

# Reflections and Metaphoric Perceptions of Translator Trainees Related to Translators' Status\*\*

Çevirmen Adaylarının, Çevirmenlerin Statüleri ile İlgili Görüşleri ve Metaforik Algıları

Gökçe Dişlen Dağgöl\* , Duygu İşpınar Akçayoğlu

Adana Alparslan Türkeş Science and Technology University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Translation and Interpreting, Turkey

## Abstract

Throughout history, translation has had a notable role in the spread of knowledge. Contrary to what is assumed, translation is not confined to just finding the equivalences of words. Translators are quite active in the translating process, and translation, as a multidimensional act, requires various skills and responsibilities. However, despite the fact that translation is a very old human activity, translation as a profession seems to require more time to gain the desired status, which is the focus of this study. This study aims to reveal prospective translators' perceptions about their future profession before they start working as professional translators, and it focuses on students' viewpoints about translation, translators, status of translators and the probable ways to enhance the status of translators. Hence, 23 second-year students enrolled in the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies were included in this study. Data were collected qualitatively through reflection papers and open-ended question forms that aimed to elicit the participants' views regarding the definition of translation and suggestions about improving the status of translators. The findings indicate that translator trainees have different descriptions regarding translation, translators, and translation processes and think that translators have low-status. The study provides a number of suggestions of prospective translators to increase the status of the profession.

**Keywords:** Translator Status, Translator Training, English-Majors, Metaphor.

## Öz

Çeviri, tarih boyunca bilginin yayılmasında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Sanılanın aksine, çeviri sadece kelimelerin eşdeğerlerini bulmaktan ibaret değildir. Çevirmenler, çeviri sürecinde oldukça aktiftirler ve çok yönlü bir eylem olan çeviri çeşitli beceri ve sorumluluk gerektirir. Ancak, çeviri çok eski bir eylem olsa da çevirmenlik mesleğinin istenen statüye ulaşması için daha çok zamana ihtiyacı vardır. Temel noktası çevirmen statüsü olan bu çalışma, mütercim tercümanlık öğrencilerinin profesyonel olarak çevirmenliğe başlamadan önce gelecekteki meslekleri hakkındaki algılarını incelemeyi amaçlamakta ve öğrencilerin çeviri, çevirmen, çevirmen statüsü ve statülerini iyileştirmenin olası yolları hakkındaki görüşlerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Mütercim Tercümanlık Bölümüne kayıtlı 23 ikinci sınıf öğrencisi çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Veriler nitel olarak, yansıtma kağıtları ve açık uçlu soru formları yoluyla toplanmıştır. Bulgular, öğrencilerin çeviri ve çevirmene dair farklı tanımlamalarının olduğunu ve çevirmenlerin düşük bir statüye sahip olduklarını düşündüklerini göstermiştir. Çalışma, mesleki statünün artırılması konusunda öğrencilerin önerilerini sunmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çevirmen Statüsü, Çevirmen Eğitimi, İngilizce Bölümü Öğrencileri, Metafor.

\* Corresponding Author / Sorumlu Yazar: gdislen@atu.edu.tr

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## Introduction

Translation has acted as a bridge since the ancient times, and it contributed to development of different sciences even in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries (Yalçın, 2015). The act of translation is known to be quite old. As Munday (2008) notes, the practice of translation was discussed by, for instance, Cicero and Horace (first century BCE) and St Jerome (fourth century CE). However, the development of translation studies is relatively new. Translation has been accepted as an academic field since it was accepted that translation could be taught (Akalin & Gündoğdu, 2010), and as a new branch of science, there are different definitions of translation (Baykan, 2005).

Translation is a multi-dimensional and complicated process (Yıldız, 2004), and it is defined as transferring images and meaning from one language into another (Sunel, 1988). According to Kızıltan (2017), translation, which is as old as human history, is an attempt to overcome the language barriers caused by foreign languages, and it will continue to exist as long as different languages are spoken. Therefore, translation could connect several different languages and cultures, which makes translation essential in conveying information. İli and Komissarov (2016) note that messages are transferred into not only a different language but also a different culture; thus, a translator should overcome both linguistic and cultural obstacles to be understood better by the readers of the target language.

Translation is known to lead to many cultural and social changes throughout human history; therefore, translation and translators play a leading role in every interaction between foreign societies (Ersoy & Erkut, 2014). Translators not only transfer words and sentences linguistically, but they also take the role of cultural mediators and they build a bridge between source and target cultures through cultural communication (Bedeker & Feinauer, 2006; Shirinzadeh & Mahadi, 2015). Therefore, translation is no longer viewed only as a cross-linguistic activity; it is also a remarkable, cross-cultural form of communication (Abbasi, Salehzadeh, Janfaza, Assemi, & Dehghan, 2012). However, successful communication depends on the ability of the translators.

The job of translators is more difficult than it seems because translation is not merely finding the equivalences of words and sentences. Translators must assume many different roles. According to Göktaş (2014), translation is comprised of many stages that follow each other and that are impossible to separate from each other. At this point, translators enable this process to be understandable for those who do not know the language. With such an important mission, translators should gain the status that they deserve in the society.

### 1.1. Translators' Status

The status of translators is covered under the sociology of translation (Chesterman, 2009). Pym, Grin, Sfreddo and Chan (2012) define 'status' as a set of social signals displaying the presumptions that one has a level of qualification or competence in a desired skill and the value which is associated with that skill. They further identify five features that involve the meaning of status as follows:

Table 1.

*Five features that involve meaning of status*

Recognition & Prestige:	Appearance or recognition of the status of the translator in official documents. It could be an indication such as allocating translators or interpreters a category of their own in forms where one's occupation needs to be stated; in other words, recognizing translating as a stand-alone profession which can be classified as a specific field
Authority :	The source of power which provides translators with the certification to carry out translating. The authority

	could come from a government institution, professional body or even educational institutions.
Remuneration :	The status of an occupation is determined by the amount of remuneration it receives for the service rendered and vice versa.
Professional Exclusivity:	One of the features to determine the status of a profession is whether there is exclusivity in the profession, i.e. whether only a small number of people who possess the competence and recognition are allowed to practice while others who may not possess the required skills and knowledge are legally barred from practising their craft.
Trustworthiness :	As the translation process involves bridging two cultures, the element of trust is essential when translators communicate with clients. The trustworthiness of a translator may come from the institution which recognises the translator.

As it is evident in the table presented above, translators' status is a complicated and multi-dimensional concept. It is a quasi-profession that is experiencing a lot of difficulties in gaining the full professional status, and one of the basic reasons for this situation is the lack of recognition attached by the public (Kang & Shunmugam, 2014). Ferreira-Alves (2011) suggests that society has misconceptions and biases about the translators' place and importance in the social system. The study conducted among translators/interpreters by Bahk-Halberg (2007) showed that translation was seen as a low-prestige profession, and for example clients treat translators as secretaries in Korean context. According to Dam and Korning Zethsen (2008), not only translators and translation scholars, but also non-translators agree that translation is a low-status occupation. Dam and Korning Zethsen (2008) also found that translators' salary and potential influence on companies were lower than expected. External views about the translation profession included "seldom recognized and poorly paid" (Venuti, 1995), "low status" (Bassnett, 2002) and "thankless" (Risku, 2004).

Translator trainees may have differing beliefs about the profession before graduation. For instance, the study by Sinković (2018) revealed that translation students perceived translation as a profession of high occupational status, although they also believed that people outside the field do not appreciate their work. There can be differences in the perceptions of translators and interpreters, as well. The study conducted by Katan (2009) indicated that translators viewed themselves as having a middle and low status occupation while interpreters had higher beliefs about their profession. Similarly, Setton and Liangliang (2009) found that interpreters enjoyed higher status than translators, and most of the participants were inclined to lower the importance of their roles as cultural mediators. Actually, translators have different roles, and they make texts understandable and meaningful to the target reader. According to Melkumyan and Dabaghi (2011), translators play a key role in general and literary translation by rendering a unique composition universal. Different metaphors describe their roles such as bridge builders across the space between source and target (Bassnett, 2002), playing a musical score (André, 2014) and puzzle-solvers or musical arrangers (Green, 2010).

All in all, translation and translators take a remarkable role in the spread of knowledge and the enrichment of cultures. Translation involves various mental activities such as language, thinking, problem solving, information processing and perception. A translator acts as an active expert who senses, processes, signifies and produces meaning (Coban, 2015). However, translation as a profession seems not to receive the desired and deserved attention by society. Given that translator training programmes are expected to raise awareness in the translation profession from different perspectives, this study set out to involve translator trainees.

Translator trainees, who are encouraged to think critically and provide solutions about the problems before they start their profession, are more likely to become more conscious about what they do as translators in the future. Therefore, this study aims to elicit translation students' views about translation, translators, the status of translators and possible solutions to enhance the status of translators. It particularly focused on one of the problems of the translation profession, the status of translators, from the perspectives of translator trainees.

## **Method**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This study, which is descriptive in nature, utilised a qualitative approach in order to elicit translation students' perceptions about translation, translators, and the status of translators. The data were collected through reflective essays and open-ended questions.

A strength of qualitative data collection methods is that they enable researchers to obtain in-depth data about a specific topic. The participating students were asked to indicate their views about translation and translators in a detailed way through the questions and metaphors given to them in the open-ended questions form. Metaphors could yield valuable data regarding an issue under investigation. As by its nature qualitative research yields a multitude of heterogeneous pieces of information that have complex meaningful structures, this complexity could be made clearer through the use of metaphors (Schmitt, 2005). Metaphors provide specific, personalized sides to familiar phenomena. Schmitt (1995) states that many, sometimes contradictory, metaphors could be used for the representation of one particular phenomenon.

### **2.2. Participants**

The participants were comprised of 23 second-year students at the Department of Translation and Interpreting in a state university located in southern Turkey. This study was conducted within the framework of Critical Thinking Skills Course and it included only 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. In the second year of their education, the students in the department start to do translation as assignments and take some theoretical courses about translation. Exploration of their views about translation and their future profession in the second year of their education, before they start working as translators and after they receive some theoretical and practical courses about translation, seemed to be a topic worth investigating.

### **2.3. Data Collection Procedure**

In the first phase of the study, the translator trainees were provided with some guiding questions about translation, translators and their status in society. Based on these questions, the students were asked to write a reflection essay. In the second phase of the study, the participants were asked some open-ended questions. Six students did not complete the open-ended questions form; therefore, they were excluded from the second phase of the study. The open-ended questions involved two different parts. In the first part, the students were asked to express their opinions about the status of translators and indicate potential solutions about how to enhance the status of translators. In the second part, they were given some categories (*countries, sports, musical instruments, art and other*) to define translation through metaphors. For instance, they were expected to answer the question "*If translation were a country, which country would it be like? Why?*". The question was constructed in the same way for all the categories. However, the participants were not limited to only these categories; they could indicate their views in addition to these in the "other" category to share *what translation is like* in their opinion.

### **2.4. Data Analysis**

Both the reflection papers and the open-ended questions were analysed qualitatively; hence, the data were subjected to content analysis. In the content analysis approach, the codes are generated from the data; researchers perform careful readings of the data and then establish and apply codes (Rothwell, 2010). Content

analysis of the data through the examination of the codes and patterns enables a contextual and interpretive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Sandelowski (2000) states that as researchers try to understand the latent content of information, qualitative content analysis is interpretive in nature. In line with this, Berg (2001) recommends to provide relevant excerpts from the data if latent meaning is being denoted. Excerpts of the participants' original statements were thus provided in this study.

## Findings

The findings of the present study centered on students' viewpoints about translation, translator, the status of translators and possible ways to improve their status. The analysis of the first element of the reflection paper, which is related to the opinions about translation, was presented together with the students' metaphors about translation in the open-ended questions forms. Then their perceptions about the translator, the status of translators, and suggestions about how to enhance their status were presented respectively.

### 3.1. Findings About the Definitions and Metaphors About Translation

The first item of the reflection paper aimed to identify the students' perceptions about translation. Beside the general and well-known definitions of the translation provided by the students from various sources they cover in their courses, their answers involved insights about the ways in which they view translation. A number of participants mentioned the *"intellectual ability and higher skills"* required by the translation activity (f=4). The students further explained that translation was about the ways to make different cultures, behaviours, or any other messages conveyed in the source text understandable to people who do not know the elements of the foreign culture (f=4). Two students stated that the translation activity was both good (because you have the power to convey meaning) and bad (because a little mistake can ruin everything). Deeper and challenging sides of translation were also mentioned by the students with quotes such as *"translation is beyond changing words"* (f=2); *"translation is beyond word games"* (f=2); *"translation is a hard activity requiring responsibility and patience"* (f=2); and *"you have to triple check everything"* (f=1). On the other hand, a number of students reflected their interest in translation and the importance of translation both in their own life and in the life of others in general. For instance, *"translation is an important activity needed in everyday life"* (f=3); *"translation is a passion"* (f=1); *"I like being lost in words"* (f=1).

Following their views and definitions about translation, the students were asked to describe what translation is like and why. They were also asked to complete sentences such as *"Translation is like ... because ..."*. The findings regarding the metaphors were collected and presented in categories including "metaphors about countries", "metaphors about sports", "metaphors about musical instruments", and "other".

#### 3.1.1. Metaphors about countries.

The students were asked *"If translation were a country, which country would it be like? Why?"*. Responses included both important, joyful, and potentially valuable sides to translation and challenging, complicated, and risky sides that are not often recognized. Some excerpts are as follows:

*"Translation is like Turkey; it is a big country but its development is not given sufficient importance"*

*"Translation is like the Vatican or Italy because of its rich historical background"*

*"Translation is like the climate of Romania. Sometimes it is rainy, sometimes it is sunny; doing translation sometimes involves joy but sometimes it has challenges"*

*"Translation is like South Korea because it requires discipline and even dictatorship"*

*"Translation is like a Middle Eastern country because the translator uses some strategies to make a complicated situation understandable for others"*.

*"Translation is like Turkey because although there are some bright opportunities in every field, they are not recognized. Its real value is not recognized well."*

### 3.1.2. Metaphors about sports.

The students were asked “*If translation were a sport, which sport would it be like? Why?*” The responses included good, valuable, and enjoyable sides of translation that resemble sports. On the other hand, the metaphors involved the importance of doing the right movements just at the right time and using some tactics while making decisions for the right translation, having no second chances, being patient and practising a lot, and having some risks when things are done without sufficient knowledge and experience. Some excerpts are as follows:

*“Translation is like wrestling because although it has a long history, it is not given much attention”.*

*“Translation is like billiards because it is enjoyable, but it requires patience and you only have one shot to make after careful consideration.”*

*“Translation is like Pilates because although it is difficult and painful while doing, there’s relief after it finishes.”*

*“Translation is like Yoga because it makes the mind relax.”*

*“Translation is like swimming because unless you know how to swim you drown; if you do not know how to translate you get lost in the text.”*

*“Translation is like tennis because you need to catch the ball at the right time.”*

*“Translation is like chess because you should know which chess pieces to use as well as how and when to use them.”*

*“Translation is like basketball because you need to know the necessary tactics and maneuvers”.*

### 3.1.3. Metaphors about musical instruments.

The students were asked “*If translation were a musical instrument, which musical instrument would it be like? Why?*”. Responses included the role of practice and knowledge to produce music through musical instruments and using the necessary chords and sounds. Translation involves word choice preferences and strategies that help to produce a similar product. Although people might think that anyone can do it, it actually requires knowledge and practice. Some excerpts are as follows:

*“Translation is like a guitar because just like guitars have many chords, translation has many strategies.”*

*“Translation is like a guitar because everyone thinks that anyone can play it.”*

*“Translation is like music itself because it requires both knowledge and joy.”*

*“Translation is like a Cello because at first it takes so much time to do the first move, but in time it becomes automatic and enjoyable.”*

*“Translation is like a Piano because it involves so many different sounds, and one sound could yield so many different results.”*

*“Translation is like a Piano because it is complicated”.*

*“Translation is like playing any instrument. It requires ability and practice, just like translation”*

### 3.1.4. Other metaphors.

The students were asked to indicate any other metaphors about translation apart from those in the groups. Responses included the knowledge, patience, delicacy, experience, and creativity needed for translation through various metaphors. Some excerpts are as follows:

*“Translation is like being a doctor and knowing which vein goes where.”*

*“Translation is like being an artist and producing new things every single day”*

*“Translation is like painting a picture; at first it looks nice but later you can see many errors.”*

*“Translation is like art. In art you imitate nature; in translation you imitate the source language”.*

*“Translation is like sculpture; it requires delicacy, diligence, and perfectionism.”*

*“Translation is like literature; you play with words while translating.”*

*“Translation is like needlepoint; it requires delicacy.”*

*“Translation is like writing a poem. Not everyone can do it.”*

*“Translation is like an endless road. You keep going, but the road never finishes”*

*“Translation is like children’s games; you learn when you are playing”*

*“Translation is like a door; people just see the door. The translator opens that door and helps people to see what is behind that door.”*

*“Translation is like building an architectural building, and the cement you use is the strategies used in translation”.*

*“Translation is like being an actor. You must know the audience, and the audience should know you. However, what you are doing is actually acting the role of someone else.”*

*“Translation is like a baby growing in the mother’s womb. Its birth brings a totally new creature, and a lot of patience is needed in the growing process”.*

### **3.2. Findings About Translators and Their Status**

The students were asked about translators as professionals. Some of the students’ views reflected the *risky* nature of being a translator. For instance, *“being a translator is a risky job that might cause problems in case of a mistake”* was mentioned by 2 students. The students’ responses also involved the *richness* of the professions from a number of different views. Some examples includes *“a translator is a person who should be reliable, patient and honest in order to convey the meaning successfully“* (f=3), *“being a translator is prestigious and enjoyable”* (f=1); and *“being a translator enables us to learn new things every day”* (f=1). Finally, the important role that translators play was mentioned in comments such as *“translators have very important roles that are not recognized”* (f=2), *“translators are the small stones of culture”* (f=1), and *“translators are invisible, unknown heroes.”* (f=1).

The students were also asked about the status of translators in Turkey. Their responses included the themes presented in Table 2, which indicated generally low or insufficient status of the translators or negative views about the process and product of the translation job.

Table 2.

*Views about the status of translators*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>f</b>
Time and effort needed for translation is underestimated	14
Translators are not recognized	11
Translators are not appreciated sufficiently	10
Anyone who knows two languages is considered to be able to do translation	6
Being a translator is not a prestigious job	6
Translators have low status	5
Being a translator is a prestigious job	3

As seen in Table 2, the most frequently mentioned themes were *“the time and effort needed for translation is generally underestimated”* (f=14), *“translators are not recognized in society”* (f=11), and *“translators are not appreciated sufficiently”* (f=10).

In addition to the general notions about translators’ status, the students were asked their suggestions about how to improve the status of translators. Their answers are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3.

*Suggestions about how to improve the status of translators*

Themes	<i>f</i>
Conducting awareness-raising activities about translators (For instance: TV programs, books or films, videos or documentaries, social media posts, etc.)	16
Appreciating the time and effort needed for translation	8
Highlighting the importance of translators	4
Establishing more translation departments at universities	2
Organizing seminars, conferences, workshops about translation	2
Increasing the quality of education in translation departments	2
Establishing translation clubs	2
Establishing unity among translators /Rules and conditions should be specified	2
Paying translators more	2
Providing more job opportunities for translators	1

Parallel to the findings about the lack of appreciation and recognition about the translators in society, the most frequently mentioned recommendation about how to increase the awareness in society of translators is *conducting awareness-raising activities about translators* ( $f=16$ ). Some suggestions included TV programs, books or films, videos or documentaries, and social media posts. The participants also highlighted the need for *appreciating the time and effort needed for translation* ( $f=8$ ) and *highlighting the importance of translators* ( $f=4$ ).

### Discussion

This study aimed to identify second-year translation department students' views about translation, translators, and the status of translators, and utilised qualitative methods to collect data. Hence, the participants were asked to write a reflection letter and respond in open-ended questions.

The participants were first asked to define translation and to deepen their definition through metaphors. As the participants in the present study were second-year students, they could provide the components of formal definitions of translation. Their definitions described translation as an old, rich activity and highlighted the importance of translation for all parts of society. The participants reported that translation had an important place in miscellaneous fields of life. According to Patience (2016), translation in everyday life has great importance, and it allows for cross-fertilization of languages, the spread of knowledge in different areas, as well as communication and mutual understanding for the unity, peace, cooperation and development between nations. The participants also mentioned that translation is beyond changing words or simply finding their equivalents, indicating that it involves many other factors to be taken into consideration. As Schwarz, Stiegelbauer and Husar (2016) state, translator's work goes beyond words. The study by Alfaori (2017) also reports that translation includes transferring not only the meaning of words but also the style, emotions, impression and effect of the author in the source language into the target language. Therefore, the multidimensional nature of translation could be a problem for translators. These potentially problematic factors were also mentioned by the participants. They stated that translation could have risks as translators could easily make some mistakes that result in inaccurate translation. The participants highlighted that translation requires more time, careful thought, and effort than it seems. The creativity required for good translations was also highlighted.

The findings also indicated that translation as an activity was a kind of passion for some of the participants. These kinds of answers also included that translation helped the mind to relax, became a passion for those who enjoyed it, and gave the translator the power to connect between different cultures and countries. The knowledge required for translation was also emphasized by several participants. Acioly-Régner, Koroleva, Mikhaleva, Régner (2015) note that translation requires certain skills and competences, and translators deepen



and improve their working languages and subjects they work on while translating. As a multifaceted term (De Toro, 2007), Neubert (2000) lists overall features of translation competence as complexity, heterogeneity, approximation, open-endedness, creativity, situationality, and historicity. The participants mentioned some of these features in various questions and highlighted the lack of appreciation and recognition in society.

The participants' responses included both challenging and satisfying sides of the field of translation. The examples in the metaphors, related particularly to sports and musical instruments, indicated the importance of using strategies and tactics and the role of nuance in translation. According to Lörscher (1991), translation strategy could be considered a conscious procedure used by an individual to solve a problem when translating a text segment". As they act as a connector linking theory and practice together (Hönig and Kussmaul, 1982), translation strategies play a crucial role in the field of Translation Studies. Sdobnikov (2012) describes the levels of a translator's decision-making as analyzing the communicative situation; determining the translation goal; choosing a translation strategy; choosing translation tactics; and choosing translation operations (p.861).

The metaphoric descriptions also mentioned the delicacy and diligence required in the translation processes, but they reportedly remained unnoticed and unappreciated by society. It seems that translation competence is recognized by those who are involved in the translation profession, and there is a need for raising awareness about the features required for translation competence. Literature has documented findings in relation to the fact that translation as an activity or product is perceived as mechanical (Hermans and Lambert 1998, p. 123) or non-creative (Koskinen 2000, p. 54, Bassnett 2002, p. 12) especially by those who are outside the profession.

The metaphors produced by the participants mentioned the joyful, satisfying, and challenging sides of translation that require a lot of patience, careful and hard work, and practice. Štefčík, J. (2015) also reported the highly demanding nature of translation requiring an "exceptional degree of professionalism and considerable amount of time" (p. 139).

Given all these views about the various features of translation with special emphasis on unappreciative attitudes and thoughts, the participants' views about the status of translators displayed parallel findings. Only a small number of participants think that being a translator is prestigious. The other findings reflected not sufficiently recognized or unappreciated side of translation. The participants stated that the time and effort needed for translation generally remain unrecognised or ignored by people. Understanding the occupational prestige of the profession of translation could make a positive contribution to the understanding about both the physical and mental process of translation in general and from a social perspective (Aly, 2018). The participants' responses to various questions indicated insufficient attention and understanding regarding translation processes and translators. Translation is an activity that requires a lot of patience; however, these details are not recognized by society. The need for this appreciation was highlighted by the participants in more than one question. Vermeer (1994) also reported that a better appreciation of translator's social position could become possible only if people understood translators' tasks.

Translators must have various skills and abilities to deal with the complicated task of translation that require higher skills and intellectual ability as indicated by the participants in this study. Translation is not confined to transferring words and sentences linguistically; it requires to take the role of cultural mediators because translators build a bridge between source and target cultures through cultural communication (Bedeker & Feinauer, 2006; Shirinzadeh & Mahadi, 2015). However, as there is a general tendency in the public to see translation as a mechanical, almost instantaneous process of converting one language to another (Kang & Shunmugam, 2014), translation is not considered a prestigious job and anyone who is bilingual is believed to be able to do translation. The lack of public recognition and appreciation is reported to be a factor that causes professional translators to perceive their profession as low-status (Katan, 2009; Ferreira-Alves, 2011; Bahk-Halberg, 2007). The participating students seem to be aware of this factor; therefore, their suggestions regarding the improvement of this status might help pave the way towards recognising translators as full-fledged professionals.

This study also elicited the participants' views about improving the status of the profession. The top-suggested item was to raise the awareness of the public about translators through media with some examples including TV programs, books or films, videos or documentaries, social media posts, etc. The participants' other suggestions (e.g. appreciating the time and effort needed for translation, highlighting the importance of translators, establishing more translation departments, etc.) were also centered around activities to make translators more visible and to help the public to appreciate their work. Kang and Shunmugam (2014) also report that raising awareness of the public about the "merits of engaging professional translators to do translation work and the meaningful contribution translators make to society" is needed (p. 203), which is believed to help change the perceptions of the public towards translators. In addition, parallel to the suggestions of a number of students in the present study, a union protecting translators through standards could be helpful to increase the status of the profession. Kang and Shunmugam (2014) claims that providing a legal representative body and educating the public would certainly yield changes to the perceptions of translators towards their profession. Leech (2005) also notes that translator associations do not play a role in raising awareness in public about the importance of the translation profession. However, as stated by Ruokonen (2013), translator associations need to strive for closer cooperation with clients, employers and relevant authorities to make their work and expertise visible and concerted political actions are needed to improve the working conditions and status of translators. Dam and Zethsen (2009) suggest more studies on translators and interpreters as a social and professional groups to foster their status.

In conclusion, the present study focused on an issue that is not given much importance and remains an important problem for the future of the profession and the people who choose this profession. Translation is an important activity that requires a lot of hard work, time, patience, and difficult decision-making processes. People doing it as a full-time profession desire more appreciation for this hard work from clients and people in society. The limitation of this study is that it included future translators at the Department of Translation and Interpreting who were enrolled in their second year at a newly founded university. Studies to be conducted with more translation department students and translators from various places would shed more light on the issue. More studies could also allow for the improvement of translator training programs.

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