



## Challenges of Translation in Reduced Relative Clauses

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### Abstract

A relative clause (RC) is a dependent clause that modifies a noun. It describes, identifies, or gives details about a noun. RCs begin with a relative pronoun or relativizer: a *wh-* or *that*. Relative pronouns might be omitted in English, which results in the reduction form of RCs. Turkish, however, has neither relative pronouns nor a reduction in RCs, which may result in challenges in translation from English into Turkish. This study aims to analyse what these challenges are and how they differ depending on the condition of active and passive voice use in RCs or reduced RCs. By applying a set of questions gathered from Foreign Language Exams administered to the translation students, the present study revealed that students taking the online test had more errors in the questions of non-reduced active RC sentences, which might be related to the length of the sentences, the phrases hard to translate, and other tricky options in the multiple choice test while students translating from the scratch had more difficulty in answering reduced passive RCs because of the temporal ambiguity in meaning. It is expected that this study will help student translators be aware of the ambiguity of meaning in reduced RCs.

### Keywords

Relative clause  
Reduction  
Defining/ non-defining clause  
Subordinate clause  
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### Kısaltılmış İlgili Tümcelerinin Çevirisinde Karşılaşılan Zorluklar

#### Özet

İlgili Tümcesi (İT), bir ismi tanımlayan bağımlı bir yan tümcedir. İT'ler bir ismi betimler, tanımlar veya onunla ilgili daha fazla bilgi verir. İT'leri -(y)an, -dık, vb. veya -mış gibi bir ilgili zamiri ile başlar. Bununla birlikte ilgili zamirleri bazen İngilizce'de atılabilir. Bu da İT'lerin kısaltma biçimine neden olur. Türkçe'de ise İngilizce'deki ne ayrı yazılan ilgili zamirleri ne de İT'lerde görülen kısaltma biçimleri vardır. Bu da İngilizce'den Türkçe'ye çeviride zorluklara neden olabilir. Bu çalışma, bu zorlukların neler olduğunu ve İT'lerde veya kısaltılmış İT'lerde etken ve edilgen yapı kullanımının durumuna bağlı olarak bu zorlukların nasıl farklılaştığını analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada, çeviri bölümü öğrencilerine Öğrenci Seçme ve Yerleştirme Merkezi (ÖSYM) tarafından yapılan Yabancı Dil Sınavlarından elde edilen bir dizi soru uygulanmıştır. Hazırlanan testi çevrimiçi platformda tamamlayan öğrencilerin çevrilmesi zor olan ifadeler ve cümlelerin uzunluğunun yanı sıra çoktan seçmeli testteki çeldirici şıklar nedeniyle kısaltılmamış etken cümle sorularında daha çok hata yaptıkları görülmüştür. Öte yandan aynı cümleleri İngilizce'den Türkçe'ye kendileri çeviren öğrencilerin ise edilgen kısaltılmış İT'lerde, cümlede anlam belirsizliğinden dolayı daha çok zorluk yaşadıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Bu çalışmanın, çeviri öğrencilerinin kısaltılmış İT'lerdeki anlamın belirsizliğinin farkında olmalarına yardımcı olması beklenmektedir.

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## Introduction

The present research aims to explore the complexity of translating the reduction forms of Relative Clauses from English into Turkish. To this end, the concern of this research is to test the hypothesis that translation of English-reduced RCs into Turkish might cause difficulties because reduced RCs may lead to temporary ambiguity and there is no 'reduction' case in Turkish. The reason why it might be difficult to comprehend and translate reduced RCs can be seen in sentences (1a) and (1b) below, the former of which is an example of non-reduced active RC whereas the latter (1b) is that of reduced RC that does not include a relative pronoun and might lead to temporary ambiguity in meaning, thereby becoming challenging for the reader or the translator.

- (1) a. Our teacher who drives to school every day is on foot today.
- b. Driving to school every day, our teacher is on foot today.

For the purpose of this research, the Foreign Language Tests in Türkiye administered by OSYM since 2000 were collected. Additionally, the present research seeks to present a comparison of active and passive RCs and reduced RCs in terms of translation difficulty. Furthermore, it aims to reveal whether there is any ambiguity in reduced RCs or not and how student translators cope with this challenge. Reduced RCs frequently cause temporary ambiguity in language(s) given that the first word of a reduced clause could be misconstrued as a component of the main clause (Townsend & Bever, 2001:248). That's why, reduced RCs have been the focus of a large amount of research, especially in psycholinguistics (Townsend & Bever 2001:247), to determine whether semantic information or background knowledge can have an impact on how a reader or a listener forms a phrase initially. To illustrate, one study compared sentences where it was more likely to observe the garden path effect since the past participle in the reduced RC might well be interpreted as the main verb for its subject (such as "the student asked... [by the teacher]", where the subject "student" is animate and may be the performer of the action), and sentences where it was less likely to observe the garden path effect (such as "the question asked... [by the teacher]", where the subject "question" is inanimate and thus could not be the performer of the action)' (Carrol, 2008:137).

The resolution of ambiguity in reduced RCs by native and non-native speakers has been compared in studies of second language acquisition. For instance, Juffs (1998) reported word-by-word reading times for six sentence categories with 17 advanced ESL (English as a Second Language) Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Romance learners as well as 17 monolingual native English speakers (NSs). The evidence suggested that post-ambiguity cues and verb subcategorization information were used to resolve main verb/reduced RC ambiguity. The findings also demonstrated that some ESL learners were more susceptible than others to being misled by a lack of post-ambiguity cues, a distinction that can be linked to their native languages (L1s). These findings imply that adult ESL learners' processing of English is shaped by the typological aspects of their L1s due to their parsing approaches and that ESL speakers, like native speakers, are sensitive to the complex interactions of information sources while parsing a phrase. Relative pronoun does not appear before the reduced RC, as in example (2). Hence, the reader is not provided with any further information (Hsu, 2006). Given that the common pattern is agent-action-patient, the reader in example (2) initially perceives "caught" as the main verb, but when they read "scream," they are compelled to re-evaluate the sentence. They only realize later that "the cat" is the direct object of the subordinate sentence and that "caught" is actually the past participle form.

(2) The cat caught in the trap screamed.

As mentioned above, there is an obvious difficulty in processing reduced RCs, and thus the translation of such sentences is also expected to lead to difficulty when compared to full RCs. Furthermore, the translation difficulty of reduced RCs might be higher, especially in typologically different languages that do not carry a relative pronoun such as Turkish. Nevertheless, as far as the researchers are aware, there has been no relevant literature investigating the translation difficulty of full and reduced RCs between typologically different languages such as Turkish and English. The present research explores the challenges of translation in reduced RCs from English into Turkish.

To this end, the primary and secondary research questions are as follows:

1. What makes it difficult to translate reduced Relative Clauses?

a) How does the type of reduction affect the translation difficulty in reduced RCs?

b) Does the use of active or passive voice make it harder to translate English full and/or reduced RCs from English into Turkish?

c) Do student translators experience temporal ambiguity in meaning in reduced RCs while translating?

The remaining paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the relevant studies on Relative Clauses in English and their Turkish equivalent structure. In Section 3, the methods and materials used in the present study are explained. Afterward, Section 4 presents the Results, and lastly, Section 5 Discussion and Conclusion are presented.

## Literature Review

This section includes five sub-sections as follows: (1) *Relative Clauses*, (2) *reduction in Relative Clauses*, (3) *types of reduced Relative Clauses*, (4) *ambiguity in Relative Clauses*, and (5) *Relative Clauses in Turkish*.

### Relative Clauses

According to Keenan and Comrie (1977), a relative clause (RC) is a sentence that specifies a subset of a broader set of objects. The head noun phrase (NP) specifies the domain, whereas the constraining sentence is the entire sentential equivalent of RC. Subordinate clauses that provide a referential statement in the main sentence are called RCs. The head (or filler) of RCs is the modified element. The gap (i.e. missing element) within the relative clause is co-referential with the head.

In the main clause, RCs are used to express information about a head referent, or nominal category. An RC interprets this head referent with a relativized element (i.e. gap). As a result, RC is part of a wider structure that includes a main clause and a related clause. A unique class of pronouns known as relative pronouns introduces relative phrases, including that, who, which, whom, where, why, and whose, etc. To illustrate, "who" is used to talk about people as in example (3) below:

(3) Jessica, who is my teacher, is from England.

The two features that are utilized to describe the structure of relative clauses are the syntactic function of the main clause element serving as the head of the relative clause and the syntactic function of the gap or the element that is relativized inside RC. The subject of the main phrase, its

object, or any other verb argument can serve as the head of the relative clause. These two characteristics allow for the distinction of four different types of relative clauses:

- (4) a. Subject RC with the subject matrix role (SS):  
Kitap oku-yan kadın kapıyı açtı.  
'The woman who was reading a book opened the door.'
- b. Object RC with the subject matrix role (SO):  
Ara-dığı kitap rafın üstünde duruyordu.  
'The book she was looking for was on the shelf.'
- c. Subject RC with the object matrix role (OS):  
Fareyi kovala-yan kediyi sevdim.  
'I stroked the cat which was chasing the mouse.'
- d. Object RC with the object matrix role (OO):  
Köpeğin kovala-dığı kediyi kucağıma aldım.  
'I held the cat which the dog was chasing.'

(Diessel, 2005:882).

The nominal that serves as the head of the clause in the main clause comes before the modifier clause with the gap. That is, in Turkish, relative clauses (RCs) come before the noun phrase they modify, much like adjectives come before the nouns they modify, as in examples (5a) and (5b), where the adjective çalışkan ('hard-working') and the RC ödevini yapan ('... who have done their homework') both modify the head noun öğrenciler ('students') and occupy the same position, namely pre-nominal. This is predicted considering the fact that Turkish typically uses head-finals.

- (5) a. Çalışkan öğrenciler - hard-working students  
b. Ödevini yapan öğrenciler – The students who have done their homework

Traditionally, there are two categories of relative clauses: defining (or restrictive RCs), as in example (6), and non-defining (or non-restrictive), as in example (7). RCs are placed in square brackets here and in subsequent examples for ease of reference.

- (6) a. The girl [who stole the vase] ran from the kitchen.  
b. Jack ran after the girl [who stole the vase].
- (7) a. Jack, [who stole the vase], ran from the kitchen.  
b. The surprised mom shouted at Jack, [who stole the vase].

Defining RCs satisfy the Keenan and Comrie (1977) criterion considering the fact that they assist to delimit or change the head NP by indicating which of a specific group of objects is intended by the speaker. On the other hand, non-defining RCs behave more like parentheticals since more information about the head NP is provided while leaving the domain it denotes undefined. Defining RCs are used to provide crucial information about someone or something, and thus reveal what or who is being referred to. A defining relative phrase is normally placed after the term it refers to. Non-

defining RCs are used to provide more information about a person or a thing. It isn't compulsory information. In spoken English, pronouns who, whom, and which are frequently replaced by that in defining RCs. Other pronouns cannot be replaced with those in non-defining RCs. In non-defining RCs, the relative pronoun cannot be left out. Even when it is the object of the verb in RC, the pronoun is obligatory. Finally, unlike defining RCs, which are punctuated, non-defining RCs are always separated from the rest of the phrase by commas. Example (8) presents a non-defining, while (9) presents a defining RC.

(8) This is Jacob, who lent my bike. (non-defining)

(9) This is the guy who lent my bike. (defining)

The difference between (8) and (9) comes down to varying head characteristics. In other words, in contrast to the head of RC in (9) which is a generic noun phrase, the head of RC in (8) is a proper name. Due to this distinction, it is doubtful that a reader of (8) will be able to determine the thing being referred to by the speaker of (8) using the information provided in RC. Using a personal name like Jacob assumes that the addressee already has sufficient knowledge of the intended referent, obviating the need for additional attribute ascriptions in the form of RC. Semanticists have long given proper names a special place. In this regard, some have even claimed that they can be considered to refer directly within a specific speech context. Contrarily, example (9), which serves to semantically describe a complicated sense before being used to establish a reference, is typically treated as a definite description. The information in RC is very useful, though not absolutely essential, for the hearer's task in this scenario, which is to select the candidate that most closely matches the description's content. According to linguists, the syntax between (8) and (9) reflects the differences in the underlying structure.

#### **Reduction in Relative Clause**

Regular RCs belong to the category of dependent clauses, often known as "subordinate clauses," which typically modify nouns. The relative pronouns who, whose, whose, where, or which, as well as the word that in English, are used to define them.

RCs typically start with a relativizer (R), a relative pronoun. In order to test the hypothesis that processing difficulty is directly influenced by the level of entrenchment of a constructional configuration, or more specifically, a specific type of RC configuration, this phenomenon, that is, the omission of non-obligatory relativizers in English - might be used. It is predicted that when RC instantiates a strongly entrenched configuration, optional relativizers will be discarded. More precisely, the probability of relativizer omission is larger when there is more entrenchment.

Relative pronouns and complementizers that would normally introduce RCs do not also appear in the reduced form (Carroll 2008:136). The full RC for the phrase "The kid whom I saw was very tall" uses the relative pronoun whom, but the reduced form is "The kid I saw was very tall." Reduced RCs can result in sentences that appear to be grammatically correct but that listeners may have trouble understanding since function words have been left out. The similarity between the past tense of verbs in active voice (e.g., "Jack played football") and the past tense in passive voice (e.g., "Football played with 11 players is an enjoyable game") can also lead to misunderstandings about a specific type of reduced RCs (Townsend & Bever 2001:247). In other words, RC is in the passive voice, and the noun being modified is its direct object. According to linguist David W. Carroll, the phrase "the florist

sent..." can be used to start a sentence with either "sent" as the main verb, as in "the florist sent the flowers to the elderly widow," or "the florist [who was] sent the flowers was extremely delighted" (in which "sent" is the beginning of a reduced relative clause) (Carrol 2008:136.) This type of language frequently causes what is known as the "garden path effect," whereby a reader starts off with an interpretation but subsequently must go back and re-examine the structure to clarify any ambiguity. (Carrol 2008:5).

### **Types of Reduced Relative Clauses**

A relative clause (RC) can be reduced by making use of different strategies as follows:

#### *Reduce to an Adjective Phrase*

The verb (often "be," but also "seem," "appear," etc.) and the relative pronoun are dropped. The changed noun comes before the adjective phrase.

- (10) The boy who was disappointed by his grades didn't go out of his room.

The boy, disappointed by his grades, didn't go out of his room.

#### *Reduce to a Prepositional Phrase*

The relative pronoun and the verb "be" are removed. The prepositional phrase is placed after the modified noun.

- (11) The flowers, which were in the vase, were bought by her husband.

The flowers, in the vase, were bought by her husband.

#### *Reduce to a Past Participle*

The relative pronoun and the verb "be" are removed. The past participle phrase is placed after the modified noun.

- (12) The house, which was built in New York, was a villa with a big garden.

The house, built in New York, was a villa with a big garden.

#### *Reduce to a Present Participle*

The relative pronoun and the verb "be" are removed. The present participle phrase is placed after the modified noun.

- (13) The teacher who is talking to the headmaster right now, has some problems with his students.

The teacher, talking to the headmaster right now, has some problems with his students

When the present tense is used, the relative pronoun is dropped, and the verb is converted into the present participle, some action verbs decrease to the present participle ("-ing" form). The changed noun is followed by the present participle phrase.

- (14) The girl who stays with her cousins is leaving from the city tomorrow.

The girl, staying with her cousins, is leaving from the city tomorrow.

If the emphasize is on the prior completion of the activity in the participle phrase, the relative pronoun is removed, and replaced by "having", the past participle is placed before the modified noun.

(15) The boys who have had an accident are in the hospital now.

The boys, having had an accident, are in the hospital now. Perfect Participle)

(16) The black guy who has been shot by accident has been taken to the hospital.

The black guy, having been shot by accident, has been taken to the hospital.  
(Perfect passive participle)

#### *To infinitive*

'to – infinitive' is used to replace pronoun in the sentences as follows:

(17) Steve is the only person who comes to the classes regularly.

Steve is the only person to come to the classes regularly.

(18) Jeremy is the second person who has delivered his assignment on time.

Jeremy is the second person to have delivered his assignment on time.

#### *Displaced RCs*

Depending on whether the non-defining participle refers to the independent clause's subject or not, reduced RCs may come before or after the independent clause's subject.

(19) Merry, (who was) doing her homework, didn't answer her friends' messages.

Doing her homework, Merry didn't answer her friends' messages. (Active v.)

(20) The cars, (which are) imported from Germany, are bought in Turkey at a high price.

Imported from Germany, the cars are bought in Turkey at a high price (Passive v.)

Displaced RCs are particularly important when it comes to translation from English into Turkish given that the reduction of adverbial clauses can be easily confused with the reduction of RCs.

(21) Because he has always been fond of computers, Kevin has become a software engineer.

Having always been fond of computers, Kevin has become a software engineer.

The sentences in (19) and (20) can be confusing for readers given that the structure is similar to the reduction of adverbial clauses as in sentence (21). Thus, the present study aims to understand how student translators cope with this ambiguity between the reduction of RCs and adverbials.

#### **Ambiguity in Relative Clauses**

When structural ambiguity is addressed, the gaps between the utterance and the comprehension become obvious. However, ambiguity can be seen, especially when two different interpretations of the same statement might be appropriate or pertinent in the same discourse. Similarly, "garden-path" sentences such as (22) constitute more problems for comprehension.

(22) The headmaster needed to sign the document wasn't in his room.



The problem with garden-path sentences, as Bever (1970) points out, is that the reader strives to finish the sentence as soon as possible, only to learn that his conclusion was incorrect simply because he misparsed it and ascribed an inaccurate structure and meaning to a portion of it. In the instance of (22), given that a propositional representation may have been fully created at that moment, it is thus expected that the sentence will be complete when the word missing appears. When the next word appears, the reader is surprised to see that his parsing is inaccurate, and he might not regain proper parsing.

- (23) a. The girl that Jim loves detests Hans.  
b. The girl Ø Jim loves detests Hans.

Linguists who accept the idea of semantic similarity between forms would view a pair like (25a) to (25b) as the closest representation of true synonymy. There is, nevertheless, a difference between these two formulations: The type of utterances depicted in (25a), i.e., with an overt relativizer, have less ambiguity and can thus be deemed more informative. On the other hand, the condensed version in (25b) is locally syntactically unclear when the word loves is observed (a fronted direct object might be observed in the sentence, i.e., it could exhibit an OSV order). In terms of the degree of formativeness of an expression type, (25a) is unquestionably the "better" signal. Since there is no longer any need for "guessing" when it comes to construction, it contains more information and presents fewer difficulties for comprehension.

### Relative Clauses in Turkish

Turkish has several suffixes for creating subordinate clauses such as *-(y)en*, *-(y)ecek* and *-dik*. In English, the verb in the subordinate clause is inflected according to tense and mood.

- (24) a. *Kitap okuyan kadını görüyorum.*  
I see the woman who is reading a book.  
b. *Kitap okuyan kadını göreceğim.*  
I will see the woman who reads a book.  
c. *Kitap okuyan kadını gördüm.*  
I saw the woman who read a book.

In English, the tense of the subordinate clause can be different from the tense of the main clause. For instance, it is possible to say "I will see the man who ran..." or "I saw the man who will run...". In Turkish, however, the conjugation of the verb in RCs cannot be changed. If the tense of the RC is not clear from the context, in order to convey the tense, lexical expressions are used. More specifically, words are inserted as in '*Dün kitap okuyan kadını görüyorum*' (I see the woman who read the book yesterday). In this sentence, the word *dün* (yesterday) makes it clear that the reading action happened in the past, even though the woman is seen at the moment.

Turkish and English are two linguistically distinct languages. To give an example, Turkish is a head final language whereas English is a head initial language. RCs have a nominalized modifier clause in Turkish. There is only a gap in the head position; neither an overt complementizer nor an overt *wh-* are present' (Aydın, 2007). In general, two Turkish RC forms show a subject/non-subject asymmetry (Underhill 1972; Kornfilt 2000; Ulutaş 2006). Whether the phrase internal gap site is a non-subject or the syntactic subject of the relative, as in (25a), determines whether RC suffix should be

used: object (-dık, -(y)ecek) or subject particle (-(y)en, -r -maz, -mış) (27b). The internal morphology of the two relativizing techniques sets them apart from one another, as well (Özsoy, 1994, p. 363). Since it lacks agreement morphology, -(y)en verbal form (subject RC) is significantly easier. However, possessive morphology in agreement with the subject, which (when overt) displays genitive case morphology, follows the -dık construction (i.e., object RC) (Çağrı, 2005).

(25) a. oynamayı sev-en kedi

‘The cat that loves playing’

b. kedinin sev-diği oyun

‘The game that the cat loves’

There have been several attempts to explain the difficulty of obtaining these various types of RCs. Turkish studies demonstrate that subject RCs occur more frequently than object RCs and that Turkish children comprehend subject RCs more accurately (Özge, 2010). Another challenge is brought on by the '-dık' construction's intricacy. Processing subject RCs is simpler than processing object RCs since the genitive marking of the subject in the latter is more troublesome and disjointed from Turkish's canonical clause structure (Aydın, 2007). As Solak (2019) stated, Turkish RCs are challenging building blocks of elements. Such structures are noun phrases rather than sentential sentences. A novel theory proposes that the morphemes -(y)en, -dık, and -(y)ecek, which are conventionally regarded as participles utilized in relativization, are actually productive suffixes that derive noun phrases (NPs) from verb phrase stems. Even though there have been many studies on processing RCs and Reduced RCs in the literature, there have been no studies conducted in order to investigate the translation difficulty in full RCs and reduced RCs, especially in two typologically different languages such as English and Turkish. Therefore, the present study aims to reveal what challenges Turkish student translators experience while rendering these sentences. The next section will introduce the methodology used for this purpose.

## Materials and Methods

The goals of the present study guide the selection of an appropriate approach. The researcher chose two methods due to the nature of the issue, the population, and the availability of the data. The work is based on the description and analysis of translation students' behaviours. That is, in order to reveal and to discuss the level of the translation difficulty for student translators in full and reduced RCs when they include active or passive voice in the subordinate clause, the researchers have prepared a test consisting of 28 questions on RCs which are gathered from the Foreign Language Test administered by OSYM. The details of the data collection tool, participants, procedure, and data analysis are presented below.

### Data Collection Tools

Foreign Language Tests in Türkiye between 2000 and 2013 by Student Selection and Placement Centre (OSYM) were gathered, the translation sections in these tests were investigated and the sentences with relative clauses (RCs) were picked out and divided into four groups as '7 Active RCs, 7 Passive RCs, 7 Active reduced RCs and 7 Passive reduced RCs' and thus a total 28 questions were chosen (see Appendix A). Moreover, a difficulty rating scale from 1 to 5 was designed from very

easy to very hard and placed under every question in order to determine which groups of RCs stated above are found more challenging to answer by student translators.

The number of the words in the questions was also analysed in order to get a clear idea about whether the length of the sentences had an impact on the participants while reading and deciding on the right answer during the test. Accordingly, the average number of words in the Active RC category is 28.00 words. It is 23.14 in Passive RC, 26.29 in Active Reduced RC, and 23.43 in Passive Reduced RC. In brief, the average number of words in the entire questionnaire was 25.215.

### **Participants**

The population of students consisted of first and second-grade students in Kırıkkale University, who were studying at the English Translation and Interpreting Department. According to Brown (2001:72), random sampling decreases the impact of bias and improves impartiality since each individual has an equal chance of being selected. As a result, the subjects were chosen at random.

There were two groups of students divided according to the data collection procedure applied. The first group included 36 students who answered the multiple-choice questions online. The second group included 20 students who translated the sentences themselves in class from scratch and they are the students who did not take part in the first group.

In brief, 36 students participated in the online test. However, 2 of them were excluded from the analysis since they did not respond to all the questions in the test. 20 students took part in the in-class translation from scratch. Nevertheless, 6 of them didn't complete the translation of all the sentences. However, the sentences that they translated were also examined for a better picture of student translations.

### **Procedure**

RCs, especially reduced RCs, as mentioned in the literature, are often regarded as having temporary ambiguity in meaning, given that the first word of a reduced RC may initially be interpreted as part of the main clause. Thus, students tend to read sentences again if there is a reduction form in the sentence.

In order to conduct the present study, the questions since 2000 have been collected from OSYM and sorted out on the basis of 7 Active RC, 7 Passive RC, 7 Active Reduced RC, and 7 Passive Reduced RC, and a difficulty rating scale from 1 to 5 was designed from very easy to very hard and placed under every question to determine which groups of RCs stated above are found more challenging by student translators. In total, 28 RC questions were shared with the participants online through Google Forms. For a better understanding of the challenges student translators might have while working with full and reduced RCs, a small group of participants were delivered copies of sentences and they were asked to translate the sentences from scratch themselves in class within a given time (approx. 60 min.).

### **Data Analysis**

For the first group who completed the online test, the analysis of the answers was obtained through Google Forms and turned into Excel to get the averages and compare them with one another. The striking averages were further investigated in detail and these questions were exemplified in Results.

As regards the second group, the answers to questions were written into Excel, and especially the translations of RC parts were analysed to get a general idea about how the participants translated different types of RCs. Also, the difficulty rate scales under every question were turned into Excel.

## Results

The results of the present study are presented in two titles below, namely the results of the online test and the results of the translations from scratch.

### Results of Online Test

To determine the ambiguity in meaning in reduced RCs while translating from English into Turkish and whether it is more challenging to translate when passive voice is used in reductions or not, 28 questions - grouped as 7 Active RC, 7 Passive RC, 7 Active Reduced RC, and 7 Passive Reduced RC - were conducted with student translators.

The average score of the students was 23.53 on the online multiple-choice test. The results show that the average correct answers out of 34 students in Active RC were 26.29, 30.71 in Passive RC, 27.71 in Active Reduced RC, and 29.57 in Passive Reduced RC. The easiest section for students to answer was Passive RC without reduction with an average score of 1.98 over 5 (1 very easy to 5 very hard) on the difficulty rating scale. They had difficulty in Active Reduced RC with an average score of 2.36 (Table 1).

Table 1. *Answers to multiple choice questions on RC translation*

Type	Questions	Total Number of Correct Answers	Average	Difficulty Rating Scale	Average
Active RC	1	18		2.32	
	2	28		2.03	
	3	32		2.29	
	4	28	26.29	2.44	2.31
	5	24		2.74	
	6	28		2.29	
	7	26		2.03	
Passive RC	8	31		2.53	
	9	33		1.53	
	10	32		1.71	
	11	33	30.71	2.00	1.98
	12	26		2.24	
	13	32		1.32	
	14	28		2.53	
Active Reduced	15	29		2.53	
	16	25		2.56	

RC	17	26		2.35	
	18	30	27.71	2.09	2.36
	19	29		1.97	
	20	34		1.94	
	21	21		3.06	
	22	31		2.29	
	23	30		1.85	
Passive Reduced RC	24	29		1.88	
	25	31	29.57	2.85	2.13
	26	31		1.76	
	27	25		2.32	
	28	30		1.97	

The first question in the Active RC section of the test had the lowest correct answers with 18 students out of 34 even though it had a 2.32 difficulty rate on the scale and there was no hard or very hard option chosen by the students (Figure 1). The fact that 51.5% of the participants voted for the neutral option in the difficulty rate scale means they found the question neither easy nor difficult. 33.3% of the student translators found the question easy, 15.2 % very easy.

The ninth question in the Passive RC section has the most correct answers with 33 students answering accurately out of 34 and it has a 1.53 difficulty rate on the scale which shows consistency. That can be based on the fact that the question was found easy and that it had words below the average number of words in the questionnaire (i.e., 19 words, average number of words: 25.215 words). 58.3 % of the student translators found the questions very easy and 27.8% voted for easy.

There were 21 students who answered question 21 in Active Reduced RC correctly and it had the highest rate of difficulty on the scale with 3.06. 13.9% of the students rated it as very hard and 25% hard (Figure 1). It might be inferred that this question had difficult phrases for the student translators to translate such as 'of immense importance' and had 28 words, thereby classified as a long sentence. The reason why we assume the phrase "of immense importance" might be challenging is that the students in the second group could not translate this phrase when they were supposed to translate the sentences themselves from scratch. Additionally, the length of the sentence might have been a confounding factor given that this sentence had 28 words, which was above the average number of words in the questionnaire.

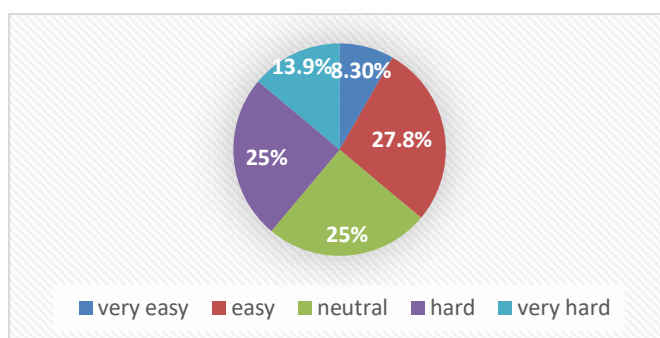


Figure 1. Difficulty rating of question 21.

To conclude, as opposed to the previous expectations, students had more difficulty in answering the Active Reduced RC, Active RC, Passive Reduced RC, and Passive RC respectively. The assumption, however, would be that student translators might have difficulty in comprehending passive sentences given that passive is a more complex structure to process. The possible reasons for this result include the length of the sentences, the phrases that are hard to translate, and tricky options in the test.

### Results of the Translations from Scratch

When the answers of the second group consisting of 20 student translators were analysed for a better understanding of the challenges in RCs, it was observed that the students translated RCs into Turkish with either ‘-(y)an’ like ‘ulaşamayan’ and ‘mış’ ‘ulaşamamış’ which are specially used for subject RCs or ‘-dik’ such as ‘yaşadığı’ representing for object RCs. There was no clear effect of active/passive form or full/reduced RC form on their decision to use ‘-an’, ‘-dik’, or ‘-mış’. That is, these suffixes are found in all types of sentences. 5 of the students did not translate the longer sentences – which were question 4, 17, 20, and 22. These questions all consisted of 30 or more words. 6 of the students neither translated nor rated the sentences after question 10, and 3 of the students did not rate the sentences after question 15. Therefore, they were excluded from the calculation of the average scores.

When the difficulty scale of the focused group was analysed, the highest score was found 1.92 in Passive Reduced RC as expected and this result was different from the group who did the test online and whose highest score was in Active Reduced RCs with 2.36 on the difficulty scale.

Table 3. Difficulty rate scale of translation from scratch

Questions	Average
Active RC	1.89
Passive RC	1.84
Active Reduced RC	1.86
Passive Reduced RC	1.92

Nevertheless, the general averages on the difficulty scale are much lower in the focused group than those in the online, which might mean that they translated the sentences more easily by themselves while the online group struggled with tricky options. Question 25 in the example below was chosen as "very hard" by the focused group, with a rate of 2.83. That might have been due to the passive voice of RC and the lexical difficulty of phrases such as ‘of comparable significance’ as mentioned in the online test group.

Q 25. *The 19th century witnessed changes in the political map of Europe, of comparable significance to the economic and social transformation brought by the Industrial Revolution.* (The phrase was underlined by the authors for emphasis.)

The participants translated RCs word-for-word, being source-text dependent. They did not divide the sentences into small groups or they did not omit RC parts. The student translators preferred to translate the sentences given to them as loyal as possible to the source text without

altering the structure. Phrases such as ‘many of which’ and ‘of comparable significance’ as in Question 5 below were observed to cause difficulty in translation, which might be due to their less frequent use as grammatical structures.

Q 5. *The Van Gogh Museum has been transcribing and translating more than 900 of Van Gogh's letters, many of which feature early sketches of his famous paintings. (The phrase was underlined by the authors for emphasis.)*

In the reduced RCs such as Question 6 below, where there is a lack of participle (either present participle as in active reduced RCs or past participle as in passive reduced RCs), students did not use suffixes such as –an, –mıŝ, or –dık while translating but they translated them as in the original form directly between commas i.e., Van Gogh, Hollanda'nın en ünlü modern sanatçısı, ... ressamdı.

Q 6. *Van Gogh, the most famous modern artist of the Netherlands, was not only an underappreciated genius but also a painter who was able to sell only one painting in his lifetime. (The phrase was underlined by the authors for emphasis.)*

To conclude, the analysis of the translations from scratch suggests that students had more difficulty in translating Passive Reduced RC as expected since the reduction in RCs, especially in passive voice makes it difficult to comprehend, thereby leading to higher confusion in translation, and they had challenges when less frequent grammatical structures or phrases were encountered in English sentences.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate whether reduction in RC, especially in passive voice makes it harder to comprehend the sentences and thus to translate from English into Turkish. In the online test applied to students, as opposed to the previous expectations, the student translators had more challenges in Active Full RC potentially due to the length of the sentences and phrases that were difficult to translate, and tricky options. On the other hand, the translations from scratch demonstrated that student translators had more difficulty in translating Passive Reduced RC as the reduction in RCs, especially in passive voice makes it difficult to comprehend the given expression and thus becomes confusing for translation. As pointed out previously, reduced RCs often result in temporary ambiguity considering the fact that they might initially be interpreted as part of the main clause (Townsend & Bever 2001:248).

The results showed that in the test consisting of 28 RC questions, the lowest average correct answers out of 34 students were Active RC with a 26.29 score and with 2.31 difficulty rate. On the other hand, the most difficult part was Active Reduced RC with a 2.36 difficulty rate. The highest average correct answers were found in Passive RC with a 30.71 score and 1.98 difficulty rate, which was followed by Passive Reduced RC with a 29.57 average score of correct answers and 2.13 difficulty rate. As a consequence, Passive sections were not difficult for translation students when the test was conducted online with multiple choices. Therefore, whilst passive reduced RCs might be challenging for student translators while translation from scratch due to temporary ambiguity in structure, the length of the sentences and structural difficulty or less frequent structures should be also taken into account as confounding factors.

In conclusion, English relative clauses are distinguished by the following characteristics, such as containing a relative pronoun (RP) such as who(m), which, or that, being co-referential with the

head NP, serving some grammatical structures (subject, direct object, indirect object, etc.) within RCs, and being omitted under well-defined conditions. It was expected that as there is no such condition of reduction case in Turkish, translating the reduced RC especially those with a passive voice should cause difficulty in understanding the source sentence and translating it into Turkish. The explanation of this case can be stated as the temporary ambiguity because the relativizer does not precede the relative clause and thus the person reading the relative clause has no "warning" that they are in RC, so they read the sentence again in order to be certain about the meaning. In the study with the online group, the results were contradictory to the assumptions. The present study revealed that factors like the length of the sentences and complexity of words or structures, and also tricky options in the test should be taken into account to better understand translation difficulty from English into Turkish. However, the findings of the translations done from scratch showed that students had more trouble translating passive reduced RCs because RC reduction, particularly in the passive voice, makes it hard to grasp the phrases and leads to ambiguity in translation. In order to further generalize the results, the study might be replicated with a larger group of students as well as varying language pairs from different linguistic families.

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