

## FLT AND TRANSLATION STUDIES: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE (\*)

Alev BULUT(\*\*)

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper discusses the possibilities of interdisciplinary relations between the fields of Translation Studies (TS) and Foreign Language Training (FLT) with respect to the developments in TS. The paper first defines the scope and meaning of interdisciplinarity and gives an account of the development of TS as a scientific discipline to proceed with examples, sample course outlines and details concerning the use of TS in FLT.*

**Key Words:** Translation Studies (TS), Foreign Language Training (FLT), Interdisciplinarity, Translation Courses in FLT Departments

### ÖZET

*Bu çalışmada Çeviribilim ve Yabancı Dil Öğretimi alanları arasındaki disiplinlerarası ilişkiler ve olanaklar Çeviribilimin gelişimi doğrultusunda ele alınmaktadır. Çalışmada önce disiplinlerarasılık kavramının kapsamı ve anlamı ele alınarak Çeviribilimin bilimsel bir alan olarak gelişim öyküsü anlatıldıktan sonra Yabancı Dil Öğretiminde çeviri derslerinin işlenişi ile ilgili öneriler ve görüşler, örnekler, örnek izlenimler ve ayrıntıları ile verilmektedir.*

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Çeviribilim, Yabancı Dil Öğretimi, Disiplinlerarasılık, Öğretmenlik Bölümlerinde Çeviri Dersleri.

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\*\* Istanbul University Faculty of Letters

## Introduction

Interdisciplinarity is both a “must” and a “challenge” in today’s world where divisions among branches of sciences get more and more developed and fully-fledged. This is why the formation of interdisciplinary areas among disciplines, interfaces of different branches of sciences, in other words, seems to be possible only if;

- the scholars of the fields in systematic relation do not deny the scope and the autonomous work of each other
- the scholars of the fields in relation do not fall short of seeing overlapping points and thus refrain from falling into the trap of repeating the already made efforts
- interdisciplinarity is respected as a form of mutual respect
- all disciplines are doomed(!) to be interdisciplinary without losing their own focus
- an interdisciplinary perspective clears our way when we get stuck with paradigms that do not serve the needed purposes and prevents blurred vision or self-centeredness (for both the researcher and the discipline)

Translation may be an old practice but Translation Studies (TS) is a comparatively new discipline with its history of about 40 years. Why did it take TS this long before it was finally defined as a scientific field in its own rights? After being practiced as part of written and oral arts and skills for ages, it started to be defined under language-based disciplines and the sciences of language, mainly under Applied Linguistics and Contrastive Analysis (from 50’s to 70’s) before it established its name and scope as an independent discipline (end of 70’s onwards).

In pursuit of the phases of the development of TS, one needs to be aware of different conceptions and definitions related to the act of translating. This takes us to the basic question behind it all:

“What is translation?”

Translation, in its essence, is the transfer of written or oral messages produced in one cultural (and naturally linguistic, discursive) medium/context into another cultural medium/context. Then it is not wrong to claim that the practice of translation cannot be about language alone since no linguistic production takes place in a vacuum, that is, outside a cultural or a situational context. The most important clues that we have in our pursuit of the scientific development of TS is the evolving perspectives and frameworks that we place the basic conception of translation as an “act of transfer”. ‘Transfer’ being the

stable element in any perspective developed around the act of translating, one can trace the evolvement through the changing perspectives of linguistic production as an outcome, consecutively, of individual, contextual, social, cultural, communicational and intercultural frames.

### **Why is TS a scientific field?**

TS is a scientific field because;

**it is observational**

every fact and situation of translation available to the researcher for observation can be developed into a topic of research. You may observe subtitles of foreign films in Turkish (film translation) for certain cases and recurrences to develop a hypothesis and collect data to test it...

**it is experimental/empirical**

you may gather your data and work with a corpus under a certain approach and model from descriptive to functional (with a technique suitable for analysis) and thus test your hypothesis...

**it is objective**

objectivity requires seeing the situation to be analysed not from the translator's subjective stand alone but from an objective position to be applied to all cases under similar circumstances. Thus, the ivory tower on which the "inborn artist" translators are placed is no longer there alongwith with their critics as the subjective, emotional admirers or condemners of translations...

### **Why the name Translation Studies (TS?)**

The name Translation Studies indicates the process of the activity of translating and interpreting as well as its continuum as a scientific field dependent on its practice. Although "translatology" is not widely accepted as the name of the discipline in international use, its Turkish equivalent "çeviribilim" seems to serve the purpose of representing the discipline with its theory and practice well enough among scholars and researchers in Turkey.

Translating is a term that covers the total of the translation process:

- starts with a source message, text, linguistic or audio-visual material
- ends with the production of a target message, text, linguistic or audio-visual material

- transfer of messages may be done in many mediums from visual to audio and linguistic and not necessarily among the similar mediums (e.g. transferring notations into audio symbols of music or a playtext into bodily movements and words on a stage...)
- no human activity is purpose free and it is the purpose of the activity-process that decides its use
- translation is also an activity that is geared by the questions “who, where and when the target material will be used for what purpose and function”

then...

- each new user, situation, purpose and function will make a difference on the production-reproduction of a source material

e.g.

“May God save you”

as

“Tann seni korusun” or “Allah seni korusun”

e.g.

“kahvehane” as

“café”	or	“coffeehouse”	or	“pub”
“café”	as	“kahve(hane)”	or	“kafe”

All translational choices can be “right/acceptable” depending on the situation and the purpose of translation and the effect the translator wants to create.

e.g. “The shelled fish do not taste as delicious in the months without ‘r’, that is May, June, July and August”

translated as

“Kabuklu deniz ürünleri içinde ‘r’ olan aylarda çok lezzetli olmaz”

(literal translation irrespective of the meaning and context)

or

“Kabuklu deniz ürünleri Mayıs, Haziran, Temmuz ve Ağustos aylarında lezzetli olmaz”

(acceptable cultural translation respective of linguistic limitations)

e.g. "Memet" as "unknown hero" or "Memet" as it is used word in F.H. Dağjarca's poem "Bir Memet Daha" ("Another Unknown Hero" translated by T.S. Hamlan)

e.g. "I did some tooth canal work on Mrs. Wilma Zardis...." ("If Impressionists Were Dentists" by W. Allen)

as

"Bayan Wilma Zardis'e kanal tedavi uyguladım..." or

"Mrs. Wilma Zardis'e kanal tedavi uyguladım..."

All of these examples indicate possible decisions to be taken for acceptability under different circumstances -in case they are grammatically and semantically acceptable in the target system.

### **Theoretical bases of TS**

Dutch scholar James Holmes started the discussion of "the name and the nature of translation studies" as an emerging field in the end of 1970's. He gave us a map to fit all translational activity in as perfect representations of the actual translation processes from theoretical TS to applied TS. Then, Israeli scholar Gideon Toury brought forth the idea of a translation process based not on complete source-based equivalence but on target-based considerations because of the nature of the translation process (80's). He developed the scale for the evaluation of a product of translation with criteria ranging from adequacy-efficiency (in terms of relation with the source) and appropriateness-acceptability (in terms of target). Another Israeli scholar of the Tel Aviv School, Itamar Even-Zohar developed a poly-system for mainly literary translations which well served as a foundation for deeper discussions of culture and translation. Each cultural system has layers, structures and periods with sub-systems. This poly-systemic nature of cultures and products of cultures gives the concept of translation a chance to be defined as a cultural act. Then, it becomes important to know which system is transferred into which other system in which period in the history of that culture. German scholar and theoretician Hans Vermeer and the school of functional translation brought forth the idea of translation being a purposeful action (skopos theory) carried out in and for the target system.

Translation Studies is classified into the following sections of scientific study:

- Pure TS
  - theoretical (partial, integrative)
  - descriptive (product, process, function)
- Applied TS
  - teaching (in FLT or translator training)
  - practice (translating)
  - criticism (translation criticism through different theoretical and practical models and approaches)

(see Holmes 1988; Toury 1980; Yazıcı 2000; Akbulut 2004; Eruz 2003; Berk 2005 for discussions of the scope of TS)

#### **An integrated approach to TS**

Mary Snell-Hornby put forth the following interdisciplinary ties under TS:

- literary translation
  - literary studies, cultural studies, linguistics
- general translation
  - textlinguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics...
- specific translation
  - technical fields such as medicine, law, economy...

(see Snell-Hornby (1988) *An Integrated Approach to TS*; Bengi-Öner, (2001, for a discussion of partial and integrative approaches)<sup>1</sup>

#### **An interdisciplinary perspective for TS and Foreign Language Training (FLT)**

In order to have an interdisciplinary perspective built around TS as is done with other disciplines and interdisciplines (psycho-linguistics, bio-chemistry, geo-physics etc...) we need to have two separate, independent disciplines with their fully-defined practical and conceptual fields. Since TS did not have scientific paradigms of its own for years and was, at its best, considered an extension of Applied Linguistics, it was not possible to develop a

<sup>1</sup> see Holmes 1988; Toury 1980; Yazıcı 2000 for discussions of the scope of TS and Akbulut 2004; Eruz 2003; Berk 2005 for discussions of the origins and the development of TS as an independent field in the world and in Turkey

sound basis for it to interact with other disciplines, may these be language studies or cultural, sociological, psychological, technical fields.

In order to be able to define interdisciplines of TS we need to see the things from the reality of TS as summarized above which leads us to fruitful inter-fields defined by this reality. For the sake of limiting our discussion with language studies (and specifically with FLT for the purposes of this study) as interdisciplines of TS we need to start by defining the paradigms of the fields in question.

### TS and FLT

TS has interdisciplinary ties with literary studies, cultural studies and linguistics which leads us to a tie with language teaching methodology under educational science and applied linguistics. This relationship is indispensable because translation is the oldest method of language teaching (grammar-translation approach). Although new approaches and methods of FLT-ELT ban or limit the use of translation, it is no longer a strict "taboo". FLT and translation always had a difficult relationship as put forth in studies by FLT (mainly English Language Training- ELT) and TS scholars such as Kirsten Malmkjaer (1998), Peter Fawcett (1997), Mona Baker (1992), Bengi-Öner (1992), Kurultay (1999), Bulut (2003). The use of translation in ELT departments - either as part of teacher training curriculum or as part of foreign language teaching methodology - has thus been studied by many scholars and researchers in our country mainly from the FLT departments with an effort of using translation more appropriately and beneficially both in the language classroom and in the teacher training process.

### The place and use of translation courses in FLT programs

Modern FLT curricula that have been developed from the 70's onwards under the positive influence of the new theories of educational and pedagogical fields did have difficulty giving translation, which was damned and declared a taboo in communicative teaching and learning environments after its bad influence of the long years of the use of grammar-translation method, a new role and place in their student and performance-based interactional designs. The translation courses that were considered a great aid especially by the teacher trainers coming from the philologies up till then lost their role and privilege to a much more limited space in the new FLT framework program developed and put into force by the Higher Education Council (YÖK) in Turkey as of 1998, rightfully for the sake of standardizing the dozens of scattered teacher training programs in the country.

FLT curriculum in Turkey today allows two translation courses: one, from FL into Turkish (see appendix 1) in the third year and the other, Turkish into FL in the fourth (see appendix 2). It is also possible to assign some of the elective course contents to the use translation of translation courses in FLT programs to give future teachers of foreign languages insights and hints (see appendix 3). It is also possible to give translation a place in post-graduate programs, at masters or doctoral levels with an interdisciplinary focus in FLT under the titles of Contrastive Linguistics and FLT, FLT and Translation, Contrastive Text Studies in FLT, A Discourse-Based Approach to the Teaching of Translation in FLT (see appendix 4 and 5).

Teaching translation in coordination and integration with other courses in FLT programs, from the teaching of basic language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking to more complicated course contents covering interculturality, interferences in linguistic and cultural senses and practical aspects of teaching of a foreign language outside its own cultural context with non-native instructors and teacher trainers as part of classroom methodology has plural benefits. The most obvious interdisciplinary benefit can still be listed in two precise entries:

1. teaching FLT trainees-future trainers translation for its own sake as an end in itself
2. giving trainees an insight about the use and place of translation in FLT as a means

The second benefit above will not be there if the first one is not achieved properly. This is exactly the same as discussing language teaching for translation students where you cannot achieve anything without teaching languages with a methodology for its own sake as an end in itself. Only then come the interdisciplinary benefits that is:

#### TS for FLT and FLT for TS

#### Conclusion

This paper aimed at discussing the interdisciplinarity from the viewpoint of the use of TS in FLT through the translation courses offered in FLT programs. The scientific development and the current status and scope of TS have been evaluated with their possible reflection on the use of TS and translation as a means in FLT. The interdisciplinary focus favored here has been one that does enough justice to both the long-neglected science of translation and the FLT methodology that used translation as a mechanical teaching technique that



does not serve the aims of modern FL teaching and learning. The double benefit here is the consideration of both fields with their own rights as an “end” and as a “means” depending on our purpose of integrating their scopes.

#### **APPENDICES: Sample Syllabi for Teaching Translation in FLT**

1.

##### **Translation (FL into Turkish)**

**Course Description:** Translation is introduced in the third year of Teacher Training Program with this one semester course aiming at familiarizing the students with the process of translation. Translation as an integrative course (that allows the use of all four skills, reading, writing, speaking-listening) is introduced at the level of language practice and advanced grammar check contrastively in English and Turkish languages. The texts to be translated in the classroom in groups and the texts to be assigned as home practice all serve the function of showing the students both “how they can learn to translate and how they can use this knowledge”. The activity of translation necessarily involves the study of texts, text-type analysis and text production. Thus, it benefits from Reading Skills and Writing Skills courses as well as Grammar and Linguistics (under the sub headings of textlinguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics).

##### **Course Outline**

- 1st Week: What is translation? Learning to think about translation
- 2nd Week: Translation drills, phrasal verbs, cultural differences of meanings
- 3rd Week: Text-type and translation/types of translation
- 4th Week to 10th Week: Translation practice with sample texts representing a variety of text-types

##### **Course Content**

1. Addressive and operative texts
  - news texts
  - everyday operative texts, manuals (e.g. passports, petitions etc.)
  - speech sample (“I Have a Dream” - M.L. King)
2. Referential/informative texts
  - semi and fully scientific and technical texts
  - legal text samples such as petitions and licences
  - “Eros and Psyche” (mythological story)
  - “Yoga Vacations” (Newsweek)
  - “Up From Down Under” (Newsweek)
3. Expressive texts
  - short poems and anonymous texts
  - “Giant Steps” (anonymous story)
  - stories and fables for teacher training

- short story
  - "Cat in the Rain" by E. Hemingway
  - "Extenuating Circumstances" by J.C. Oates

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## 2.

### Translation (Turkish into FL)

**Course Description:** This course is the continuation of the translation course introduced in the third year of Teacher Training Program. Translation from L1 (Turkish) into L2 (English) gives ELT senior trainees a chance to have an overall idea about contrastive analysis, error analysis and remedial teaching through translation courses in ELT. The course also aims at teaching and practicing the intricacies of translation from Turkish into English for the sake of translation (as an end). it tries to build up its theoretical framework on the third year discussions of translation theories and text-types, language functions and translation.

### Course Outline

#### I. Introduction

- A. translation as an "end" versus translation as a "means" (2 weeks)
  1. "as an end"
    - a. remembering what translation is
    - b. everyday observations and assignments for language transfer and the impact of translation in our daily lives
    - c. language, discourse and translation
  2. "as a means"
    - a. the place of translation in ELT
    - b. the relation between the use of translation in ELT and EA (Error Analysis), CA (Contrastive Analysis) and Remedial Teaching

### Course Outline

#### II. Sample Texts in Major Text-Types

- A. Addressive and operative texts  
News texts
- B. Expressive texts  
Narratives, myths  
"Troya Efsaneleri" A. Erhat  
poems  
short story  
"Güneş Yiyen Çingene" B. Uzuner
- C. Referential/informative texts  
Semi and fully scientific and technical texts  
"Trafik Kazaları-İletişim Kazaları" D. Cüceloğlu  
"Gıdalarda Küfü Nasıl Önleriz?" F. Turantaş

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### 3.

#### Translation in ELT (elective)

**Course Description:** This third year first semester elective course is designed in parallel with the third year Translation Course (English into Turkish). The overall aim of the course is to discuss the use of translation in language teaching with a new and integrative focus. As a background to the course contrastive analysis and error analysis will be discussed as feedback sources for remedial corrective work in ELT.

#### Course Outline

1. Thinking about the place of translation in ELT in all possible ways  
How do the language teaching methods evaluate the place of translation in ELT
2. What can we learn through translation?

- Awareness of contrastive discourse (sports discourse, recipe discourse in T-E) functions of utterances within contexts (same news different text-types)  
 a check of grammar knowledge
3. How can we methodize learning through translation?  
 Grammar in context exercises (e.g. recipe discourse, poetry)  
 Texts from different discourse situations

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### 4.

#### Contrastive Linguistics and Translation In FLT (graduate level)

**Course Description:** The course aims at giving the graduate students of FLT an insight of Translation Theories in interdisciplinary relation with contrastive linguistic analysis. The specific focus of the course is to build up a contrastive perspective on the overall linguistic aspects of translation. The course covers the contrastive analysis of Turkish and English languages as L1 and FL-L2 with an additional focus of Error Analysis. These foci are intended to give the graduates, researchers and professionals of ELT a chance to use translation for their purposes and to think about the role of translation in FLT-ELT processes and situations.

#### Course Outline

- I. defining the place and the scope of translation in language studies  
 translation in progression with comparative linguistics  
 translation as a science in its own right  
 translation as a subject in ELT curriculum
- II. placing translation in an interdisciplinary frame with linguistics and applied language studies  
 Contrastive Analysis (CA) of Turkish and English  
 Error Analysis (EA) and its implications on FLT through translation as a means

5.

### **FLT and Translation (graduate level)**

**Course Description:** The course aims at discussing translation as a means and as an end. The headings in the course outline serve the purpose of raising questions about the possibility of using translation in FLT with regard to the critical position of translation in FLT methodology. Translation Studies is introduced

as a scientific field and a practice which may be of use in language teaching methods

other courses at graduate and doctoral levels

- Contrastive Linguistics and Translation (graduate level)
- Contrastive Text-Linguistics and Translation (doctoral level)
- A Discourse-Based Approach to the Teaching of Translation in FLT (doctoral level)

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