

# Academics' Views of Receiving and Acknowledging Language Assistance\*

## Akademisyenlerin Dil Desteği Almakla ve Bunu Çalışmalarda Belirtmekle İlgili Görüşleri

Research/Araştırma

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### ABSTRACT

The 21st century has witnessed the global spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF) across numerous areas, including science and academia, as a consequence of the interplay of various not-so-innocent historical circumstances and the inevitable effects of globalization. The overwhelming dominance of English as an academic lingua franca (EALF) has put academics all over the world under growing pressure to publish in English for various legitimate reasons such as increasing their international visibility, receiving grants and other awards, and satisfying academic appointment and promotion criteria. Consequently, non-native English speaking (NNES) academics have increasingly resorted to professional and/or non-professional language assistance such as translation, proofreading, and editing to get their English-language publications accepted by publishers. This study explored native Turkish-speaking academics' views and experiences of receiving English language assistance to publish studies and acknowledging the assistance received in published studies. To this end, an online survey was first administered to a non-random sample of academics from various disciplines, and then online interviews were held with a self-selected group of survey respondents. The survey results showed that most academics first write their studies in Turkish and then have someone else translate them into English, and they receive language assistance from various service providers but mostly from freelance translators.

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\* This study is based on the doctoral thesis of the first author completed under the supervision of the second author. Part of the data reported here was also presented at the 9th International KTUDEL Conference on Language, Literature, and Translation held on 25-26 September 2023 in Trabzon, Türkiye.

While the assistance received is rarely acknowledged in published studies, the most selected reason for this is that journal editors/publishers do not require to do so. However, the analysis of the interview data showed that academics' concern over possible negative associations about their (in)competence in English is the most prominent reason behind the non-acknowledgement of the assistance received. In conclusion, the present academic publishing industry dominated by EALF seems to be a major site that has created a burgeoning market for language services, while the work of language workers is taken for granted and almost always remains unacknowledged and, by extension, invisible.

**Keywords:** Academic translation, specialized translation, proofreading, editing

## ÖZET

21. yüzyılın dil alanında yaşanan en dikkat çeken gelişmelerinden biri olarak İngilizce çok da masum olmayan çeşitli tarihsel koşulların bir araya gelmesi ve küreselleşmenin kaçınılmaz etkisiyle bilim ve akademi de dahil olmak üzere sayısız alanda ortak dil olarak dünyaya yayılmıştır. İngilizcenin akademinin ortak dili olarak artan hakimiyetiyle birlikte dünya genelinde akademisyenler uluslararası görünürlüklerini artırmak, finansal desteklerden yararlanmak ve özellikle atanma/yükseltme kriterlerini sağlamak gibi çeşitli haklı sebeplerle İngilizce yayın yapma baskısıyla karşı karşıya kalmışlardır. Sonuç olarak, anadili İngilizce olmayan yazarlar İngilizce yayınlarını ulusal ve uluslararası yayıncılara kabul ettirmek için çeviri, dil kontrolü ve metin düzenleme gibi çeşitli konularda profesyonel ve/veya profesyonel olmayan dil desteklerine başvurmaya başlamışlardır. Bu çalışmada ana dili Türkçe olan akademisyenlerin İngilizce dil desteği (çeviri ve/veya dil kontrolü/düzenleme) almakla ve alınan desteği yayınladıkları çalışmalarda belirtmekle ilgili görüşleri ve deneyimleri araştırılmıştır. Bu doğrultuda olasılıksız örnekleme yöntemiyle ulaşılan, farklı disiplinlerden akademisyenlere önce çevrimiçi anket uygulanmış ve ardından ankete katılan gönüllü akademisyenlerle çevrimiçi görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Anket sonuçları çoğu akademisyenin İngilizce yayın yapmak için çalışmalarını önce Türkçe yazıp sonra bir başkasına İngilizceye çevirttiğini ve çoğunlukla serbest çevirmenler olmak üzere çeşitli kaynaklardan dil desteği aldığını göstermiştir. Alınan destek yayınlanan çalışmalarda nadiren belirtilirken dergi editörlerinin/yayıncıların böyle bir talebinin olmayışı en yaygın gerekçe olarak seçilmiştir. Ancak görüşmelerden elde edilen bulgulara göre, akademisyenlerin destek aldıklarını yayınlanan çalışmalarda belirtmemelerinin altında yatan en önemli sebep bu durumun İngilizce yetkinlikleriyle ilişkilendirilebileceği endişesidir. Sonuç olarak, İngilizcenin ortak dil olarak hüküm sürdüğü akademik yayıncılık sektörü bir yandan dil hizmetleri alanında büyüyen bir pazar yaratırken diğer yandan dil emekçilerinin katkılarının çalışmalarda belirtilmediği ve dolayısıyla görünmez kılındığı bir alan olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Akademik çeviri, özel alan çevirisi, dil kontrolü, düzenleme

## 1. Introduction

One of the most notable linguistic developments of the 21st century is the global spread of English as a lingua franca (ELF) across a wide range of formal and informal domains of life. Although English is not the first language in history to play this role, it has become a global lingua franca of an unprecedented scale in terms of both the extent of its geographical reach and the range of its influences and functions (Bellos, 2011; Crystal, 2003; Ostler, 2010). The recent global expansion of English is often explained by the effects of globalization (House, 2013; Jenkins et al., 2011; Pym, 2006); however, its rise as a global lingua franca has a much longer and deeper history that dates back to the

colonial 'heyday' of the British Empire and the growing 'superpower' of the United States (US) in the post-war period (Crystal, 2003; Pennycook, 2017; Phillipson, 1992). Additionally, the global spread of ELF has as much to do with its use to disseminate scientific and technological knowledge as it does with the power of English-speaking countries (Benesch, 2001; Grabe, 1988; Grabe & Kaplan, 1986; House, 2013; Kaplan, 1993; Montgomery, 2013). From a liberal perspective, English eliminated its nearest rivals (French, German, and Russian) and thrived as an international language of science in a post-war context where the international scientific community most needed a common language due to the rapidly increasing amount of scientific and technological knowledge, especially of US origin (Bellos, 2011; Grabe, 1988; Grabe & Kaplan, 1986; Kaplan, 1993). The undisputed dominance of English in the global academic publishing industry is by now well-established in a sheer volume of publications (for more recent evidence, see Vera-Baceta et al., 2019). Along with the supremacy of Anglo-American academic culture and the implicit or explicit privileging of English-language publications by national academic systems (Ardıç, 2007; Curry & Lillis, 2004; Englander & Uzuner-Smith, 2013; Uysal, 2014), the dominant use of English as an academic lingua franca (EALF) has put scholars under such great pressure to publish in English that the famous "publish or perish" mentality has turned into "publish in English or perish" (Di Bitetti & Ferreras, 2017). Consequently, English has, for better or worse, gained widespread currency in all corners of the academic world and secured its position as a globally preferred academic lingua franca.

Türkiye, a country where English has no colonial past or official status and is learned as a foreign language, is by no means an exception to any of the discussions above. The initial government-planned spread of English in Türkiye due to its perceived benefits for modernisation and internationalisation from the 1950s to the late 1970s has triggered a growing demand for the language and facilitated its unplanned and uncontrolled spread across almost all domains of life after the mid-1980s (Demircan, 1988; Dogancay-Aktuna, 1998). Together with ever-growing globalization and its concomitants since the early 2000s, English has remarkably increased in popularity and prestige with the growing number of learners of all ages, English-medium instruction (EMI) schools and degree programs, and private ELT companies; thus, it has strengthened its position as the primary foreign language in Türkiye (Doğançay-Aktuna & Kızıltepe, 2005; Şaş, 2022). As a result of higher education policies favouring the use of English in academic publications, English has been elevated to the leading language of academic publication, while Turkish has been gradually sidelined and subordinated to English (Ardıç, 2007; Englander & Uzuner-Smith, 2013; Uysal, 2014). This trend has resulted in a gradual decrease in Turkish-language publications compared to the rising share of Türkiye-origin articles published in English in national and international journals (Şaş, 2022). Uysal (2014) explains the growing power of English in Turkish academia as "a domino effect caused by the global pressures and demands to publish in English that influence the Turkish state policies to use English as a prerequisite for integration with the scientific world, which then impact the publishing behaviours and attitudes of Turkish scholars" (p. 282). Thus, Turkish academia could not escape the global trend that prioritizes the use of ELFA as a means of gaining access to global knowledge production

and promoting internationalization efforts. Although current national policies and criteria for ascending the academic career ladder do not explicitly require academics to publish in English, and publishing in English is not the most critical condition for academic career progression, the global trend in the academic publishing industry that maintains the dominance of ELFA has been placing academics in Türkiye, like their peers elsewhere in the world, under increasing pressure to publish in English to secure employment, recognition, promotion, and funding. Meanwhile, there is a growing popularization of courses and workshops in English for research publication purposes (ERPP) for both early career researchers and senior academics. Many universities have also established separate units or centres to support academics in academic writing in English. Some universities also offer academics in-house paid or unpaid language services. Additionally, companies and freelancers that offer academic translation and/or proofreading/editing services have recently mushroomed in Türkiye. It has become common for academics to receive marketing e-mails from such companies and freelancers. Additionally, as shown by empirical evidence, the use of professional and/or non-professional language services to publish in English has gradually become a common and sometimes even necessary practice among academics in Türkiye (Demir et al., 2017; Karahan, 2013; Karakaş, 2012), just like their non-native English speaking (NNES)<sup>1</sup> peers (Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2019; Bendazzoli, 2016; Bennett, 2010; Burrough-Boenisch, 2019; Espinoza Marquez, 2020; Kim, 2019; Lillis & Curry, 2006, 2010; Luo & Hyland, 2016, 2019; Willey & Tanimoto, 2013). Against this background, this study aimed to explore native Turkish-speaking academics' views and experiences of receiving English language assistance and acknowledging the assistance received in published studies. Surprisingly, there is little published data on receiving language assistance to publish studies (Bendazzoli, 2016; Bennett, 2010; Espinoza Marquez, 2020; Luo & Hyland, 2016, 2019; Molino, 2018), while the issue of acknowledging translators and proofreaders/editors in published studies has been largely neglected and unexplored with only a few exceptions (Burrough-Boenisch, 2019; Matarese & Shashok, 2020). Given the dearth of research on all the issues, this study is believed to make a significant contribution to the literature by providing new insights into NNES academics' use of language services and uncovering issues surrounding the (non-)acknowledgement of language service providers as non-author contributors in published studies.

### **1.1 Types of Language Assistance**

The entire process of English-language academic publication from pre-submission to post-submission involves various types of mediators who directly or indirectly support academic text production in various important ways (Burrough-Boenisch, 2003; Lillis & Curry, 2006, 2010). In terms of linguistic mediation, these mediators include 1) professional language service providers who have knowledge of and expertise in the English language, such as translators, proofreaders, revisers, correctors, copy editors, author's editors, and convenience editors (i.e., English language specialists such as

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<sup>1</sup>Although the dichotomy between native English speaking (NES) and NNES is a matter of controversy and criticism for its connotations with the privileged status of native speakers, the terms are preferred in this study for their widespread and well-established use in the literature.

teachers of English and NES colleagues), and 2) non-professionals who are believed to have a good enough knowledge of English, such as colleagues, friends, spouses, and family members (Burrough-Boenisch, 2003; Lillis & Curry, 2006, 2010; Willey & Tanimoto, 2013). These mediators can operate on a formal (professional or paid) or informal (amateur, friendly, or unpaid) basis (Lillis & Curry, 2006, 2010). As can be seen, language services come in various names and forms. This study addresses the issue of receiving language assistance to publish studies under two broad categories of linguistic mediation, i.e., translation and proofreading/editing.

### 1.1.1 Academic Translation

Given the historical role and function of translation in the dissemination and (re)production of scientific and academic knowledge (and of all forms of knowledge), as documented in a large body of publications, there is considerable overlap between the current use of EALF and translation. Both EALF and translation play a gatekeeper role in carrying scientific and academic knowledge across linguistic boundaries (Montgomery, 2000, 2010; Pym, 2006; Schögler, 2019). This gatekeeping role is new neither for translation nor for a lingua franca. In fact, moving across boundaries is inherent to the functioning of science and academia, and both translation and writing in a lingua franca have long been serving to this end (Montgomery, 2000, 2010; Pym, 2006; Schögler, 2019). In Montgomery's (2010) terms, "[t]ranslation of science is as old as science itself", and "[d]ue to its role both in collecting and disseminating knowledge, translation has been no less integral to scientific progress than teaching and research" (p. 299). However, most of the discussion and research on the circulation of academic thought and knowledge through translation has remained "restricted to the fields of science and technology", while "translation in the academic field remains a topic placed at the fringe of translation studies" and is left largely "underexplored in contrast to fields of translatorial practice such as literary or – to a lesser extent – technical translation" (Schögler, 2019, pp. 12,13). At this very point, it seems useful to clarify what is meant by 'academic translation' in this study and distinguish it from apparently the nearest fields of activity that relate to the translation of specialized forms of knowledge, i.e., scientific and technical translation.

Although scientific and technical translation is frequently used either interchangeably or in pairs to refer to a "research field in its own right" within TS due to their similarities (Franco Aixelá, 2004, p. 31), they should be treated as two distinct forms of specialized translation (Byrne, 2012; Olohan, 2016). The word 'scientific' tends to be understood as what is called hard, exact, or natural sciences both in general contexts where the term is used and in the field of scientific translation (Byrne, 2012; Espinoza Marquez, 2020; Montgomery, 2010). Although scientific translation is also often used to include the translation of academic genres, social sciences and humanities texts tend to be not covered in scientific translation. Therefore, "[i]n comparison to the study of translation in science (and technology), the study of translatorial practices and translations in fields that are commonly referred to as the social sciences and humanities is considerably more dispersed" (Schögler, 2019, p. 13). The small volume of research on 'academic translation' does not include a definition of the term but uses it as a

generic term to refer to 1) the area of activity, i.e., the industry, market, and field of academic translation, which may also imply a field of study, i.e., a line of research on relevant issues, 2) the product, i.e., translated academic texts that usually pertain to social sciences and humanities, and 3) the process of translating academic texts (e.g., Bennett, 2007, 2010, 2013a, 2019; Luo & Hyland, 2019; Molino, 2018; Pisanski Peterlin, 2013, 2014; Schögler, 2019). A plausible reason for the lack of definition might be that the meaning of ‘academic translation’ is considered to be immediately apparent to many readers. However, it is necessary to delineate its use in this study to better address the issues under investigation here. This study uses the term ‘academic translation’ in all the three forms or senses mentioned above to refer to the translation of academic genres by professional language service providers or non-professionals, which are intended for a scholarly audience and pertain to any discipline without being restricted to so-called hard sciences or soft sciences. Examples include journal articles, theses/dissertations, conference/symposium papers, books, chapters, reviews, case reports, and abstracts. In this sense, this definition is not radically different from the above treatment of scientific translation except for its inclusion of all disciplines. While ‘academic translation’ may involve any pair of languages, it is today mostly done in and out of English given the dominance of EALF in the academic publishing landscape. Additionally, ‘academic translation’ is most often used by service providers and users in Türkiye compared to ‘scientific translation’. A search on the web for both terms to look for such services also brings up more results for ‘academic translation’, at least in Turkish and English, thereby indicating the embrace of the term ‘academic translation’ in the translation industry. Thus, the more common use of ‘academic translation’ by global and local language service providers and users also accounts for the reason for preferring ‘academic translation’ over ‘scientific translation’. However, this use of ‘academic translation’ in this study is not intended to be normative or exhaustive, rather it is open to discussion and reinterpretation.

### 1.1.2 Proofreading and Editing

Proofreading and editing are subject to different interpretations by academic publishers, and language service providers and users. The term editing is most often used, in the context of academic publishing, as a generic term to refer to a series of overlapping interventions to improve the quality of academic texts, written in or translated into English in this case, and prepare them for publication (Burrough-Boenisch, 2013). These interventions include, along a cline from superficial/light to deep/heavy, copy editing to remedy mechanical issues such as spelling, punctuation, and publisher-specific style (i.e., house style), language editing to improve readability, and substantive editing to increase the efficiency of a text in terms of content and structure (Burrough-Boenisch, 2013). In this sense, proofreading is usually done at the last stage before publication or submission and corresponds to a point towards the more superficial end of the editing cline. Considering that editing and proofreading are most often used interchangeably or jointly without a clear-cut distinction in Türkiye, and several Turkish words used to refer to such practices (i.e., dil kontrolü, dil revizyonu, düzeltme, düzenleme, and redaksiyon) are usually accompanied by the two English terms, this study uses editing and

proofreading in their generally accepted senses but without focusing on the sharp boundaries between the two terms.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1 Research Design and Procedure**

This study used a case study within a survey design (Yin, 2009). This design implies a two-phase research procedure in terms of both data collection and data analysis. Accordingly, an online survey was administered to a non-random sample of academics in the first phase, and online interviews were held with a self-selected group of survey respondents in the second phase. Before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University in 2021 (Approval Number: 62075, and Research Identification Number: 2021/255).

#### **2.1.1 Survey**

The online survey was developed by the first author drawing on previous relevant research and her hands-on experience in academic translation and proofreading/editing. The survey was designed and administered in Turkish using Google Forms. After the initial version of the survey was completed, expert opinions were sought from two Turkish language experts, four academics from different disciplines who have experience and expertise in survey design and administration, and four professional translators who have experience in translating, editing and/or proofreading academic texts and hold a doctoral degree in TS. The survey was revised in light of expert feedback, and then it was pilot-tested with a sample of 15 academics who were asked to check for the clarity, relevance, and order of the items, the amount of time spent filling in the survey, and the layout of the form, as well as typographical errors and missing items. After the piloting phase, the survey was refined before its final version was officially launched. The final version<sup>2</sup> consisted of 57 items (i.e., questions), most of which are mandatory and closed-ended, while some items are non-mandatory and open-ended questions that were intended to elicit additional responses and compensate for any missing category in the preceding item.

The online survey was circulated using a combination of non-probability sampling strategies (i.e., purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling), and it was accessible from May 19 to November 19, 2022. In line with the purpose of the study, the following selection criteria were established: 1) to speak Turkish as a mother tongue, 2), to work as an academic at a university in Türkiye, 3) to publish academic studies in English or use English in any part of published studies, 4) to have received English language assistance for published studies in the last five years, and 5) to work in a discipline other than English language-related programs such as ELT, English/American Language and Literature, and English Translation and Interpreting. The rationale for excluding academics from such disciplines was simply the assumption that they are less likely to be information-rich cases because they have a good command of English and thus may

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<sup>2</sup> The original Turkish survey is accessible through <https://forms.gle/2JPhcReA2Avv2taZ9>. Its English version is accessible through <https://forms.gle/PsJ5zonLq8UooxxG8>.

not need or receive English language assistance to publish academic studies in English. In contrast, it seems more likely that they provide such assistance (e.g., Luo & Hyland, 2016; Willey & Tanimoto, 2013) although they may sometimes be asked to have their studies proofread by a native English speaker. Accordingly, the target population of this study consisted of native Turkish-speaking academics from various disciplines (excluding English language-related programs), who have received English language assistance to publish academic studies in the last five years. There are 205 actively operating universities in Türkiye and a total of 183,300 academics, including 1707 academics from English language-related programs and 2029 foreign nationals who may not have Turkish as a mother tongue (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu [Council of Higher Education], 2021, 2022). These figures are meant only to give a rough idea of the potential size of the target population because there is no foolproof and accurate way to estimate the number of eligible academics. The survey received a total of 318 responses. However, 95 respondents failed to meet the selection criteria; thus, the responses of 223 academics were included in the dataset for analysis. Given the potential size of the target population, this number is literally a drop in the ocean. It is, however, worth stating that the response rate relied on the voluntary participation of respondents. The quantitative data collected through the survey were presented in charts with numbers and percentages.

### 2.1.2 Interviews

The survey was also used to recruit cases for the second phase in which online interviews were conducted with nine academics who volunteered to be interviewed. The interviews were held in Turkish in January 2023 and aimed at further exploring academics' opinions, observations, and experiences. The qualitative data collected through the interviews was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (TA) due to its flexibility and its prioritization of the subjectivity and creativity of the researcher(s) "as a resource for knowledge production" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 334). The use of reflexive TA in this study was informed by social constructionism (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 336). Following the six-phase analysis procedure and instructions (Braun & Clarke, 2021), the themes and sub-themes were extracted from the interview data. The interviewees were coded as I-1, I-2, and so on to ensure anonymity in reporting the data.

## 2.2 Participants

### 2.2.1 Survey Respondents

Among 223 survey respondents, 72 (32.3%) were assistant professors, 63 (28.3%) were associate professors, 44 (19.7%) were research assistants, 23 (10.3%) were instructors, and 21 (9.4%) were professors<sup>3</sup>. The respondents were grouped according to their main field of study using the classification system devised by the Interuniversity Board of the Council of Higher Education in Türkiye, which subsumes disciplines (i.e., branches of sciences) under twelve main fields of study. Accordingly, most of the academics (65;

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<sup>3</sup> An academic working in a university in Türkiye can hold one of these five academic positions/titles. Each university in Türkiye has its specific appointment and promotion criteria although they are subject to the relevant national higher education laws and regulations.



29.1%) were from disciplines listed under the Architecture, Planning and Design main field, followed by those from disciplines under Education Sciences (52; 23.3%), and those from disciplines under Social Studies, Humanities, and Administrative Sciences (36; 16.1%). The remaining academics were from the disciplines listed under the following main fields: Science and Mathematics (16; 7.2%); Health Sciences (14; 6.3%); Philology (13; 5.8%); Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (10; 4.5%); Engineering (6; 2.7%); Fine Arts (5; 2.2%), and Sport Sciences (5; 2.2%). There was only one academic from the Law main field and no academic from the Theology main field. However, it should be noted that a high number of academics under any category does not imply any conclusive evidence about their receiving English language assistance to publish academic studies although it may have direct or indirect connections with receiving such assistance. In other words, a high distribution only indicates that the survey circulated more widely among academics who gave these responses.

### 2.2.2 Interviewees

Among the nine academics interviewed, five (I-1, I-2, I-5, I-6, and I-7) received only translation assistance in the past five years, and four (I-3, I-4, I-8, and I-9) received both translation and proofreading/editing assistance. None was from the same discipline. Three were professors, three were associate professors, two were assistant professors, and one was a research assistant. Only one interviewee (I-1) reported acknowledging the language assistance because she believes it is ethical to do so. One (I-5) reported not acknowledging the language assistance because he does not want it to be known. The remaining seven reported that they do not acknowledge language assistance because the journal/publisher does not require it.

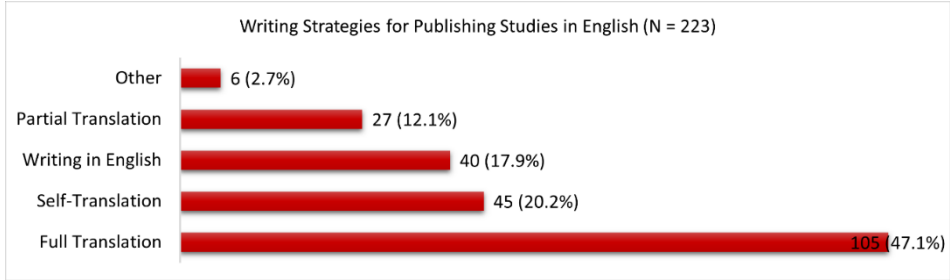
## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Survey Findings

This section presents the survey findings related to academics' experiences and views of receiving language assistance and acknowledging it in published studies. Looking at the strategies that the academics most often use to publish studies in English, as shown in Figure 1, almost half of the academics (105; 47.15%) responded that they first write their studies in Turkish and then have someone else translate them into English. The next common strategy was first writing studies in Turkish and then self-translating them into English (45; 20.2%), followed by writing directly in English (40; 17.9%). Some academics (27; 12.1%) reported writing partly in English and partly in Turkish and then having Turkish parts translated into English. Six academics (2.7%) reported that they opt for different strategies at different times rather than sticking to one strategy.

**Figure 1**

*Writing Strategies for Publishing Studies in English*



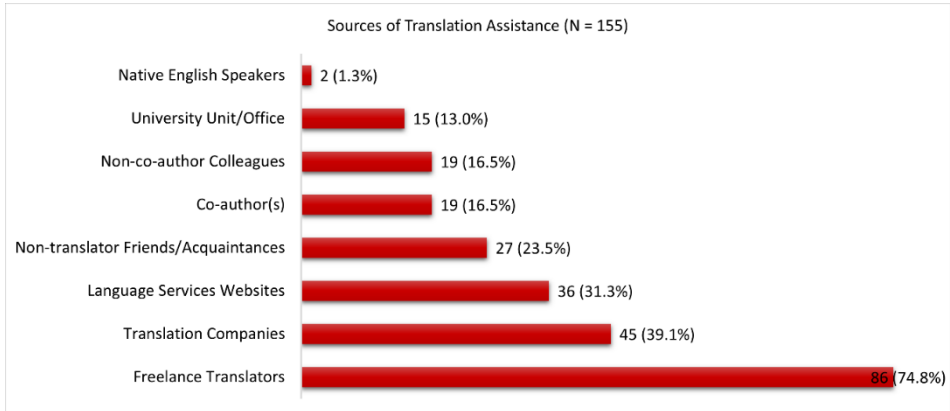
Looking at the type of assistance that the academics received to publish in English in the last five years, 97 (43.5%) reported receiving translation assistance, 58 (26.0%) received both translation and proofreading/editing assistance, and 68 (30.5%) received proofreading/editing assistance only. This means that 155 academics received translation assistance and 126 received proofreading/editing assistance.

The respondents most often resorted to freelance translators for both translation (86; 74.8%) (Figure 2) and proofreading/editing assistance (42; 33.3%) (Figure 3). Translation companies and language services websites were also commonly preferred by both groups. Non-translator friends and acquaintances were the second most frequently selected group for proofreading/editing assistance (37; 29.4%), while they were the fourth most frequently selected group for translation assistance (27; 23.5%). Co-authors, non-co-author colleagues, and university units<sup>4</sup> were selected by a small number of academics in both groups, while only a few academics resorted to NESs for language assistance.

**Figure 2**

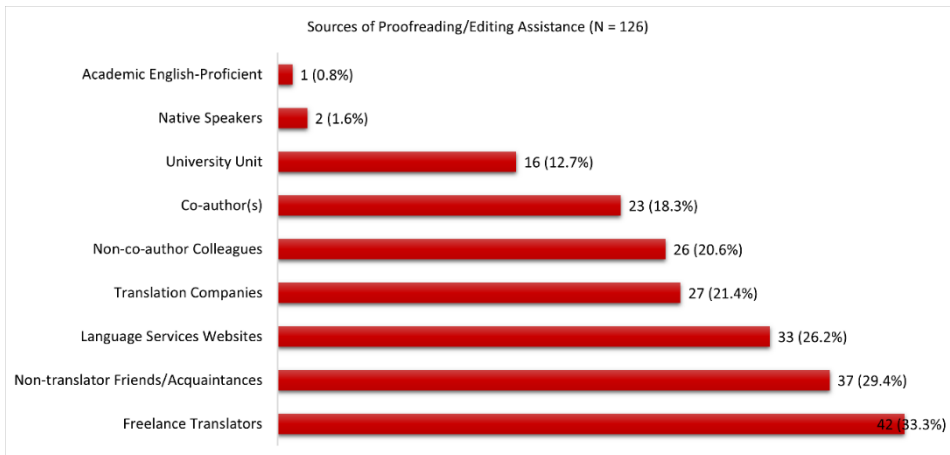
*Sources of Translation Assistance*

<sup>4</sup> Some universities in Türkiye have a unit or office that offers academics free or paid language assistance. This is a quite recent practice and available in only a few universities.



**Figure 3**

*Sources of Proofreading/Editing Assistance*



As shown in Figure 4, only a small number of academics (25; 16.1%) responded that they acknowledge the translation assistance received in published studies. As shown in Figure 5, the same is also true for proofreading/editing assistance (34; 27.0%). The most common reason for acknowledging both types of assistance was that it is considered ethical. While some academics did not consider it a problem to make it known, fewer acknowledged the assistance received because the journal/publisher required it. The respondent who chose the other option explained that it is right to credit the person who contributes to the work.

**Figure 4**

*Reasons for (Not) Acknowledging the Translation Assistance Received*

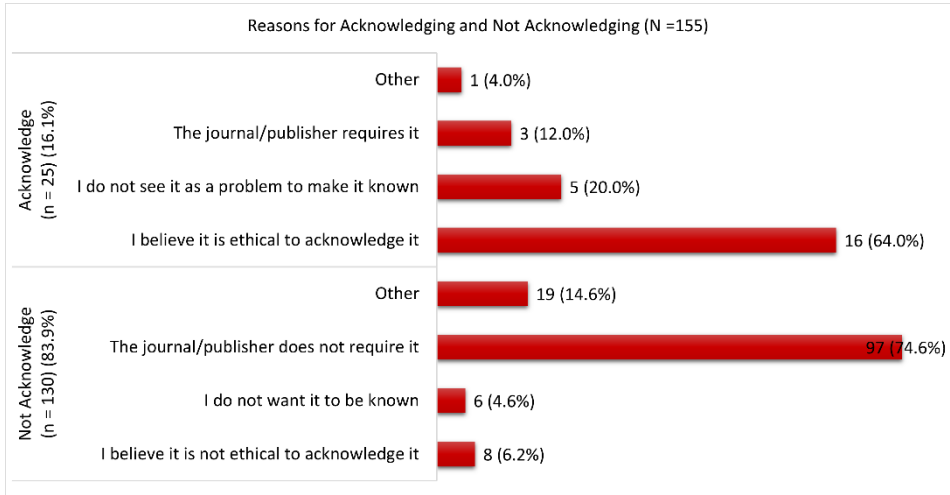
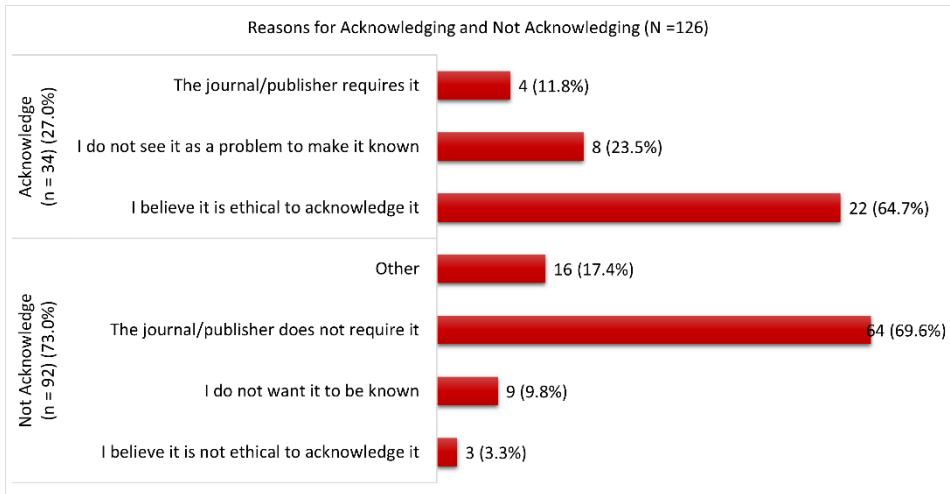


Figure 5

*Reasons for (Not) Acknowledging the Proofreading/Editing Assistance Received*



Looking at the reasons for not acknowledging the assistance received, most of the academics responded that the journal/publisher did not require acknowledgement in both the case of translation assistance (97; 74.6%) and the case of proofreading/editing assistance (64; 69.9%). A small number of academics did not acknowledge the assistance received either because they did not want it to be known or because they found it unethical. To sum up, the responses of those who chose the other option, the most prominent reason for both types of assistance was that acknowledging language assistance is a matter that academics have not contemplated

or thought of before. Another important reason was that they found it unnecessary to acknowledge a paid service.

### 3.2 Interview Findings

This section presents the interview findings under the two themes created using reflexive TA. The academics' views and experiences of receiving language assistance are treated under the theme *'the use of language assistance by necessity'*, and their views and experiences of acknowledging language assistance are treated under the theme *'acknowledging as a thorny issue'*.

#### 3.2.1 The Use of Language Assistance by Necessity

As can be seen in Table 1, academics' recourse to language assistance is shaped by various factors. Accordingly, the interviewees receive translation and/or proofreading/editing assistance for two main reasons: 1) they want to have their texts translated or proofread by a professional (i.e., a language expert) for various reasons, and/or 2) they are asked by journals to have their texts proofread by a NES or a professional due to language problems. Although in the first case, academics seem to use language assistance by choice, a closer look at the underlying reasons for resorting to language assistance shows that their choice is informed by some conditions that make the use of language assistance necessary. The conditions that necessitate the use of language assistance were subsumed under the two subthemes: *'the constraints of time and workload'* and the view of *'English academic writing as a distinct expertise'*. The following excerpts<sup>5</sup> exemplify these sub-themes:

Time is a factor. My preference would be to have someone more competent in this subject, someone who deals entirely with language... I think there is an expert for that... People who specialise in academic writing, especially in translation. (I-3, Assistant Professor, International Law)

Time also matters... If I translate it [my study] into English, then when will I work? [An academic] has administrative tasks... You have a lot of roles. You should not assume the role of another person. Otherwise, you would have to sit and translate [your study] into English for days. (I-8, Associate Professor, Tourism Management)

Even an article [translated by a translator] into English may be rejected due to language problems. Although we have perfect knowledge of English, I believe an expert must revise it... Unfortunately, we have a heavy workload... we do not have that much time. (I-9, Research Assistant, Nursing)

**Table 1**

*Themes and Subthemes Generated from the Interview Data*

Themes	Subthemes	Mentions
<b>The use of language assistance by necessity</b>	Time and workload constraints	I-3, I-4, I-8, I-9
	English academic writing as a distinct expertise	I-1, I-3, I-4, I-5, I-6, I-7, I-8, I-9

<sup>5</sup> All excerpts were translated by the first author.

<b>Acknowledging as a thorny issue</b>	Proofreading demanded by journals	I-1, I-3, I-4, I-6, I-7, I-8, I-9
	Financial concerns	I-2, I-5, I-6, I-8
	Machine translation as a cost-effective solution	I-2, I-6
	Practical issues/impracticality	I-7, I-8, I-9
	Negative associations	I-2, I-3, I-4, I-8
	Positive associations and benefits	I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, I-6, I-8
	Language assistance as a means to an end	I-4, I-5, I-7, I-8
	Easier to acknowledge proofreading	I-3, I-4
	The translators' status at stake	I-3

The second reason for academics' enforced recourse to language services was discussed under the sub-theme '*proofreading demanded by journals*', especially prestigious journals, as reflected in the following excerpts:

Although we [have our article translated into English by a translator], journals ask you to re-send it to the translation/proofreading company that they work with. Only then they evaluate your submission. (I-6, Assistant Professor, Sport Sciences)

International journals do not accept submissions without proofreading services. They do not evaluate and process submissions. (I-7, Associate Professor, Economics)

The sub-themes '*financial concerns*' and '*machine translation as a cost-effective solution*' may seem, at first glance, irrelevant to the theme 'the use of language assistance by necessity'; however, in the interviews from which these themes were generated, the interviewees stated that they had to receive translation and proofreading/editing services, and they believed that professional language assistance is actually needed. These sub-themes are exemplified by the following excerpt:

Translation services can be directly related to one's financial situation. We actually have some financial problems... It costs a lot of money to submit to a journal... We wasted very good articles by translating them into English using Google Translate. (I-6, Assistant Professor, Sport Sciences)

Two interviewees (I-8 and I-9) also mentioned the use of machine translation tools among academics to understand English-language publications or to translate Turkish abstracts into English. However, they did not relate it to financial concerns.

### 3.2.2 Acknowledging as A Thorny Issue

As can be seen in Table 1, the issue of acknowledging language assistance in published studies is not easy to settle or resolve. This issue was generally unfamiliar to most of them because all but one (I-1) never acknowledged in their studies that they had received English assistance. Most importantly, most of them did not see an instance of acknowledged language assistance in a publication, or they never thought of this issue.

The interviewees reflected on several factors that may affect the actual practice of acknowledging language assistance. Some of these factors were gathered under the sub-theme '*practical issues/impracticality*'. The following excerpts reflect the impracticality of acknowledging due to commercial or operational concerns:

I do not think it would be appropriate to standardise this procedure... because it then would become commercialised. Then a certificate [of proof] would be demanded [by journals/editors]. (I-8, Associate Professor, Tourism Management)

I think it is open to misuse... It would serve as an advertisement... Academics resort to companies because they cannot find freelance translators. I think this would lead to unfair competition. (I-7, Associate Professor, Economics)

A standard acknowledging procedure seems impractical for some fields because almost every publication would then contain, by default, the same disclosure:

We are receiving translation assistance. But this is what will happen in this case. All studies will have the same phrase, such as 'language assistance was received'... [Language assistance] is received for almost all studies... In our field, this is a normal, taken-for-granted situation. (I-9, Research Assistant, Nursing)

Receiving language assistance is most likely to evoke serious negative associations about authors' competence in English and thus harm their reputation in the academic community. The concerns under the sub-theme '*negative associations*' play a critical role in the non-acknowledgement of language assistance, as exemplified by the following excerpts:

This may lead to a loss of prestige for the person... It may be perceived as if my English was inadequate. (I-7, Associate Professor, Economics)

They would say, for example, 'he got a score on the test, he became an associate professor or professor, he authored an article in English but with help'... So, it would become a matter of 'how did you become a professor, then?'... The perception would be that 'well, he got help with English'. (I-4, Professor, Social Studies Education)

However, for many academics, acknowledging language assistance is more likely to evoke '*positive associations and provide benefits*' to authors:

I think this is actually an advantage... [It means] that I receive assistance with this issue because I care about my work... It shows that the work has emerged as a product of multidimensional assistance. (I-1, Professor, Guidance and Psychological Counselling)

If [the language assistance received] is acknowledged, I can claim my right on the subject in which I am an expert. So, I do not take responsibility in situations that may arise from the correctness and incorrectness of the [translation]. (I-2, Associate Professor, Geography Teaching)

For some interviewees, although academics are not yet ready to acknowledge that they have received language assistance, it only serves '*as a means to an end*':

The goal is to put forward a text on an original subject... We confuse whether language is a goal or a means to an end... But academics are not yet ready for this issue. (I-5, Professor, Modern History)

On the other hand, it may be '*easier to acknowledge proofreading*' assistance compared to translation.

Proofreading may be acknowledged, but translation [assistance] may be perceived as incompetence.... I do not think that anyone would write that they have got translation assistance... In Türkiye, academics are not open to it. (I-4, Professor, Social Studies Education)

It is both surprising and not surprising that only one interviewee touched on the translators' invisibility and low status. Her awareness arose from her interest in literature. She believed that translators should stand up for themselves because academics' reliance on unacknowledged language assistance is apparently taken for granted and not negotiated. The following excerpt reflects '*the translators' status at stake*' in academic translations:

Translation is a very valuable job. In Türkiye, I think, it is a job that is not valued very much in terms of both material and immaterial gains.... In literary translations, for example, translators are named, but I see that even there they are not recognised. The translator remains in the background. This is also true for academic translation... Translators should stand tall. They should say 'this is my job and I want it to be acknowledged; otherwise, I will not do it'. (I-3, Assistant Professor, International Law)

#### 4. Discussion

The analysis of the survey data showed that the most common strategy to publish in English was full-text translation, followed by self-translation. However, some academics may switch between strategies depending on circumstances. In a survey of 192 Portuguese researchers from different disciplines of humanities and social sciences, Bennett (2010), likewise, reported that while most of the researchers used several different strategies at different times, 77 researchers had someone else translate their work and almost half of them resorted to the service of professionals. Taken together, these findings show that the practice of linguistic mediation in academic text production is most often much more complex, fluid, and hybrid (Bennett, 2010, 2021; Montgomery, 2009). Freelance translators were the most common service providers for both translation and proofreading/editing. Translation companies and language services websites were also commonly used in both cases, while non-translator friends were more commonly used for proofreading/editing. These findings are consistent with earlier observations that many scholars are becoming aware of the greater efficiency of using professional translation services although colleagues and acquaintances are still asked for assistance (Bennett, 2013b; Espinoza Marquez, 2020). The academics in the present study quite rarely resorted to NESs for language assistance. This finding shows that translating into English as a non-native language has come to be widely recognized as a market-driven practice in EFL countries (Bennett, 2010; Zannini, 2016) due to, for example, the difficulty in accessing NESs to mediate academic texts (Kim, 2019; Luo & Hyland, 2016).

The interview findings revealed that the academics need to use language services at one point for one reason or the other. They referred to their lack of time, heavy



workload, and preference for leaving the work of translating and proofreading to the experts, and prestigious journals' routine demands for professional proofreading and/or editing. Machine translation tools have been increasingly used by NNES researchers as an aid for academic writing thanks to the recent improvements in their output quality (Bowker, 2020; O'Brien et al., 2018). The interview findings showed that machine translation is used as a cost-effective solution due to the cost of language services. Earlier studies also reported that the cost of language services may hinder scholars from resorting to language services (Bendazzoli, 2016; Espinoza Marquez, 2020; Li & Flowerdew, 2007; Lillis & Curry, 2010). It is unlikely, at least for the time being, that financial concerns and machine translation technologies completely obviate the need for language assistance because, as reported by most of the interviewees, it is the rule rather than the exception, especially for prestigious journals to ask authors to have their manuscripts proofread or edited by a NES or language professional. However, it seems that the cutting-edge applications of artificial intelligence, which have recently received plenty of hype and come to be increasingly used for academic purposes, will soon, if not yet, exert a greater impact on academics' use of language services. Four interviewees also reported that they use language services due to the constraints of time and workload because they would, otherwise, have to devote a greater amount of time and effort to draft their studies in English. This finding is in accord with recent studies indicating that NNES scholars' lack of time is a key factor in resorting to language services because both self-translation (Pisanski Peterlin, 2019) and writing in English (Pérez-Llantada et al., 2011) are usually considered more time-consuming.

According to the survey findings, most of the academics did not acknowledge the language assistance received in published studies mostly because the journal or publisher did not ask them to do so. However, the interview findings showed that acknowledging the assistance received in published studies is not a straightforward issue, rather there are several factors at play in the actual practice of acknowledging. Contrary to the survey findings, the analysis of the interview data revealed that academics are reluctant to acknowledge their use of language services mostly because they worry about risking their reputation and being labelled as incompetent in English. While the interviewees confirmed the positive aspects and possible benefits of acknowledging the use of language services, their concern over possible negative associations and the impracticality of acknowledging due to seemingly legitimate reasons were cited as the most prominent reasons for not acknowledging the assistance received. This empirical evidence supports earlier observations that language assistance is rarely acknowledged in published studies (Bennett, 2021; Burrough-Boenisch, 2019; Luo & Hyland, 2019; Montgomery, 2009). International publishing ethics standards and submission guidelines of prestigious journals/publishers stipulate that authors must list any assistance received in the preparation of manuscripts, for example, in the 'acknowledgements' section, and credit a paid help or a friendly favour as non-author contributions, including professional and non-professional language assistance (EASE, 2018; ICMJE, 2023; Teixeira da Silva, 2020). However, journals' requests for proofreading, as expressed by Matarese and Shashok (2020), serve only to ensure authors' compliance with their instructions to seek assistance rather than encouraging

authors to acknowledge the use of such services. Thus, acknowledging language assistance is a pending issue that requires urgent attention from the academic community (Matarese & Shashok, 2020). As highlighted by one interviewee in this study, language service providers themselves might ask authors to credit them in published studies using an acknowledgement statement that is negotiated and accepted by both parties. However, as shown by recent empirical data (Burrough-Boenisch, 2019), language service providers' call for acknowledgement is a matter of controversy. Burrough-Boenisch (2019) surveyed 131 freelance language editors to investigate whether they seek acknowledgement for editing academic studies written by NNES scholars. More than half of the respondents (76; 58%) did not seek acknowledgement and cited the following reasons: seeking acknowledgement had never crossed their mind, due payment means sufficient acknowledgement, and it is not important to be acknowledged. Most interestingly, they did not want to be wrongly credited with disimprovements because authors could later insert errors in the published text. Taken together, the results reported in Burrough-Boenisch (2019) and the results of the present study suggest that both authors and language service providers worry that their reputations may be at risk when language services are acknowledged. These results also indicate the importance of the need for language service providers to ask authors to acknowledge their assistance and for both parties (i.e., service users and providers) to negotiate the issue and reach a consensus on how to acknowledge the assistance.

#### **4.1 Implications**

As shown by the present findings and discussed by earlier studies, the present role of EALF carries considerable implications for translation, which also raise some critical ethical issues. They can be subsumed under three broad categories. First, the dominant use of EALF has created a flourishing market of academic translation in both directions, i.e., in and from English – so much so that “[t]he transfer of scientific material is quite likely the largest realm of translation in the world today, especially in professional and academic circles” (Montgomery, 2009, p. 6). The internationalization and marketization of scientific and academic publishing have led to a “considerable increase in the volume of translation work into English” and “also generated a need for translation from English into other languages” (Bennett, 2013a, pp. 170-171). Second, translators play a significant role in contributing to both the circulation of academic knowledge and the reinforcement of EALF, usually unwittingly though, due to the perceived authority and prestige of EALF. Third, despite its strategic position in the continuous circulation and exchange of scientific and academic knowledge, translation is most often taken for granted as a latent dimension of the process and “sometimes create[s] the impression of being an original” either by being falsely presented as an original without reference to its source text or by being simply “received as an original and stripped from its status as translation” (Schögler, 2019, pp. 5, 11). Thus, translation is usually subversive and invisible, and translators are not given social and/or symbolic recognition for their contribution to knowledge-making (Schögler, 2019; Franco Aixelá, 2004). In this regard, Montgomery (2010), pointing to Lawrence Venuti's well-known argument about the translator's invisibility, notes that “the translator of science is not considered important enough as a creative, producing agent” although they “produce cultural products that

qualify as originals in the target language” and “are potent actors in the globalization of knowledge” (p. 303). The implications for translation also apply to proofreading and editing. Like translation, proofreading and editing are usually taken for granted and rarely transparently acknowledged. This means that “translation, when it occurs, tends to be ‘covert’ [i.e., functions as an original], while paratranslational activities such as editing, proofreading or linguistic revision routinely go unattributed” (Bennett, 2021, p. 179). In their study with a Chinese clinical neurologist who worked with several translators to publish research articles in English, Luo and Hyland (2019) highlighted that the status of the translated text and the professional recognition of translators were perhaps the most contentious issue raised in their study. Their findings also showed that academic translators “provide a critical, but anonymous, service sometimes paid but rarely acknowledged”, while “[p]ublishers and journals seldom mention the need to acknowledge or credit translators in their guidelines or statements of ethical practice”, and “the research literature seem particularly concerned with the matter, despite the issues it raises for questions of authorship, contributorship and the transparency of research” (p. 45). As they aptly worded, “[a]cademic translators seem to inhabit the grey areas of research publication: essential but unsung champions of the otherwise excluded EAL [English as an additional language] academics”; thus, “[b]y failing to publicly recognize the work of good translators, the academy overlooks work of considerable scholarship and, at the same time, it fails to reward a major mechanism which supports EAL academics to participate in international disciplinary conversations” (Luo & Hyland, 2019, pp. 45-46).

## **5. Conclusion**

The most important conclusion of this study is that the work of academic translators and proofreaders/editors is taken for granted and rarely acknowledged in published studies. This means that they are rendered invisible while they contribute to the visibility and standing of academics. Thus, the present academic publishing industry dominated by EALF is a major site that maintains the persistent invisibility of translation (as well as other forms of linguistic mediation) despite its critical role in the circulation and (re)production of academic knowledge.

This study has two major limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the findings and conclusions reported here concern only the group of academics who participated in the study. Although they provide relevant data and illuminating insights regarding the topic under investigation, they should not be considered predictive and cannot be generalized to the experiences of other academics in Türkiye or elsewhere. Thus, the applicability of these findings to other contexts is left to the discretion of potential readers of this study. Because this study tried to elicit responses from a group of understandably busy respondents, the survey and interviews were kept short as much as possible, and several other important points could not be addressed. Thus, there is a definite need for both qualitative and quantitative follow-up research to probe further into this topic from different perspectives, especially from the point of view of academic translators, proofreaders, and editors. Second, ironically and regrettably, this study

relies almost exclusively on English-language publications. Non-English-language sources would definitely have offered a diversity of views and voices on the issues discussed here. The implications of the present findings go beyond translation studies and seem relevant to various lines of research such as language policies, ELT, ELF, academic publishing, publishing ethics, EAP, and academic writing. It is hoped that both the findings and shortcomings of this study pave the way for a fruitful disciplinary and interdisciplinary exchange and encourage scholars from different disciplines to reflect on and enrich what has been (not) said in this study.

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#### Author Contributions

**First Author:** Nazan İşi 60% (literature review, data collection and analysis, theoretical framework, discussion)

**Second Author:** Korkut Uluç İşisağ 40% (literature review, data collection and analysis, theoretical framework, discussion)

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**İkinci Yazar:** Korkut Uluç İşisağ %40 (literatür taraması, veri toplama ve analizi, kuramsal çerçeve, tartışma)

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