This report offers a brief historical and cultural lexicon of the Turkish terms/concepts for translation by means of available primary and archival materials and proposes a small-scale genealogy of Altaic tradition in two main parts. In the first part, a special focus is on Uighur Turkish in Central Asia (Old Turkic period, 9th century), followed by Anatolian Turkish developed in Asia Minor since the 11th century (West Turkic). Due to insufficient historical research and data on translation within the paradigm of Translation Studies, the report will not scan translational terms/concepts in Qarakhanid, Qharezm and Chagatai Turkish, which are members of East Turkic tradition. In the second part, the report reviews translation as concept and practice, focusing especially on the Turkish literary discourse of the late 19th century since this era is a period of the Turks’ encounter with Europe, hence, a period of shifting civilization from the East to the West, which led to a change in translation conception (see Paker 2006; Demircioğlu 2005).

Keywords: Altaic tradition of translation, Turkish terms/concepts for translation, translation as concept and practice in Ottoman society

Turkish is a member of the Turkic languages, a subgroup of the Altaic family and is historically spoken over a larger geographical area extending from Southwest, Central and Northern Asia to Eastern Europe and Asia Minor. Belonging to the southwestern (SW) or Oghuz branch of the Turkic languages, Turkish was historically introduced into the multilingual and multicultural environment of Asia Minor in the 11th century by the Seljuk Turks who captured a land from the Byzantine Empire and adopted Persian as the official language of the Sultanate. Since the 13th century, Turkish became the literary language of the Oghuz Turks during the time of principalities emerged after the fall of the Seljuk Sultanate of Anatolia and continued to be the official language of the Ottoman Empire from the mid-13th to the 20th century.
1. Identifying translation in East Turkic

The genealogy of the terms/concepts relating to translation in Turkish has been traced back to the Old Turkic literature produced in Central Asia, especially to classical Uighur literature, which appeared between the eighth and the thirteenth century before the Uighurs’ adoption of Islam. This is not to say that Turkish literature in Central Asia starts with the Uighurs. Formerly, there were the Köktürks who ruled in the sixth to eighth century in Central Mongolia and produced some of the earliest written examples of Turkic language.

After defeating the Köktürk dynasty in the Orkhon region in 744, the Uighurs migrated to Tarim Basin and Turfan in 850 in response to Kirghiz pressure and ruled there up to the early-thirteenth century. Hosting Buddhism, Manichaeism and Christianity, the Uighurs gradually produced their own literature via translations, especially from Buddhist and Manichaean sources which appeared formerly in Sanskrit, Tocharian, Sogud, Chinese and Tibetan. The classical Uighur literature was fundamentally shaped by translation within a multicultural and multilingual environment (Ölmez 1997: 240) and it was Indian and Chinese traditions contributed to the shaping of Turkish culture and literature in Central Asia.

The first translation in Uighur Turkish, i.e. *Maytrisimit Körünç Nom Bitig* (A Book for Spectacles Named Maytrisimit), draws our attention to the terms and concepts associated with translation. It was translated by a Buddhist missionary and translator, Pratnarakşiti Açari, from the mediating language Tocharian into which the original Sanskrit text was rendered by a Toharian translator, Aryaçintri Bodhisattva Kşi Açari, probably during the first centuries of the Christian era. Recounting religious stories on Buddha’s life, *Maytrisimit* was used by many Buddhist missionaries to teach Buddhist thought to the Uighurs gathered for a public square performance (Tekin 1995/2008: 99–111). A recorder’s brief note on the translation does not only illuminate the verbs related to translation but also it helps us see the cultural appraisal of the translation process: *yaratmak* (to create or to adapt) and *evirmek* (to translate). In the recorder’s discourse, *yaratmak* appears as a verb indicating to make or find suitable, to adapt, to approve or to agree with something, and the Toharian version was identified to be something like an adaptation. However in the case of Turkish translation, the act of translation was identified as *evirmek*, meaning to turn, to overturn and to translate from one language into another. *Evirmek* was also used as a synonym for *ağtarmak/axtarmak* (to convey) as well as for *çevürmek* and *tevürmek* (to translate) (see Clauson 1972: 959; Caferoğlu 1993: 6). *Altun Yaruk* (The Golden Light) was another rendering illuminating translational terms/concepts. It was translated in the early 11th century from Chinese into Uighur Turkish by a Buddhist missionary, scholar and translator, Şingo Seli Tutung, in which the verb *döndermek* with the variants *tongtarılmak*, *agtarılmak*
appears as representing translation, meaning to turn something over or to invert. It is interesting that it was *döndermek* (with its noun derivative *döndermeklik*) but not *evirmek* frequently used as a verb of Turkish origin to identify translation in Old Anatolian Turkish since the 13th century.

2. Identifying translation in West Turkic

In the 11th century, Turkish was introduced into Asia Minor by the *Oghuz* Turks who had formerly embraced Islam and learned its essence orally from the educated Muslim missionaries who were active in the Turkistan and Horasan region. In great numbers, the Turks gradually moved to Asia Minor through Iran away from the Mongol invasion in Central Asia and by the end of the 11th century they had established the Seljuk sultanate of Anatolia in Konya. The Seljuk sultanate adapted Iranian literary models and used Persian not only as the official language but also as the language of education. It was *Oghuzca* which remained spoken in the public sphere by administrators for the purpose of daily communication and Arabic was commonly used in producing religious texts.

After the Seljuk sultanate of Anatolia was vanquished by the Mongol invasion which continued throughout the 13th century, Anatolian principalities emerged as the offshoots of the Seljuk sultanate. In the time of principalities, Turkish gained importance as a literary language and *Germiyanoğlu* and *Aydınoğlu* were the leading principalities promoting Turkish to translate works from Persian and Arabic, which had already established their own canons of written literature. Unsurprisingly, many of the translations were on Islamic history, mythology and mysticism due to a need to islamize Turkish tribes migrated from central Asia to Anatolia since the 11th century and thus the first interlinear Turkish translations of the *Qur’an* was also seen in this period. Turkish renderings especially from Persian helped to form a vernacular literature and served for public education. There were also intra-vernacular translations from other Turkic languages. The terminological and conceptual system of translation in Turkish started to become heterogeneous in linguistic and conceptual composition and one can see terms/concepts of Turkish origin together with those borrowed from Arabic and Persian as well as from European languages since the literary modernization started at the late 19th century (see also Tahir-Gürcağlar and Paker and Milton 2015: 3–8).

In the paratexts of religious and mystical prose-translations, *döndermek* appears as a term of Turkish origin. There are terms of Arabic origin associated with translation as well. One of the fourteenth century translations in the principality of *Germiyanoğlu*, known as *Marzubân-nâme Tercümesi* (Translation of *Marzubân-nâme*), is a good example. This was a book of advice for princes
translated by Şeyhoğlu Mustafa into Old Anatolian Turkish from a Persian source which itself was an abridged translation of an assumed source in Old Persian in the eleventh century. When Marzubân-nâme was translated, there were already in circulation the terms of Arabic origin attached to Turkish verbs, for instance nakl eylemek (to convey). Tarih-i İbn-i Kesîr Tercümesi (Translation of İbn-i Kesîr’s History) illuminates one of the terms and concepts of translation also circulated in the fifteenth-century Turkish prose. It was rendered by Muhammed b. Mahmûd-ı Şirvânî, famous physician and translator, from İbn-i Kesîr’s El-Bidâye ve’n-Nihâye fi’t-Târîh (14th century). The translator’s introduction makes it explicit that it was Sultan Murad II who obviously offered patronage and commissioned Şirvânî to produce a clear and accessible translation in Turkish. In the paratext, tercüme olunmak (to be translated) emerges as a verb of Arabic origin used to denote the act of translation.

Another term related to translation, tasnif (re-arrangement/compilation), comes to the fore in the first intra-vernacular translation Kitab-ı Güzide (The Distinguished Book). This was translated in the fourteenth century by Mehemmed bin Bali into Old Anatolian Turkish from Ebu Nasr bin Tahir bin Muhammed Serahsi’s book, Güzide, in Qharezm Turkish and served as a significant work on Islamic catechism (Tekin 2000: 168). The translator’s introduction implies that there was a need to translate from a vernacular: from the eastern into the western dialect of Turkish. The paratext draws our attention to a close connection between translating (döndermek) and compiling (tasnif idenmek). Mehemmed bin Bali used the verb “to translate” (döndermek), jointly as identifying himself to be a person who complied (tasnif iden) a text by changing (tagyir iden) his source. This implies that, even in a vernacular translation, three operations are clearly interrelated: translating (döndürmek) a source through compiling (tasnif itmek) and changing (tagyir itmek).

In fact, tasnif refers to the act of writing an original book in Turkish in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. However, the paratexts of interlingual translations like Güzide indicate that tasnif also obviously associates with rewriting or compiling a source by way of translation. One of the early-fifteenth century translations, Gülîstan Tercümesi (Translation of Gülîstan) is an interesting case to see the close relationship between compiling and translating in a work that identifies itself as translation. Translated in 1433 from Sa’dî’s Gülîstan (The Rose Garden), the famous thirteenth century Persian poet, Mahmûd bin Kâdi-i Manyâs version was an abridged translation that exhibited orthographical features of Arabic, Persian and Uighur Turkish. Manyâs aimed to arrange (tasnif) a book and translated eight chapters in the form of prose from Sa’dî’s canonical verses. Seeing the Turkish of his time as inadequate to translate from Persian, Manyâs considered tasnif and tercume to be related acts. His discourse fairly reveals that translation (tercüme) appears as a practice associated with compilation or, in reverse, compilation (tasnif) associates
with translation (tercüme). In his discourse, tercüme itmek or tercüme kılmak were the verbs indicating the act of translation.

One of the late-fourteenth century books of political advice, Kenzü’l-Küberâ ve Mehekkü’l-Ulemâ (A Treasury of the Greatest and the Measure of Learnedness) by Şeyhoğlu Mustafa, poet and translator, is another example to observe translational terms/concepts in Old Anatolian Turkish. Şeyhoğlu identifies his version as an indigenous (telif) and a strange compilation (tasnif) in Turkish. In this case, tasnif emerges as compiling an indigenous book. However, studies on this work draw attention to a translational relationship between Şeyhoğlu’s text and a Persian source. Mustafa Çetin Varlık identifies this work as a translation from the Necmeddin-i Razi’s Persian original Mîrsâdî’l-İbâd (1230–1231) (Varlık 1979: 547). Similarly, Orhan Şaik Gökyay points to a translational relationship between Şeyhoğlu’s Kenzü’l-Küberâ and Necmeddin-i Razi’s Mîrsâdî’l-İbâd (Gökyay 1976: 37–51) and Kemal Yavuz states that Şeyhoğlu made use of Razi’s work as a model (Yavuz 1991: 11). Şeyhoğlu also identifies his text as “dressed” in Turkish, which implies a text in another language that might have served as a source for his Turkish version.

One of the early-fifteenth century works by Muhammed b. Mahmûd-ı Şirvânî, known as Cevher-name (The Book of Jewels), draws our attention to translational behavior in Turkish at that time. Cevher-name is presented as an original work (Argunşah 1999) albeit it was an assumed translation. Şirvânî articulates that he was commissioned by Timurtaşoğlu Umur Bey to render (döndürmek) an Arabic book on valuable jewels, i.e. Ezhârü’l-efkâr by Yusuf b. Ahmed-i Tîfâşî (d. 1253), a thirteenth century Arabic thinker and critic, and that he intended to write (yazmak) a book, omitting some parts and adding some elements he took from other books he found useful. His explanation links his version to an implied source(s), making use of them to produce his version. In the translation, türkiye döndürmek (to turn into Turkish) appears as representing to translate into Turkish and tasnif emerges as a translation-related form of text production that needs to be considered as a practice of structural change in rendering a source text and of multiplicity in thematic import in Turkish in that time.

Three romance narratives that refer to the same source story in Persian, Hurşid-name by Şeyhoğlu Mustafa (1387) and Cemşîd ü Hurşid by Ahmedî (1403) and Cemşîd ü Hurşid by Cem Sultan (1478), provide translation related terms and concepts in relation to rewriting. Referring to Selmân Sâvecî, a fourteenth-century Persian poet, and his mathnawi of Cemşîd ü Hurşid written in 1369, the poets versified in Turkish the story of Cemşîd and Hurşid, two protagonists, making use of Selmân Sâvecî’s work as a source. It is Şeyhoğlu who complains of the difficulties in conveying (nazmi nakl eylemek) an original verse into Turkish. For him, retaining formal equivalence brings about difficulties in conveying (nakl) the subject
matter of the Persian original. Cem Sultan mentions that he translated Sâvecî’s text by dressing the original in an Anatolian garment (Rûmî libâs) to accomplish his translation.

Gülşehri’s translation of Ferideddin Attar’s Mantıku’t-Tayr (Conference of Birds) is also another work to distinguish translational terms/concepts used in verse narratives. As an important poet-translator of the 14th century in Anatolia, Gülşehri translated Ferideddin Attar’s Mantıku’t-Tayr, thirteenth century Persian poet, using the expression Türkî suretinde söylemek (to tell in Turkish) to describe his act of translation (Özkan 1993). In a similar vein, in Süheyl ü Nev-bahâr, the first romance narrative identified in Anatolia, certain verbs associated with translation draw attention. Süheyl ü Nev-bahâr was a translation by Hoca Mesud, one of the greatest of the fourteenth century poets, although the source text has not been discovered (Dilçin 1991: 53–54). Hoca Mesud refers to himself as the interpreter (terceman), which is a piece of evidence for identifying his version as translated (şerh: commentary). However, Hoca Mesud gives neither the name of his source text nor that of the original poet. In the section titled “Sebeb-i nazm-ı tercemân-ı in-kitâb” (The purpose of the interpreter in versifying the book), he used the verbs “Türkî’ye dönmek” (to turn into Turkish) and “Türkî’ye getürmek” (to bring to Turkish) and “Türkice şerh eylemek” (to comment on in Turkish) to describe his act of writing a book. These verbs refer to various acts of translating or at least of writing a book through translation and to that translating and commentary are interconnected practices.

Sevdâ’î’s translation of Leylî and Mecnûn gives clues to see other representations of translation in circulation. In his introductory part, Sevdâ’î reports that he was requested by his friends to render Persian Leylâ vü Mecnûn into Turkish as verse. Speaking of his act, he uses the phrases Türkçe nazm inşa eylemek (to construct verse in Turkish) and Türkçe kılmak (to make Turkish), both indicates culture specific acts of translation.

In his translation of Menâkıb-ı İmâm-ı A’zam (Stories on the Great Imam), Şemseddin Sivasî, a Halveti sheikh and poet who lived in Sivas in the sixteenth century, provides us with certain metaphors or images attributed to translation. Şemseddin Sivasî states that he extracted his version from Arabic (Arap dilinden ihrac itmek) and dressed it in a Turkish garment (Türkice dibâc giyürmek). Similarly, another garment metaphor is seen in Sâbir Pârsâ’s Gûl ü Nevruz (The Rose and Nevruz), eighteenth century mystic thinker and poet. In the section where Sâbir Pârsâ explains the goal of his translation, he states that he translated a story about Gûl and Nevruz, making his homeland Anatolia adorned by way of dressing a Persian text in a western (Anatolian) garment. To describe his act of translation, he uses the phrase Türkîce dibâc giyürmek (to dress in a Turkish garment).
Chapter 10. Altaic tradition

As a result, various sources examined here point to diversity in translational terms and/or concepts. In East Turkic such verbs as *evirmek, yaratmak, aktarmak, çevirmek* and *döndermek* denote translation, and in Anatolia from the fourteenth century onwards, verbs such as *döndermek, nakl eylemek, terceme/tercüme olmak, terceme kilmak, terceme itmek, tasnif itmek, tagyir itmek* and their related noun forms as *döndermeklik, terceme/tercüme, mütercem, nakl, tazmin* were all in use. The diversity which has been documented above adds up to certain variants in the form of collocational verbs from the fourteenth to eighteenth century that refer to the act of translation and that need to be discovered by other explorations: *nazm nakl eylemek, be-tazmin getürmek, mütercem itmek, Türki suretinde söylemek, Türkiye dönmek, Türkiye getürmek, Türkçe şerh eylemek, Türkçe nazm inşa eylemek, Türkçe kilmak, Türkçe dibac giyürmek, dîbâ-yi Rûmi giyürmek.*

3. Identifying translation in Ottoman lexicons

In Ottoman Turkish, *terceme* (ترجمه) signifies a loan word derived from Arabic and made up of “t-r-c-m” letters in the *fa’lale* or *dehrece* meter. Even though *terceme* seems at first glance to be an Arabic word, it has an Aramaic origin. In his *Die Aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen*, Siegmund Fraenkel points out that *terceman* in Arabic [as well as *terceme*] was genealogically an Aramaic word which entered not only Arabic but also Hebrew (Fraenkel 1962: 280; see also Orhonlu 1993: 175; Okiç 1966: 29). *Tercüme* with its variant *terceme* were in circulation in Anatolia and survived as orthographic variants for many years in Turkish. *Tercüme* does not represent the modern orthographic variant of *terceme* but is linguistically regarded as an erroneous usage (*galat*), which means a term introduced into Turkish from other languages, especially from Arabic and Persian, with a change either on its original meaning or on its orthography.

3.1 Terceme in dictionaries translated from Arabic

The definition of *terceme* in *Vankulu Lügati* (Vankulu’s Dictionary), a well-known Ottoman Turkish dictionary of the late-sixteenth century, gives clues about the interaction between Arabic and Ottoman linguistic system. *Vankulu Lügati* was a translated dictionary, first published by İbrahim Müteferrika in 1728, served as a guide for the Ottoman literati (Furat 1988: 202–203). The author Mehmed Vani Efendi, an Islamic jurisconsult and lexicographer, rendered his version from an early-eleventh century Arabic-into-Arabic dictionary, known as *el-Sihah* by Cevherî. In *Vankulu Lügati*, *terceme* was defined as interpreting one speech in
another language (Mehmed Vani (trans.) 1755–1756: 408). *Terceman* (interpreter) was also defined as a person who interprets one’s word into another language. The definitions of *terceme* and *terceman* draw our attention to the close relationship between translation (*terceme*) and commentary (*şerh*) and exegesis (*tefsir*) in Arabic tradition.

It is also illuminating to review a translated dictionary of the early-nineteenth century known as *El-Okayânûs el-basît fi tercemeti’l-kâmûs el-muhît* (El-Okayânûs, The Simplified Translation of Kâmûs el-Muhît) by Mütercim Asım. In Asım’s dictionary, *terceme* (vocalized as *terceme*) was defined in a similar way (Mütercim Asım (trans.) 1817–1818). *El-Okayânûs* was a bilingual version of the Arabic dictionary of the early-fifteenth century by Ebu Tahir Muhammed b. Yakub Firuzabadi, translated in the early-nineteenth century by Mütercim Asım, a prominent lexicographer, historian, poet and translator. The translated version was published with critical annotations providing Turkish equivalents to some Arabic and Persian words and was presented to Sultan Mahmud II. *Terceme* is clearly defined in connection with *tefsir* (interpretation/ exegesis) and *beyan* (explanation, statement) and thus it was expected from a translator to interpret, to explain and to state the original in the target language. This is to say that possible additions, expansions or omissions were also expected by the target culture. With regard to the definitions in both dictionaries, *terceme* appears to be a notion associated with interpretation, explanation and statement. Both provide us with certain bases for understanding the origins of Ottoman conceptions of *terceme* which seem to have imported from Arabic lexicographical discourse via translation.

In order to check the connections between *terceme* and *tefsir* (interpretation/exegesis) in Persian, *Lügatnâme*, an early twentieth century Persian dictionary by Dihhûda, an eminent Persian lexicographer, would be a good example. In *Lügatnâme*, it is not surprising to find such connections. In the dictionary, *terceme* is defined as to interpret one language in another and to state one’s words in another language; additionally, to translate (*terceme yapmak*) means to turn/translate a word or writing in another language, to state one speech or an expression in another language (Dihhûda 1919, vol. 12: 560). As seen, *terceme* in Persian too was associated with *tefsir* (interpretation) and *beyan* (explanation) and the definition of *terceme/tercüme* in Ottoman Turkish lexicons has similar orientations both in Arabic and Persian as part of Ottoman interculture.

At this point, it is useful to examine *terceme* in several Ottoman Turkish dictionaries which appeared in the late-nineteenth century. Traces of Arabic and Persian definitions will then become even more evident.
3.2 Terceme in Ottoman Turkish dictionaries

Terceme in Ottoman lexicons was commonly associated with exegesis, interpretation, expressing/stating and conveying, which demonstrates translation-bound terms in lexical discourse. Definitions also indicate a regularity which connects terceme in Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish dictionaries. The way of defining terceme point out two aspects of translation in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century: It does not only represent an interlingual transfer but it also points to an expected function as to interpret, to express and to state the original.

On top of that, nakl (conveying) of Arabic origin was another term corresponding to terceme/tercüme in lexicons. In translated dictionaries, e.g. Vankulu Lügati, it was defined as to convey an object from one place to another. Similarly, in El-Okyanûs it was to convey an object to another place. However, in the lexicons in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, nakl appears to be clearly defined in connection with terceme as seen in Hüseyin Hüsnû’s Ilaveli Müntehabat-ı Lügat-ı Osmaniyye (The Supplemented Collection of Ottoman Words) (Hüseyin Hüsnü 1880–1881: 493). Additionally, nakl also appears as a concept related to writing a copy of a text, i.e. either original or translated. The same aspect of nakl is also seen in Şemseddin Sami’s definition in Kamus-ı Türkî (Şemseddin Sami 1899–1900: 1469). Sami defined nakl as synonymous with terceme.

Two definitions which appeared in Mecmua-ı Lisan (Language Magazine) are illuminating to understand Ottoman definitions of translation in relation to French terminology. Mecmua-ı Lisan was a popular magazine organized several translation competitions. In the magazine, terceme is defined with reference to French terms version and traduction. What seems interesting is that traduction signifies free translation (mealen terceme) while version indicates literal translation (harfiygen terceme) in its discourse (Mecmua-i Lisan, no. 10, pp. 76).

In the lexicons of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, we find çevirme, a noun derivative of çevirmek (to turn), used as a synonym of “to translate” not as a lexical entry but as a term in explaining translation. In Kamus-ı Türkî (Turkish Dictionary), Şemseddin Sami mentions çevirme in defining terceme (Şemseddin Sami 1899–1900: 395), speaking of two kinds of strategies: harfiygen (literal) and mealen (sense for sense), but noticeably without mentioning any other translation strategies. In Reşad Faik’s Mükemmel Osmanlı Lügati (The Perfect Ottoman Dictionary), çevirme also appears to define nakl (Reşad Faik [undated]: 944). In fact, çeviri would be used as a neologism derived from the verb çevirmek and intended to correspond to translation in modern Turkish discourse. It would gain importance after the Turkish language reform movement for purism in the 1930s as a result of an ideological attitude towards Ottoman culture and literature (Paker 1998, 2002; Tahir-Gürçağlar 2008) and would not appear as a lexical item even in
the 1930s. Since the 1930s, words of Arabic and Persian origin in Turkish were regarded as linguistically and culturally “foreign”. Arabic and Persian lexical items were gradually excluded from Turkish as a result of certain official and institutional interventions.

Several guides started to offer terms of Turkish origin instead of those of Arabic and Persian origin, some of French equivalents were added to the definitions of translation as seen in the publications printed by Ülkü Mecmuası. This demonstrates that çevirmek was offered as an item corresponding to terceme etmek in the early republican discourse, intending to replace it with a coinage of Turkish origin. However, it is the fact that the transition operated at the intra-lingual level in the republican period resulted in narrowing down the definition of terceme while attaching old definitions as well as their labels to a new habitus.

4. Translation in Ottoman literary discourse in the late nineteenth century

The final quarter of the nineteenth century in Ottoman culture witnessed a gradual increase in the number of translations from the West, especially from French literature. The 1880s and the following decade provide many data for reviewing discourses on literary translation. One meets a number of statements, evaluations as well as discussions on Ottoman translation practices not only in newspapers and magazines but also in the prefaces of translated books. All of these indications need to be considered in relation to the changing society that witnessed major cultural, literary and institutional transformations and reforms that had been undertaken since the reorganization (Tanzimat) period started in the late 18th century and continued throughout the 19th century.

4.1 Metaphors about translation

Kemal Paşazade Saîd, eminent Ottoman translator, teacher and member of the Supreme Council, draws attention to an interesting definition of translation in his well-known work Galatat-ı Terceme (Errors in Translation) with eighteen note-books. In the second notebook, Saîd offers a mystical metaphor in Persian in order to describe translation (terceme) in Turkish (Kemal Paşazade Saîd 1888–1889). He sees terceme as to convey the sense of the words of one language into the enveloping words of another language whereby the sense is regarded as water according to a Persian statement: the word is an envelope and sense is like water. He also perceives ornaments as acceptable interventions in literary translation since, for him, they are like chemicals added to water so as to preserve it from the new words that may damage the sense. Saîd’s metaphor implies a certain mystical analogy between envelope
(zarf), i.e. letters, and enveloped (mazruf), i.e. meaning, referring to an Islamic epistemology of form and content. He defines terceme as conveying the sense of the original by replacing words between languages. Placing a strong emphasis on preserving the meaning in terceme, Said deployed water to represent the meaning which would never lose its essential properties even when it was poured into a new cup. Meaning was ideally regarded to be an invariant element that remained unchanged even though words of the original were changed in the process of translation. In his mind, translation was only a kind of interlingual rewording without taking into consideration the possibility of syntactic/semantic changes or obligatory shifts that would affect the construction of meaning in the target language.

Nabizade Nazım, writer, poet and translator, suggests a garment metaphor for translation which appeared in the magazine Afak in 1882. In the paratext of his translation from the English poet, translator and literary critic Matthew Arnold, Nabizade Nazım identifies his translation as a French beauty dressed in an oriental garment (quoted from Kolcu 1999: 94). Nabizade’s metaphor, which echoes a similar metaphor from the fifteenth, sixteenth and eighteenth century, indicates that a translation of verse may exist in an oriental garment in terms of its appearance but at the same time it may contain a western essence in terms of its internal nature. He interestingly compares his translation to an attractive and desirable woman, genderizing the receiver-sender poles in translating between the East and the West.

4.2 Translation as “imitation” and “emulation”

A number of illuminating discourses on translation in the final quarter of the nineteenth century may be found particularly in the so called “classics debate” of 1897. With important views aired by prominent Ottoman writers/translators, the debate offers a fruitful point of departure for the understanding of the cultural, linguistic and literary interest in translating from Europe as well as its significance for Ottoman society. The debate prompts certain awareness for observing how the Ottoman literati perceived translation in that period, shedding light on various aspects of translation related to its definitions, terms and concepts as well as strategies.

The classics debate, which continued approximately six months, was sparked off by Ahmed Midhat, an important Ottoman novelist, translator, publisher, journalist and the owner of the newspaper Tercüman-ı Hakikat (Kaplan 1998: 8; Paker 2006; Demircioğlu 2003). Ahmed Midhat called on the talented pens of his time to make European classical works known to Ottoman readers. His attempt to arouse interest in translating European classics goes back to the idea he had launched in his preface to Sid’in Hulāsas (1890–91) i.e. his summary translation of Pierre Corneille’s Le Cid. In the preface, Ahmed Midhat placed a strong emphasis on the need for translating European classical works for Ottoman readers, offering his summarized
version as a product comparable with translation. A few years later, in the course of the classics debate, he again called attention to the same issue and claimed that translations of such classical works-by European neo-classical but not Greek classical writers-would serve the progress of Ottoman readers. Though he accepted translating from neo-classical and romantic writers, i.e. Corneille, Goethe, Racine and Shakespeare), he rejected translating the works of realist French writers such as Zola, Richepin and Bourget. The reason behind this was his perception of realist writers as harmful in relation to Ottoman moral values at that time. Another important point is his conception of imitation (taklid), which he discussed in relation to translating European classical works. Ahmed Midhat approved the imitation of French literary works if they served as literary models (Demircioğlu 2009).

In the debate, Ahmed Cevdet, chief editor of the newspaper İkdam, was the first writer who not only responded to Ahmed Midhat but also drew attention to the difference between conveying (nakl) and imitation (taklid). For Ahmed Cevdet, imitation was different from conveying a text into another language and it should be considered separately from translation. Regarding the connection between terceme and taklid as two related concepts and practices in Ottoman culture, Cenab Şahabeddin, the poet of the Edebiyat-ı Cedide movement (New literature), objected to imitating classical works of European literature. Criticizing Ahmed Midhat’s conception of what a “classic” was, he thought of imitating the classics as harmful but supported the idea of translating by way of examination (müatalaa). His main emphasis was on understanding the moral values and mental progress of mankind and thus underlined the connection between translating and imitating European classical works in terms of their benefits or harmful results for Ottoman literary progress. In a similar vein, Necib Asım, philologist, considered that imitating the works of ancient writers was harmful, whereas translating (terceme) and examining (müatalaa) their works were beneficial and necessary. Proposing a classification of four possible strategies of translating into Turkish, he identified imitation as one of the strategies practiced in Ottoman tradition for centuries.

Statements in the debate on the connections between translation and imitation reveal that European classics should be translated but not imitated. This idea points to a principal difference in identifying translation by considering it separate from the practice of imitation. However, imitation was overtly discussed in relation to conveying (nakl) and translating (terceme) European classical works. In other words, imitation came up in connection with translation in the discourse of the debate, appearing as a translation-bound concept. French works were taken as models for producing Ottoman texts, giving imitation a special role in the making of a new repertoire. Terceme and nakl and taklid were all representing primary notions indicating particular ways of Ottoman translation practices in the late nineteenth century.
In the system, there is also another translation-bound concept that was still at work in the course of Ottoman literary modernization: nazire or tanzir (emulation). Conventionally, nazire means producing a parallel, responsive or competitive verse composed in the same meter and rhyme as its source, signifying a poetic genre which became prominent in Ottoman literary tradition since the fifteenth century. Ottoman pens, either in prose or verse, made use of structural and narrative elements of some French novels to produce similar works which lacked in the target pole in that time. Nazire was also practiced to produce new poems in western style. Abdülhak Hamid, prominent post-Tanzimat poet and diplomat, identified his Nesteren (1878) as an emulation of Pierre Corneille’s Le Cid, identifying his work as a “pure-Turkish-rhymed tragedy” (facia) which was not only associated with western and Arabic meter but also “written” on the basis of western poetic forms. Hamid defined nazire as a mode of producing a reflected text (in’ikâs) without referring to translation as emulation even though his text was obviously based on a French source. He clearly regarded nazire as translational because he took it as a transfer strategy. For him, the receiving culture may adopt many cultural, linguistic or textual properties from the original source and use them in its own environment for the purpose of emulation. Hence, Hamid’s practice shows that nazire also appears as a cross-textual transfer, indicating that the emulator could make use of the story, theme or plot of the original and assimilate it to the target cultural and literary environment with modifications.

4.3 Functions attributed to translation

In the late nineteenth century, translation discourses were engaged mainly with the question of what had to be expected in translating from Europe. Cultural functions of translation were the central issue and, generally speaking, literary figures emphasized that translation contributed much to the progress of Ottoman culture and literature where it could fulfill a number of useful functions. Translation was seen as a means of introducing new genres and shaping new literary products. Hence, it was attributed a function by which it would not only improve Ottoman culture but also develop Turkish which had not yet been standardized. The “classics debate” of 1897 was a good example to see how Ottoman literary as well as non-literary agents focused essentially on the significance of translating European literary works into Ottoman Turkish. Participants held both explicitly and implicitly that translation was a strong and necessary instrument for Ottoman cultural and literary development. Thus, the most noticeable idea on translation in this period was the need for translating from the West and its decidedly formative roles on Ottoman cultural and literary life.
4.4 Translation and progress

Kemal Paşazade Saîd’s perception of translation is particularly illuminating to understand formative roles of translating from Europe. In the preface he wrote to Müntehabat-ı Teracim-i Meşahir (Selections from Famous Translations) by İbrahim Fehim and Ismail Hakki (1889–1890), Saîd offered a very noteworthy definition of translation foregrounding its innovative roles necessary for Ottoman socio-cultural progress. His definition sheds light on the context of how translating from Europe contributed to Ottoman society and served as a tool for Ottoman institutional and cultural modernization. According to Saîd, Ottoman society met its needs through the import of both western progress and new ideas, drawing attention particularly to newspapers and journals which promoted translation and played pivotal roles not only in providing Ottomans with reading materials but also in making western science and culture known to Ottoman readers.

Ahmet Midhat’s discourse was also a good example of illuminating how translation was related to the notion of literary progress. He called attention to the translation of classical works from the West as a means of acquiring European literary development. In his preface to his translation of Pierre Corneille’s Le Cid, he suggested transferring European classics and accepted them as models to produce Ottoman texts comparable to those of Europe. His thoughts are significant in terms of his understanding of the translational contact with western literatures, reiterating the view that European texts could also be appropriated. His notion of model indicates that he had a particular approach to translating from European literatures by means of a number of strategies. What seems significant is his perception of Europe as a source for importing new literary products into Ottoman society, emphasizing that the great works of Europe needed to be accepted and loved as literary models for Ottoman literary progress (Demircioğlu 2009).

Generally speaking, the idea of taking European works as models reminds that there might have emerged an a priori discourse on the need for translating foreign works for the benefit of Ottoman target readers. The classics debate was an exemplary case to see the existence of a need for translating the great European works, focusing on the pragmatic benefits to be gained from their translation. Yusuf Neyyir, translator of Graziella by Lamartine, emphasized in the late 1870s the very necessity of translating rather than generating indigenous works. In the preface to his translation, he stated that Ottomans had to translate until they reached an adequate level so as to benefit from the European scientific and cultural heritage. Appreciating Europe as a civilized community whose development in the sciences and arts had materialized, Yusuf Neyyir considered that Ottoman society could satisfy its own essential needs as well as improve its sciences and arts through translating from the West. Necib Asım, philologist and writer, also pointed out the importance of
translation in his Kitap (The Book) (1893–1894). Devoting an entire chapter to translation, Asım re-emphasized the benefits of translating from other languages in his contribution to the classics debate a few years later. Even though Necib Asım objected to imitating, he established a certain connection between translation and the notion of progress. He had a favorable view of translation and appreciated its benefits, emphasizing that translation would serve in both developing Turkish and enriching the Ottoman library. He encouraged translators to use intelligible Turkish, calling attention to the problem of intelligibility in translation. For him, translation should be clear and useful and his attitude towards the linguistic quality of translations stemmed from the movements for plain Turkish which had begun by that time. In a similar vein, Şemseddin Sami, novelist, journalist, translator and lexicographer, argued that word-for-word translation (harfiyyen terceme) would lead to the purification of Turkish rather than its distortion. In the preface to his famous translation of Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe, Sami claimed that Turkish would not only be made plain but also more beautiful by translating from European languages. He questioned lacks and gaps in Ottoman literary system with respect to European literature and compared the current position of Ottoman classical literature with its European counterparts, looking critically at Ottoman cultural and literary progress and the question of imitation. For him, Europeans were much more developed than Ottomans in technical, cultural and literary matters and he complained about the lack of works in Turkish, comparable to western works in terms of style and content, which could be read with pleasure by the people with taste. Sami argued that western cultures had achieved progress through translating the great works of the East into their languages and suggested filling in the gaps by benefiting from western knowledge and literature.

4.5 Translation and Ottoman moral values

For some writers and translators morality was an important issue that was regarded as a primary aspect in translating from Europe. They emphasized the significance of moral values in translating from the West, underlining suitability to the Ottoman socio-cultural values with a proposal of certain norms that needed to be followed in the selection of a European text for translation. Writers/translators assumed ethics -even if imported from the West via translations- to be a means to serve Ottoman cultural and literary progress. Yusuf Neyyir argued that one of the major tasks of literature was clearly to elevate Ottoman morals and his arguments point to cultural norms essential to adopt in the process of translation. One of the articles in the newspaper Hayal in 1874 clearly illustrates cultural expectations. The article emphasized that the case of scientific and literary progress in the Ottoman Empire
calls for extensive translation from the West and certain norms be adopted when selecting source books for translation for the benefit of Ottoman readers.

Discourses related to moral values point to an epistemological distance between Christian and Muslim moral values and practices and during the 1870s a considerable emphasis was on keeping the moral values of the Ottoman society free of European influence not only in the production of domestic literature but also of translated literature. Intellectuals tried, on the one hand, to modernize Ottoman culture and literature through translations from the West but, on the other hand, they attempted to preserve the ethical values of the receiving culture by drawing attention to certain norms. What’s interesting is not only a wish to modernize but also a wish to define boundaries to modernization.

Some of the writers concentrated on what kind of novels needed to be translated for Ottoman readership, for instance Halid Ziya who was the second major contributor to the development of the Turkish novel and short story and an advocate of the realistic approach in the novel. Evaluating translated literature from the West, Halid Ziya criticized romantic novels translated into Turkish in the late nineteenth century in terms of their lack of literary value and intellectual quality. His intention was to provide his readers with real life incidents rather than offer a fantastic and romantic representation of life. Romanticism and realism were among the significant topics of discussion on literary translation and debates on literary theories of the time had a concrete impact on the production of translated literature in Ottoman culture.

5. Translation strategies in discourse

In the late 19th century, writers and translators spoke of various types of Ottoman translation practices, ranging from harfiyyen (literal), aynen (as the same) to mealen (sense-for-sense) and tevsien (expanded). Other methods were also practiced, such as hulâsa (summary), taklid (imitation), tanzir (emulation) and tahvil (conversion). Translation strategies in that period were multiple and thus need to be considered with beyond binary terms in a range extending from fidelity to freedom.

5.1 Bipartite strategy: As the “same” versus “free”

In his work Kitap, Necib Asım pointed out that there should be two main ways of translating: as the same (aynen) and free (serbest). For him, free translation should be practiced mostly in translating scientific and technical works to grasp European scientific knowledge and produce an intelligible text for the target readers.
intelligibility as the primary goal in free translation, Necip Asım saw necessary to adopt free strategy for the domain of science and technology; however, he advocated literal strategy for the literary domain. What is remarkable is his proposal of literalness as a norm to be adopted in literary translation. Necib Asım was critical of the translators who just conveyed the writer’s ideas but not the figures of speech and thought. Hence, he discredited non-literal translation strategies which, for him, resulted in simple derivations in translation, and advocated fidelity as opposed to free translation in rendering literary works.

Şemseddin Sami was also another supporter of fidelity in translating literary texts. In his preface to his translation of Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe, Sami emphasized both using plain Turkish and fidelity to the original. Similar to Sami, Ismail Hakki, translator, followed literal strategy (aynen ve harfiyyen) in his translation of Raphael by Lamartine in 1896–1897, surprisingly apologizing to his readers for his long and complex sentences in his translation.

In translating texts as literal (aynen/harfiyyen) or free (serbest), certain historical connections emerged between Ottoman and Arabic translators. The discourse of Manastırılı Mehmed Rifat, a military officer, playwright and translator, is a case in point. In his preface to Cevâhir-i çihâryâr ve emsâl-i kibâr (Jewels of the Four Caliphs and Great Proverbs), Manastırılı Mehmed Rifat drew attention to two strategies of translation practiced by several Arabic translators. He stated that he had made use of the sense-for-sense (mealen) strategy which was described by Salahaddin-i Safedî, an Arabic savant and translator in the fourteenth century, in his commentary on Lamiyyetü'l-Âcem (printed in Cairo 1888). As seen in Mehmed Rifat’s preface, Arabic translators had followed two kinds of strategy in translating Ancient Greek works into Arabic: word-for-word and sense-for-sense translation. Mehmed Rifat also stated that figures of thought and metaphors could not be transferred to the target language by using literal strategy. Thus he preferred sense-for-sense translation (mealen), informing his readers that he did not translate word-for-word in his work (harfiyyen terceme ve aynen hall) (Demircioğlu 2013).

5.2 Tripartite strategy: “As the same”, “sense-for-sense” and “expanded”

In his work titled Şöyle Böyle (Somehow), which includes translations mostly from French poetry, Muallim Naci referred to certain strategies he identified not only as the same (aynen) and sense-for-sense (mealen) but also as translating by way of expansion (tevsien). Perceiving each strategy as belonging to Ottoman translation practices, Naci drew attention to expanded translation as a particular form of free translation in which the translator added expressions that would serve to explain and adorn the sense of the original. What is striking is his description of expanded
renderings as *terceme* and his perception of this strategy as part of the Ottoman practice of literary translation.

Like Muallim Naci, Saffet Nezihi, a post-*Tanzimat* translator, classified translation strategies in his article “Terçemelerimiz” (Our Translations) published in *Malumat* in 1902. He identified three types of translation (*terceme*): full conformity with the original (*asîna tatamen mutabık*), sense-for-sense translation without being distant from the original (*asîndan tebâüd edilmeksizin mealen*) and sense-for-sense with expansions (*mealen ve tafsilen*). Recommending translators to follow one of these strategies, he stated that each could have certain pitfalls in conveying (*nakl*) literary texts from western languages.

5.3 Quadripartite strategy: “Sense-for-sense”, “imitation” and fidelity to “figures of speech” and “thoughts”

In his article “Klâsikler” (The Classics), which appeared in the course of the classics debate of 1897, Necip Asım identified four strategies. As for the first path, Asım drew attention to the strategies followed in the production of Turkish translations, particularly from Arabic and Persian. He referred to the translation of *Makamat* by Hariri, a twelve-century Arabic writer and linguist, as a typical example of *aynen terceme* (translating as the same) in which both the figures of speech and thought of the original were entirely preserved in translation. With respect to the second path, Asım referred to several translations of Sadi’s *Gülîstan* in Turkish as another example of literal translation in which only the figures of thought of the original were preserved in translating from Arabic and Persian. Asım significantly recommended translators to follow the second strategy when rendering European classical works into Turkish. As for the third path, he drew attention to conveying the sense of the original, which appears as problematic in terms of his conception of translation. Claiming that some Ottoman pens did not produce translations but just conveyed the subject matter in the way they understood the original, he interestingly considered conveying the subject matter of the original as a translating strategy but did not identify texts that were generated in this way as translations. In his fourth category, he referred to both *hamse* (i.e. five *mesnevis*) and Yusuf Kamil Paşa’s translation of *Terceme-i Telemak* (of Fénelon’s *Les Advences de Télêmaque*) as examples of imitation. Even though he referred to such works in terms of translation -for instance he called *Terceme-i Telemak* a translation- he identified these works not as translation but as imitation.

In particular, his negative views on translations promoted by newspapers and journals reveal that he favored translations which were close to their originals, in other words, texts in which the textual and linguistic integrity of the original was
preserved. On the basis of his classification of translation strategies, which was obviously formulated on the basis of textual transfer, one can conclude that the strategies 1 and 2 in his classification correspond to his conception of what translation really was terceme while the ones 3 and 4 do not. Even though he intended to exclude the strategies 3 and 4 from his notion of terceme, each category represents the culture-bound practice of Ottoman text production through translation. Asım was also critical of the practice of literal translation in Ottoman interculture because of the very presence of Arabic and Persian vocabulary in the translations. According to Asım, literalness in the strategy 1 resulted in a kind of non-translation in Turkish. This would be the main reason why Asım suggested the second path as suitable for translating European classical works in which only the figures of thought, not the figures of speech of the original, should be preserved.

5.4 A mode of converting between genres: “Tying” and “loosing”

Ahmed Midhat’s preface to his Konak yâhut Şeyh Şâmil’in Kafkasya Muhârebâtında Bir Hikâye-i Garîbe (Mansion or a Strange Story about Şeyh Şamil’s War in the Caucasus), a translation of Adolf Mützelburg’s historical novel Der Held von Garika: Roman aus den Laendern des Kaukasus, indicates that tahvil corresponded to converting texts into Ottoman Turkish. In his preface to Amiral Bing, a novel possibly translated from Paul Foucher and Antoine Nicholas Joseph Bovy’s play L’admiral de l’escadre bleue drame historique en cinq actes et dix tableaux, Ahmed Midhat used the term in the sense of converting a play to a novel.

In the preface to Cevâhir-i çihâryâr ve emsâl-i kibâr (Jewels from the Four Caliphs and Great Proverbs) by Manastırî Mehmed Rifat, certain terms (akd and hall) appear as related to translating from verse to prose and vice versa. In this work, in which Manastırî Mehmed Rifat inserted translations from Arabic into Turkish of the proverbs attributed to the four Muslim Caliphs, he translated many works from Arabic, Persian and French by following several strategies, one of which he identified as “akd” and “hall”, both signify converting or changing a text from one state to another. Manastırî Mehmed Rifat referred to akd as converting prose into verse and hall as converting verse into prose, considering both as part of the Ottoman practice of translation.

Describing his method of translation or conversion, he suggested an assimilationist approach which indicates a kind of free translation or a form of rewriting or adaptation. Manastırî Mehmed Rifat has in mind scientific and technical translation, which he perceives it as rewriting. He explained his way of conversion, which had been practiced frequently in the art of eloquence in Ottoman tradition. In his discourse, tahvil (conversion) is a method closely related to translating from one
literary medium into another, and in this sense, *akd* and *hall* represent two kinds of translation practice. Manastırlı Mehmed Rifat made use of *hall* as a translation method to convert Arabic verse into Turkish prose, identifying three types of *hall*. In the first, defined as *edna* (inferior), the original verse was converted to prose by keeping the same words of the original without resulting in any semantic loss. However, this strategy was considered to be inferior since it gave rise to a kind of non-translation. In the second type, defined as *tarz-ı mutavassit* (intermediary), the translator could change some of the words of the original, paying attention not to violate its meaning. In the third type, which was not given a name, the translator was expected to produce a successful rewrite of the original verse. Mehmed Rifat’s views show us that *hall* functioned as a rewriting strategy in Ottoman literary practice and thus, *tahvil* (conversion) appears as one of the culture-specific practices of Ottoman *terceme* tradition.

5.5 Translation as “summary”, “commentary” and “explanation”

In Ottoman literary system, there were works also generated in the form of *hulâsa* (summary) of other works. Within this genre, Ahmed Midhat emerges as an important literary figure that followed *hulâsa* as a translation strategy in the late nineteenth century. In the preface to his summary translation of Pierre Corneille’s *Le Cid*, Ahmed Midhat refers to himself as *muharrir* (writer) and opens a dialogue with an imaginary reader. According to Ahmed Midhat, it was important to make such European works known to Ottoman readers. Following particularly the *hulâsa* strategy, he thought it would best serve his informative and pragmatic purposes. A few years after he wrote his preface to *Sid’in Hulâsasi*, Ahmed Midhat reiterated this strategy in the classics debate of 1897, suggesting that it needed to be taken as a solution for the difficulties of literal translation. He even referred to *şerh* (commentary) and *tahşiye* (annotation) as other methods of translation practiced in French literature in translating Ancient Greek works, offering not only to summarize the original but to explain it. He remained closer to the original play in his summary, at the same time, declaring another strategy: writing in the form of commentary and explanation (*şerh* and *tavzih*). Ahmed Midhat’s rationale in explaining his purpose and the functions of his text seem to have been based on the assumption that French culture was distant from Ottoman culture. That is why he starts off by pointing out the lack of a literary genre, such as tragedy in verse, which was foreign to the receiving system. Ahmed Midhat was aware of certain methods and strategies practiced in French literature, which he adopted as models. Translation strategies such as literal (*harfiyyen*), free (*serbest, mealen*) or summary (*hulâsa*) appear to be closely connected to the notion
of intelligibility. In this context, it makes sense why Ahmed Midhat referred to the importance of the summary strategy for producing comprehensible versions. His rationale for the summary strategy may have been connected to his identity and activity as a journalist who valued a communicative language and immediate intelligibility.

6. **Problem of translatability, terminological correspondence and translator’s quality**

The concept of translatability, unavoidably coupled with untranslatability, was one of the key issues in translation in the late nineteenth century and generally discussed in relation to translating verse. Preserving the elegance (*letafet*), impact (*tesir*) and merit (*meziyet*) of verse was considered to be a difficult, or even an impossible task in translation.

In the classics debate, Ahmet Cevdet was the first writer who drew attention to the notion of untranslatability in terms of impact, elegance and merit in translating verse. He argued that it was quite impossible to convey the European classical works, keeping the features mentioned above. He formulated his conception of un/translatability with respect to conveying the poetic features of the verse original and argued that such issues as what was poetical, feelings, the power of language, meanings of words, grammatical features and eloquence of speech and the rhetoric of the original were all untranslatable in poetry translation. His criteria for un/translatability are associated with the problem of conveying the poetical and rhetorical features of the original. He also claimed that translatability would only be possible if the aim of translation was simply to make the existence of literary works of European cultures known to Ottomans. He tended to perceive translatability through attributing a double function to translation: translating for adopting a model and translating for information. According to Ahmet Cevdet, translatability could not be achieved if foreign works were taken as models. He thought translatability possible only in the case of translating for information. Thus he would allow translators to make certain manipulations or changes to the original so as to inform their readers.

Ahmed Midhat considered translatability in terms of connections between verse and prose and strategies of translation. He argued that translatability could not be achieved in the literal translation of verse or prose. In a similar vein, Necib Asım claimed that translating verse as verse was difficult. Necib Asım, because it required making additions and/or omissions, considered that translating verse as verse was almost impossible while translating verse as prose was quite possible. He
proposed translating prose classics from ancient Greek literature with annotations if the goal was to inform the readers. He advocated retaining the virgin images of the original, thus bringing source and target closer to each other.

As for the problem of terminological correspondence, generally speaking, the problem of terminology became a major topic discussed at the end of the nineteenth century when a movement for plain Turkish gained considerable momentum. Parallel to the movement for writing in plain Turkish, some Ottoman writers began to emphasize the importance of using Turkish terminology instead of taking loanwords from Arabic and Persian. However, there was no agreement crystallized on the use of Turkish terminology in the linguistic and literary circles of the time. It is worth noting that he called on Ottoman contemporary writers to assess the equivalents he suggested in rendering from French into Turkish.

In this cultural context, the problem of correspondences appeared as a significant subject of discussion on translation activity. Some Ottoman writers and translators were involved in finding correspondences to certain French terms and concepts. Kemal Paşazade Said appears as the first person to focus particularly on the problem of terminology in translation. In his preface to Nezaret Hilmi’s dictionary Osmanlıcadan Fransızcaya Cep Lügati (Ottoman-French Pocket Dictionary) (1886–1887), he drew attention to erroneous usages in Turkish and the need for producing Turkish terminology. In the series of Galatat-ı Terceme, Said also proposed Turkish equivalents as well as partial translations from the works of famous French writers, some of which were presented to exemplify his suggestions.

Competence was also extremely important not only in the source language but also in the target language. It was underlined that a number of benefits of translating European works into Ottoman culture could only be provided by means of qualified translators. Translators who added long explanations and hence translated with improper equivalents were criticized. Said’s statements indicate that the lack in necessary terminology was also experienced by translators not only in the literary field but also in other fields in Ottoman society such as philosophy, theology, politics, economics, medicine and the military field.

Discourses on translators show that writers were sensitive about the quality of translators, who were expected to be competent and knowledgeable about translation. Ahmed Cevdet’s comment reveals that the translator’s proficiency in Turkish was also regarded as an important matter. He criticized translators working for newspapers and magazines who were generally incapable of using Turkish as their native language.

Mehmed Celal, a poet, translator and critic, focused on errors made by translators in a series of ten articles which appeared in İrtika in 1900–1901. In his first article, titled “Kelimeler Aynen” (Words as they are), Mehmed Celal started by
examining Atamyan’s translation of Médecin des folles by Xavier de Montépin under the title Mecnuneler Tabibi. What he criticized in Atamyan’s translation was the lack of proficiency in Turkish, but the problem he identified was also clearly related to the problem of finding proper and acceptable solutions in the target language. At that time, Turkish had not yet been standardized and transformed into a plain language usable in public and official writing.

In his article titled “Tercüme Hakında Tarihe Müstenid Bir Mütalaa” (A Historical Comment on Translation), which appeared in İrtika in 1899–1900, Bolulu H. Talat, translator, dwelt on the problem of language, claiming that only competent translators should translate texts from Arabic or European languages. He underlined the necessity for a translator to be familiar with the subject being translated. In Bolulu H. Talat’s statements, it is interesting to find some clues to the ways Europeans domesticated some Arabic works in translation. He pointed out that some Arabic works were translated by Europeans in conformity with their own way of living and thinking.

In some discourses we also find definitions of the profession and the task of a translator. For instance, Ali Kemal, a literary figure and critic of the time, reflected on what a translator should follow in the process of translating and compared ‘translating a text’ with ‘writing an indigenous text’. According to Ali Kemal, translating was an act as difficult as writing an indigenous text. It seems noteworthy that he advised a translator not merely to convey but to perform like the author of an original text.

Consequently, Ottoman Turkish discourses on literary translation in the late nineteenth century indicate that there was no uniform and homogenous definition of translation in terms of the conception of Ottoman translation practices. Functions attributed to translation and norms in selecting source texts and the strategies followed by translators show that there were various ways of translating from other cultures and literatures such as harfiyyen (literal), aynen (as the same), mealen (sense-for-sense), mealen ve tafşilen (sfs with explanation), serbest (free), tevisien (expanded), nakl (conveying), iktibas (borrowing), taklid (imitation), tanzir (emulation), tahvil (conversion) and hulâsa/telhis (summary). Furthermore in translation discourse, the notion of translatability, the problem of terminological correspondences and the quality of translators were among the issues discussed by Ottoman intellectuals, writers and translators of the late 19th century.
7. Conclusion

The present report examines “translation” as term and concept in Turkish through a historical survey from the pre-Ottoman to the early Republican period. Presenting a genealogy of the terms related to translation, the report brings to light not only the terms transmitted from East Turkic sources in Central Asia but it also provides a lexicon of the terms used in the paratexts of various translations which came out in the form of manuscript or printed materials. The genealogy indicates that there is diversity in translational terms and concepts in Turkish. In Uighur period, a clear-cut distinction between the act of translating and adapting is striking both in discourse and in practice. After the Turkish migration to Anatolia with religious conversion, the Turks developed a literature in West Turkic (Old Anatolian Turkish), mostly based on translation. In addition to rendering from other Turkish vernaculars into West Turkic, many texts were translated into Old Anatolian Turkish from Persian and Arabic sources. Thus in the literary system at that time, there were not only translational terms of Turkish origin but also those of Arabic and/or Persian origin. The survey of translational terms/concepts in the paratexts of literary and non-literary works show that tasnif (re-arrangement/compilation or rewrite) came up in connection with translation (döndermek, tercüme/terceme itmek) in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Hence tasnif appears not as a culture-specific concept of translation in the pre-Ottoman period, but it also indicates a practice of importing structural and thematic items, in other words, it appears as a practice of compiling or rewriting via translation. The genealogical survey in the pre-Ottoman period also indicates that translational terms and concepts were diverse, and the paratexts of verse narratives in Turkish imply that any text may have a translational relationship with a Persian/Arabic source during the formation period of a literary system in Anatolia and hence they should be assumed as translation.

The report also examines the late nineteenth century definitions of translation (terceme) through the lexicons translated from Arabic into Ottoman Turkish in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as well as through the lexicons which appeared in the late nineteenth century. A comprehensive look at Ottoman Turkish lexicons indicates that definitions of translation had more or less similar orientations with those in Arabic and/or Persian, and that translation (terceme) was generally associated with exegesis/interpretation, commentary, stating/expressing and conveying. This led us to conclude that translation (terceme) in the discourse of Turkish lexicons in the late nineteenth century indicates two aspects of “translation”: first, translation (terceme) points to convey something from one language to another, and secondly a translated work is expected to interpret, comment, state and explain an original text for the target readers.
As put clearly by Theo Hermans, any aspect of translation is “construed” by the members of a particular culture in a certain manner and that a particular culture may “construe” and “label” their own concepts and practices of translation in a different way which may not be compatible with those in other cultures (Hermans 1995: 221). Thus it is essential to pay attention to the culture-specificity of “translation” and examine it as a culture-bound concept in the various ways it was practiced and in the ways it related to cultural and literary issues.

Time-bound aspect is also another important dimension since culture-bound aspects of “translation” are time-dependent. It is obvious that practices and conceptions of translation may change in accordance with temporal lines of a particular culture. Thus, the term denotes possible shifts in the concepts and practices of translation in a given culture, especially in the context of historical continuity/discontinuity. Time-bound aspects of translation seem to be important for cultures such as Turkish tradition, which undergo great socio-political, ideological transformations particularly at the intra-cultural level in time. That is why one needs to regard the culture-specificity of translation as a time-dependent matter when conducting a historical, descriptive and interpretative study of translation in Turkish tradition. It is important to keep translational terms, concepts and practices as they were named and identified by the members of that particular culture. This is also essential to avoid the problem of overlooking and thus erasing cultural, literary and linguistic indications of “translation” while writing a history of a tradition such as the present report. My research for the report indicates that we are constantly faced with the problem of translating “the otherness of other cultures” when writing in “English as lingua franca” (Hermans 1995: 221; Paker 2002: 121).

To conclude, the report shows that terms and/or concepts of translation in Turkish are various and not allowing us to come up with one unique definition of translation. There are different historical forms of translation (terceme) practices, some of which do not conform to our modern notion of translation today. Hence it seems important that any labels for translation as seen in the Turkish case need to be considered without overlooking their time- and culture-bound aspects. Findings of the present report also encourage us to rethink diverging perspectives as well as the undisputable possibility of different definitions related to translation in a tradition in the past as well as today.
References


https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.118


