021) is the only one that addresses the issue of final authority in editing literary translations. This study, conducted in Slovenia, may not be generalized to Iran.

Other researchers have also demonstrated that editors play a significant role in the finalization of translation works (cf. also Bisiada, 2018, 2019). Similarly, Zlatnar Moe et al. (2021) note the numerous actors involved in finalizing literary translations, suggesting that conflicts of interest are nearly unavoidable, raising the question of who determines the final version of the translation.

3. Method

The theoretical framework of this study is Actor-Network Theory (ANT), which examines the process of how scientific knowledge is formed (Akrich & Latour, 1992). ANT views science not as a fixed body of facts but as a dynamic process of associations and interactions that link both human and non-human entities (Latour, 2005; Latour & Strum, 1986). ANT emphasizes science in the making and highlights the ongoing processes through which knowledge and technology are produced, instead of focusing on ready-made science (Latour, 1987). Because the aim is to understand conflict resolution in the "process" of editing literary translations, in ANT, the actions of each actor affect those of other actors. In terms of ANT, we are dealing with networks with punctualisation and networks with depunctualisation. In the former, all actors within the network are functioning properly, and the network is regarded as a unity, while in the latter, the network is dealing with conflict, and we see symptoms of malfunctions. The network in ANT is trying to make the project irreversible through the obligatory passage point (OPP), identifying actors, making them interested in the project, enrolling them, and determining the actual scope and mobilization of the project (cf. Tyulenev, 2014). ANT has been increasingly used in Translation Studies to examine translation as a socially situated collaborative act within a network.

The instrument used for data collection in this study was an interview. A total of 57 people participated in the interviews, including 26 translators, 12 editors, 6 senior editors, 6 proofreaders, 4 chief translators, and 3 publishing managers. Ten of the interviewees had more than one job position, but only their primary job position was counted. Among them, 15 had 2 to 5 years of work experience, 18 had 5 to 10 years, and 24 had more than 10 years. There were 30 men and 27 women among the interviewees. Individuals who had at least two years of formal cooperation with at least one publishing house were selected for interviews. For full details of the interviewees, see Appendix 1.

Interviewees were given the option to choose their preferred method of interview. Many preferred to send voice messages on messengers, some sent their responses in writing, and a much smaller number were interviewed in person. All voice messages were manually transcribed. The interview was conducted in Persian. The English translation of the four interview questions is listed below:

1. In cases of disagreement with colleagues, what processes are typically followed to reach a consensus? Does it involve negotiation, consultation, or reference to a specific source?
2. When agreement on an editing issue cannot be reached, who makes the final decision?
3. Is it determined at the beginning of the project who has the final say, or does this become clear during the editing process, depending on the circumstances?
4. On which issues is consensus usually not achieved, and disagreements remain?

The interviewees' responses were analyzed using the six-step thematic analysis method of Braun and Clarke (2006) using MAXQDA 24 software. Themes in this type of analysis are "patterns of shared meanings with a central concept" (Braun & Clarke 2019, p. 593). Inductive thematic analysis was conducted – a "bottom-up" method where the analysis is "data-driven" – without attempting to fit the data into predetermined coding.

4. Results

4.1. Conflict Resolution and Decision-making Processes

When disagreements arise, the most common method is a bilateral negotiation among involved actors (see Figure 1). A senior editor, Interviewee 8, emphasized the value of reasoned discussion: "Our goal is to solve problems through dialogue – especially in the editing area. We convince the other party through argument, explanation, and logical thinking". Similarly, Interviewee 5, another editor, emphasized the importance of respecting the translator's stylistic preferences during the editing stage:

When I have a strong argument, I convey it to the translator. However, if they remain adamant, I will eventually yield to their position. Essentially, certain aspects involve personal style, and it is essential to maintain the distinctive tone of the translator or author. Perhaps this is their preferred approach to expression. However, if my advice is based on objective justification or sound logic, I will certainly try to clarify and support it.

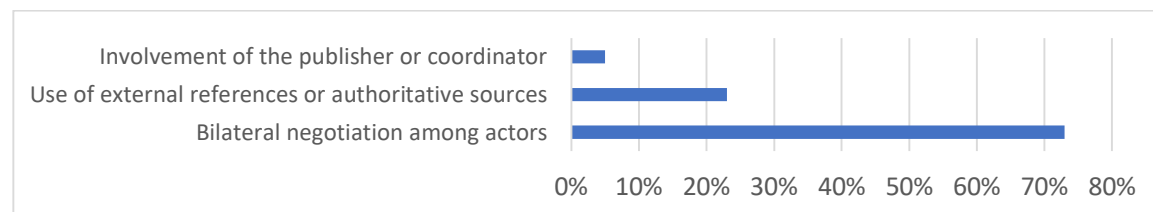


Figure 1. Conflict Resolution and Decision-Making Processes

When referring to the use of reference sources to resolve disagreements, many interviewees, such as Interviewee 40 who was a translator, mentioned consulting the style guide of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature in cases of disagreement. Similarly, Interviewee 48, another translator, improves this approach by using various dictionaries and online tools. Interviewee 8, a chief editor with over ten years of experience, demonstrated this method by referring to multiple references:

Sometimes, the translator, author, or publisher is not convinced, which leads me to refer them to the Academy of Persian Language and Literature style guide or its approved vocabularies and other grammar texts, language guides, and additional materials, which often leads to their agreement.

Interviewee 12, a publisher with over ten years of experience, explains the specific case of the publisher or coordinator's intervention as follows:

Situations like this don't happen often because our other colleagues resolve their disputes among themselves. However, sometimes they couldn't conclude their discussions and asked for my help. Based on my own experience, I expressed my opinion, and the problem was solved.

4.2. Final Authority in Editing Disputes

According to the results of this research, the publisher generally has the final decision-making power in most scenarios (see Figure 2). Interviewee 10, an editor with more than ten years of experience, considered this to be the publisher's inherent right: "when no consensus is reached, I leave it to the publisher, given that they own the resulting publication". Interviewee 42, an experienced translator, reinforced this view by referring to the contract as the basis for solutions: "in exceptional cases where either party makes no concessions, a final judgment should be made in accordance with the agreement, and this role is usually the publisher's". In line with this, senior translator, Interviewee 57, offered a similar insight: "In the final analysis, the publisher made the judgments. Despite any action taken by the senior editor, it was the publisher who made the final judgment".

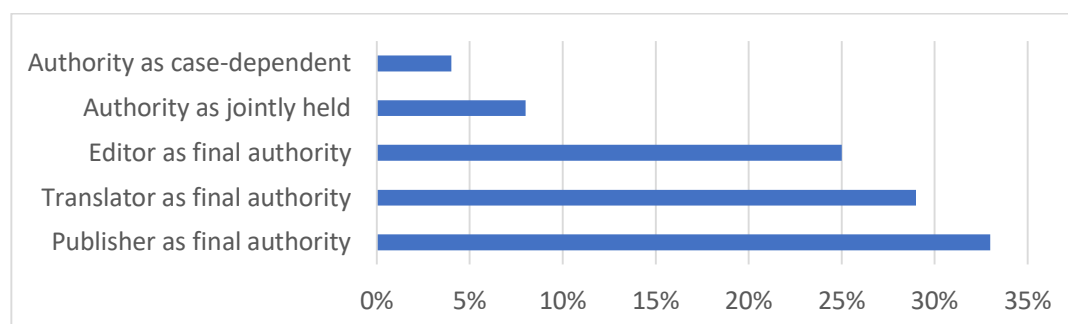


Figure 2. Final Authority in Editing Disputes

After the publisher, the translator appears as the second most common entity exercising final authority. Interviewee 20, a translator with more than ten years of experience, recalled an encouraging encounter in this regard: "in my experiences with different publishers, the translator assumes at least one critical position". Renowned translator, Interviewee 42, depicted a similar interaction: "most of the time, the translator is responsible for the final verdict and the decision on whether to accept any revisions". Furthermore, Interviewee 15, another translator, described a harmonious and considerate collaboration with their editor:

It is noteworthy that during disagreements over editing points, my editor graciously defers to my point of view and confirms that the final choice is mine. After my decision, the matter may be brought up again for the opinions of other editors. However, in direct exchanges between us, I always have the final say as the translator.

The editor emerges as a third potential holder of final decision-making power, typically when dealing with translators who lack extensive experience. Drawing on his background in editing, Interviewee 42 stated:

Naturally, in cases where I have edited the work of a novice translator, the publisher or project supervisor has accepted my point of view as the leading authority and has completely

ignored the translator's views or, if expressed, rejected them. However, such approaches are rare.

This pattern was confirmed by Interviewee 1, a novice translator:

Given that I was new to the field, I tried to follow their instructions without objection. In moments of uncertainty, I adhered to their judgments. For example, they might consider something incorrect, even if it was in everyday and standard usage. Alternatively, they sought to ban a term from the English or Arabic language. There were disagreements, but I completely yielded to their preferences.

In a small subset of scenarios, authority is shared. Reflecting on his background in translation, Interviewee 20 stated that he had never encountered a scenario where one party imposed a ruling that displeased the other; instead, decisions were made by consensus.

Finally, the concept of context-dependent authority is explored. In certain circumstances, it is challenging to identify a consistent decision-maker. Interviewee 19, an editor with 2–5 years of experience and an external collaborator with publishers, offered this perspective:

Since they only provided me with a copy of the book to review, my knowledge is limited. However, from what I have gathered, this knowledge varies by subject. For example, if someone has superior knowledge in a particular field, their judgment becomes the standard.

4.3. Defining Final Authority in Editing Projects

As shown in the pie chart in Figure 3, usually, authority is established in advance, with the explicit mention of the authority holder. As Interviewee 16, a chief editor and editor with more than ten years of experience, noted, contracts often include a clause covering this aspect.

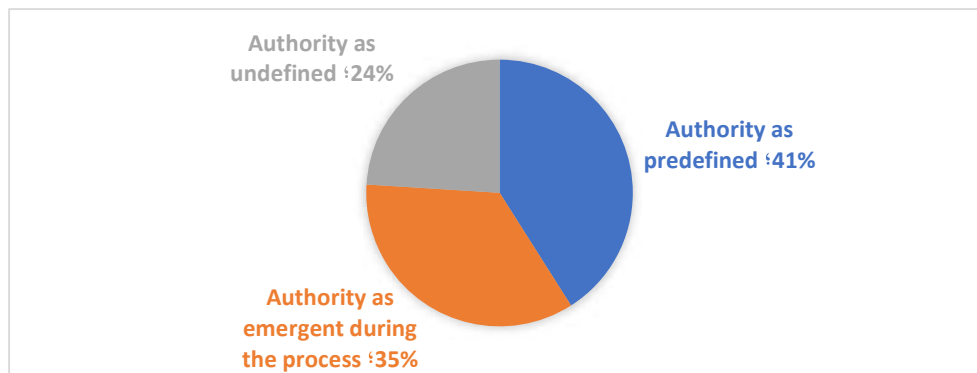


Figure 2. Defining Final Authority in Editing Projects

Interviewee 13, a translator with more than ten years of experience, identified the translator's skill level as a key influencing factor here:

From the very beginning, it is clear that the translator acts as the primary arbiter, while the editor generally provides recommendations – provided that the translator demonstrates competence. However, if the translator produces incomplete expressions, it is logical for the editor to step in and make the necessary corrections.

In many cases, authority emerges organically in the course of the work. Interviewee 48 confirmed this notion: "As the editing progressed, this aspect gradually manifested itself". Interviewee 40 made a similar observation: "initially, the project lacked clarity about who would have the final say. During the editing, we came to a consensus—at least for certain situations—about the appropriate decision-

maker”. Similarly, Interviewee 31, a head translator, echoing Interviewee 20 from the previous section, emphasized how the translator’s expertise shapes the resolution of authority disputes:

This depends mainly on the translator’s characteristics, including depth of knowledge, subject matter expertise, and fluency in both English and Persian. When a translator is working at an advanced level, we prefer to approach, collaborate with, and ultimately respect their judgment. However, given the wide variations in translator quality, we often prioritize the opinions of experienced editing professionals—or the translation itself—for the final verdict.

In rarer cases, authority initially remains unclear. Interviewee 51 observed that contracts ignore this issue entirely: “it’s not there from the start, and it’s not mentioned in the agreement. It’s not even mentioned”. Interviewee 45, chief editor, editor, and proofreader with more than ten years of experience, expressed a similar view: “often, there’s no structured system; issues are resolved haphazardly, to the advantage of whoever has better leverage”. This idea was echoed by Interviewee 8: “such issues are rarely addressed in advance”.

4.4. Examples of Disagreement in the Editing Process

Responses to the fourth interview question revealed eight distinct types of editing-related disagreements (see Table 1). The most common type is lexical disagreements, particularly in the translation of verbs. For example, Interviewee 14 noted: “I once checked the original text and noticed that the translator had used incorrect verb tenses, which I resolved with the publisher”. Similarly, Interviewee 45 stated: “I often correct the use of collective verbs for inanimate plural subjects, a trend that English has influenced and that I regularly correct”.

Table 1. Instances of Disagreement in the Editing Process

Type of disagreement	Frequency	Percentage
Lexical choice disagreements	18	27%
Style guide disagreements	12	18%
Stylistic choices and tone	9	14%
Colloquial language use	9	14%
Title translation	6	9%
Fees and deadlines	6	9%
Sensitive content and censorship	3	5%
Use of footnotes	3	5%
Total	66	100%

The second type is disagreements in the style guide, which arise from differences between the publisher’s style guide and the standards set by the Academy of Persian Language and Literature. Interviewee 8 explained, “for example, spelling issues arise when words like *ایده‌آل* are rejected in favor of *ایده‌آل*”. Punctuation also causes disagreement, as Interviewee 45 stated, “I am in favor of punctuation at the end of sentences and avoiding commas or semicolons that are out of place, but many resist this, and punctuation often changes after editing”.

The third type involves stylistic and tone choices. Interviewee 31 noted, “understanding tone is challenging and often leads to disagreement”. As Interviewee 41 observed, some publishers clearly prefer complex sentence structures. Another issue is the choice between Persian and Arabic words. Interviewee 42 said: “translators may prefer obscure Persian terms, while editors or publishers prefer common Arabic words for fluency, causing stylistic differences”.

The fourth type is the use of colloquial language. Interviewee 45 emphasized: “in fiction, especially children’s and young adult literature, disagreements often arise over the use of colloquial versus standard language, and some advocate avoiding non-standard forms”.

The fifth type is title translation, wherein linguistic differences and creative demands lead to disagreements. Interviewee 24 explained: “it is difficult to translate clever book titles into Persian. Disagreements occur because the chosen translation may not convey the essence of the original text well, and it is challenging to find a natural and fluent equivalent”.

The sixth type is fees and deadlines, which indirectly affect the quality of editing. Interviewee 50, an editor with more than ten years of experience, recalled: “a large project with a tight deadline forced rushed work and lowered quality. Again, low pay for a difficult project undermined my motivation and led to less careful editing”.

The seventh and eighth types – the use of footnotes and sensitive content, as well as censorship – were equally common. Disagreements over footnotes are minor, as Interviewee 28, a translator with more than ten years of experience, noted: “sometimes they say footnotes are not necessary, but these issues can usually be resolved”. Censorship, however, is more controversial and often leaves translators dissatisfied with the final product.

5. Discussion

Some of these disagreements may stem from actors’ attitudes towards and expectations of each other. That is, each actor believes it is their responsibility to perform a specific task and not the other actors’. Moreover, they are unable to resolve their disagreement. When it comes to literary translation, the expectations and demands of readers, as demonstrated by Bolouri and Jalali (2023), might play a significant role in the editing process and are often a source of friction between translators, editors, and publishers, all of whom aim to create a work that effectively communicates with the intended audience. For example, the pressure to provide fluent and accessible translations; editors may insist on changing verb tenses or replacing certain words for greater clarity, which is not always consistent with the translator’s vision of the text, as in disagreements regarding lexical choices. The same is true when it comes to preserving the voice and style of the original work. Publishers sometimes gravitate toward simpler Persian words rather than complex phrases or Arabic-derived vocabulary, thinking it will be more digestible for readers. However, this approach can conflict with what the translator believes is the most accurate representation of the original work. Then there is the issue of peritexts, such as introductions, critical essays, or footnotes, which can be controversial, especially when they might dilute the originality of the work or attract unwanted attention from censorship. Furthermore, underneath it all, there is the constant pressure to prove yourself as a skilled translator by producing work that is both accurate and nuanced, which only fuels disagreements about everything from the use of colloquial language to maintaining a consistent style throughout the text.

As Latour (2005, p. 129) states, “the network does not designate a thing out there that would have roughly the shape of interconnected points, much like a telephone, a freeway, or a sewage ‘network’”. He also defines a network as “the trace left behind by moving agents” (Latour, 2005, p. 132) or “the recorded movement of a thing” (Latour, 1996, p. 278). Accordingly, this study focuses on the relationships between actors.

Discussing the first question, the preferred method for resolving disputes that arise between the involved parties is direct negotiation between the translator and the editor, which is similar to ‘negotiation’ in terms of ANT. Interviewees believe that this is probably because disputes are usually minor and do not require the involvement of the publishing manager. In approximately 20% of cases,

when confidence in the claims of either party is insufficient, referencing external or authoritative sources can be helpful, likely due to the widespread credibility of these sources in the editing field.

In question two, which sought to determine the final authority in editing-related disputes, the publisher and translator together account for more than 60% of the authority. This is likely because these two parties are usually the ones who sign translation contracts (enrolment stage), which often include clauses on dispute resolution. The publisher alone accounts for more than 30% of the authority due to its greater influence, being OPP in terms of ANT. In contrast, many of the translators interviewed, with more than a decade of experience and some of whom are well-known to readers, may sometimes have the upper hand due to their reputation.

In question three, we examined whether the final authority in editing-related disputes is determined before the project begins. As previously noted, a contract clause typically addresses this issue, which may explain why over 40% of cases reported the authority as being predefined, as in the case of ANT's *interessement*, that is, OPP trying to make actors interested in the project through using a variety of techniques (Tyulenev, 2014). In 35% of responses, the authority emerged during the process, or viewed through the lens of ANT, actors become more familiar with the actual scope of the project and get mobilized. This is consistent with the previous point that the translator's experience or reputation can sometimes give them more influence, while in other cases, the editor or principal may take the lead. Our findings suggested a possible association between translator inexperience and editor proficiency, or vice versa; however, this issue was beyond the scope of our research questions and was not explored further.

In the fourth question, we asked the interviewees to give examples of editing disagreements based on their experience. The most frequent category was lexical choices. According to Hajimohammadi (2025), the most common type of editing carried out in Iranian publishing houses is linguistic-structural editing. Lexical items, being a subgroup of this type of editing, have a high frequency that can be justified. In second place is the style guide. Hajimohammadi (2025) demonstrated that the style guide, as a non-human actor, has a small share. Therefore, it is not surprising that the number of disagreements is high due to the lack of a common understanding of it. The next most frequent category was the use of colloquial and broken language. One possible reason for the disagreement among actors is that we currently lack official style guides for colloquial and broken language. There are personal guidelines (cf. Solhjoo, 2018), which primarily consist of the author's own opinions, and there are also guidelines based on extensive corpora (cf. also Tabibzadeh, 2019). Perhaps it would be better for the Academy of Persian Language and Literature to publish a style guide in this field to serve as a reference to settle disputes. The next category was title translation, in which elements of creativity and linguistic or metaphorical play in particular titles create conditions that prevent formal equivalence and lead to different preferences. The last and least frequent category concerned the use of footnotes. Disagreements in this area often centered on whether footnotes should be placed at the bottom of each page or collected at the end of the book. Proponents of the first approach argued that separating footnotes from the main text and making repeated references might distract readers. Another point of contention was the amount of information that should be included in footnotes: should all relevant details be provided or, like the original author, should the reader be allowed to search for information independently and retain the pleasure of discovery. The diversity of these approaches probably contributes to the disagreements in this category. Informed by ANT, all these conflicts may result in the depunctualisation of the network and poor coordination among actors, and be an obstacle in the way of making the project irreversible (cf. Tyulenev, 2014).

In a related study, Zlatnar Moe et al. (2021) examined the roles of three predefined actors: editor, translator, and reviser. They aimed to determine the final authority in editing disputes in literary translation. Their results showed that the translator has more authority than the editor, and the translator's opinion prevails in disputes. In contrast, our study in the Iranian publishing context found

that the publisher is the primary authority, followed by the translator. Despite this difference, both studies consistently conclude that the translator has a greater influence over the editor.

Borg (2024) delved deeper into the functions of these key figures and found that the translator, as the creative authority, has the most significant influence. In a similar vein, Marin-Lacarta and Vargas-Urpi (2019) reached a similar conclusion. However, the results of Hajimohammadi (2025) show that although the translator is ranked as the second most influential participant, they lack final decision-making power in all scenarios – particularly in work-for-hire arrangements that exclude royalties from subsequent editions, thereby limiting their ability to intervene and increase publisher control.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the editing process in literary translations underscores a complex dynamic that significantly influences the emergence of disagreements among involved actors. Most of the time, these actors prefer bilateral negotiation, and sometimes they use external references and authoritative sources; however, the publisher or coordinator rarely gets involved to settle disputes. It was found that the publisher holds the final authority, followed by a translator and an editor, respectively. In other cases, authority is held jointly or it is case-dependent. Moreover, the authority is defined at the outset of the project, but it sometimes becomes emergent during the process or remains undefined altogether. The most common areas of disagreement are over lexical choices, and sometimes style, tone, colloquialisms, and other issues also become areas of disagreement.

One of the main limitations of this study is the lack of direct observation of the editing process. Additionally, other methods of analyzing this process, such as analyzing email correspondence and diary analysis, were not available. Increasing awareness of disagreements in the editing process enables publishers, translators, and editors to use the findings to enhance their interactions with stakeholders, respect diverse preferences, and ultimately improve the quality of editing and translated literature. Further research may explore other genres, such as children's literature. As Fogelman (1993) puts it, "the young are far more impressionable and vulnerable than are adults, and not surprisingly, there is wide disagreement on what is appropriate for children to read" (p. 324), where readability and cultural adaptability are prioritized.

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