The Turns of Translation Studies from a CDA Perspective: The Polysystem Theory as a Nodal Discourse in Translation Studies[1]

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Abstract

Inspired by Thomas Kuhn's theory of paradigm shift and guided by Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis (CDA), this paper is concerned with the turns of Translation Studies (TS) from a CDA perspective. It gives account of the way in which Polysystem theory as a nodal discourse redefined translation through the discursive processes of emergence and appropriation, contestation and hegemony, and recontextualization and colonization. This is done by conceptualizing the turns of TS as an order of discourse according to Fairclough's model. The paper attempts to show that the Polysystem theory, having been appropriated into TS, displaced the existing discourses within TS and redefined the methodological and epistemological status of translation by raising a cluster of new conceptual issues, which greatly contributed to the cultural turn in the field. It is concluded that a turn in TS occurs when the three areas of methodology, epistemology and ontology are redefined by discursive processes.

Keywords: Turns of Translation Studies, Fairclough's model of CDA, nodal discourse, Discourse change, Paradigm shift, Polysystem theory

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1. Introduction

The terms "paradigm" and "turn" have firmly established themselves within TS as the nuclear aspects of the discipline's dynamism. This is evident from the widespread use of these terms by TS scholars (see, among others Hermans, 1999; Lefevere, 1985; Pym, 2014; Snell-Hornby, 2006). The concept of "paradigm" has gained wide currency in the academic world since the seminal work of the philosopher Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, first published in 1962. The concept of "turn" as understood in TS is, however, a metaphor taken from everyday English (Snell-Hornby, 2009), or is "a reflexive trope that has come to take the place of paradigm" (Farmer as cited in Bachmann-Medick, 2016, p. 11).

Paradigms and turns in TS have often been attributed to the introduction of ideas and concepts from other disciplines and schools of thought. These ideas and concepts, according to Baker (1998), have resulted in greater insight into the translational phenomena and opened up "new challenges, new avenues of inquiry, and new perspectives on pursuing such inquiry" (p. xiii). However, few scholars have studied the emergence and nature of paradigms and turns in TS within a coherent theoretical and methodological framework. Their approaches have been either historical (Snell-Hornby, 2006), or classificatory (Pym, 2014). Moreover, these scholars have not provided a working definition of paradigm or turn to account for the conceptual and methodological shifts in TS.

The present study is concerned with the contribution of discourse changes to the turns of TS within Fairclough's model of CDA in an attempt to account for the process of turns in TS.

## 2. Review of Related Literature
2.1. Kuhn's Idea of Paradigm

The idea of paradigms was made popular by Thomas Kuhn, who initially used the term "paradigm" in the context of history and philosophy of science. He defined

a scientific paradigm as "universally recognized scientific achievements that, for a time, provide model problems and solutions for a community of practitioners" (1996, p. viii). The paradigm was thus viewed, according to Guerra et al. (2012), as a sort of "methodological and conceptual universe… in which scholars can operate… which delimit the set of concepts and methods that a scholar can work with" (p. 20).

Kuhn's model postulates that the sciences go through alternating periods of normal science and revolution. Normal science is defined as the period when an existing model of reality dominates a prolonged period of puzzle-solving, and revolution occurs when the model of reality itself undergoes sudden drastic change. Chand (n.d.) summarizes the process of paradigm shift according to Kuhn as follows:

> When enough significant anomalies have accrued against a current paradigm, the scientific discipline is thrown into a state of crisis. During this crisis, new ideas, perhaps ones previously discarded, are tried. Eventually a new paradigm is formed, which gains its own new followers, and an intellectual "battle" takes place between the followers of the new paradigm and the hold-outs of the old paradigm. After a given discipline has changed from one paradigm to another, this is called a scientific revolution or a paradigm shift.

Kuhn's theory of paradigm shift can be illustrated with the following diagram:
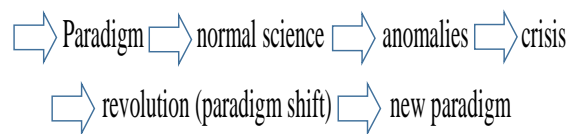
Diagram 1. Kuhn's Theory of Paradigm Shift

Kuhn importantly conceived of paradigms as "incommensurable," (1996, p. 4) meaning that the two paradigms cannot be directly compared by a common standard, as the criteria of judgment depend on the paradigm itself.

2.2. Paradigms in TS

The terms paradigm and turn are widely used in the social and human sciences. TS scholars have also used the Kuhnian concepts of paradigm to account for the discipline's development and dynamism.

One of the first translation scholars who wrote about "a new paradigm" in TS was Theo Hermans. In his introduction to the seminal collection of essays *The Manipulation of Literature* (1985), Hermans saw the Polysystem theory as "an adequate framework for the systematic study of translated literature," (p. 10) which could act as a new paradigm for the study of literary translation. In the same volume, Andre Lefevere (1985) also discusses the concept of paradigm and paradigm change along Kuhn's lines, but he stops short of applying the concept specifically to TS. His main concern is to advance his theory of rewriting, under which he subsumes translation, within the descriptive and systemic model.

Another study that specifically deals with paradigm shift in TS along the lines drawn by Kuhn's theory is Ho's doctoral thesis *Globalization and Translation: Towards a Paradigm Shift in Translation Studies* (2004). As Ho puts it, "the 'anomalies,' i.e., the phenomena of translation theory being seriously out-of-touch with translation practices under the impact of globalization, have developed into a crisis in Translation Studies that is caused by the conflict between the new environment and practice of translation and the old theory of translation" (p. 17).

In her book *The Turns of Translation: New Paradigms or Shifting Viewpoints?* (2006), Snell-Hornby takes a historical view of paradigm shift to discuss the development of the TS into a discipline and interdiscipline. She quotes Vermeer who equates one type of progress with paradigmatic shift and defines paradigm shift as "the straightforward leap to a new idea or point of view" (cited in Snell-Hornby, 2006, p. 2).

Pym (2014) also uses the concept of paradigm to discuss theories in TS. He understands paradigms "as sets of principles that underlie different groups of theories" (p.3). He identifies six paradigms: *(1) equivalence, (2) purpose, (3) description, (4) uncertainty, (5) localization,* and *(6) cultural translation* around which he organizes various translation theories. Pym, however, recognizes the lack of research on the possible social forces behind the various paradigms, and why they have developed historically.

2.3. Objections to the use of Kuhnian concept of Paradigm in TS

Despite the widespread use of the terms "paradigm" and "paradigm shift," Kuhn himself did not believe that it was appropriate to apply the concept of paradigm to social sciences. Some scholars, following Kuhn, believe that there are no paradigms at all in the social and human sciences. Dogan (2001) argues that patterns of mutual ignorance instead of incommensurability, disagreement between scholars, cumulative nature of knowledge, and the proliferation of schools in social and human sciences prevent formation of paradigms in these disciplines. Bachmann-Medick (2016) also views "methodological pluralism, a transcendence of boundaries and an eclectic appropriation of methodologies" across disciplines as preventing the formation of "paradigms" in Kuhnian sense that makes it more appropriate to employ the term "turn" instead, which she defines as "momentous shifts in scholarly attention" (p. 11).

In addition to objections leveled at the Kuhnian concept of paradigm in social sciences and humanities in general, there have also been arguments against the use of the concept in TS. Some translation scholars (Chesterman, 2017; Hermans, 1999) have doubted the appropriateness of applying the term "paradigm shift" to TS. Considering the "yet modest dimensions and achievement" of TS as a discipline in 1999, Hermans (1999) believed that to call on Kuhn's notion of paradigms in the context of translation studies "looks a bit overblown" (p.10). Chesterman (2017), however, refers to the multiplicity of "paradigms" in the field. There is not one shared

paradigm in TS, which is the necessary condition for the development of a single research program covering the whole field. Different sets of concepts, different types of data and heterogeneous methodologies are enumerated by Chesterman as reasons for this lack of single shared paradigm within TS. He also argues that none of the theories, nor models or schools, in TS have yet attained the status of a general paradigm—all are partial in scope. The lack of agreement between scholars on what TS should be like as a discipline, the very interdisciplinary nature of TS, which draws on different research traditions and the very nature of translation as a complex human activity are, according to Chesterman, factors which work against formation of a single shared paradigm within the discipline.

Baker and Saldanha (2020) confirm Chesterman's argument in their introduction to the third edition of *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* by stating that two important new trends continue to shape the development of the discipline: "the first is 'interdisciplinarity,' which involves working across disciplines; the second is 'transdisciplinarity' which involves engaging directly with users and producers of knowledge outside academia" (p. xxv). They also argue that TS has not yet generated sufficient historical research on its own development to see whether it does follow the pattern of change as Kuhn claimed about scientific knowledge.

3. Theoretical Framework

For my theoretical framework, I shall draw on Fairclough's model which he has developed in several of his recent works (e.g. Fairclough, 2006). Fairclough's model provides an understanding of how discourses interact in the processes of transition and change. It describes the effects of discourse on wider processes of social change through a "transdisciplinary" dialogue with other theories and disciplines. As Fairclough explains (2005), a transdisciplinary approach asks "how a dialogue between two disciplines or frameworks may lead to a development of both through a

process of each internally appropriating the logic of the other as a resource for its own development" (p. 54).

In Fairclough's model, the process of change includes three stages: emergence and appropriation, contestation and hegemony, and recontextualization and colonization of discourses. The model can be described briefly as follows:

New discourses are created within an area of research due to changes in the economic, social, cultural, religious or intellectual environments, or introduced into it when scholars or actors within that field appropriate or borrow discourses from other fields. In this stage, a nodal discourse or nodal discourses, which, according to Fairclough (2010), subsume and articulate in a particular way many other discourses, are appropriated or otherwise borrowed from what Malmkjær (2000) calls "feeder disciplines" (p.165). This occurs either because the existing discourses can no longer adequately represent the phenomenon under research or because scholars within a field, or scholars from other disciplines interested in that field, are trying to expand the scope of their research. When nodal discourses are derived from an established field of knowledge, they employ the meta-language of the field from which they are derived to speak about the field into which they are appropriated. Therefore, appropriation or borrowing of a nodal discourse within a field of study will inevitably introduce new concepts and terminologies into that field. The nodal discourses, defined by Fairclough (2006) as a particular configuration of discourses that organize relations between other constituent discourses, usually determine the orientation of research within the borrowing field, and emerge as strategies for change.

The new concepts thus introduced into the new field change the topics of research and help to form significant theories and/or practices. These discourses, having been appropriated or borrowed by scholars within a field, enter into a relation of contestation with other potentially nodal discourses within that field. This is what

we may call "order of discourse" which, in Fairclough's terminology, denotes "a limited range of discourses which struggle in the same terrain" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 27), such as "norms" and "equivalence" in TS domain. Order of discourse also describes a potential or actual area of discursive conflict. The concepts of antagonism and hegemony belong to the level of the order of discourse. As Jørgensen and Phillips put it, "'antagonism' is open conflict between the different discourses in a particular order of discourse, and 'hegemony' is the dissolution of the conflict through a displacement of the boundaries between the discourses" (p. 56).

The displacement of existing discourses occurs through the process of recontextualization and colonization of discourses. The process changes our perception of the object of research by raising a cluster of conceptual and methodological issues that can no longer be adequately theorized by the existing theories within the field of research. Turns are thus viewed, in Fairclough's (2005) terms, "as strategies for achieving and stabilizing a new fix" (p. 55). The movement of a discourse from one field into another entails its recontextualization within the borrowing field, which Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) define as "a new articulation of elements into which it is incorporated" (p. 94). Recontextualization, according to Fairclough (2005), is the selective appropriation of elements of one (nodal) discourse within a field in accordance with "distinctive recontextualization principles" associated with that field (p. 64), like when Physics is recontextualized as school Physics in different pedagogies. These recontextualizing principles, as Fairclough (2005) says, result in "transformations, exclusions and additions of 'material'" moved from one discourse to another (p. 65). Recontextualization relations are thus relations of appropriation–"the principles according to which one field selectively appropriates discourses from other fields" (Bernstein as cited in Fairclough, 2005, p. 65). The concept of recontextualization, as Wodak and Weiss (2005) put it, "incorporates the discursive dynamics and modification of arguments, themes, topoi, and speech acts in the transformation from one field to another" (p.127). Thus,

when discourses are recontextualized, they are articulated with discourses which already exist within the new context. When new discourses enter into a relation of contestation with other potentially nodal discourses within the new context, they raise a cluster of conceptual (ontological and epistemological) and methodological issues that can no longer be adequately theorized by the existing approaches within the new context and thus change the perception of what the object of research within that field is.

4. The Polysystem Theory as a Nodal Discourse in TS
4.1. Emergence and Appropriation

The idea of the Polysystem in TS evolved from the work by Even-Zohar (1978). He used the concept to describe the process of translation production and change within the entire literary system instead of describing the process of the transfer of a single text. In doing so, he borrowed from the ideas of the Russian Formalists, especially Jurij Tynjanov.

Tynjanov introduced the concept of "system" to explain "the relationship of the innovative formal element to the specific text and to the existing literary order" (Gentzler, 2001, p. 133). For Tynjanov, the entire literary and extraliterary world could be divided into hierarchical structural systems. Tynjanov's thinking thus took a historical and structuralist orientation as his goal was, according to Gentzler, to discover the "specific structural laws that govern all systems," (p. 133) including literary texts, which heavily influenced research in TS through appropriation of the idea of the hierarchical literary system.

Tynjanov's concept of a hierarchical literary system was adopted by Even-Zohar, who used it from a TS perspective to study how translations function in various societies. Even-Zohar invented the term "Polysystem" to refer to what Gentzler (2001) calls "the entire network of correlated systems—literary and extraliterary—within

society" (p. 134). He also developed an approach called "Polysystem theory" to explain the function of all kinds of writing within a given culture. Concepts borrowed from Tynjanov—such as "system," "norms," and the notion of "evolution"—were used to frame "his analysis of the intrasystemic relations between conflicting literary structures" (Gentzler, p. 136). Even-Zohar's research entailed the exploration of the complex interrelations among these various systems. As Gentzler states, such a theory rearticulated the system theory proposed by the late Formalists, which Even-Zohar resurrected and incorporated translation into it.

4.2. Contestation and Hegemonic Relations of the Discourses

Unlike earlier models, Even-Zohar's Polysystem theory was not a source-oriented text-specific approach based on the notion of equivalence and did not analyze individual texts isolated from their cultural context. Even-Zohar did employ the notions of translation equivalence and literary function but without pulling them out of history. As Gentzler (2001) argues, instead of having a static conception of what a translation should be, Even-Zohar varied "his definition of 'equivalence' and 'adequacy' according to the historical situation, freeing the discipline from the constraint that had traditionally limited its previous theories" (p. 145). His work, instead, looked at actual translations within the larger sociological context.

Moreover, Polysystem theory presumed that the social norms and literary conventions in the receiving culture (the target system) determined the aesthetic presuppositions of the translator and thus influenced translation decisions (Gentzler, 2001), while early TS scholars tended to look at one-to-one relationships and functional notions of equivalence, believing in the subjective ability of the translator to produce an equivalent text that influenced the literary and cultural conventions in a particular society. These scholars tried to theorize the process of translation and to evaluate the success of individual texts synchronically, which ignored the historical situation which conditioned specific systems of representation. Even-Zohar's

contribution, in contrast, "abandoned attempts at prescription, incorporated descriptions of multiple translation processes and analyzed the various historical products" (Gentzler, p. 130). Polysystem theory thus entered into a relation of contestation with the existing approaches in TS by trying to replace the discourse of "equivalence" with the discourse of "norms" which broadened the concerns of contemporary TS beyond textual relations to contexts of all kinds.

Polysystem theory displaced the linguistic models centered around the nodal discourse of "equivalence" and it related discourses by incorporating a diachronic, functional, descriptive and target-oriented perspective in TS research around the nodal discourse of "norms" instead of a synchronic, formal, prescriptive and source-oriented one. It placed translations in their socio-cultural context and reversed the direction of thought about translation by showing how the social norms and literary conventions in the receiving culture ("target" system) influence translation decisions. With the adoption of the Polysystem theory by translation scholars, the issues that gained prominence, according to Bassnett (2007), "related principally to questions of literary history and the fortune of translated texts in the receiving culture," (p. 16) which enabled the scholars to consider translation from an alternative point of reference, questioning the established norms. As Hermans (1999) points out, the Polysystem theory placed translations in the larger field of cultural activity: "it drew attention to the practical and intellectual needs which translations might be trying to fill and thus provided a way of connecting translations with an array of other factors in addition to source texts" (p. 110). In other words, it integrated translation into broader sociocultural practices and processes.

4.3. Recontextualization and Colonization

Several TS scholars appropriated the Polysystem theory to advance their own projects. Andre Lefevere (1992) elaborated a systems concept of literature and translation along somewhat different lines with more emphasis on social and

ideological factors, and as Hermans (1999) reports, more recent revisions in sociological terms seek inspiration in Pierre Bourdieu's writings on the sociology of culture or in Niklas Luhmann's idea of social systems. According to Gentzler (2001), as translation scholars recontextualized the Polysystem theory within TS, "it entered a new phase in which extraliterary factors such as patronage, social conditions, economics, and institutional manipulation were being correlated to the way translations were chosen and function in a literary system" (p. 141).

Gentzler (2001) argues that Even-Zohar opened the way for translation theory to go beyond prescriptive aesthetics by enlarging the theoretical boundaries of traditional translation theory, which were principally based on linguistic models or literary theories, and "embed[ed] translated literature into a larger cultural context" (p. 145). Gideon Toury seized upon this opening by focusing specifically upon the translation component of Even-Zohar's model and began the search for a new theory of translation.

The approach of the Manipulation School was also based on the concept of the literary Polysystem going back to the Russian Formalists and the Prague Structuralists, but in particular as developed by Even-Zohar. The Manipulation scholars developed their own tenets, methods and theoretical models from this essentially target-oriented starting-point. Their emphasis on the target text, as Snell-Hornby (1998) argues, led to a principally descriptive approach which "explicitly rejected the normative and evaluative attitudes of both traditional translation theory and linguistically oriented translatology" (p. 24). Their approach also brought about a shift of emphasis to the translated text as a historical fact.

Polysystem theory, as Lambert (1995) points out, changed the focus within TS from intertextual relations to "the dynamic functions fulfilled by translation within heterogeneous cultures and societies," (p. 104) as a result of which a host of new questions for research on translation were formulated. The new questions raised under

the influence of the Polysystem approach made translation a legitimate matter for scholarly disciplines like sociology, linguistics, media studies, Bible studies, colonial history, etc.

5. Conclusion

The major reorientations, or turns, in TS are propelled by interdisciplinary resources and consist mainly of the appropriation of core concepts from different disciplines, which typically occurs in the context of an attempt to put forward an overall or partial reconceptualization of the object of study within a field. As Sakellariou (2015) explains, this is usually done "by challenging certain ontological and epistemological assumptions" (p. 2). In the present study, I used Fairclough's model of CDA to theorize the process of turns in TS in terms of "discourse change" through the processes of appropriation, contestation and recontextualization.

As discussed above, the discourse of Polysystem became a hegemonic nodal discourse in TS and translation scholars used this dominant discourse to appropriate and colonize other (dominated) discourses within TS, or discourses from other research fields, which facilitated what was subsequently hailed as the "cultural turn" in translation studies.

As Hermans (1999) points out, the most striking contribution of (poly)systemic thinking to the cultural turn in TS was that it generated a methodology, or methodological models, for research: "it offered a comprehensive and ambitious framework for researchers when looking for explanations and contexts of actual behavior" (p. 102), which produced a great deal of empirical and historical work on translation. Polysystem theory also displaced the epistemological problem of representation by viewing the text as both produced and producing. The new epistemological assumptions of translation, according to Gentzler (2001), viewed

texts "as dynamic and productive rather than static and fixed, and thus contribute[d] to the ongoing post-modern re-valuation of the nature of language" (p. 99).

Polysystem theory changed methodological and epistemological orientations in TS, but it remained for influences from the cultural studies to change the ontological orientation and effectively bring about a cultural turn in TS.

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چرخش‌های مطالعات ترجمه از منظر تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی:

نظریهٔ نظام‌های چندگانه به مثابه گفتمان کانونی در مطالعات ترجمه[1]

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چکیده

این مقاله با الهام گرفتن از نظریهٔ تغییر پارادایمِ تامس کوهن و استفاده از چارچوب نظری تحلیل گفتمان انتقادیِ فیرکلاف به بررسی فرایند چرخش‌های مطالعات ترجمه از منظر تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی می‌پردازد، و توضیح می‌دهد که نظریهٔ نظام‌های چندگانه به‌مثابه گفتمان کانونی ترجمه را از رهگذر فرایندهای گفتمانیِ ظهور و خودینه‌سازی، رقابت و هژمونی، و بافت‌گردانی و مستعمره‌سازی بازتعریف کرده است. این امر با مفهوم‌سازی چرخش‌های مطالعات ترجمه به‌مثابه نظمِ گفتمانی در چارچوب مدل تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی فیرکلاف صورت می‌گیرد. این مقاله تلاش دارد نشان بدهد که نظریهٔ نظام‌های چندگانه پس از آنکه در درون مطالعات ترجمه خودینه‌سازی شد، گفتمان‌های کانونی موجود در این حوزهٔ پژوهش را جابجا کرد و با مطرح ساختن یک رشته مسائل مفهومی جدید، دیدگاه‌های روش‌شناختی و معرفت‌شناختی حاکم بر ترجمه را تغییر داد، و بدین ترتیب سهم بسزایی در چرخش فرهنگی در این حوزه ایفا نمود. یک چرخش کامل زمانی اتفاق می‌افتد که سه حوزهٔ روش‌شناسی، معرفت‌شناسی و هستی‌شناسی در فرایند گفتمانی بازتعریف شوند.

واژه‌های راهنما: چرخش‌های مطالعات ترجمه، مدل تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی فیرکلاف، گفتمان کانونی، تغییر گفتمان، تغییر پارادایم، نظریهٔ نظام‌های چندگانه