ÜLKÜ TAMER AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE IN TRANSLATOR HISTORY[1]

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ABSTRACT

Over the last decade, theoretical research in translation studies has focused on human translators and contributed to the emergence of "human turn" as an extension of "humanization" in translation history. In this article, we postulate that Ülkü Tamer, a renowned Turkish poet and translator, was an "agent of change" who crucially impacted the expansion of culture repertoire during the 1960s and 1980s. To identify Tamer as an agent of change, we first analyzed the core elements of his personal history and synthesized them into his sociological biography. We also analyzed the socio-cultural context, political events, literary movements, and historical developments between the 1960s and 1980s. to reveal the effects of external forces on his internal dispositions. We conducted qualitative content analysis of primary and secondary sources about his professional work to investigate his translator identity. In conclusion, Tamer distinguished his poet-translator identity by constructing his internal dispositions upon the external dispositions of his time. As an agent of change, he contributed to the definition of the established canon, prevalence of popular narrative forms, enlargement of the poetic genres in the Turkish language and wider access to global cultural heritage, which results in the expansion of Turkish literary repertoire.

Keywords: Agent of change, Qualitative content analysis, Sociological biography, Translator history, Ülkü Tamer.

ÇEVİRMEN TARİHİNDE BİR DEĞİŞİM EYLEYİCİSİ OLARAK ÜLKÜ TAMER

ÖZ

Son on yıl içinde, çeviribilimdeki kuramsal çalışmalar insan çevirmenlere odaklanmıştır ve çeviri tarihindeki "insan odaklılığın" bir uzantısı olarak "insan dönüşünün" oluşumuna katkı sağlamıştır. Bu makalede, ünlü bir Türk şair ve çevirmen olan Ülkü Tamer'in 1960'lı ve 1980'li yıllar boyunca kültür repertuvarının genişlemesini önemli ölçüde etkileyen bir "değişim eyleyicisi" olduğunu ileri sürmekteyiz. Tamer'i değişim eyleyicisi olarak tanımlamak için, öncelikle, kişisel geçmişinin temel bileşenlerini analiz edip sosyolojik biyografisine dönüştürerek sentezledik. Çevresel etkenlerin onun içsel eğilimleri üzerindeki etkilerini ortaya çıkarmak için 1960'lı ve 1980'li yıllar arasındaki sosyo-kültürel bağlamı, siyasi olayları, edebî akımları ve tarihi gelişmeleri de analiz ettik. Çevirmen kimliğini araştırmak için, mesleki çalışmaları ile ilgili birincil ve ikincil kaynakların niteliksel içerik çözümlemesini gerçekleştirdik. Sonuç olarak, Tamer içsel eğilimlerini döneminin dışsal eğilimlerinin üzerine inşa ederek şair-çevirmen kimliğini öne çıkarmıştır. Bir değişim eyleyicisi olarak, yerleşik kanonun belirlenmesine, popüler anlatım şekillerinin yaygınlaşmasına, Türkçedeki şiir türlerinin genişlemesine ve evrensel kültürel mirasa erişimin artmasına katkı sağlamıştır ve bunun sonucunda, Türk edebiyatı repertuvarı genişlemiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Değişim eyleyicisi, Niteliksel içerik çözümlemesi, Sosyolojik biyografi, Çevirmen tarihi, Ülkü Tamer.

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Introduction

Translation studies have enlarged enormously through its close relationships with a variety of disciplines and the exchanges of theoretical perspectives and methodological tools in the last fifty years. By extension, the recent past of translation history has witnessed a remarkable integration of different methods and perspectives taken from various disciplines. The greater part of the studies on translation history have employed an eclectic methodological approach that was previously developed under the effect of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) (Toury, 1995). However, from another perspective, in his *Humanizing Translation History*, Anthony Pym (2009) avoids offering humanization as a methodological tool; instead, he proposes a translator-oriented approach in his research on translation history. He discusses two leading rules of this approach: translation historians need first to examine translators and then texts, and they need to perceive them as working in "professional intercultures" (Pym, 2009, p. 37). In addition, as recently underlined by Bergantino (2023), there is a human turn in translation studies that focuses on translators as individual human beings who are entirely different from each other. Hence, the research on translator studies (Chesterman, 2009, p. 13) results in an outstanding increase in the quality and quantity of research on the driving forces in individual translator's practices. As theoretical research in translation studies has not focused on translators until recently (Kaindl, 2021), Pym's suggestion for humanization (2009) in research on translation history and Chesterman's emphasis on translator studies (2009) are remarkable. From a holistic point of view, this study intends to contribute to this understudied area of research in translation history with a comprehensive focus on the concept of human translators.

Primarily, this study posits that Ülkü Tamer was what Toury (2002, p. 150) would describe as an "agent of change", who played a significant role as a culture entrepreneur. To identify him as an agent of change, we analyze his personal history and professional work together with the analysis of the socio-cultural context, political events, literary movements, and historical developments between the 1960s and 1980s. In this regard, as the first step, we study his sociological biography (Lahire, 2019), including his educational background, family, private life, career, and professional work. After that, this study examines the cultural, literary, and political aspects in Türkiye during the 1960s and 1980s for the discussion of the effects of these external forces on his sociological biography and internal dispositions (Lahire, 2019). As the following step, we investigate Ülkü Tamer's translator identity through the qualitative content analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This analysis encompasses public comments about Ülkü Tamer and his personal accounts of his own professional activities. From this standpoint, this study intends to answer the following questions:

1- How can we identify Ülkü Tamer as an agent of change in terms of his contributions to the culture repertoire through the analysis of his sociological biography and professional works?

2- How can we distinguish Ülkü Tamer's translator identity through the qualitative content analysis of the primary and secondary sources on his professional works?

Theoretical Framework

Human Translators as Agents of Change

In the beginning of the 1990s, Douglas Robinson published *The Translator's Turn* (1991), and since then, human agents in the translation process have garnered more focus. Even Chesterman's suggestion for the addition of "Translator Studies" branch to Holmes' map in 2009 can be a precursor of future research into human translators. Pym (2007, 2009) also tries to increase the visibility of subjective dimensions in translation studies by indicating an analysis of translation history through the lens of human translators.

Itamar Even-Zohar describes culture repertoire as "the aggregate of options utilized by a group of people, and by individual members of the group, for the organization of life" (Even-Zohar, 2002, p. 166). Accordingly, culture repertoire is not unique to a specific social entity or group, but it tries to bring in new alternatives by way of creating or importing either by unknown actors or established members of the society deliberately or accidentally (Even-Zohar, 2002). The literary repertoire, a subsystem of culture repertoire, embodies the established canon (classics), poetic genres, critical traditions, popular narrative forms, and translated texts in a nation's polysystem. In this study, we investigate Ülkü Tamer as an agent of change who had a remarkable effect on increasing sales figures of certain literary publications from the late 1970s through the 1980s. Tamer, as the editor-in-chief of *Milliyet Çocuk*, also helped establish comics as a genre among Turkish youth. Here, we define the concept "agent of change" (Toury, 2002, p. 150) as a person who has an active role in contributing to the production of repertoire, literary repertoire in this case. As Toury (2003) suggests, a group or an entity can ascribe such a title to the agents of change. They might also assume this role through their professional work deliberately. This, according to Toury (2002), results in achievement. Toury (2002) attributes this concept to them, as they offer new cultural products that can change culture repertoire. We can also associate the term "agent of change" (Toury, 2002, p. 150) with Even-Zohar's notions of "cultural contacts and interferences" (2010, p. 52). He posits that contacts are signifiers for any connection between diverse cultures and their results constitute exchanges of ideas, concepts, or genres. However, interference appears as the exchanges between cultures lead to the production of similar versions in the target language repertoire. In this respect, we assume that agents of change are responsible for the introduction of new ideas, concepts, or genres into another culture, but not necessarily cultural interference.

Lahire's Approach: Sociological Biography

A strong relationship exists between the professional agency of individuals and their previous experiences as a sum of all great and small achievements. Bernard Lahire's approach (2003), based on a sociological perspective at a personal level, serves to discover individuals' previous experiences. This approach encompasses a scrutinized analysis of what Atkinson (2021, p. 197) calls "empirical individual" rather than communities or groups by referring to sophisticated and specific people. Lahire's stance indicates a "dispositionalist-contextualist" (2019, p. 379) perspective, far from Bourdieu's field-habitus model (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This theoretical model defines habitus as a socially acquired, internalized system of durable dispositions that shapes an individual's consequent practices and choices. According to Lahire (2019), the involvement of individuals in different fields or social spaces

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can exert an influence on their professional works, which results in the emergence of a "plural habitus" (Hadas, 2021, p. 19).

Built on a dispositionalist and contextualist approach (Lahire, 1998, 2002, 2010), the sociological biography investigates sequential or extended experiences of socialization including "family, educational, professional, sentimental, political, religious and sports, etc." (Lahire, 2019, p. 379). These experiences shape and construct dispositions of individuals related to their beliefs, understanding, stances, feelings, and practices in every corner of their lives. In the same line, we can identify sociological biography as "the history of socialization" (Lahire, 2019, p. 380) and its lasting influence on individuals. At this point, socialization corresponds to how individuals become who they are under the influence of various engagements during their whole lives (Bruner, 1991; Dornes, 2002; Stern, 1989). In alignment with this, Lahire (2019, p. 379) explains the reasons behind focusing on sociological biography rather than habitus and states that the unstable and malleable nature of dispositions makes any research on habitus insignificant from a "dispositionalist-contextualist" perspective. By extension, Lahire (2011) claims that in specific cases, it is possible to justify certain practices and actions of individuals with the convergence of internalized inclinations and situated constraints. In parallel with this, we suggest that individuals enact different dispositions according to the situation and this brings about a variety of actions and decisions, namely professional works in this case. Therefore, it is essential to deconstruct the biography of individuals and reconstruct it from a sociological perspective by focusing on the moments of socialization and their roles in exploring the reciprocal relationship between their experiences of socialization and embodiment of dispositions. Here, socialization refers to the process by which an individual acquires different dispositions stemming from the interactive communication between individuals and the external world chronologically (Lahire, 2019). In this respect, our chronological approach in this study toward socialization experiences allows us to make sense of their effects on individuals in a more expedient way. In relation to socialization moments, Lahire (2019, p. 388) highlights "biographical ruptures" that correspond to substantial turns in an individual's life, including educational decisions, first profession, matrimony, split, "first child" or serious health issues. Inasmuch as biographical ruptures might influence the trajectory and change of dispositions, they require further analysis.

In this study, we argue that becoming a translator or an agent of change is a decision made at the intersection of internal dispositions and external situations. This leads us to the analysis of sociological biography and shifts our focus to the effect of external forces on individual work. Notwithstanding the assertion that biographical analysis in sociology confines individuals to a 'bell-jar' and functions in a linear course of events from a critical perspective (Bourdieu, 1986), biography indeed is the best option for rebuilding all the connections between a specific individual and others or other entities (Lahire, 2019). For this reason, only the analysis of sociological biography enables the investigation of different socialization experiences and the sequential effects of external forces on the establishment of individuals' internal dispositions. This analysis also provides a macro perspective on the intersection of internal and external constraints that primarily establish an individual's lifelong patterns of cognition, action, perception, and emotion.

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, we apply an interpretivist research paradigm within the scope of qualitative research in translation studies (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014). This paradigm suggests that reality is a socially constructed phenomenon, and we can evaluate it in conjunction with the constructivist ontology displayed by Saldanha and O'Brien (2014). The main approach of this research is qualitative methodology (Dörnyei, 2007; Neuman, 2014). As Saldanha and O'Brien (2014, pp. 11-12, 22-25, 207) assert, qualitative research corresponds specifically to the studies that investigate human experiences and cultural issues. In this study, we conduct a single case study on Ülkü Tamer to analyze his sociological biography and translator identity in alignment with the research questions. From methodological perspective, case studies focus on "contextualization and real-life setting" (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014, p. 207), which supports its pertinence for context-oriented research. Saldanha and O'Brien (2014, p. 207) highlight that the scope of a case study is wide-ranging by including "an individual person", a "text", "a whole organization", "a translation agency", or "a literary system". In addition, the objective of the present study also complies with the first circumstance in which researchers apply case study as a method, namely "in exploring questions of *how* and *why*" (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014, p. 209).

Materials

This study investigates Ülkü Tamer's sociological biography thoroughly, and the presence of his autobiographical accounts establishes the viability of this approach. The methodological framework of this study necessitates either the availability of individuals' autobiographies or the opportunity to conduct interviews with them. Along with the biographical sources on Tamer and his autobiography *Yaşamak Hatırlamaktır* (Life is Remembering) (Tamer, 1998/2020), we analyze the cultural, literary, and political events in Türkiye during the 1960s and 1980s for further assessment of their effects on Tamer's internal dispositions. As his sociological biography is not directly available, multiple data sources establish triangulation by enhancing the reliability of findings. The study includes the sources accessible to the researcher and selected through convenience sampling. As suggested by Saldanha and O'Brien (2014, p. 217), researchers meticulously select their sources based on the nature of the study, their "relevance", "availability", their competence, and history. In the context of the second objective of the study, we analyze the sources on Ülkü Tamer's translator identity and his translation practices through the qualitative content analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study relies on written materials because of its historical perspective, as in the studies of Sturge (2004) and Susam-Sarajeva (2006). The corpus consists of online sources (including opinion columns, archives of news, blog posts, and dictionary entries) on Ülkü Tamer and his professional works. Given the centrality of Tamer's subjective experience to this study, his autobiography, memoirs, and personal narratives are employed as primary sources, providing invaluable first-person insight. The study further integrates external accounts on Tamer and his professional works to contextualize and externally corroborate the subjective perspectives derived from the primary sources. The combination of multiple sources provides both a double check of the findings and makes up for the possible unavoidable partiality.

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

In case studies, because of their iterative nature, researchers conduct data collection and analysis in simultaneous and inductive ways (Saldanha & O'Brien, 2014). Within the scope of this study, as the first step of the data collection procedure, we collected the data in the written sources on Ülkü Tamer's life experiences and professional works for the investigation of his sociological biography. As the second step, we prepared a Word document that includes the dictionary entries about Ülkü Tamer on Ekşi Sözlük between 16.10.2001 and 01.08.2025 for the process of the qualitative content analysis. The reason for the selection of this dictionary is twofold. First, Ekşi Sözlük is the most popular online dictionary among all the online dictionaries and has built its own subculture as a website (Gürel & Yakın, 2007). Second, it is the first platform as a collaboratively maintained dictionary, continuously refined by its contributing writers (Yazıcı, 2016, p. 124).

Data Analysis

This study employs the interpretivist paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018) in qualitative content analysis of the collected data. In the interpretation of dictionary entries, however, we conducted qualitative content analysis through the Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software MAXQDA with an inductive approach. As one of the systematic research methods preferred not only in social sciences but also in translation studies, data analysis does not consist of predetermined classifications or theoretical backgrounds. The process of inductive qualitative content analysis includes a reiterative scrutiny of raw material, identification of thematic or conceptual recurrences along with open coding, their naming, organization (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), and abstraction (Mayring, 2000). Inductive qualitative content analysis is a comprehensive and data-driven method used for drawing significant conclusions from condensed data sets with the primary aim of answering research questions. Regarding this, we used MAXQDA software, one of the most groundbreaking advancements in "social science methodology" (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023, p. 160), when analyzing the data in dictionary entries about Ülkü Tamer. Following the code analysis, we constructed a table that shows the frequency distribution of codes within the relevant segments.

Analysis and Discussion

Ülkü Tamer as a Versatile 'Human'

Ülkü Tamer (c. 1937-2018) was a Turkish poet, journalist, teacher, actor, and translator who witnessed an unpredictable period of *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) not only in politics but also in literature in the twentieth and twenty-first century Turkish Republic. He was born in Gaziantep. His family was an example of an urbanized Republican family. The family members adopted a contemporary lifestyle shaped by the reforms of the Republic period. They also showed respect for cultural, moral, traditional, and religious values (Tamer, 1998/2020, p.17). This lifestyle might remind us of Hasan Ali Yücel, who Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar (2015) analyzed in the context of a person-oriented study. Yücel also had a history of *mevleviyeh* and sufistic background and we could observe their reflections on his versatile personality and cultural initiatives. In this regard, we assert that Tamer grew up in such an environment that had overtones of both religiousness and secularism, which could be influential in the emergence

of his versatility and cultural agency. On the other hand, books were the most precious objects in his household (Tamer, 1998/2020, pp. 37-38). His father built a library that had a considerable number of books. Setting a good example, he also read reviews. His mother taught Tamer how to read and write, before he went to the school (Bakır, 2020). Even though she was not a schooled woman, she read the poems written for children to Tamer. Imitating her approach, Tamer started to write poetry in primary school with the continuous encouragement of his family (Tamer, 2011). At this point, we suggest that Tamer's experiences in his family have had a leading impact on the establishment of his career as a poet along with his cultural and historical background since he was a child. Before starting school, Tamer spent his days in a bookshop and read books. Thanks to the accessibility of this place, he regularly read the children's magazines *Doğan Kardeş, Çocuk Haftası, 1001 Roman*, the books written by Naki Tezel and Kemalettin Tuğcu and *Dünya Çocuk Masalları* (Tamer, 1998/2020, pp. 36-40). His impressions, feelings and experiences acquired there probably contributed to the establishment of his identity as an intellectual. Remarkably, his early acquaintance with a variety of children's magazines might have served as a factor in his successful career as the editor-in-chief of *Milliyet Çocuk* in his later years.

Sinematek, the first film club established in Gaziantep left a remarkable effect on Tamer by providing an opportunity for him to meet with cinema culture, which resulted in his interest in cinema and theatre in the following years of his life (Bakır, 2020). At this point, Nakıp Ali[4], who established the first cinema in Southeastern Anatolia in the 1940s is noteworthy. As he did not charge students, a vast number of children started to learn how to write and read, which partially catalyzed a literacy campaign. Setting a good example, we indicate that Nakıp Ali was a key figure in forming Tamer's intellectual construct and viewpoint. After his primary school education in Gaziantep, Tamer continued with his secondary school education at Robert College in İstanbul (Tamer, 1998/2020, pp. 51-73).

While Tamer was studying at Robert College, he engaged in theatre and acting. Tamer and his college friends went on tours and performed plays at different theatres in Türkiye. In relation to his years at Robert College, Tamer demonstrates that he formed friendships around common fields of interest (Tamer, 1998/2020, p. 43). Hence, we postulate that his friendships had an agentive role in Tamer's personal growth, inclinations, and professional experiences. His social circle might have determined his career path and domains of interest to a degree. In his book, Tamer (1998/2020, pp. 76-83) underlines the quality of education and extracurricular opportunities provided in Robert College with a remarkable emphasis on his literature and English teachers. After his graduation from Robert College in 1958, Tamer studied at the Journalism Institution of Istanbul University ("Ülkü Tamer", n.d.). In the same year, he started to translate for *Varlık* with the directions of Yaşar Nabi Nayır.[5] Moreover, Nayır sent Tamer to the International PEN Congress a couple of times as its Turkish delegate. After this magazine published his poem *Hançer*, Memet Fuat invited him to *Yeni Dergi*. Then, his poems appeared in *Yeni Dergi*, which he regarded as a school. His works were also published in such magazines

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[4] Nakıp Ali pioneered for the subtitles of movies to be translated instantly and read aloud during the silent movie era (Pala, 2022). He also run both the colorful display of an original movie and sound of its Turkish black-and-white version at the same time by presenting the 'colorful' movie with its original subtitles and Turkish dubbing (Tamer, 1998/2020, pp. 57-58). These novelties in cinema can be taken into consideration in terms of the development of subtitling and dubbing in translation history in Türkiye.
[5] In *Varlık*, almost twenty works translated by Tamer were published. Yaşar Nabi Nayır trusted his competence in translation so much that he published his translations without any further reading and editing process (Tamer, 1998/2020, pp. 152-162).

as *Varlık, Yeditepe, Pazar Postası, Yenilik, Yeni Dergi, Dost, A, Yeni A, Sanat Olayı, Papirüs, Gösteri, Milliyet Sanat,* and *Kitap-lık.* These publications involved his poems, stories, and translations from British and American poets. Apart from his translations of poems, novels, and stories, he also translated more than thirty plays belonging to such playwrights as Euripides, W. Shakespeare, A. Çehov, B. Brecht, A. Miller, E. Ionesco, J. Steinbeck, T. S. Eliot, N. Simon, R. Dyer, and H. Ibsen. These plays were also performed in private theatres (Tamer, 2004). In a broader context, we can perceive the effects of his education at Robert College, his social network, and his professional experiences in different magazines on his career path and his expertise in literary translation. We can also take Tamer's translation (*Mitologya*) of Edith Hamilton's *Mythology,* which he previously studied in his English classes in college, as one of the concrete examples for the extent of this effect.

In 1963, Ülkü Tamer married Tomris Uyar, one of his friends from Robert College, but their marriage did not last long. They divorced just after their baby girl Ekin died of drowning. After a while, Tamer married Neslihan Tamer, and they stayed married to their dying day (Biyografiler.com, n.d.). In respect of his personal life experiences, we can suggest that the loss of his first child might have had a leading impact on his involvement in the projects directly targeting child audience. Ülkü Tamer was among the prominent agents in the Second New (İkinci Yeni) poetry movement during the 1950s. His poems present reflections from his curious personality (Tamer, 1998/2020) with a unique understanding of imagination. The themes of his poems include children, animals, and nature. He used abstractions in view of the plainness of the language and created his own works through inspirations from mythology, folk literature, and specifically British and American poetry. Antep culture, theatre, cinema, and Western literature contributed to his career as a poet-translator (*poetranslator*) with their remarkable traces on his professional works in poetry. This made his poetry unique and intense by differentiating him from other poets in pursuit of the same movement. Besides, Ülkü Tamer highlights that traditional considerations remain essential despite his strong endorsement of uniqueness and novelty, which makes him exceptional in his period (Bakır, 2020). His focus on social realities conformed to the practices of literary figures in his time, while simultaneously distinguishing his work from the Second New movement's representatives.

As a conceptual background, Tamer's works incorporate elements of social realism, which enables pro-socialist artists like Zülfü Livaneli to set his poems to music. Livaneli already composed and performed Tamer's poems "Güneş Topla Benim İçin" and "Memik Oğlan" (Tamer, 2004). In these poems, Tamer gives human emotions prominence by focusing on inequality, injustice, and marginalized classes in society. This implies that as an artist, Tamer remained actively engaged with the society of his time, and his professional works mirrored the sociological landscape of that time. We can also observe the effects of sociological phenomena on his personal and professional life in his book *Yaşamak Hatırlamaktır* in detail (Tamer, 1998/2020).

Following his success and productivity in poetry, Ülkü Tamer chose to work as the executive manager of Milliyet Publications and Karacan Publications, rejecting the offers from various publishing houses. He also played an active role in the management of *Milliyet Çocuk* magazine as its editor-in-chief. Thanks to his contributions, this magazine differentiated from other children's magazines with its colorful and striking presentation and found its well-

deserved place in the publishing industry (Bakır, 2020). From the late 1970s through the 1980s, *Milliyet Çocuk* published one comics adaptation of classics every week, which amounts to fifty-two classics a year. The publishing of these adaptations spanned four years and continued even during the coup d'état period in the 1980s. In addition to this, he worked as the editor of such magazines as *Milliyet Sanat* and *Sanat Olayı* in the following years (Yalçın, 2003). In respect of his works, Ülkü Tamer translated at least seventy books and produced poetry anthologies ("Çukurova Ödülü", 2014). For his literary translations and works, he received the TDK 1965 Translation Award, the 1967 Yeditepe Poetry Award, the Endre Ady Award (1979), the 1991 Yunus Nadi Award, and the Melih Cevdet Anday Poetry Award (2014) ("Melih Cevdet Anday", 2014).

The Cultural, Literary and Political Aspects in Türkiye during the 1960s and 1980s

During the 1960s-1980s, the perceptibility and impact of literary activities and productions increased, and there appeared an enlarging literary repertoire in the Turkish literary polysystem. We can consider this process as a rewriting, re-establishment, or growth of a more prolific literary field and literary market, including trends and movements. As Başgüney (2013) asserts, journalists, writers, and intellectuals took influential and valuable roles in society throughout this time. In line with the prevailing literary arguments of the period, Başgüney (2013) suggests that the literary figures did not limit themselves to literature and gave rise to an intellectual climate shaped by their discussions and works. This intellectual climate mostly refers to the intersection between modern and populist (social realist) trends. Even though the focus on political and social issues constituted the *zeitgeist*, Başgüney (2013) emphasizes that different political and ideological orientations shaped the trajectory of events. The Turkish politics from 1960 to 1980 witnessed intense political fragmentation and ideological polarization, spanning from the Kemalist center-left (social democrats) and nationalist-conservative center-right to militant ideological fringes. These ideological tendencies consisted of the ultranationalist right, emergent Political Islam and the Marxist-Leninist left. This unpredictability led to coalition governments, socio-economic tensions, elite-mass cleavage, and political terrorism (the 1960 Coup D'état, 1971 Military Memorandum and 1980 Coup D'état).

In the relevant decades, literary production was the midway point of the debates between highbrows because of its perception as a significant premise. This process of transformation resulted from four key issues: the increasing number of institutions (Alper, 2009), publications of literary and political journals, establishment of new publishing houses, enormous international mobility and new ideas for artists and intellectuals mediated by translations and publications of theoretical books and novels. In addition, we need to bear in mind the transformative nature of translation in terms of Turkish literary system and repertoire throughout this period. Besides, Başgüney (2013, p. 19) demonstrates that the cultural evolution of the state, particularly after 1965, played a substantial role in training a more politically open-minded and refined generation as the evolving audience and architects of artistic output. Drawing upon Başgüney's study (2013), we also assume that the literary figures intended to stand for the social realities and phenomena around them. They tried to create comprehensive and salient artworks for a universal culture and expected Turkish art to take its place in global or high culture. Additionally, because of their versatile personalities, the intellectual figures in

the public sphere had more than one professional identity as being both a writer, journalist, and state officer at the same time (Başgüney, 2013, pp. 27, 169). Here, we can associate the versatility in Tamer's personal and professional life as a poet, translator, editor, teacher, journalist, and actor at the same time with the prevalent profile of an intellectual in those times.

Beyond these, the research on Ülkü Tamer's translator identity in translation history reveals that the researchers in translation studies have not studied Ülkü Tamer as a translator comprehensively (see Berk, 2004; Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2015, 2018). In Özlem Berk's (2004) all-embracing study about the function of translation in the westernization of Türkiye from the 1840s to the 1980s, she remarks on Ülkü Tamer in only one sentence within the scope of poetry translation. In this study, Berk (2004) states that the writings about poetry and poetry translation between the 1960s and 1970s resulted in a great amount of controversy. The critical traditions emerging in the period's literary journals focused on the translatability of poetry and its creative features. The quantity of anthologies and collected or selected poems of individual poets increased during the 1940s and 1950s and reached its maximum number in the 1960s. As highlighted by Berk (2004), a significant proportion of translations from this period underwent multiple editions. The discussions about poetry translation incorporated the translations by such names as Can Yücel, Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, Yetkin and Siyavuşgil, Cevat Çapan, Sait Maden, Ülkü Tamer, Özdemir İnce and Ataol Behramoğlu. They were based on the labeling of their translations as 'good' or 'bad' examples. However, literary critics' discussions about Tamer's poetry translations imply the visibility of his translator identity in literary circles. In accordance with Berk's assertion (2004, p. 237), Turkish poetry started to change in the 1940s, and Turkish poets were under a profound influence of foreign poetry introduced through translations. However, the discourses on translators in Türkiye between the 1960s and 1980s (Tahir Gürçağlar, 2015) disclose that the popular view in the 1940s was a balance between faithful and free translation. In the 1960s, on the other hand, it became more significant to transfer the voice of the author and the source text faithfully. This resulted in putting fluency in translation into a secondary position along with translators themselves. Thus, there emerged a perception of translators as a 'conduit' for the author's discourse, implicitly necessitating their invisibility.

As a poet and translator, Ülkü Tamer witnessed these transformations in literature and translation practices along with the chaotic environment in politics and society. In *Yaşamak Hatırlamaktır* (Tamer, 1998/2020), he wrote about the turning points in those times including May 27th Coup D'état (p. 61), the April 28th Student Protests (p. 71) and Turkish Peace Operation (p. 264). Tamer (1998/2020, p. 71) even underlined that "the following generations learnt, searched about and analyzed those events through newspapers, magazines, books and narratives" but Tamer and his contemporaries lived through them, which directly shows the reflections of the sociological and political phenomena on his internal dispositions in first-person accounts.

Ülkü Tamer as a *Poetranslator*

His Internal Dialogue

Regarding how he started with translating, Ülkü Tamer signifies that he preferred literature as a profession, but accepted translation jobs to earn a living (Andaç, 2006). This could imply a pragmatic approach to translation in the beginning. He translated with the

guidance of his collaborating publisher(s) within the framework of his own ideology. His primary principles in translation practice were not to "betray" the authors and to avoid his personal voice. As a translator, he consistently tried to reproduce the authors' discourses in translations (Tamer, 2004). We can associate this perspective with the common tendencies in translation during the 1960s (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2015) and account for the effect of external dispositions on Tamer's internal dispositions in his professional work. In this regard, he also claims that translation practice is not just about vocabulary. In the translation process, technical expressions require literal or word-for-word equivalents, so it is necessary to do research from relevant sources when translating technical or field-specific texts. From the same point of view, he gives an example of a novel related to WW2 that reflects the Victorian Age. When translating such a book, according to him, a translator needs to have the necessary background information about this period with its general features (Tamer, 2004). In a general sense, Tamer assumes that translation is a craft rather than an art. Obviously, there is a matter of creativity in the transfer of a work into another language, but he states that what is important is the craftsmanship and its quantity depends on the work as a matter of fact. As an example, he asserts that the translation of a story by James Thurber is much different from the translation of a story by William Faulkner in terms of craftsmanship of mind. Tamer does not deny the creative nature of translation as a practice, but craftsmanship predominates, as translation is indeed a recreation of a work in another language (Tamer, 2011).

Tamer also expressed his opinions about the translation of children's books. He thinks that the literary establishment overlooked children's publications, including both books and periodicals, while the publications for adults received greater emphasis. However, according to him, the child audience requires substantial focus since they will constitute a highly engaged readership (Tamer, 2004). As is already known, Tamer mostly translated the works he wanted, and so, his translation of *Felsefe Taşı*, one of Harry Potter serial publications, deserves attention in this regard. He takes Harry Potter as a fairytale that contains all the elements belonging to the classic fairytales. In this engaging, interesting, and contemporary fairytale, there are no redundant details and long descriptions, as emphasized by him. In relation to this, he deems that we also need to produce such works in Turkish literature, but it is not an easy task. For such a work, authors need to use their imagination, internalize fairytales, go into the world of children of that age, do research, create an absorbing story, put it in a "mathematical" fiction and create a unique hero ("Harry Potter olayı", 2001).

Tamer's suggestions on translation include not "betraying" authors (faithful translation), using different translation strategies for different text-types (especially when translating children's books) and translating for the intended function of the text. At this point, it is remarkable that as a self-taught translator, he is aware of such significant concepts in translation studies as text-types, Skopos, and target audience. In respect of translating a poem, Tamer designates that the difference between composing a poem and writing prose is the same as the one between translating a poem and translating prose (Tamer, 2004). In relation to translating poems, he demonstrates an affinity for Latin American poetry and affirms that these poems are plain but also possess intrinsic aesthetic merit (Bek, 1998). Tamer unambiguously expresses that Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot especially inspired him, and he regards their influence as a natural part of a poet's intellectual journey. Additionally, he puts forward that not only national

but also foreign poets can inspire poets until they find their own voices. This statement refers to the prevalent tendencies in the period (Berk, 2004), which reveals another effect of external dispositions on his internal dispositions. Ülkü Tamer was aware of two sides of the same coin regarding translation practices. He realized both the positive and negative sides of translation for an author. From his perspective, authors understand a magnificent poem better and find new clues about it when they translate it (Tamer, 2004). He also accepts the effects of his translations on his poems, which enabled him to elaborate on them (Berköz, 2014). However, Tamer (2004) also highlights that authors who need to translate frequently use their entire energy for translating foreign works rather than their own productions. In this regard, they need to strike a balance between these two inclinations.

External Voices

Tamer's working life is set at the intersection of theatre, publishing, education, translation, and poetry. In terms of his versatile personality, Murat Belge (2018) identifies Ülkü Tamer with different adjectives "in literature, always in literature" in addition to being "Man of Letters", which points out the place of literature in his life from others' perspectives. Similarly, Memet Fuat (1985) highlights that Ülkü Tamer was "a poet closely engaged with contemporary Second New English poetry, who did translations and was highly receptive to Western literary influences." On the other hand, Gülden Öktem (2018) also comments on Tamer's versatile personality by describing him as a poet, translator, publisher, and editor all at once. She also refers to his translations from major international authors. This reference indicates the visibility of his translator identity. Besides, Doğan Hızlan (Abatay, 2018) affirms that he was a good poet from the 1950s generation and introduced innovations from American poetry. Hızlan further notes Tamer's special place in literature thanks to his poetry translations and his capacity for reader engagement, achieved through his plain language and universality. Arzu Uçar ("Dostları Ülkü Tamer", 2018) also offers high praise for his book translations.

In the second step of data collection, when we searched "Ülkü Tamer" on Ekşi Sözlük, we identified a total of 431 entries, all of which were coded, and categorized based on their content using MAXQDA software program (see table below).

Table 1

The Categorization of the Entries under the Title of "Ülkü Tamer" written on Ekşi Sözlük between 16.10.2001 – 01.08.2025
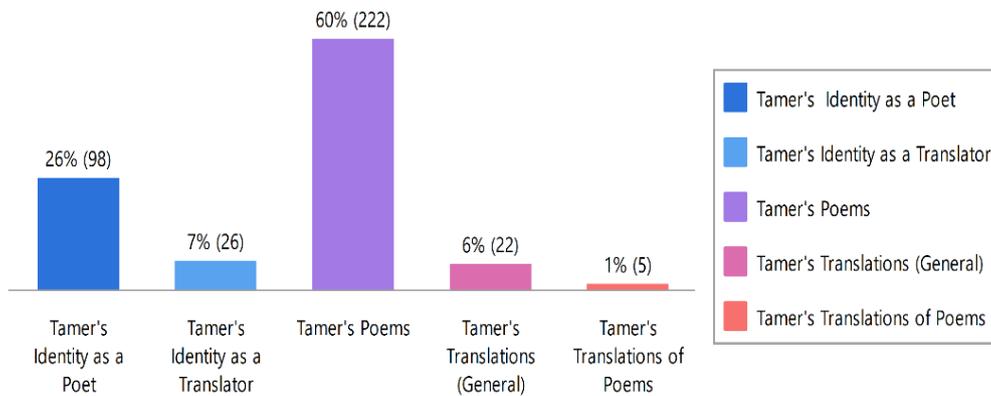
According to the data extracted from the posts on Ekşi Sözlük, Tamer's poems fit into the first place with sixty percent, while Tamer's identity as a poet takes the second place in the sequence. The gap of almost fifty percent between these categories shows that his literary products, namely his poems, have taken precedence over his poetry in terms of visibility. The highest proportion in the dictionary entries belongs to "Tamer's Poems" along with his poetry in the second place, which suggests that his identity as a poet is more visible and commended. Almost 15% of the dictionary entries pertain to his translator identity. On the other hand, the percentage rates of the categories "Tamer's Identity as a Translator" and "Tamer's Translations (General)" are close to each other with 7% and 6% percent, respectively. In relation to this, we assert that there is a reciprocal interaction between his translations and his translatorship on the side of their target audience. Hence, these findings suggest that his translations make his translator identity more visible or vice versa. Additionally, as Ülkü Tamer was already a remarkable poet in the literary world, we deliberately determined the last category as "Tamer's Translations of Poems" to observe any significant difference between his translations of poems and the ones in other genres on the same data. According to the table above, Tamer's translations of poems occupy only a place of 1% rate, which implies that the contributors addressed and referenced his translations across different genres. Fifty-three dictionary entries on Ekşi Sözlük focus on Tamer's being a professional translator and his translations by covering the categories "Tamer's Identity as a Translator," "Tamer's Translations (General)," and "Tamer's Translations of Poems." To enhance the clarity of the data analysis, we present relevant data excerpts in the following section.

The Dictionary Entries about Tamer's Identity as a Translator.

Example 1:

"iyi bir şair olmanın yanında iyi bir çevirmen de. çağdaşlarını takip etmesi ve etkileşmesi; yazdığı üzerine düşünmesi ve dili keyifli" ("*he is also a good translator in addition to being a good poet; he follows and interacts with his contemporaries; he thinks about what he writes, and his language is enjoyable*"[6])

Example 2:

"ic kisminda duyarli yerleri olan sair ve çevirmen" ("*the poet and translator who has a sensitive inner self*")

Besides these examples, in a different entry, the contributor underlines that Tamer is an exemplary and highly influential translator. In another one, the publishing houses and translation market in Türkiye are criticized in terms of stagnation and friction, while Tamer's reputation rests upon his translational aptitude, his humble personality, the idiosyncratic language in his original works, and the impact of his translations.

The Dictionary Entries about Tamer's Translations.

Example 1:

"edith hamilton'un mitologya'sı da çevirileri arasındadır." ("*Edith Hamilton's Mitologya is also among his translations.*")

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[6] All the original Turkish texts in the given examples was translated by the researchers.

Example 2:

"harry potter serisinin ilk ve benim en sevdiğim kitabı olan felsefe taşını muazzam şekilde çevirmiş…gerçekten harika iş çıkarmış. diğer kitapların çevirisini yapmamış onlar da güzel ama ilk kitabında, kendisinin de yeri ayrı..." (*He translated Felsefe Taşı that is the first book of Harry Potter series and my favorite one magnificently…he did an excellent work. He did not translate the following books. Their translations are also great, but in the first book, his touch is different…*")

Example 3:

"kitaplığımızdaki harry potter serisini ve felsefe taşı'nı öksüz bırakan, türkçemize harry potter terimlerini kazandıran çevirmendir." (*"the translator who abandoned Harry Potter series and Felsefe Taşı in our library and coined the terms of Harry Potter in our Turkish."*)

Other entries within this category emphasize Tamer's contributions to children's literature through his translations. Two different entries involve his translation *Şişkolarla Sıskalar* (Fattypuffs and Thinifers). In addition, fourteen entries taken from the dictionary address his translated book from the Harry Potter series, namely *Harry Potter ve Felsefe Taşı*. Except for two of them, the remaining entries contain constructive critiques of this translation. One of the contributors notes with disappointment that Tamer translated only the first book of the Harry Potter series, and thus, substantial discrepancies emerged between his translation and the following translations of this series. Relevant to this discussion, one contributor (*Example 3*) claims that Ülkü Tamer coined the Turkish terms relevant to Harry Potter. The bulk of the entries commend his translation *Harry Potter ve Felsefe Taşı*. Nevertheless, two specific entries offer negative assessments of Tamer's translation in terms of translations of word plays and word choices.

The Dictionary Entries about Tamer's Translations of Poems.

Example 1:

"şiir çevirisi nasıl yapılır sorusunun cevabı kendisinde saklıdır." (*"he holds the answer to the question 'how a poem is translated'.*")

Example 2:

"büyük şair, büyük çevirmen. şu an için bu ülkeye şiirin ne olduğunu öğretecek nadir kişilerden biridir…" (*"great poet, great translator. he is one of the exceptional persons who will teach this country what poetry is for now…"*)

Example 3:

"…bir insan evladının şiir çevirmede bu denli ustalığına az rastlanır doğrusu..." (*"it is unusual, indeed, to find a human being with such a competence in translating poetry."*)

As shown above, one contributor (*Example 1*) relies only on Tamer's expertise to address the methodological question of translating poetry. The contributors regard him as a revered intellectual with a mastery of translation craft, particularly translating poetry. In addition, in another entry (*Example 2*), the contributor recognizes him as "a great poet and translator" who did not receive any commensurate critical acclaim. In other relevant entries, we observe that the contributors assess his poems and poetry translations with parity, emphasizing "his competence in translating poetry" (*Example 3*) and the uniqueness of his translated poems. As

well, six different contributors write about *Milliyet Çocuk* magazine and "its genius creator Ülkü Tamer" by holding his work in high esteem with a substantial number of commendations.

The last source is a blog post about Ülkü Tamer and *Milliyet Çocuk* ("Çizgi Roman okurlarının babası", 2018). Even the title of this post ("We lost Ülkü Tamer, the father of readers of comics") says a great deal about him and his contributions to this magazine. This post describes him as a person who accustomed the children of this country to comics, thereby establishing a habit of reading comics among the youth. However, he faced unfair condemnation for exposing children to comics, a reaction fueled by the socio-political climate of the time. In accordance with Tamer's personal accounts in this post, in the last years of 1970s, *Milliyet Çocuk* attained an exceptional breadth of readership. At that time, Tamer and his editorial team published comics adaptations of world classics in this magazine. These publications drew criticism on the grounds that they fostered an exclusive preference for comics among children, discouraging their engagement with other literature. The assertion was even made that this could deter children from reading the classics at all. Nevertheless, thereupon, Tamer shares one of his memories about his visit to Altın Kitaplar and his conversation with the owner of the publishing house. Correspondingly, the owner (Turhan Bozkurt) once talked about the rising sales rate of certain classics suddenly and stated that the sales of a classic increased once *Milliyet Çocuk* published the comics adaptation of that classic work. In fact, these comics adaptations clearly encouraged their readership to read the same stories in novel format. Tamer attributes this success to the strategies employed in translations of those comics including narration of stories in different, fascinating, and striking ways and their fictionalization with imagination.

Conclusion

This study investigates Ülkü Tamer's role as an agent of change in the enrichment of the culture repertoire at the intersection of his sociological biography and professional works. By means of Lahire's sociological biography approach, we analyzed Tamer's internal dispositions in consideration of external forces, which reveals the complex relationship between his life experiences and professional works.

Regarding his early experiences, we suggest that his family environment, the opportunities furnished by his parents (library at home, access to bookstore, financial support, role modeling etc.) and the advantages that Gaziantep and his social circle provided (Sinematek) led him to acquire a distinctive perspective and develop a unique style in both his own literary works and translations, as a contribution to the enlargement of his intellectual reservoir. Additionally, his qualified education at Robert College was conducive to success in his professional work, especially considering that he chose what to translate for the better part of his career as a translator, and editors never revised his translations along with his awards. In parallel with this, his circle of friends that include poets, writers, artists, publishers, journalists, and translators also contributed to his versatile inclinations in professional work, which was a prevalent tendency of the period. Due to his close relationships with such key figures as Yaşar Nabi Nayır and Memet Fuat, he could publish his works in the prestigious magazines including *Varlık* and *Yeni Dergi*. Despite being a leading figure in the Second New movement, Tamer's plain language, use of imagery, synthesis of traditionalism and novelty, and focus on social

realism distinguished him from his contemporaries. Regarding this, we suggest that his establishment of a distinctive poetic approach contributed to the expansion of the Turkish literary repertoire. Besides, Tamer's decisive role in the high circulation of certain classical works and the prevalence of comics as a genre among Turkish youth, as being the editor-in-chief of *Milliyet Çocuk* magazine, led him to shape the cultural heritage and to expand the literary repertoire during the 1970s and 1980s. His resilience and stability in this role resulted in an array of consequences including the definition of the established canon (classics), prevalence of popular narrative forms (comics) and wider access to global cultural heritage, which justifies his identification as an agent of change.

Primary source evidence regarding Tamer's translator identity indicates that his internal inclination to translate is mainly pragmatic in nature. He views translation as a means for a deeper comprehension of original works, inspiration, enrichment of the target culture, and self-improvement. In this respect, Tamer had a unique and discernible translation approach, despite conforming to the established translation norms of this period. Thus, we put forward that he distinguished his poet-translator identity by constructing his internal dispositions upon the external dispositions of that time. The analysis of the secondary sources on Ülkü Tamer and his professional works reveals that his poems and status as a poet overshadow his work as a translator and his translations. The dictionary entries about his translations and translator identity include both positive and negative comments, but his poetry translations receive praise in all pertinent entries. While his translation *Harry Potter ve Felsefe Taşı* distinguishes his identity as a translator, his recognition centers specifically on his contributions to poetry translation. Accordingly, we posit that as a translator, Ülkü Tamer acted as an agent of change by translating such significant literary figures as Ezra Pound, William Faulkner, and T. S. Eliot into Turkish and introduced Turkish readers to a shared cultural heritage and themes of universal resonance. He also contributed to the Turkish literary repertoire by expanding the poetic genres in the Turkish language through his poetry translations. Consequently, we can differentiate his identity as a poet-translator (*poetranslator*) from his other professional activities in the translation field.

In conclusion, regardless of all the identities attributed to him, Ülkü Tamer as only a human being had already multiple dispositions (re-)formed through a variety of socialization experiences in different circumstances. He constructed his entire body of work and critical discourse upon the interplay between his inner dispositions and external forces, leading to his dynamic role in the expansion of Turkish literary repertoire as "an agent of change." The contribution of this study lies in presenting both a different methodology (as an alternative to Bourdieu's field-habitus approach) and a cutting-edge qualitative data analysis tool (MAXQDA) for subsequent scholarly inquiry. We intend this case study to be applicable, enabling other researchers to apply this approach to different cases within the scope of research on human translators.

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