Examining Abstracts from Self-Translation Perspective: A Corpus-Based Study on the Use of Active/Passive Voice and Tenses

Kendi Kendine Çeviri Perspektifinden Özetlerin İncelenmesi: Etken/ Edilgen Yapı ve Zaman Kiplerinin Kullanımı Üzerine Bir Derlem Çalışması

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Abstract: The present study aimed to explore how structural elements (active/passive voice and tenses) are used while translating from the source language to the target language in the self-translation of English and Turkish abstracts in doctoral dissertations. To this end, the doctoral dissertations written by students at the department of Translation and Interpreting were obtained from the collections of dissertations published online by the National Thesis Centre of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in Türkiye. A total of 144 abstracts of doctoral dissertations were examined within the scope of the present study. The corpus included 72 English abstracts with their Turkish translations, and 72 Turkish abstracts with their English translations. The abstracts and their translations were aligned sentence by sentence through The Phrase platform. The Phrase platform is a comprehensive translation management system and it also provides an alignment of the parallel texts. Data analysis was performed by tagging the document obtained in Excel format. This study particularly focused on providing a general picture of how active/passive voice and various tenses were self-translated into the target language. The analysis provides a pattern of how different structures including active/passive voice, and tenses, in the English-Turkish language pair are transformed and translated depending on the direction of translation. The findings reveal consistent shifts in the use of active/passive voice and tense structures across translation directions, highlighting translators' alignment with the rhetorical conventions and stylistic norms of the target academic culture.

Keywords: Corpus linguistics; Parallel corpora; The Phrase TMS; Abstract translation; English-Turkish language pair; Active/passive voice; Tenses

Özet: Bu çalışma, doktora tezlerinde İngilizce ve Türkçe özetlerini yazarların kendileri tarafından yapılan çevirileri üzerinden erek dilde ve kaynak dilde yapısal öğelerin (etken/edilgen yapı ve zaman kipleri) kullanımını incelemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Bu amaçla, İngilizce-Türkçe Mütercim ve Tercümanlık bölümünde okuyan öğrenciler tarafından yazılan doktora tezleri, Türkiye Yükseköğretim Kurulu (YÖK) Ulusal Tez Merkezi tarafından çevrimiçi olarak yayınlanan tez koleksiyonlarından elde edilmiştir. Bu çalışma kapsamında toplam 144 doktora tezi özeti incelenmiştir. Çalışmada kullanılan derlem, 72 İngilizce özet ve bunların Türkçe çevirilerini ve 72 Türkçe özet ve bunların İngilizce çevirilerini içermektedir. Özetler ve çevirileri, The Phrase platformu aracılığıyla cümle-cümle olacak şekilde hizalanmıştır. The Phrase platformu, kapsamlı bir çeviri yönetim sistemidir ve paralel metinlerin hizalanmasını da sağlamaktadır. Excel formatında elde edilen belgede etiketleme yöntemi kullanılarak veri analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışma, özellikle aktif/pasif yapıların ve çeşitli zamanların hedef dile nasıl çevrildiğine dair genel bir tablo sunmaya odaklanmıştır. Analiz, İngilizce-Türkçe dillerinde, farklı çeviri yönlerinde etken/edilgen yapıların ve zaman kiplerinin nasıl dönüştürüldüğü ve çevrildiğine dair bir analiz sunmaktadır. Bulgular, çeviri yönlerine bağlı olarak etken/ edilgen yapıların ve zaman kiplerinin kullanımında tutarlı değişimler olduğunu ortaya koymakta; çevirmenlerin erek akademik kültürün retorik gelenekleri ve üslup normlarıyla uyumunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Derlem dilbilimi, paralel derlemler, The Phrase TMS, özet çevirisi, İngilizce-Türkçe dil çifti, etken/edilgen yapı, zaman kipleri

1. Introduction

The present study aims to explore the intricacies involved in translating academic texts, particularly doctoral dissertations, between English and Turkish. In the realm of academic writing, the choice between active/passive voice and the correct usage of tenses, plays a crucial role in conveying the intended meaning and maintaining the scholarly tone of the work. This research is particularly significant as it addresses the challenges faced by scholars who are required to produce and translate their work in multiple languages, highlighting the linguistic and cultural nuances that influence the translation process. Recent systematic reviews of Turkish doctoral dissertations in the social sciences and humanities have underscored the importance of analysing dissertation structures and writing practices to better understand disciplinary conventions and academic communication (Çetin & Güneş, 2023).

Previous research on the translation of academic texts has highlighted the critical role of voice and tense in conveying scholarly intent. It has been noted that non-native speakers' use of tenses and voices differs dramatically from that of native speakers (Hinkel, 2004). Studies have shown that the choice between active and passive voice can significantly impact the clarity and authority of academic writing (Bada & Ulum, 2018; Horbowicz et al., 2019; Seoane & Hundt, 2018). For instance, some researchers argue that the passive voice is often preferred in scientific writing to emphasize the action or results rather than the researcher, thereby aligning with the objective nature of scholarly communication (Inzunza, 2020). Conversely, active voice can enhance readability and engagement, making it essential for translators to navigate these stylistic preferences carefully while translating between different languages such as English and Turkish.

Moreover, the usage of tenses in academic writing has been extensively examined, revealing that different languages may have varying conventions regarding tense application (Hinkel, 2004)such as tenses, aspects and the passive voice, examining how they are presented in writing instruction texts and identifying areas of L2 learning in need of intensive instruction. The main goal of the analysis is to identify the patterns and median frequency rates of L1 and L2 uses of three English tenses (the present, the past and the future. For instance, the most frequent tenses used in English academic writing are reported to be the present simple, the past simple and the present perfect (Alzuhairy, 2016). English often employs the present tense to discuss established knowledge and findings, while Turkish may utilize a different tense structure that can alter the intended meaning. This discrepancy poses challenges for scholars translating their work, as they must not only consider linguistic accuracy but also the cultural context that influences how information is perceived. Previous studies have underscored the importance of understanding these nuances to ensure that translations maintain the integrity and scholarly tone of the original text while being appropriately adapted for the target audience.

The background of the study reveals a gap in the existing literature regarding the specific translation strategies employed by scholars when dealing with active and passive constructions and tense variations in their dissertations. While previous studies have examined general translation practices, there is a lack of focused research on the unique challenges presented by the translation of academic texts, which often adhere to strict conventions and expectations. By adopting a self-translation perspective, this study seeks to provide insight into the decision-making processes of scholars as they navigate the complexities of language transfer, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and academic communication.

In sum, this study aims to investigate how the translation of active/passive voice and tense usage affects the clarity, coherence, and overall quality of doctoral dissertations in both English and Turkish contexts. To this end, the research questions are as follows:

1. How are active and passive voice structures translated in self-translated doctoral dissertation abstracts between English and Turkish?

2. How are tense structures (e.g. present simple, past simple, present perfect) translated in self-translated doctoral dissertation abstracts between English and Turkish?

3. Do the translation patterns reflect systematic shifts aligned with the academic writing conventions and translation universals of the target language?

The findings are expected to offer practical implications for scholars engaged in self-translation, as well as for educators and language professionals involved in academic writing and translation training. More precisely, the present study examines the use of active/passive voice and tenses in the original English abstracts, the abstracts originally written in English and their Turkish self-translations, and the abstracts originally written in Turkish and their English self-translations. For this reason, the doctoral dissertations only written by the PhD Candidates in the departments of Translation and Interpreting were included in the present study. The main

reason behind focusing on self-translations exclusively was to avoid translation errors as much possible and to better analyse translators' decisions.

1.1. Translation Universals

Translation universals refer to the general principles or tendencies that are often observed in the practice of translation across different languages. These universals can appear in various forms, such as simplification, explicitation, and normalization (Ghadessy & Gao, 2001; Robin, 2017). In the context of translating academic texts, particularly doctoral dissertation abstracts, these universals play a crucial role in ensuring that the translated content retains its original meaning while adapting to the linguistic and cultural subtleties of the target language. For the English-Turkish language pair, the translation of active/passive voice and tenses becomes particularly important as these elements can vary considerably between the two languages. Understanding how these translation universals influence the process can enhance the quality and accuracy of the final output, facilitating better communication of complex ideas across linguistic boundaries (Robin, 2017; Zasiekin, 2016).

In English, the choice between active and passive voice often hinges on the emphasis on the subject performing the action versus the action itself (Klenbort & Anisfeld, 1974; Lubis, Miranti, & Lubis, 2024). In contrast, Turkish tends to favour the passive voice, especially in academic writing (Emeksiz, 2015). This preference can lead to challenges in translating abstracts, as an active construction in English might need to be rephrased into a passive form in Turkish to align with the conventions of Turkish academic discourse. This transformation not only adheres to the translation universal of normalisation, where the translation is made to fit the norms of the target language, but also ensures that the essence of the original text is preserved (Halverson, 2003).

Furthermore, the treatment of tenses in translation also reflects the influence of translation universals. English abstracts often utilise a variety of tenses to convey different aspects of research findings, such as the present tense for general truths and the past tense for specific results (Kwary et al., 2017). Turkish, on the other hand, employs a different approach to tense usage in academic texts, which can lead to the normalization of tense structures during translation (Demir, 2022). Translators must navigate these differences carefully, as the choice of tense can affect the reader's understanding of the temporal context of the research. At this point, other translation universals such as explicitation might also become relevant, as translators may need to add clarifying information or adjust tense usage to convey the

intended meaning accurately in Turkish (Zufferey & Cartoni, 2014).

In conclusion, the translation of active/passive voice and tenses in the abstracts of doctoral dissertations between English and Turkish highlights the interplay of translation universals and the specific linguistic characteristics of both languages. Understanding these universals allows translators to make informed decisions that not only respect the source text but also ensure conformity to and enhance clarity and coherence in the target language. As the academic community increasingly values cross-linguistic scholarship, the ability to navigate these complexities becomes essential for effective communication in the realm of doctoral research.

1.2. Self-Translation

Self-translation in academic texts refers to the process where authors translate their own work from one language to another, often to reach a broader audience or to comply with the linguistic preferences of diverse academic cultures. This is particularly relevant for scholars who operate in multilingual environments, as it allows them to convey their research findings while preserving the subtleties of their original arguments. Self-translation can enhance the accessibility of scholarly work, enabling authors to engage with diverse readerships and fostering cross-cultural academic dialogue (Károly, 2022; Râbacov, 2013; Saidero, 2020)2013; Saidero, 2020. The process, however, is not merely a linguistic exercise; it involves a complex negotiation of cultural and scholarly conventions that can significantly influence the presentation of research.

The choice of active/passive voice during self-translation plays a critical role in shaping the perception of authorial presence and authority in academic writing. As highlighted by the authors (Kachru, 1997), different cultures exhibit varying preferences for voice in scholarly texts, which can affect how arguments are constructed and received. For instance, Turkish academic writing often shows tendency towards the use of a passive voice, which may obscure the author's role, whereas English academic discourse typically favours an active voice that foregrounds individual contributions (Ozdemir, 2017). This divergence necessitates that non-native scholars who engage in self-translation adapt their writing strategies to align with the expectations of their target audience, ensuring that their work is not only linguistically accurate but also culturally resonant. This allows self-translators to bridge gaps between languages and cultures, ultimately enhancing the clarity and impact of their research in a global context. Moreover, the implications of self-translation extend beyond stylistic choices.

In other words, they can influence the perceived credibility and impact of research within different academic communities. Research indicates that native English writers tend to employ self-mentions more frequently in their dissertations, which enhances their authorial presence and engagement with readers (Hyland, 2002). This suggests that non-native scholars, particularly those from cultures that favour passive constructions in academic writing as in the Turkish language, may need to adapt their writing practices to enhance their visibility and acceptance in international academic environment.

In self-translation, the handling of tenses is crucial as it directly influences the temporal clarity and coherence of the research narrative (Chatzidimitriou, 2009). Researchers must carefully consider the tense choices that conform to the conventions of both the source and target languages. For instance, while English academic writing often employs the present tense to discuss established knowledge and findings, Turkish may use both past and present tenses, reflecting different narrative styles. This divergence can lead to potential misunderstandings if not addressed appropriately during the translation process. Thus, self-translators must be careful in maintaining tense consistency to ensure that the timeline of research activities and conclusions is clearly communicated. Additionally, the choice of tense can affect the perceived immediacy and relevance of the research. As such, effective self-translation not only requires linguistic accuracy but also an understanding of how tense usage can shape the reception of scholarly arguments across academic cultures (Râbacov, 2013).

In conclusion, the practice of self-translation in academic contexts serves as an important method for scholars to communicate their research effectively across linguistic and cultural boundaries. The choices between active and passive voice, as well as the careful handling of tenses, play a critical role in shaping the perception of authorial presence, credibility, and the overall impact of scholarly arguments in academic writing. This study underscores the importance of adapting writing strategies to align with the conventions of both the source and target languages, ensuring clarity and resonance with diverse academic audiences.

2. Method

2.1. English-Turkish Parallel Abstract Corpora

In total, the entire corpora consisted of 144 doctoral dissertations published online by the National Thesis Centre of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in Türkiye. Corpus 1 included the doctoral dissertations,

which were written in English, and thus had a Turkish translation of the abstract. There were 72 English abstracts and their Turkish translations. On the other hand, Corpus 2 included the doctoral dissertations, the language of which was Turkish, and thus had an English translation of the abstract. Thus, there were 72 Turkish abstracts and their English translations.

2.2. Selection Criteria

This study included doctoral dissertations written by scholars in the field of Translation Studies, particularly in the field of the English language. The doctoral dissertations available online from inception to the 24 October 2024 were obtained on the National Thesis Centre of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) in Türkiye (see Appendix for the list of doctoral dissertations included in the present study). The lists of doctoral dissertations for the English to Turkish corpus and for the Turkish to English corpus were obtained by following the detailed analysis option on the CoHE National Thesis Centre. In more detail, the type of thesis was selected as Doctoral Dissertation, the language of the thesis was selected as English for Corpus 1 and Turkish for Corpus 2, and the field of study was specified as Translation and Interpreting. The search strategy resulted in 72 doctoral dissertations for the English to Turkish corpus, and 120 doctoral dissertations for the Turkish to English corpus. In order to have a comparable analysis, the number of doctoral dissertations for the Turkish to English corpus was also limited to 72, based on a random choice, yet giving priority to those from the English translation and interpreting background and ensuring diversity in publication years across the corpus. Specifically, dissertations were selected to ensure a spread across years and subfields within translation studies to minimise potential clustering bias.

In Türkiye, doctoral dissertations are regulated by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), which mandates that each dissertation include abstracts in two languages, one of which must be Turkish, with each abstract not exceeding 250 words (Council of Higher Education, n.d.). Consequently, dissertations written entirely in English require a Turkish abstract, and dissertations in Turkish require an English abstract. While the CoHE database does not explicitly indicate whether the translated abstracts are authored by the dissertation writers themselves or by professional translators, the present study intentionally focused on doctoral dissertations submitted by doctoral candidates from Translation and Interpreting departments. This sampling strategy aimed to ensure a higher probability that the abstracts were self-translated, given that these scholars are professionally trained in translation and are expected to possess

the linguistic competence required to produce their own translations. Thus, while absolute certainty regarding authorship of the translations cannot be claimed, the dataset selection criteria substantially minimise this potential ambiguity. This limitation is acknowledged in the interpretation of the study's findings, and future research could incorporate direct author confirmation to ensure actual self-translation authorship.

Within the scope of the present study, given that the author(s) themselves are considered to be both the author and the translator of the texts, the source language was accepted as English when the entire dissertation was written in English but the second abstract was in Turkish, and likewise, the source language was accepted as Turkish when the entire dissertation was written in Turkish but the second abstract was in English.

2.3. The Phrase TMS

The Phrase TMS (Translation Management System) tool, also previously known as Memsource, is a sophisticated software application designed to assist translators in efficiently managing translation Projects (Quintana & Castilho, 2022). It includes features that help with translation memory management, terminology management, and project workflow optimization. A significant functionality of the Phrase TMS tool is the alignment of parallel corpora, which consist of collections of texts in two or more languages that serve as translations of one another. The alignment process begins with users importing source texts (in the source language) and target texts (in the translated language). The tool then utilizes algorithms to automatically align segments from the source and target texts, identifying corresponding segments based on linguistic similarities and structural patterns. Following this automatic alignment, users have the opportunity to review and make manual adjustments to ensure accuracy, particularly in cases where the initial alignment may not be accurate. Thus, the present study utilized the Phrase TMS tool for the alignment of the parallel corpora, which made it easier to compare the texts side by side, facilitating a more thorough analysis.

While Phrase TMS is an effective translation management system with integrated tools for alignment, translation memory, and terminology management, it has limitations for corpus-based linguistic research. Its automated alignment often requires extensive manual verification, especially for typologically distinct language pairs such as English and Turkish, and it lacks specialised linguistic annotation or statistical analysis tools. Alternatives such as AntConc (Anthony, 2024), although powerful for corpus analysis, do not provide automated alignment functions, while LF Aligner (Sorato & Zavala-Rojas, 2022),

despite offering automatic alignment, produces outputs that require substantial manual correction due to structural differences between English and Turkish and has a dated interface. Therefore, Phrase TMS was preferred in this study as it offered a more reliable and efficient platform for aligning large bilingual datasets, combining automated alignment with manual verification in a workflow suitable for structural analysis.

2.4. Data Analysis

Part-of-speech tagging, or grammatical tagging, was the initial step for analysing the corpora. The abstracts written in the language of the doctoral dissertation and their translations were manually tagged. There were several tags required to accurately identify the categories. To this end, the main predicates were identified and tagged in the Excel file obtained through the alignment in the Phrase. The verbs were placed into separate columns (i.e. a column for English main verb and anther for Turkish equivalence), and later identified according to the use of active/passive voice and tenses. Furthermore, although the dataset size and the nature of coding categories did not necessitate multiple coders, to ensure methodological transparency, a second coder independently reviewed the tagging. No discrepancies were found between the two coders, confirming the reliability of the coding process. An example of an English sentence, its Turkish translation, the main verb in the original sentence and in the translation, and the use of active/passive voice and tenses is presented below.

2.4.1. English Sentence

The abstracts **were collected** through the purposive sampling method with the help of a survey prepared under pre-determined criteria. (Thesis No: 864334)

Main Verb/Verbal Phrase	: were collected
Active/Passive Voice	: Passive
Tense	: Past Simple

2.4.2. Turkish Translation

İncelenen özetler, önceden belirlenmiş ölçütler çerçevesinde hazırlanan bir anket yardımıyla amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle **toplanmıştır**. (Thesis No: 864334)

Main Verb/Verbal Phrase	: toplanmıştır
Active/Passive Voice	: Active
Tense	: Reported Past Tense

The data analysis focused merely and purposefully on the main verbs on the main clauses excluding the verbs and their forms in subordinate clauses, etc. due to the varying grammatical distinctions between English and Turkish as Turkish is an agglutinative language

(e.g. 'while… provides…' translated into Turkish as '…sağlarken…', carrying the conjunction marker as a suffix on the verb in Turkish, as well.) or similarities such as using infinitive patterns (e.g. 'to evaluate' translated in to Turkish as 'değerlendirmek'). This methodological choice was made to ensure cross-linguistic comparability between English and Turkish abstracts. Due to the typological differences between the two languages, subordinate clause analysis poses significant challenges. As pointed out, Turkish is an agglutinative language where subordinate clauses are often formed through nominalised verb forms or participial constructions with embedded suffixes, rather than through finite clause structures as in English. These structural differences complicate direct comparison of subordinate clause verbs between the languages. Thus, the ultimate goal of the present study was to focus on the main verb on the main clause to reveal a clearer picture of how active/passive voice and tenses are translated in the abstracts of the doctoral dissertations in the English-Turkish language pair.

By focusing on the main verbs of main clauses, the analysis maintains structural equivalence and clarity in examining active/passive voice and tense transformations. However, this exclusion limits the generalisability of the findings to main predications only, and does not capture patterns within embedded structures, which also contribute to overall rhetorical and grammatical choices in abstracts. Future research could build on this study by developing a comprehensive coding framework for subordinate clause verbs to provide a more holistic understanding of structural choices in self-translation across typologically distinct languages.

3. Findings

3.1. General Comparison of the Parallel Corpora

A general comparison of the two corpora from English source text to Turkish target text displays the difference between them, each consisting of 72 abstracts. More precisely, the corpora built from the English original abstracts (ENC) consisted of 21,096 words in total whereas that from the Turkish translations (TRC) consisted of 17,131 in total. On the other hand, the number of characters excluding spaces is higher in TRC. The number of characters is 123,598 in ENC whilst it is 127,072 in TRC. Likewise, the number of rows is also higher in TRC. It is 1,367 in ENC whilst 1.686 in TRC. The average length of each abstract, however, is 292.99 in ENC when counted in terms of the number of words, and it is 237.92 in TRC.

Table 1. A General Comparison of the Parallel Corpora (from English to Turkish)

	Number of Texts	Total Words	Number of Characters (excluding spaces)	Number of Rows	Average Length of Each Abstract (Words)
ENC	72	21,096	123,598	1,367	292.99
TRC	72	17,131	127,072	1,686	237.92

▶**Table 1** illustrates that there is a substantial difference between the two corpora in terms of the total number of words, characters, rows and average length. However, while ENC displays a higher number of words, TRC is longer in terms of characters and rows. This difference might be explained by the fact that Turkish is an agglutinative language, meaning that words contain multiple morphemes and thus suffixes are added to the stem word.

A general comparison of the two corpora from Turkish source text to English target text also displays the difference between them, each consisting of 72 abstracts, as shown in ▶**Table 2** below.

Table 2. A General Comparison of the Parallel Corpora (from Turkish to English)

	Number of Texts	Total Words	Number of Characters (excluding spaces)	Number of Rows	Average Length of Each Abstract (Words)
TRC	72	19,826	147,922	1,948	275.36
ENC	72	25,337	145,344	1,980	351.90

In particular, the corpora built from the Turkish original abstracts (TRC) consisted of 19,826 words in total whereas that from the English translations (ENC) consisted of 25,337 in total. On the other hand, the number of characters excluding spaces is higher in TRC. The number of characters is 145,344 in ENC whilst it is 147,922 in TRC. Likewise, the number of rows is also higher in TRC. It is 1,980 in ENC whilst 1,948 in TRC. The average length of each abstract, however, is 351.90 in ENC when counted in terms of the number of words, and it is 275.36 in TRC.

3.2. Frequency of Active vs. Passive Voice

First of all, a general analysis of the active and passive use in the English to Turkish translations was made. Accordingly, among 690 verbs tagged, while there were 444 active (64.35%) and 246 passive (35.65%) verbs in the English source texts, there were 384 active (55.65%) and 306 passive (44.35%) verbs in the Turkish translation texts. As it is reported in ▶**Table 3** below, the use of active voice is higher in the English source texts.

Table 3. Distribution of active/passive use in the English to Turkish translations

En/Tr	Active	Passive	Total
Active	356	28	384
Passive	88	218	306
Total	444	246	690

*SL, Source Language; TL, Target Language

Table 4. Distribution of active/passive use in the Turkish to English translations

Tr/En	Active	Passive	Total
Active	312	132	444
Passive	45	306	351
Total	357	438	795

*SL, Source Language; TL, Target Language

In the English to Turkish translations, there were 444 active occurrences in the English source texts. Of these, 356 verbs remained in active voice whereas 88 were transformed into passive voice. On the other hand, there were 256 passive occurrences in the English source texts, and of these, 246 remained in passive voice whereas 28 became active. This analysis of 690 tagged verbs in the English-to-Turkish corpus offers valuable insights into how self-translators navigate active/passive voice choice during the translation of academic abstracts. The source texts display a predominant use of active voice (64.35%). On the other hand, the Turkish translations show a notable increase in passive voice (44.35%), indicating a rhetorical shift during the translation process. The proportion of active constructions decreases from 444 (64.35%) in English to 384 (55.65%) in Turkish, while passive constructions increase from 246 (35.65%) to 306 (44.35%). A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the relationship between voice type (active vs passive) and language (English vs Turkish) in the first dataset (N = 690). The results indicated a statistically significant association, $\chi^2(1, N = 690) = 303.58$, p < .001, with a large effect size (Cramer's V = .663). This suggests that the distribution of active and passive voice significantly differs between English and Turkish abstracts, with English showing a much higher proportion of active voice constructions compared to Turkish.

Secondly, a general analysis of the active and passive use in the Turkish to English translations was made. Accordingly, among 795 verbs tagged, while there were 357 active (45%) and 438 passive (55%) verbs in the Turkish source texts, there were 444 active (55.85%) and 351 passive (44.15%) verbs in the English translation texts. As it is reported in ▶**Table 4** below, the use of passive voice is higher in the Turkish source texts.

In the Turkish to English translations, there were 357 active occurrences in the Turkish source texts. Of these, 312 verbs remained in active voice whereas 45 were transformed into passive voice. On the other hand, there were 438 passive occurrences in the Turkish source texts, and of these, 306 remained in passive voice whereas 132 became active. The data, based on 795 tagged verbs, reveals a significant reversal in the dominant voice. For instance, while the Turkish source

texts favour passive voice (55%), the English translations exhibit a preference for active voice (55.85%). The shift from 438 passive verbs (55%) in Turkish to 351 passive verbs (44.15%) in English, and from 357 active verbs (45%) to 444 (55.85%), demonstrates a deliberate effort by self-translators to adapt the structure of the text to English academic discourse. In other words, they tend to prioritize clarity, agency, and conciseness—all features commonly associated with active voice. A chi-square test of independence was also conducted for the second dataset (N = 795) to examine the relationship between voice type (active vs passive) and language (English vs Turkish). The test revealed a statistically significant association, $\chi^2(1, N = 795) = 261.51$, p < .001, with a large effect size (Cramer's V = .574). This result indicates that the distribution of active and passive constructions differed significantly between English and Turkish abstracts in this dataset as well, with Turkish showing a higher proportion of passive voice usage compared to English. This shift suggests that Turkish academic writers, when translating their work into English, are modifying sentence structures to meet the stylistic norms of English-language academic writing, particularly for abstract writing.

3.3. Frequency of Tenses

When the use of various tenses was examined in the English to Turkish translations, as illustrated in ▶**Table 5**, it is observed that the most frequently used top three tenses in the English source texts are as follows: (i) present simple (n=416, 60.29%), (ii) past simple (n=170, 24.64%), and (iii) present perfect (n= 85, 12.32%) respectively. On the other hand, the top three tenses in the Turkish translation texts include: (i) reported past tense (n=293, 42.46%), (ii) formal present continuous (n=242, 35.07%), and (iii) present simple (n=113, 16.38%).

In the English to Turkish translations, the use of present simple, how it was translated into Turkish, was first examined. In total, there were 416 verb occurrences as the present simple in the English source texts. They were rendered respectively as the formal present continuous (n=222, 53.37%), the present simple (n=100, 24.04%), the reported past tense (n=77, 18.50%), the present continuous (n=14, 3.37%), the future simple (n=2, 0.48%),

Table 5. Distribution of tenses in the English to Turkish translations

En / Tr	Future Simple	Past Cont.	Past Simple	Present Cont.	Present Perf.	Present Perf. Cont.	Present Simple	Total
Formal Present Cont.	1	1	6	2	9	1	222	242
Future Simple	8	NA	3	NA	NA	NA	2	13
Past Simple	NA	NA	14	NA	NA	NA	1	15
Present Cont.	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	14	14
Present Simple	NA	NA	8	NA	5	NA	100	113
Reported Past Tense	6	NA	139	NA	71	NA	77	293
Total	15	1	170	2	85	1	416	690

and the past simple (n=1, 0.24). The present simple, most frequently used in English academic abstracts is translated predominantly as formal present continuous in Turkish (53.37%) as illustrated in Example 1. This suggests that the translators perceive the formal present continuous as more appropriate for conveying ongoing relevance or general truths in Turkish academic discourse.

Example 1 (Thesis No: 868250).

EN: In this context, this study **aims** at analysing… [Present Simple]

TR: Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma … **amaçlamaktadır**. [Formal Present Continuous]

Interestingly, only 24.04% of the present simple verbs remain in the same tense in Turkish as illustrated in Example 2, indicating that a tense shift is the norm rather than the exception. The frequent use of formal present continuous forms in Turkish translations suggests a possible stylistic tendency to emphasize formality and aspectual nuance. Nevertheless, further analysis would be needed to confirm this interpretation.

Example 2 (Thesis No: 849013).

EN: The act of "remembering" **is** "the reconstruction of the past…" [Present Simple]

TR: Hatırlama eylemi … geçmişin yeniden **inşasıdır**. [Present Simple]

As for the 170 verbs tagged as the past simple in the English source texts, they were translated respectively as the reported past tense (n=139, 81.77%), the past simple (n=14, 8.24%), the present simple (n=8, 4.7%), the formal present continuous (n=6, 3.53%), and the future simple (n=3, 1.76%). The past simple tense in English is overwhelmingly rendered as the reported past tense (miş'li geçmiş zaman) in Turkish, as illustrated

in Example 3. This is a notable transformation, as the reported past in Turkish not only signals past time but also conveys a degree of epistemic distancing or indirect knowledge, which is often preferred in formal academic registers. The fact that only 8.24% of past simple verbs are translated directly as Turkish past simple suggests that Turkish academic writing favours more hedged and indirect forms of reporting research actions or results.

Example 3 (778477).

EN: Findings from students' intership reports and job adverts **showed** that … [Past Simple]

TR: Öğrencilerin staj raporlarından ve iş ilanlarından elde edilen veriler … **göstermiştir.** [Reported Past Tense]

The third most frequent tense was the present perfect with 85 verbs. A majority of this tense was rendered as the reported past tense (n=71, 83.53%) into Turkish, which was followed by the formal present continuous (n=9, 10.59%), and the present simple (n=5, 5.88%). For the present perfect, the preferred Turkish equivalent is also the reported past tense. The English present perfect, which implies a link between past events and their present relevance, appears to have no direct grammatical equivalent in Turkish, as illustrated in Example 4. This decision supports the broader strategy of modality management in Turkish translations, mitigating assertiveness by adopting tenses that reduce the speaker's direct involvement or certainty.

Example 4 (849013).

EN: It **has been examined** by some historiography and memory researchers… [Present Perfect]

TR: … çeşitli tarihyazım ve bellek araştırmacıları tarafından **irdelenmiştir.** [Reported Past Tense]

When the use of various tenses was examined in the

Turkish to English translations, it is observed that the most frequently used top three tenses in the Turkish source texts are as follows: (i) reported past tense (n=384, 48.30%), (ii) formal present continuous (n=229, 28.80%), and (iii) present simple (n= 166, 20.88%) respectively. On the other hand, the top three tenses in the English translation texts include: (i) present simple (n=486, 61.13%), (ii) past simple (n=195, 24.53%), and (iii) present perfect (n=98, 12.33%).

When the use of various tenses was examined in the Turkish to English translations, as illustrated in ▶**Table 6**, it is observed that the most frequently used top three tenses in the Turkish source texts are as follows: (i) reported past tense (n=384, 48.30%), (ii) formal present continuous (n=229, 28.80%), and (iii) present simple (n= 166, 20.88%) respectively. On the other hand, the top three tenses in the English translation texts include: (i) present simple (n=486, 61.13%), (ii) past simple (n=195, 24.53%), and (iii) present perfect (n=98, 12.33%).

In the Turkish-English translations, the most frequently used tense in the Turkish source texts was the reported past tense with 384 verb occurrences. When the translations into English was examined, it was observed that the reported past tense was rendered as the past simple (n=172, 44.79%), the present simple (n=125, 32.55%), the present perfect (n=84, 21.88%), and future simple (n=3, 0.78%).

The most frequently used tense in the Turkish source texts was the reported past tense in Turkish (miş'li geçmiş zaman). It was rendered into multiple English tenses, indicating a substantial degree of transformation in the self-translation process. This tense, which inherently conveys past actions with an element of reportedness or indirect knowledge, does not have a direct grammatical counterpart in English. As a result, translators opted for different English tense equivalents. The past simple is the most common equivalent preferred. It removes the evidential nuance of the original tense and presents the information as direct and certain, as illustrated in Example 5. This reflects a neutralization

of modality, as English lacks a conventional grammatical means to express evidentiality. This choice may also reflect the assertive and straightforward narrative style of English academic writing (Barasa, 2024; Pollock & Bono, 2013).

Example 5 (868219).

TR: Bunlara ek olarak … kitle kaynaklı çeviri çalışması **simüle edilmiştir**. [Reported Past Tense]

EN: In addition, crowdsourced translation work **was simulated** … [Past Simple]

The second most frequent translation is the present simple, which is widely used in English academic discourse to present general truths, research claims, or habitual actions. In this case, the translator may have interpreted the reported past in Turkish not as a temporally bound event, but as a generalizable statement. This shift reflects a rhetorical adaptation, aligning with the conventions of English scholarly prose.

Example 6 (891619).

TR: … seçilen eyleyicilerin sosyolojik profillerinin çeviriye nasıl yansıdığı Bourdieu sosyolojisinden ve kavramlarından faydalanılarak **irdelenmiştir.** [Reported Past Tense]

EN: … how the sociological profiles of the selected agents are reflected to their translations **are examined** by utilizing Bourdieu's sociology. [Present Simple]

The present perfect is often used in English to describe past actions with present relevance, a function that partially overlaps with Turkish reported past when the action's outcome is still valid or discussed in the present. This choice illustrates how translators aim to preserve the interpretive flexibility of the source tense by selecting an English tense that conveys a similar ongoing significance. Although infrequent, the use of future simple indicates that in certain contexts, the reported past in Turkish was interpreted prospectively, possibly due to

Table 6. Distribution of tenses in the Turkish to English translations

Tr / En	Formal Present Cont.	Future Simple	Past Simple	Present Simple	Reported Past Tense	Total
Future Past	NA	NA	NA	1	NA	1
Future Simple	4	6	NA	2	3	15
Past Simple	11	1	2	9	172	195
Present Perfect	9	1	NA	4	84	98
Present Simple	205	6	NA	150	125	486
Total	229	14	2	166	384	795

the intentional or hypothetical nature of the statement in context, as illustrated in Example 7. This could also reflect translator subjectivity in resolving ambiguity in the source text.

Example 7 (680909).

TR: … Antoine Berman'ın çeviri analizi ile ortaya çıkarılması gerektiğini vurguladığı "farklılaştırıcı eğilimler" odağında **incelenmiştir.** [Reported Past Tense]

EN: … **will be thoroughly examined** with the help of Antoine Berman's "deforming tendencies". [Future Simple]

As for the use of the formal present continuous with 229 verb occurrences in the Turkish source texts, it was observed that they were rendered into English mainly with the present simple (n=205, 89.52%), which was followed by the other tenses including the past simple (n=11, 4.80%), present perfect (n=9, 3.93%), and the future simple (n=4, 1.75%).

The dominance of present simple as the English equivalent (nearly 90%) suggests that self-translators are aligning their choices with conventional academic English norms. Present simple is the default tense for stating research aims (e.g., "This study examines…"), describing procedures or structure (e.g., "The results show…"), and presenting general truths or current relevance, as illustrated in Example 8. On the contrary, the Turkish formal present continuous (e.g., "incelenmektedir") is a stylistic marker of academic tone and impersonality. In English, this rhetorical function is achieved not through continuous aspect, but through lexical choices and nominalizations, with the present simple tense conveying the necessary neutrality.

Example 8 (832538).

TR: Bu doktora tezinde … **amaçlanmaktadır**. [Formal Present Continuous]

EN: In this doctoral dissertation, it **is aimed** to… [Present Simple]

The other tenses included the past simple, the present perfect, and the future simple. In a few cases, the translator may have judged the action to be clearly bounded in the past or descriptive of specific completed research stages. This decision may reflect contextual interpretation rather than a fixed equivalence. The present perfect might have been preferred when emphasizing the relevance of past actions to present discourse (e.g., "has shown", "has been investigated"). Lastly, the future sim-

ple might be used when the original sentence in Turkish was framed prospectively or inferentially, suggesting future stages of the research.

The third most frequent tense in the Turkish source texts was the present simple with 166 verb occurrences. It was translated into English by making use of the present simple (n=150, 90.36%) and the other tenses including the past simple (n=9, 5.42%), the present perfect (n=4, 2.41%), the future simple (n=2, 1.21%), and the future past (n=1, 0.60%).

When translated into English, the vast majority of these instances were rendered as present simple, with only a small portion translated into other tense forms. This translation behaviour indicates a strong cross-linguistic compatibility between the present simple tense in Turkish and English, especially in academic prose. Among all tense pairs analyzed, the present simple in Turkish shows the highest degree of one-to-one translation equivalence with English. This consistency suggests that in contexts where tense serves a universal academic function (such as stating facts or aims), self-translators prioritize formal equivalence, especially when it aligns with genre expectations in both languages. These results reaffirm that tense selection in self-translation is not purely grammatical but rather rhetorical and genre-sensitive. Where possible, translators preserve the original tense to maintain consistency and fluency. However, when context demands more nuanced temporal framing, subtle shifts to other forms are made.

4. Discussion

In this study, the findings highlight that the choice between active and passive voice and the use of tenses are not random but are influenced by stylistic conventions in both source and target languages. To illustrate, previous research mentioned above in this study supports that passive voice in academic writing is often used in scientific texts to emphasize the action or process rather than the agent, while active voice enhances clarity and engagement (Inzunza, 2020; Klenbort & Anisfeld, 1974). This study confirms these patterns through the corpus analysis, showing that self-translators navigating between English and Turkish adjust voice choices to meet the expected academic writing norms. Such systematic shifts provide evidence for the idea that academic writing conventions are deeply embedded in cultural practices.

The findings further present evidence of the concept of translation universals, which are general tendencies observed in translation across languages. The relevant

literature discusses how phenomena such as simplification, explicitation, and normalization play pivotal roles in translation, particularly in the context of active/passive voice and tense transformation (Robin, 2017). For instance, in parallel with the previous study, the findings shows that the Turkish academic culture prefers the passive voice, which aligns with the cultural norm of presenting information in a more hedged or formal manner (Emeksiz, 2015). At the same time, English translations exhibit a deliberate shift towards active constructions, demonstrating an adaptation to the conventions of clarity and assertiveness in English academic writing norms (Ozdemir, 2017). This underscores that transformation strategies in self-translation are not random decisions but are guided by broader universal tendencies in translation.

The detailed analysis of tense usage further confirms with the findings in earlier literature. This study provides evidence that translators systematically adjust tense structures to suit the narrative style of the target language. In English, the present simple is frequently preserved as it fits well with the general academic tone, whereas Turkish texts tend to reframe these tenses to reflect differences such as formal present continuous or reported past forms (Alzuhairy, 2016; Demir, 2022)the most-read parts of the articles, have been the subject of different studies; however, the studies that have analysed only Turkish article abstracts are very few. This study aims to perform rhetorical structure analysis of research article abstracts in educational sciences and to investigate the linguistic features of the moves. The study examined 60 abstracts published in four leading journals. The analysis of the abstracts was carried out using the model adapted by Pho (2008. These findings support literature insights that emphasize the role of tense in conveying temporal relationships and evidentiality in academic texts. The observed transformations in tense usage reflect a clear understanding by self-translators of how to align the temporal framing of their texts with the target language's rhetorical practices.

In conclusion, the translation strategies are informed by both translation universals and specific academic writing norms reflected in doctoral dissertation abstracts across cultures. These findings illustrate how universals such as normalization and simplification guide translators to adapt structures for clarity and conformity to target language conventions, ensuring translations are not only linguistically accurate but also pragmatically appropriate. Self-translators, acting as both authors and translators, are seen to strategically modulate voice and tense to maintain academic integrity and clarity, as illustrated by the systematic shifts documented in the study. Thus, the study suggests that translator training programs should focus on these aspects, ensuring that future scholars are equipped to handle such stylistic challenges effectively. The present study, grounded in a detailed analysis and supported by previous literature, contributes to the understanding of academic translation practices and reinforces the critical importance of adhering to culturally and rhetorically appropriate language norms.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the translation patterns of active/passive voice and tense usage in English-Turkish academic abstracts through a self-translation lens. The results indicate systematic shifts in both active/passive voice and tense structures depending on the direction of translation, underscoring the influence of stylistic and grammatical norms of the target language. Notably, translations from English to Turkish show a rise in passive voice and a respective order of reported past tense, formal present continuous, and present simple forms, while Turkish to English translations favour active constructions and the use of present simple, past simple and present perfect tenses. These patterns demonstrate how translators align their writing with the rhetorical expectations of the target academic community. Such structural adaptations are not random but are guided by both linguistic constraints and pragmatic considerations regarding audience and purpose.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the study offers implications for translator and academic writing training programs, particularly in contexts where scholars are expected to operate bilingually. Understanding the patterns revealed in this corpus can help educators develop targeted instruction that raises awareness of language-specific academic norms. Future studies may build upon this research by exploring similar patterns in other academic genres or across different language pairs.

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List of Doctoral Dissertations
Parallel Corpora from English to Turkish

Appendix

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62	271195	SİNEM SANCAKTAROĞLU BOZKURT	2010	Translation of text as translation of culture: a study of the turkish translations of john fowles's the french lieutenant's woman, jeanette winterson's oranges are not the only fruit, and julian barnes's england, england
63	298464	ŞULE DEMİRKOL ERTÜRK	2010	The city and its translators istanbul metonymized and refracted in the literary narratives of ahmet hamdi tanpinar and orhan pamuk in turkish, english and french
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