

Terms Used for 'Field' and 'Subfield' In Turkish Translation Studies and Some Terminological Suggestions

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Abstract

It is widely accepted that translation pre-dates the bible and no one can deny its contributions to the development of societies and cultures. In addition, it is obvious that the debate on Translation Studies' independence as an academic discipline has reached an end. Thanks to Holmes, who named this new discipline as '*Translation Studies*', the name is now widely accepted by the English-speaking scholars. However, in Turkish Translation Studies, there are diversities of field and subfield names, such as "*Çeviribilim (Translation Studies)*", "*Mütercim-Tercümanlık (Translation and Interpreting)*", "*Çeviri Araştırmaları (Translation Researches)*" and "*Translatoloji (Translatology)*" used as the field name and "*çeviri*", "*yazılı çeviri*" and "*mütercimlik*" for written form of translation; "*sözlü çeviri*", "*tercüme*", "*tercümanlık*", and "*yorumlama*" for the oral form. In this study, the variety of terms will be searched in one hundred and fourteen M.A. and Ph.D. theses submitted to The Council of Higher Education's Theses Centre with "*Çeviribilim (Translation Studies)*" tag. Finally, the preferability of these terms will be analysed and some suggestions will be developed.

Keywords: Translation; Translation studies; Terminology; Turkish translation studies; Field names; Subfield names.



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1. Introduction

Translation, basically, can be defined as the tool for intercultural communication. Thus, it is a truth that it contributes to development of societies (Kara, 2010), enables former societies to enlighten the latter and intersocietal interaction. According to Munday (2016), the term '*translation*' was first used in around 1340 and could have been derived from Old French (*translation*) or from the Latin (*translatio*) as the participle form of the verb *transferre* (to carry over). He also states that this term can linguistically refer to (a) the general subject field, (b) the text that has been translated – the product, and (c) the process of producing translation – translation service. The term '*translation*' is also used to define the (subfield) *written translation* activity as well as defining the subject field. '*Interpreting*' or '*interpretation*' is used to define the (subfield) *oral translation* activity.

The emergence of translation activity is assumed to date back to around the second millennium BC, in Mesopotamia (the region in south-western Asia where the world's earliest civilizations developed), so it is widely accepted that translation pre-dates the bible.

The birth, development and spread of civilizations were provided by communication and translation was the tool for that communication. Translation not only makes intercultural and international relationships possible, but also has formed the documental evidence of the interaction among humans; thus, it enables this communication exist. (Munday, 2016).

Linguafranca, which is an indicator of a developed culture, was first Greek and then the Latin until the 16th century. Due to historical and political reasons, it became French and finally, English. During Renaissance, each language proved being competent in governing, law, literature, philosophy and science. Therefore, the *concept* of '*translation*' started to come to the forefront. Development of publishing and correspondingly translating Bible to new national languages are two of the significant factors, which made translation inevitable those days (Kızıltan, 2000).

In addition to these achievements in the applied field, it is obvious that the debate on Translation Studies' independence as a discipline has reached an end. When Holmes (2000) delivered his paper 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies' at the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in 1972, he called for a new discipline and named this new discipline as '*Translation Studies*' which is now widely accepted in the English-speaking world. In other words, he was one of the scholars who set the fire for this evolution. In other languages, the traditional principles of naming disciplines were kept and this discipline was called '*Traductologie*' in French, '*Translationswissenschaft*' or '*Übersetzungswissenschaft*' in German. It is probably due to the tradition of adding the suffix '*-bilim*' (*-logy*) to disciplines in Turkish, such as *ruhbilim* (*psychology*), *toplumbilim* (*sociology*) that this discipline was named as '*Çeviribilim*' (*Translation Studies*) (Tahir-Gürçaglar, 2011).

As it is known, one of the necessities of being a scientific discipline is to have its own terminology. However, Translation Studies in Turkey was being studied as a subfield of either Literature or Linguistics for a long period of time, so it was late to create a specific terminology and several scholars generated several different terms. Thus,

there have been many different types of expressions for one single term in Turkish. In general, different usages for the field and subfields can be noticed. Another reason for that situation is that, there is no specific standard for generating terminology in Turkey. Whereas DIN (German Institute for Standardization) in Germany and ISO (International Organization for Standardization) internationally have standards for creating a term (Ersoy, 2011), TSE (Turkish Standards Institution), which has the same duty, does not have such an application.

As it was mentioned above, TSE, which determines rules and does regulations in standardization, does not have a terminology standard. This has been causing terms to be many in number, to use several terms for one notion, thereby a contradiction in terms both in Translation Studies and in other disciplines.

On the other hand, DIN in Germany defines ‘terminology’ as “ a discipline which examines and names concepts in the language of the field” and lists criteria for ‘concepts and terms’, such as:

Terms should:

- 1- be easily integrated into the sentence structure
- 2- be appropriately short (=concise)
- 3- be easy to remember
- 4- be easy to say
- 5- be able to be used to create derivations

In addition to that:

- 1- There should be a clear connection between the term and the title
- 2- It should be easy to translate (Hahn, 2006)

ISO, which serves for international standardization, also has principles for term formation (ISO 704¹) - *transparency, consistency, appropriateness, linguistic economy, derivability, linguistic correctness, and preference for native language.*

According to these standards, it can be inferred that terms should be used as ‘one term for one concept’, so that there could not be any confusion for the intended concept, and the term could be specific, transparent and consistent. Besides, the shorter and to the point the terms are, the more linguistically economic they become. It should be preferred to express one concept with one word because if two- or more- word terms are chosen, its derivability may be low and it may cause imperceptions. Terms should be chosen from the native language so that there should be a linguistic accuracy. Finally, the terms should be adopted by the experts of the field, widely used, used by those who serve the field or those who benefit from the field, in short, they should be field-specific.

Vermeer and Reib (1984) suggestion, which states that foreign words should be preferred when creating a terminology, should also be mentioned here. (In the following chapters, some examples that were designed on this suggestion will be given.) According to Vermeer, the reason, which underlines here, is that the foreign words’ potential association with daily life names are low; they are possible to be derived and gain international validity. (Ersoy, 2011).

2. Material and Method

Although there have been translation activities for a long time, according to some circles, it is still one of the unresolved issues to specify a field name that is approved by all the contributors of the field. That is to say, if “Çeviribilim” (*Translation Studies*) is taken as a field name, it is possible to see that some other field names are used or suggested as an alternative to it.

Some scholars of the field, such as Kuran (1995) and Berk (2005), used “Çeviribilim” (*Translation Studies*) as a field name in their studies.

Yazıcı (2004), one of the scholars of the field as well, stated that “Çeviribilim” (*Translation Studies*) would be inadequate to express that newly born and fast developing discipline, so it was no surprise that the name “Çeviri Araştırmaları” (*Translation Researches*) would be at the agenda as a suggestion.

In his book “Tarihsel ve Kuramsal Açından Çeviri Edimi” (Translation Pragmatics from a Historical and Theoretical Perspective), Yücel (2007) translated the German citations used in his study and he translated Wolfram Willss’ book “Übersetzungswissenschaft” as “Çeviribilim” (*Translation Studies*). However, Ersoy (2011) states that in that period during which the book was written, the term *Übersetzungswissenschaft* was also used to describe “Genel Çeviribilim” (*General Translation Studies*).

As it is seen, “Genel Çeviribilim” (*General Translation Studies*) is also among the field names that are used.

On the other hand, Bulut (2008) used “Çeviri” (*Translation*) as a field name in her book “Çeviride İdeoloji” (*Ideology in Translation*).

“Translatoloji” (*Translatology*), which can be an example to Vermeer’s suggestion stated above, was used by Berk (2005) and supported by Ersoy (2012) with some reasons:

a. The term “Translatoloji” (*Translatology*) is completely different from the subfield names as it is suggested by Terminology.

b. Field, product and producer names can be derived from “Translatoloji” (*Translatology*), such as “Translatoloji (*Translatology*)”, “Translasyon Ürünü (*Translation Product*)”, “Translasyon (*Translation*)”, “Translatör (*Translator*)”.

¹ <http://semanticweb.kaist.ac.kr/org/tc37/pdocument/standards/ISO%20704.pdf>

c. This term does not have any association possibilities of many other things based on Vermeer's expression-*'foreign words should be preferred as terms'* Ersoy (2012).

As it is known, "translation" and "interpreting" are widely used to describe subfields. In Turkish literature, different terms are used to describe these subfields.

Berk (2005) states that translators were called as "*mütercim (translator / written translator)*" and "*tercüman (interpreter / oral translator)*" in the old Turkish and he adds that these terms are appropriate to make a differentiation. These terms, which were used for written and oral translations in the Ottoman Turkish, were also used while naming related university departments in Turkey as "*Mütercim-Tercümanlık (Translation and Interpreting)*".

In the Turkish translation of Ammann (2008)'s book "Grundlagen der modernen Translationstheorie - Ein Leitfaden für Studierende (Foundations of Modern Translation Theory - A Guide for Students)", the terms "*mütercimlik (translation / written translation)*" and "*tercümanlık (interpreting / oral translation)*" are used to express written and oral subfields of translation.

Köksal (2008) used the term "*yorumlama (interpretation)*" for oral translation and "*çeviri (translation)*" for the written one.

Ersoy (2012) states that along with "*Translatoloji (Translatology)*" for the field name, the terms "*çeviri (translation/written translation)*" for written translation activities and "*tercüme (interpreting / oral translation)*" for oral translation activities should be used because not using common/derived words for field and subfield names would be useful to get rid of imperceptions and there would be no need to use common/derived words while creating new terms; for example, "*translatoloji (translatology) – translatör (translator)*", "*çeviri (translation / written translation) – çevirmen (translator)*", "*tercüme (interpreting / oral translation) – tercüman (interpreter / oral translator)*".

As it is seen, Turkish translation scholars have used "*çeviri*", "*yazılı çeviri*" and "*mütercimlik*" for written form of translation and they have used "*sözlü çeviri*", "*tercüme*", "*tercümanlık*", and "*yorumlama*" for the oral form.

In this study, one hundred and fourteen M.A. and Ph.D. theses, which are submitted with the "*Çeviribilim (Translation Studies)*" tag to The Council of Higher Education²'s Thesis Centre (YÖK Tez Merkezi), will be scanned deeply and thus, the study will try to find out diversity of the terms mentioned above.

First, the terms "*Çeviribilim (Translation Studies)*", "*Mütercim-Tercümanlık (Translation and Interpreting)*", "*Çeviri Araştırmaları (Translation Researches)*" and "*Translatoloji (Translatology)*" used as the field name will be searched in the theses. Later, the terms "*çeviri (translation)*" used both as the translational action in general and as the written translation, "*translasyon (translation)*" as the action in general will be searched. Also, the subfield terms "*yazılı çeviri*" used as written translation, "*tercüme*", "*sözlü tercüme*", "*sözlü çeviri*" and "*yorumlama*" used as interpreting/oral translation; "*çevirmen*" used as translator in general and as written translator; "*mütercim*" and "*yazılı çevirmen*" used as written translator; and "*tercüman*", "*sözlü tercüman*" and "*sözlü çevirmen*" as interpreter/oral translator will be sought in the theses. Therefore, the preferability of these terms will be analysed and some suggestions will be developed.

3. Results & Discussion

3.1. Field and Subfield Names in Turkish Translation Study Theses

Translation training programs were first established in 1980s in Turkey. Boğaziçi and Hacettepe Universities started carrying out this program as '*Department of Translation and Interpreting of English (İngilizce Mütercim-Tercümanlık Anabilim Dalı)*' in 1983 for the first time. Later on, Yıldız Technical University started training with '*Department of Translation and Interpreting of French (Fransızca Mütercim-Tercümanlık Bölümü)*' in 1992 and Istanbul University with '*Department of Translation and Interpreting of German (Almanca Mütercim-Tercümanlık Anabilim Dalı)*' in 1993.

Today, there are twenty-nine universities that have departments of *Translation and Interpreting* (of *English, French, German, Bulgarian, Russian, Arabian, Persian, and Chinese*) and three universities that have departments of *Translation (Studies)*.

Most of these universities are also carrying out 'Translation Studies' (Çeviribilim) graduate programs for M.A. and Ph. D. degrees. When theses, which were submitted with the 'Translation Studies (Çeviribilim)' tag to The Council of Higher Education's Thesis Centre (YÖK Tez Merkezi), are scrutinised, it is possible to see variety of names used for field and subfields.

There are one hundred and fourteen theses that are available for downloading from the official web page of The Council of Higher Education with the 'Translation Studies (Çeviribilim)' tag. Sixty-three of them are written in Turkish, forty-two of them are in English and three of them in German. Since this study aims to find out the variety of Turkish terms used for field and subfield, non-Turkish theses are evaluated by their Turkish abstracts.

When these theses are examined, seventy-eight of them use "*Çeviribilim (Translation Studies)*" to name the field, whereas eighteen of them use "*Mütercim-Tercümanlık (Translation and Interpreting)*". Four of them use

²The Council of Higher Education (YÖK) was established with the Law No. 2547 dated 6 November 1981. With this law, it has commenced in a restructuring process of academic, institutional and administrative aspects in higher education and all higher education institutions in Turkey have gathered under the roof of YÖK.

“Çeviri Araştırmaları (Translation Researches)” in order to refer to the field. However, only one of them uses “Translatoloji (Translatology)” for the field name.

When it comes to talk about the subfields, it is seen that one hundred and thirteen of these theses use “çeviri (translation)” both for the translational action in general and for the written translation. Only two of them use “translasyon (translation)” for the action in general, twenty-seven of them use “tercüme” for interpreting/oral translation. In addition, none of them uses “yorumlama” for interpreting/oral translation.

Eighty-six of these theses use “çevirmen” for translator in general, thirteen of them use “mütercim” for written translator and twenty-two of them use “tercüman” for oral translator specifically.

Thirty-two of them use “sözlü çeviri”, one of them uses “sözlü tercüme” for interpreting/oral translation. Seventeen theses use “sözlü çevirmen” for interpreter/oral translator whereas none of the theses uses “sözlü tercüman”.

Similarly for written translation, thirty-two of the theses use “yazılı çeviri” and ten of them use “yazılı çevirmen” for written translator.

As a result, Turkish translation studies prefer using “Çeviribilim (Translation Studies)” for the field name and it is clearly seen that “çeviri” is used both for the translational action in general and for the written translation. If they especially want to specify the subfield, they use “sözlü çeviri (interpreting/oral translation)” and “yazılı çeviri (translation/written translation)”. When they want to mention about translators in general, they use “çevirmen” and to be specific about the written translator, they prefer “çevirmen” to “mütercim”. They use “tercüman” to indicate interpreters/oral translators.

4. Conclusion

As it is seen, there are several different terms used for field and subfield names. Some of them are used to describe both the field and the subfield – çeviri (written translation). However, there are some studies that indicate the importance of using different terms for different concepts with some reasons.

When the studies in English are taken into consideration, it is seen that the term “translation” is used for the field name and for the subfield name that involves written translation activities. As for the oral one, the term “interpreting” is used.

In German, “Translationswissenschaft” is used to describe the field name and “übersetzen” for written translation and “dolmetschen” for the oral one. So there would be no possible wrong associations.

Having seen this, Ersoy (2011) suggests the same application with German and emphasises its significance in order not to have any wrong associations. He states that German translation studies have not always had different three terms for field and subfield names. He specifies that Reiß & Vermeer expressed that when Translation Studies started to become an independent discipline, the term “übersetzung” was used to describe both the field and the subfield – written translation, and “dolmetschen” was used to describe the oral translation. He assumes that German Translation studies had come through a period that needed to have different terms for the field and subfield names and succeeded. As it is in the German case, Turkish translation studies can go through the same procedure and become terminologically appropriate.

In our thesis proposal, which is planned to be published by mid-2018, along with the frequency of the terms in written literature, some academicians will be asked to identify and name the translational activities in order to see how frequently these terms are used and how probably the newly offered terms would be used in the future by them.

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