

The Scope and Limits of Translation History: A Critical Overview

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Abstract

Review Article

This paper offers a critical overview of translation history as a subfield of Translation Studies, examining its scope, functions, and methodological challenges. Drawing on the theoretical contributions of scholars such as Susan Bassnett, André Lefevere, Lawrence Venuti, Jeremy Munday, Anthony Pym, and Lieven D'Hulst, the study explores how translation history has evolved beyond the documentation of past practices into a critically reflexive discipline concerned with historiography and metahistoriography. The paper argues that translation is not a neutral linguistic activity but a culturally embedded practice shaped by ideology, patronage, and power relations, and that its historiographical narratives are inevitably influenced by the interpretive frameworks researchers bring to the data. Particular attention is paid to the Turkish context, where periods such as the *Tanzimat (Reformation) Era* and the early Republican reforms illustrate translation's role in cultural transformation and modernization. Building on Julio-César Santoyo's critique of "blank spaces" in translation historiography, the paper further argues that areas such as oral interpreting and everyday translation practices remain significantly underexplored, particularly in Turkish academia, where research has predominantly focused on literary translation. The study concludes that the future of translation history depends on methodological diversification, interdisciplinary engagement, and the inclusion of non-literary, oral, and everyday translation practices, alongside a sustained critical awareness of the ideological and positional dimensions of historiographical writing.

Keywords: Cultural Turn, Historiography, Metahistoriography, Translation History, Translation Studies.

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Introduction

Translation history has emerged as a significant subfield within the broader discipline of Translation Studies, offering critical insights into how translation practices, theories, and institutions have evolved over time. Rather than merely documenting past translation activities, translation history seeks to interpret the socio-cultural, ideological, and epistemological conditions under which translation has been produced and conceptualized. As emphasized by scholars such as Andrea Rizzi et al.

(2019), the field encompasses not only the historical study of translation practices but also the historiography and metahistoriography of translation, thereby addressing both what is written about translation and how it is written.

Translation history can be categorized under three main categories: the first one is the actual history of translation, which deals with the historical findings about how translation was practiced, utilized, and conceptualized throughout human history; the second one is translation historiography, namely how

translation history has been written; and last but not least, the "metahistoriography" of translation.

As defined by Lieven D'Hulst (2010), metahistoriography constitutes "the explicit reflection on the concepts and methods to write history" (p. 397). It deals directly with the epistemological, conceptual, and methodological boundaries governing the production of historical narratives.

This explicit reflection on the concepts used to write history is deeply mirrored in broader historical philosophy. As John W. Yolton notes in his foundational discussion on meta-history, any given discipline must be strictly distinguished from the talk about that discipline. While the primary historian works on an empirical level—searching for explanations, collecting data, and establishing facts—the meta-analyst operates on a post-perceptual level, analysing the very tools, presuppositions, and linguistic categories that researchers rely upon. When applied to translation studies, a metahistoriographical approach dictates that our historical narratives are never neutral; rather, they are shaped by the context-sensitive interpretive frameworks, standards of significance, and controlling hypotheses that the historian brings to the data.

This distinction between the primary activity of a discipline and the critical reflection upon it is deeply rooted in broader historical philosophy. As John W. Yolton notes in his foundational discussion on meta-history, any given discipline must be strictly distinguished from the talk about that discipline. While the primary practitioner or historian works on an empirical level—searching for explanations, collecting data, and writing up descriptions—the meta-analyst operates on a post-perceptual level. Applied to translation, metahistoriography shifts the focus away from the mere gathering of translated artifacts and toward a critical examination of the underlying presuppositions, methodologies, and linguistic frameworks that translation historians use to construct their narratives.

The core function of this meta-level perspective is to lay bare latent assumptions, expose them to criticism, and challenge accepted meanings to ensure

methodological precision. Furthermore, Yolton argues that the epistemology of history is fundamentally an "epistemology of meanings" rather than one of physical objects. Because historical facts never truly speak for themselves, they are inevitably selected, organized, and "franchised" within a primary scheme or hypothesis determined by the researcher. In translation history, this means that the narratives we construct about past translation events are heavily dependent on the context-sensitive frameworks we bring to the data. Acknowledging this meta-historical reality allows researchers to recognize that the relation between translation facts and historical meaning is an open, interpretive process. Consequently, metahistoriography serves as a vital safeguard, reminding translation scholars to remain critically aware of their own positionality and the ideological lenses through which they interpret the past.

The importance of translation history lies in its ability to contextualize contemporary translation practices within a broader historical framework. By examining the interaction between translation and cultural development, researchers can better understand how societies construct knowledge, negotiate identity, and engage with external influences. In this sense, translation is not a neutral or purely technical activity; rather, it functions as a dynamic agent shaping literary systems, ideological formations, and intercultural exchanges. This perspective is particularly relevant in contexts such as Turkish translation history, where periods like the *Tanzimat (Reformation)* era and the early Republican reforms played a decisive role in cultural transformation through translation.

At the same time, translation history is not without its methodological and epistemological challenges. Issues such as selective documentation, reliance on anecdotal evidence, and the influence of ideological frameworks complicate the writing of translation history. Scholars like Anthony Pym (1992) and Lieven D'Hulst (2001) have drawn attention to these limitations, emphasizing the need for critical and interdisciplinary approaches. Furthermore, as Julio-César Santoyo (2006) argues, certain areas—such as

oral interpreting and everyday translation practices—remain significantly underexplored.

This paper aims to examine the scope, functions, and methodological concerns of translation history while also addressing the gaps identified in the literature. By focusing on both theoretical perspectives and the specific case of Turkish academia, the study highlights the necessity of expanding translation historiography beyond its traditional focus on literary translation. In doing so, it argues for a more inclusive and methodologically diverse approach that incorporates oral, non-literary, and everyday translation practices into the broader narrative of translation history.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, literature-based research design grounded in critical document analysis and theoretical synthesis. Rather than producing new empirical data, the paper engages in a meta-level examination of existing scholarship in order to map the conceptual scope, functions, and methodological tensions of translation history as a subfield of Translation Studies. This approach is consistent with what Lieven D'Hulst (2001) characterizes as metahistoriographical inquiry, namely, the explicit reflection on the concepts and methods through which translation history is written, rather than the production of historical narratives themselves.

The methodological framework rests on three interrelated procedures. First, the study employs a thematic literature review of foundational and contemporary works in translation history, including the contributions of Bassnett and Lefevere (1990, 1998), Lefevere (1992), Venuti (1998, 2008), Munday (2022), Pym (1998), Hermans (1999), D'Hulst (2001, 2014), Rizzi et al. (2019), and Santoyo (2006). These sources were selected on the basis of their disciplinary influence and their direct engagement with the historiographical, theoretical, or methodological dimensions of translation history. Secondary sources addressing the Turkish translation tradition, such as Eruz (2003) and Doğan (2017), were incorporated to contextualize the discussion within the local academic landscape.

Second, the study applies a critical-comparative reading to identify recurring concerns across these sources, including the cultural turn, patronage and ideology, the translator's invisibility, microhistorical approaches, and the epistemological status of historical narratives. By placing these perspectives in dialogue, the paper traces both points of convergence such as the shared insistence on translation as a culturally embedded practice and points of divergence such as differing positions on periodization, agency, and the role of non-literary translation.

Third, the analysis draws on Yolton's (1955) philosophical distinction between primary historical inquiry and meta-historical reflection in order to frame translation history not as a neutral collection of facts but as an interpretive process shaped by the researcher's positionality, conceptual presuppositions, and ideological orientation. This theoretical anchor enables the study to move beyond descriptive summary toward a critical evaluation of how translation history is constructed and narrated.

Finally, the Turkish case is treated as an illustrative example rather than as an object of empirical investigation. References to the Tanzimat (Reformation) era, the early Republican reforms, and the work of Turkish scholars such as Tahir-Gürçağlar and Demircioğlu serve to ground the broader theoretical argument in a specific cultural context and to highlight gaps that warrant further empirical research, particularly in the domains of oral interpreting and everyday translation practices.

Limitations

Despite its critical contribution, this study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the paper is theoretical and interpretive in nature and does not include primary empirical data. Although the discussion identifies underexplored areas such as oral interpreting in the Turkish tourism sector and everyday translation practices in commercial translation offices, the absence of fieldwork, archival research, surveys, or interviews means that these claims remain at the level of conceptual proposition rather than empirical

demonstration. Future research could address this limitation by undertaking the kinds of oral history projects and ethnographic studies that Santoyo (2006) advocates.

Second, the scope of the literature reviewed is necessarily selective. While the study draws on a broad range of internationally recognized scholars, it does not exhaust the full diversity of perspectives within translation history, particularly those emerging from non-Western traditions, indigenous translation practices, and recent digital and computational approaches to translation historiography. The selection privileges Anglophone and Western European scholarship, alongside a limited engagement with Turkish sources, and other regional historiographies (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Latin American) remain outside the scope of the present discussion.

Third, the engagement with the Turkish context is illustrative rather than exhaustive. The paper refers to the *Tanzimat (Reformation)* era, the early Republican translation reforms under Hasan Ali Yücel, and the work of selected Turkish scholars, but it does not provide a systematic historiographical survey of Turkish translation history. A fuller treatment of this case would require dedicated archival research and a more comprehensive review of Turkish-language scholarship, which exceeds the boundaries of a critical overview.

Fourth, as the study itself acknowledges through its metahistoriographical framing, the writing of translation history is inevitably shaped by the positionality and interpretive choices of the researcher. The arguments advanced here reflect particular theoretical commitments, including a preference for cultural and sociological approaches over purely linguistic or descriptive ones, and a normative orientation toward expanding the field to include oral and everyday translation. Other researchers, working from different theoretical traditions, might reasonably reach different conclusions about the priorities and limits of translation history.

Finally, the paper's normative recommendations, particularly its call for the development of new methodologies for studying oral interpreting and

everyday translation, are proposed rather than tested. The feasibility, ethical implications, and methodological design of such research remain open questions that future studies will need to address through concrete empirical work.

These limitations should not be read as undermining the paper's central argument but rather as defining its scope and pointing toward productive directions for subsequent research. By making its boundaries explicit, the study aligns itself with the metahistoriographical principle that scholarly narratives are most rigorous when their conditions of production are openly acknowledged.

1) The Cultural Turn and the Birth of Translation History

The conceptual foundation for modern translation history was laid by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, particularly in their co-edited volume *Translation, History and Culture* (1990) and later in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (1998). They argued that translation should not be studied as a marginal linguistic exercise but as a central cultural practice. Their famous "cultural turn" insisted that translations are produced within networks of cultural power and that the historian of translation must therefore study not only texts but the institutions, ideologies, and agents surrounding them. Bassnett's *Translation Studies* (first edition 1980, revised editions through 2014) traces translation history from Roman antiquity through the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and into the twentieth century, demonstrating how each era's translation practices reflect its broader cultural assumptions about originality, authorship, and fidelity.

1.1. Lefevere: Rewriting, Patronage, and Ideology

André Lefevere's *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1992) is perhaps the most influential single work on the historical dimensions of translation. Lefevere argued that translation is one form of "rewriting" alongside criticism, anthologizing, historiography, and editing.

All these rewritings shape how literary works survive and are received across time and cultures. He proposed that translation history must attend to three forces: *patronage* (those who commission, fund, or sanction translations), *poetics* (the dominant literary norms of the receiving culture), and *ideology* (the worldview that constrains what can be said and how). Through these categories, Lefevere showed how figures like Edward FitzGerald or Bertolt Brecht's translators reshaped foreign texts according to domestic concerns, often distorting originals to serve receiving-culture agendas.

1.2. Venuti: Invisibility, Domestication, and Foreignization

Lawrence Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (1995, second edition 2008) offers the most sustained historical argument about Anglo-American translation practice. Venuti traces a long-standing preference in English-language publishing for "fluent" translations that read as if originally written in English, a practice he calls *domestication*. He contrasts this with *foreignization*, a strategy that preserves the linguistic and cultural otherness of the source text. Crucially for translation history, Venuti situates these strategies within centuries of evolving norms, showing how seventeenth-century translators like John Dryden codified domestication and how nineteenth-century figures like Friedrich Schleiermacher articulated the alternative. Venuti's history is also political: he argues that the translator's invisibility reflects an ideology of transparent authorship that erases the labor and interpretive choices of translators, and that recovering translation history is partly a project of restoring agency to these forgotten figures. His later *The Scandals of Translation* (1998) extends this by examining the marginalization of translation in the academy, copyright law, and publishing economics.

1.3. Munday: Mapping the Discipline

Jeremy Munday's *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (first edition 2001, now in its fifth edition, 2022) functions as the standard textbook overview and provides one of the clearest

accounts of how translation history has developed as a subfield. Munday surveys major historical paradigms from Cicero and Jerome through Luther, Dryden, and Schleiermacher into the twentieth century, situating each within its theoretical context. Beyond synthesis, Munday has contributed original work on microhistory and archival methods in *Evaluation in Translation* (2012) and various articles arguing that translation historians should use translators' drafts, correspondence, and paratexts to reconstruct decision-making processes. This *microhistorical* approach has become increasingly influential, complementing the broader cultural histories produced earlier.

Anthony Pym's *Method in Translation History* (1998) offered the first systematic methodology for the subfield, arguing that translation history should be centered on translators as agents rather than on texts in the abstract. Pym proposed four principles, including the focus on the social context of translators and the importance of explaining why translations happened when and where they did. Theo Hermans, in *Translation in Systems* (1999) and earlier work on the Manipulation School, examined how translation norms operate historically within literary systems, drawing on Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory. Lieven D'hulst has written extensively on the historiography of translation, including the question of how translation history itself should be periodized and narrated. More recently, Christopher Rundle's edited *The Routledge Handbook of Translation History* (2021) consolidates these debates and represents the current state of the field.

Across these scholars, certain themes define translation history as a coherent inquiry. There is consistent attention to translation as a site where cultures negotiate identity and difference, particularly in colonial and postcolonial contexts (an emphasis Bassnett developed alongside Harish Trivedi in *Post-colonial Translation*, 1999). There is shared insistence that translators are not neutral conduits but historical agents whose choices reflect and reshape power relations. And there is a methodological consensus that translation history requires interdisciplinary tools drawn from cultural

history, sociology, and book history, rather than purely linguistic analysis.

2) The scope of Translation History

Translation history is a sub-branch of translation studies, which deals with the developmental process of translation with its own concepts and methods. (Rizzi et al, p.2) Translation history can be categorized under three main categories: the first one is the actual history of translation, which deals with the historical findings about how translation was practiced, utilized and conceptualized throughout the human history, the second one is translation historiography, namely how translation history has been written and the last not but not least, 'metahistoriography' of translation, which deals with the epistemological and methodological aspect of the writing of history. (Rizzi et al, 2019, p. 5) Pioneers of translation history defined the branch by approaching them in different aspects: As an illustration, Antoine Berman (1984) defined translation history as the main task of the modern theory of translation, while Jose Lambert considered it as an activity which is necessary to legitimize the new discipline of translation studies (Rizzi et al., 2019 p. 76)

In terms of conceptualization, historians, regardless of the field that they deal with have two main missions, collecting the data and interpreting them. Translation history also possesses the same concept, since its research area is as wide as the human history itself, as we the earliest proof of the existence of translation activity traces back to 4500 BC and many ancient civilization from Egyptians to Romans considered translation as an important activity for several reasons like trade, science or art (Eruz, 2003, pp. 22-23).

Munz (1997) defines explains the reason behind the researchers' enthusiasm for translation history, by referring the people's desire to recognize themselves:

“At one end of the scale there is idle curiosity and the fascination of the exotic; in the middle, there has always been the desire to learn from other people's experiences; and at

the other end there is the assumption that one's past defines one's identity and that the perception, even though it may be spurious or imagined, of a shared past promotes a sense of community. In addition to these various aesthetic, didactic and political reasons, there is the fact that we are the products of the past ... only the past explains why we are here and why we are the way we are (p. 833).”

According to D'Hulst (1994), function of translation history gives people several advantages like preventing them from adhering simple theories without questioning as well as understanding the structure of the discipline by showing the underlying relationships between divergent approaches and practices, by underlying the fact that translation history provides researchers the intellectual flexibility, which they needs when regularly adapting their ideas to new viewpoints (pp. 12-13).

Yet another important researcher, Pym (1992) explains the reason behind the existence by demonstrating their benefits when people needs to express, address and try to solve the problems affecting their own situation (p. 8) Moreover, Pym underlines the fact that translation history can contribute to other branches of science by describing the evolution of individual cultures by revealing the external forces that have interfered in the culture in question through translation. Furthermore, Pym (1992) categorized the epistemological outcoming of translation into four: archeological accumulation of the data, dependence on anecdotal evidence, arbitrary periodization and finally reluctance to see translation as possible agents rather than expression of historical change. (p. 8)

It can be inferred that, translation history is necessary to understand the evolution of our own culture in order to refrain from cultural assimilation and carrying our values to the future. That is, translation history demonstrates us the way we built our own culture throughout history as well as our relationship between several other cultures. For instance, in the Reorganization or '*Tanzimat*' (*Reformation*) Era of the Ottoman history, French literature and the ideas emanated from the French revolution has an undeniable effect on the literature of the era, as well

as the westernization of Turkish society. Yet another period that built the modern culture of Turkish society as well as its literature and literary polysystem is Hasan Ali Yücel's efforts related to literary translation in the early republican era (Aydın, 2025). Therefore, numerous research options for the translation historians that can shape today's concept of translation is already included in our own 'translation history'. Therefore, translation history cannot be underestimated and new methodologies should be developed in order to revive and improve it.

What is also important in translation history is the constructing narratives. Since the mission of the researcher is not simply collecting the data but interpreting them by the guidance of the correct methodology and interdisciplinarity of the translation studies. Because, narration and interpretation of the translation history also shape the understanding of research in Turkish academia and approach of the future researchers towards translation studies and translation history. Patronage and ideological interventions are main handicaps towards objective narration in translation history, besides prejudices and clichés. Therefore, originality and unicity are also important in the process of writing the translation history.

3) Translation history and new Research Fields

In their article, Santoyo (2006) mentions several fields of translation which is rather underestimated by researchers of the translation studies. The first one is, oral interpreting since it is rather based on secondary sources and innumerable anecdotes, which makes it far away from using the correct methodology, which requires to carry out a centuries-old activity like oral interpreting, and he accentuates how large topic it is by encouraging researchers to deal with it more by utilizing the correct methodology of oral history (p. 13).

Yet another topic that he considers as an underestimation in the field of translation history is carrying out research on daily translation activities rather than translating literary or informative texts.

As Santoyo (2006) asserts:

“In point of fact, such translated texts are the only ones that count in any history of this art and craft, and it is quite evident that only minor references to other types of texts are found in the partial histories of translation published so far. Everyday, common, unerudite, unscholarly translations have hardly ever attracted the attention of historian (p. 15).”

It can be easily inferred that, what Santoyo (2006) asserts is also valid for Turkish academia. Most of the works related to translation history is rather related to literary translation like those published by Turkish academics such as Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar or Cemal Demircioğlu. When Tahir-Gürçağlar published her book related to the politics and poetics of translation in Türkiye, she only dealt with the novel publishing and how it shaped the Turkish polysystem in the Early Republican Era. However, translation is an activity which is not limited with written translation types like technical or literary translation. Unfortunately, we still feel the lack of the adequate sources related to the development of Oral Interpreting in Turkish Academia. Of course, there are numerous publishing related to the methodology of oral interpreting like '*Sözlü Çeviri: Çalışmaları ve Uygulamaları*' ('*Oral Interpreting: Studies and Practice*') by Aymil Doğan (2017), but a detailed source related to appearance and evolution of the oral history in Türkiye or Turkish society throughout histories is still required in order to understand the historiography of oral interpreting and contributing to the further studies that will be carried out related to oral interpreting in Türkiye.

In fact, oral translation is an activity which is more practiced in real life comparing with literary translation and practiced by not only a narrow intellectual environment such as authors or academics, but also by a large group of people who works for the tourism sector as well as foreign trade and even at the immigration services provided by the government. When we consider how big the oral interpreting market is, it is impossible to think that it is not as rooted as written history in Türkiye. Thus, several research related to the development of oral interpreting in the tourism sector can be carried out,

especially by carrying out surveys and interviews with local seller at the touristic locations of Türkiye. Yet another suggestion for studying daily translation in Türkiye is carrying out surveys and interviews with freelance translators, who works for translation offices translates so-called simple documents which are brought to translation offices by ordinary customers. These are only some of numerous possible research topics related to the history of oral interpreting and daily translation.

4) Expanded Discussion on Turkish Translation Historiography

The Turkish context offers a particularly rich case for translation history, and two scholars whose work has shaped this field deserve closer engagement: Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar and Cemal Demircioğlu. Their contributions illustrate both the achievements and the methodological orientations of Turkish translation historiography, while also pointing to the gaps that remain.

Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar's work titled '*The Politics and Poetics of Translation in Turkey, 1923–1960 (2008)*' is the most sustained English-language historiographical study of translation in the early Turkish Republic. Drawing on descriptive translation studies and polysystem theory, she examines how translation functioned as an instrument of cultural planning under the new Republic, focusing on the activities of the state-sponsored *Translation Bureau (Tercüme Bürosu)* established in 1940 and dissolved in 1966. A central argument of the book is that the field of translated literature in this period was shaped by two competing forces: the canonical, government-sponsored translations of Western classics produced by the Translation Bureau and published by the Ministry of Education, and the popular translations produced by private publishers operating largely outside state control (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2008). By placing these two domains in dialogue, she demonstrates that there was no uniform conception or practice of translation during the early Republican era, and that translation both shaped and was shaped by the ideological and poetological currents of the period.

Moreover, Tahir-Gürçağlar (2005) provides a comprehensive historiographical critique of the Turkish translation tradition, particularly focusing on how institutional translation initiatives during the early Republican era served as instruments of cultural planning and westernization. Her work titled '*Kapılar: Çeviri tarihine yaklaşımlar*' (*The Doors: Approaches towards Translation History*) published in 2005, demonstrates that the history of translation in Türkiye is inextricably linked to state-led ideological projects and identity formation.

Beyond this monograph, Tahir-Gürçağlar has made important methodological contributions to translation historiography, most notably through her work on paratexts. In her influential *chapter "What Texts Don't Tell: The Uses of Paratexts in Translation Research"* (2002), she argues that paratextual elements—prefaces, footnotes, covers, titles, advertisements, and reviews—are indispensable resources for the historian of translation, particularly in domains such as popular literature where translators rarely produce explicit theoretical reflections on their work. Paratexts, she contends, allow researchers to reconstruct patterns of production and reception, and to problematize concepts such as authorship, originality, and anonymity that conventional textual analysis cannot easily access (Tahir-Gürçağlar, 2002). This methodological intervention has been widely adopted in subsequent translation history research, both in Türkiye and internationally.

As the present paper has noted, however, Tahir-Gürçağlar's historiographical focus has primarily been literary translation, and particularly the novel and other forms of written canonical and popular fiction. While this focus has produced substantial scholarship, it also exemplifies the broader tendency identified by Santoyo (2006) in which non-literary, oral, and everyday translation practices remain comparatively neglected.

Cemal Demircioğlu's scholarship represents a different but complementary strand of Turkish translation historiography, one centered on the Ottoman tradition and the conceptual genealogy of translation in the Turkish language. His doctoral thesis, *From Discourse to Practice: Rethinking*

"Translation" (Terceme) and Related Practices of Text Production in the Late Ottoman Literary Tradition (2005), was the first systematic study to examine Ottoman translational concepts within the framework of descriptive translation studies, and it earned the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) Young Scholar Award in 2007 for its contribution to historical translation studies.

A central argument running through Demircioğlu's work is that the modern Turkish term çeviri and the Ottoman term terceme are not synonymous but rather culture-bound and time-bound notions that reflect different conceptions of textual transfer. In his article "*Osmanlı Çeviri Tarihi Araştırmaları Açısından 'Terceme' ve 'Çeviri' Kavramlarını Yeniden Düşünmek*" (2009), Demircioğlu argues that applying contemporary Western definitions of translation retrospectively to Ottoman practices obscures the distinctive features of the Ottoman literary tradition, in which terceme encompassed a wide range of text-production activities, including paraphrase, commentary, abridgement, and adaptation, that would not be classified as translation under modern definitions. This insight aligns with the metahistoriographical concerns articulated by D'Hulst (2001) and Rizzi et al. (2019), since it foregrounds the danger of imposing anachronistic categories on historical materials.

Demircioğlu has further developed a research model he terms "action-oriented discourse analysis," which is designed to map translators' behaviors through specific linguistic markers in Ottoman texts and to contribute to the genealogical study of translational terms and concepts in the Turkish literary tradition. His monograph *Çeviribilimde Tarih ve Tarihyazımı: Doğu-Batı Ekseninde Bir Karşılaştırma* [History and Historiography in Translation Studies: A Comparison between East and West] (2016) extends this comparative perspective, juxtaposing Eastern and Western historiographical traditions and arguing for a culturally sensitive approach to writing translation history. His chapter "*Altaic Tradition: Turkey*" in *A World Atlas of Translation* (2019) similarly situates Turkish translation history within a broader, non-Eurocentric framework.

The works of Tahir-Gürçağlar and Demircioğlu together demonstrate that Turkish translation historiography has produced sophisticated and internationally recognized scholarship, particularly on literary translation, on the institutional history of the Translation Bureau, on the methodological uses of paratexts, and on the conceptual history of translation terms in the Ottoman tradition. At the same time, their work also confirms the gap this paper has identified: even in this rich scholarly landscape, oral interpreting and everyday translation practices remain at the margins of the field. Building on the methodological foundations they have established—particularly Tahir-Gürçağlar's attention to paratexts and Demircioğlu's emphasis on culture-bound conceptual analysis—future research could productively extend translation historiography in Türkiye toward the underexplored domains of oral, vernacular, and non-literary translation.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that translation history is not merely a retrospective account of translation activities but a critical field that contributes to the understanding of cultural, intellectual, and social development. By engaging with key theoretical perspectives, it has become evident that translation history operates at multiple levels, including the documentation of past practices, the interpretation of historical data, and the critical examination of historiographical methods. In this regard, the contributions of scholars such as Rizzi, Pym, and D'Hulst highlight both the richness and the complexity of the field.

One of the central arguments of this study is that translation history plays a crucial role in shaping disciplinary awareness within Translation Studies. By revealing the interconnectedness of translation practices across time and space, it enables researchers to question simplified theoretical assumptions and to adopt more flexible and context-sensitive approaches. Moreover, translation history contributes to a deeper understanding of how cultures evolve through interaction, particularly in cases like Turkish history, where translation has

functioned as a key driver of modernization and cultural transformation.

At the same time, the discussion has underscored significant gaps in the existing historiography. Following Santoyo's critique, it is clear that areas such as oral interpreting and everyday translation practices remain underrepresented, despite their widespread presence in real-life communication. This imbalance reflects a broader tendency within the field to prioritize literary and elite forms of translation while neglecting the contributions of non-institutional and non-literary actors. Addressing these gaps requires the adoption of new methodologies, including oral history techniques, fieldwork, and empirical research based on interviews and surveys.

Finally, this study emphasizes that the writing of translation history is inherently interpretative and therefore susceptible to ideological influences, patronage, and bias. For this reason, researchers must remain critically aware of their own positionality and strive for methodological rigor and originality. Expanding the scope of translation history to include diverse practices and perspectives will not only enrich the field but also provide a more comprehensive understanding of translation as a fundamental human activity.

In conclusion, the future of translation history depends on its ability to move beyond traditional boundaries and to embrace interdisciplinary, inclusive, and innovative research approaches. Such an expansion will ensure that translation history continues to evolve as a dynamic and relevant field within Translation Studies.

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