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Adapting to an English-Dominated Academia: Challenges, Strategies, and Institutional Gaps Among Turkish Scholars

İngilizce Hakimiyetindeki Akademik Ortama Uyum: Türk Akademisyenlerin Karşılaştığı Zorluklar, Stratejiler ve Kurumsal Eksiklikler

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ABSTRACT

English-language publishing continues to present significant challenges for non-native English-speaking scholars, particularly those from underrepresented regions such as Turkey. This qualitative study explores the experiences of Turkish academics in publishing research articles in English, focusing on the linguistic, structural, and institutional barriers they encounter. Using a phenomenological research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 scholars across various disciplines. Thematic analysis revealed key challenges including language-related difficulties, the financial burden of translation and proofreading services, and perceived bias in peer review—often prioritizing linguistic accuracy over content quality. Participants reported relying on informal peer networks, AI-assisted writing tools, and professional editing services to meet international publishing standards. However, these solutions were often insufficient or financially inaccessible, highlighting deeper systemic inequities. The study also found inadequate institutional support for academic writing development, leaving scholars to navigate the publication process independently. These findings underscore the need for systemic reforms in academic publishing—namely, greater institutional support, inclusive editorial practices, and recognition of linguistic diversity. Addressing these gaps is essential for building a more equitable publishing landscape where research is evaluated on scholarly merit rather than linguistic proficiency.

Anahtar Kelimeler
Akademik yayıncılık,, kurumsal destek, yayıncılık eşitsizlikleri, Türk akademisyenler, İngilizce yayın yapan dergiler

ÖZ

İngilizce dilinde akademik yayın yapmak, ana dili İngilizce olmayan araştırmacılar için—özellikle Türkiye gibi temsil gücü düşük bölgelerden gelen akademisyenler açısından—önemli zorluklar yaratmaya devam etmektedir. Bu nitel çalışma, Türk akademisyenlerin İngilizce araştırma makalesi yayımlama sürecindeki deneyimlerini incelemekte; karşılaştıkları dilsel, yapısal ve kurumsal engellere odaklanmaktadır. Fenomenolojik desenle yürütülen araştırmada, farklı disiplinlerden 20 akademisyenle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Tematik analiz sonucunda öne çıkan başlıca zorluklar arasında dil kaynaklı güçlükler, çeviri ve dil düzeltme hizmetlerinin yarattığı finansal yük ve hakem değerlendirme süreçlerinde içerik kalitesinden ziyade dil doğruluğuna verilen öncelik yer almaktadır. Katılımcılar, uluslararası yayın standartlarını karşılayabilmek için gayriresmî meslektaş ağlarına, yapay zekâ destekli yazım araçlarına ve profesyonel redaksiyon hizmetlerine başvurduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Ancak bu çözümler çoğu zaman yetersiz kalmakta veya maddi açıdan erişilemez olmaktadır; bu da sistemsel eşitsizliklerin daha derin olduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışma ayrıca, akademik yazma becerilerinin geliştirilmesi konusunda kurumsal desteğin yetersizliğine işaret etmekte; akademisyenlerin yayın sürecini büyük ölçüde bireysel çabalarla yürüttüklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu bulgular, akademik yayıncılıkta daha kapsayıcı editoryal uygulamaların teşvik edilmesini, kurumsal desteklerin artırılmasını ve dilsel çeşitliliğin tanınmasını gerekli kılmaktadır. Bu boşlukların giderilmesi, araştırmaların dil yeterliliğinden ziyade bilimsel değeri temelinde değerlendirilmesini sağlayacak daha adil bir yayın ortamı oluşturmak açısından hayati önemdedir.

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1. Introduction

Academic publishing plays a critical role in shaping scholarly careers, visibility, and legitimacy within the global academic community. Yet, systemic barriers continue to be imposed on non-native English-speaking scholars by the predominance of English as a lingua franca in academia (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Canagarajah, 1996). Recent large-scale empirical research confirms the magnitude of this disadvantage: non-native English speakers spend 90.8% more time reading and 50.6% more time writing English-language papers compared to native speakers, face manuscript rejection due to language issues at 2.5 times higher rates (38.1% vs 14.4%), and receive requests to improve English during peer review 12.5 times more frequently (Amano, Ramírez-Castañeda, Berdejo-Espinola, Borokini, Chowdhury & Golivets, 2023). For scholars reading 200 articles annually, these penalties translate to 10-19 additional working days per year—a structural disadvantage that compounds across career stages. While English enables international collaboration and knowledge dissemination, it also reinforces unequal access to publishing opportunities for scholars from non-Anglophone and underrepresented regions. These barriers go beyond just linguistic barriers since non-native scholars also have to adopt the Anglophone rhetorical norms as well as his stylistic expectations (Flowerdew, 2013; Hyland, 2018).

Despite widespread expectations that scholars publish in English, few comparative studies have critically examined the structural inequalities embedded in the academic publishing system. Research shows that peer review often prioritizes linguistic form over intellectual content, leading to excessive revision demands for non-native authors (Flowerdew, 2008; Curry & Lillis, 2004). Recent controlled experiments provide definitive evidence of such bias: manuscripts from authors in higher-income, English-speaking countries received significantly more favorable reviewer ratings and editor decisions when author identities were known, while double-blind review eliminated this geographic and linguistic bias entirely (Fox, Meyer & Aimé, 2023). These dynamics favor native English speakers and scholars from affluent institutions, who are better positioned to afford editing services and article processing charges (Canagarajah, 1996; Burgess et al., 2014).). Financial barriers have intensified, with article processing charges (APCs) increasing at rates three times faster than inflation, averaging $2,450-$3,600 per article, while waiver programs reach less than 1% of authors who need them (Borrego, 2023). In contexts like Africa and the Middle East, these costs are prohibitive, with 48.5% of Kenyan researchers reporting they have never paid APCs (Onaolapo, Ayeni & Mncube, 2025). The situation is compounded by a lack of institutional support in academic writing and research dissemination (Hyland, 2015; McGrail, Rickard & Jones, 2006). Although many international scholars adopt adaptive strategies—such as using AI writing tools, hiring editors, or relying on peer networks—these solutions are often partial, costly, and structurally insufficient (Uzuner, 2008; Lei & Chuang, 2009). Contemporary scholars increasingly turn to generative AI tools like ChatGPT to overcome language barriers, with 92% reporting improved writing quality, yet this technological reliance introduces new ethical tensions around authorship, identity, and authenticity, particularly among humanities scholars (Hu, Zhou & Hashim., 2025). Such workaround strategies highlight not just individual effort, but systemic failures in supporting equitable participation in global scholarship. This raises pressing concerns for social science researchers regarding fairness, academic inclusion, and the geopolitics of knowledge production.

Despite growing recognition of these challenges, significant research gaps remain. First, while much scholarship focuses on East Asian contexts or aggregates "non-native speakers" broadly, there is limited research specifically examining Turkish scholars' experiences within their unique institutional and geopolitical context. Second, although existing studies document linguistic barriers, fewer have systematically examined the intersection of linguistic challenges with institutional neglect and disciplinary hierarchies—particularly the marginalization of social sciences and humanities scholars relative to STEM fields. Third, recent technological developments (AI writing tools, machine translation) have transformed scholars' adaptive strategies, yet research has not adequately explored how these tools reshape both opportunities and constraints for non-Anglophone scholars. Finally, while theoretical frameworks of linguistic imperialism and center-periphery dynamics are well-established, contemporary manifestations of these power structures—including algorithmic bias in AI detection systems and evolving APC models—require empirical investigation

This study investigates the experiences of Turkish scholars in writing and publishing academic articles in English, with a focus on the challenges, coping strategies, and institutional support mechanisms available to them. Turkey represents a critical yet understudied context: as a non-Anglophone country with expanding

higher education ambitions and increasing pressure for international publication, yet with documented gaps in institutional support (Uysal., 2014), Turkish scholars exemplify the peripheral position within global knowledge production. Moreover, Turkish academia's increasing adoption of international ranking metrics and English-medium publication requirements intensifies these pressures while support infrastructure remains inadequate. It seeks to answer four research questions: (1) What challenges do Turkish scholars face in publishing in English-language journals? (2) How do they develop English academic writing competence? (3) What institutional supports exist, and how are they used? (4) What strategies are employed to navigate the English-dominant publication landscape?

By centering the lived experiences of scholars from a non-Anglophone, underrepresented academic context, this study contributes to ongoing debates in the social sciences about linguistic equity and institutional accountability. It draws on three theoretical frameworks—linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), recently updated as "linguistic neo-imperialism" to account for how English dominance is maintained not only through historical colonialism but through contemporary mechanisms including publisher monopolies (controlling >50% of the academic publishing market), indexing systems (98% of SCI journals are English-medium), and local institutional policies that privilege English publication (Zeng, Ponce & Li, 2023); the center-periphery model (Canagarajah, 1996); and academic literacies (Lillis & Curry, 2010)—complemented by decolonial perspectives that challenge Western-centric writing norms and recognize the epistemic contributions of diverse literacy traditions (Canagarajah, 2024)—to analyze how language, power, and access intersect in the global academic publishing regime.

1.1. Challenges Faced by International Scholars in the Writing for Publication

The pressure to publish in English-medium journals has become a defining feature of academic life for scholars worldwide (Lillis & Curry, 2010). For international, non-native English-speaking researchers, this demand introduces a complex intersection of linguistic, rhetorical, and institutional challenges. While English publication offers visibility and recognition, it also imposes norms that extend far beyond language proficiency. From a critical social science lens, these challenges reflect entrenched structural inequalities. Linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) positions the dominance of English not as a neutral tool, but as a system historically designed to privilege native speakers and marginalize others. This hierarchy is maintained through indexing systems, editorial gatekeeping, and conflation of language fluency with intellectual merit (Flowerdew, 2008; Flowerdew, 1999a). Contemporary analyses reveal that 98.05% of SCI journals, 96.17% of SSCI journals, and 75.26% of Arts & Humanities Citation Index journals are published in English, with major publishers controlling over 50% of the global academic publishing market valued at $19 billion (Zeng et al., 2023). This concentration of power creates what scholars term "linguistic neo-imperialism," where English dominance is perpetuated through both external pressures and internally-driven institutional policies in peripheral countries that privilege English-medium publication for promotion and ranking purposes. Canagarajah's (1996) center-periphery model further explains how knowledge production is structured around global North institutions, relegating scholars from non-Anglophone contexts to the periphery. These scholars often must adopt publishing norms, rhetorical strategies, and epistemologies alien to their own disciplinary or cultural traditions (Ammon, 2000; Curry & Lillis, 2004). Research specific to Middle Eastern contexts, including Turkey and Iraq, documents how scholars perceive this system as "linguistic injustice/hegemony," wherein English functions as both a gateway to international visibility and a mechanism of exclusion (Alhasnawi, Uysal & Selvi, 2023). Turkish scholars in particular face institutional pressures requiring publication in internationally indexed journals while receiving minimal support for developing English academic writing proficiency. The academic literacies perspective adds that writing is not merely a technical task but a socially embedded practice influenced by access, power, and identity (Lillis & Curry, 2010). For many scholars, this means negotiating unfamiliar discourse conventions with minimal institutional mentoring or support—requiring the reshaping of authorial voice, argumentation, and disciplinary alignment (Flowerdew, 2013; Uysal, 2012). Decolonial perspectives further challenge the presumed universality of Anglophone academic writing conventions, arguing that "appropriateness" norms established by colonizing communities impose standards that devalue the literacy traditions and epistemologies that multilingual scholars bring (Canagarajah, 2024).

Empirical studies support these theoretical concerns. Differences in rhetorical culture (Cho, 2004; Swales, 2004; Bennett, 2010), vocabulary limitations (Flowerdew, 1999a), syntactic complexity (Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2014), and idiomatic errors (Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005) are frequent causes of rejection. Recent research on Chinese academics in science and engineering confirms that sentence construction represents the most significant linguistic challenge, followed by vocabulary selection, cohesive devices, coherence, and grammar—barriers that contribute to higher rejection rates despite China producing 28.9% of global research output (Zhang, Eto & Chui, 2025). Underfunded institutions often lack editorial resources and mentorship (Canagarajah, 1996; Li & Flowerdew, 2007), exacerbating inequality. Studies of non-English-speaking higher education institutions reveal systematic absence of writing centers, inadequate research funding, and unclear institutional policies regarding publication support, with linguistic barriers amplified by these structural inequities (Almawi et al., 2025). Even early-career Turkish academics in English Language Teaching—scholars trained specifically in English—report facing severe challenges due to lack of institutional support, inadequate postgraduate training, and limited mentorship (Ekoç-Özçelik, 2023), suggesting that linguistic proficiency alone cannot overcome systemic barriers.Yet scholars are not entirely passive. Many develop adaptive strategies, including self-directed learning and engagement with literacy brokers (Flowerdew, 2000; Lee & Norton, 2003; Lei & Chuang, 2009). These responses, while resourceful, remain uneven and highlight deeper disparities in access to scholarly networks and publishing capital. Critically, these adaptive strategies come at considerable emotional cost. Multilingual scholars describe laboring "under a heavy mountain" of exclusion, experiencing heightened anxiety, self-doubt, depression, and loss of confidence as they navigate repeated rejections and contradictory reviewer feedback (Piller, Zhang & Li., 2022). Survey research reveals that 87.5% of multilingual scholars publish in foreign languages despite perceiving it as significantly more demanding, with 88.9% believing linguistic aspects negatively influence peer review outcomes and 84.3% feeling the peer review process inadequately addresses non-native author challenges (Schnell, 2024). As a result, structural imbalances in global academic discourse persist. A nuanced understanding of Turkish scholars' experiences must account not only for their linguistic adaptation but for the systemic forces that shape which voices are legitimized within academic knowledge production.

1.2. Strategies Employed by International Scholars

To navigate the challenges of publishing in English-language journals, international scholars adopt various strategies that reflect both individual agency and structural constraints. Language barriers intersect with unfamiliar academic norms, creating added difficulty in conforming to Anglophone publishing expectations (Kachru, 1992; Bhatia, 1993). A widely documented strategy is the use of literacy brokers—a diverse group of peers, editors, and professionals who assist in manuscript preparation. While academic insiders contribute to disciplinary development, language professionals often focus on surface-level corrections such as grammar and syntax (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Many early-career scholars depend on such support (Flowerdew, 2000; Li, 2006; Li & Flowerdew, 2007; Gurel, 2010). However, miscommunication and mismatched expectations can create friction, especially when brokers lack disciplinary knowledge (Belcher, 1994; Mišak, Marušić & Marušić, 2005). Financial limitations further restrict access to such services, particularly in underfunded contexts (Li & Flowerdew, 2007). Some scholars draft in their first language (L1) to express ideas more fluently before translating into English (Li, 2007; Gosden, 1996). While effective in early drafting, this strategy can result in linguistic errors or loss of nuance during translation, affecting the clarity and rhetorical tone of submissions. Longitudinal case studies demonstrate how scholars with limited English proficiency strategically use online machine translation throughout the entire publication process—from manuscript preparation to submission to communication with editors and reviewers—revealing how technology functions as a critical literacy broker (Zou, Gong & Li, 2023). Others resort to technical language as a shield for limited proficiency. Sionis (1995) observed that some novice French researchers relied heavily on symbolic or formulaic language, which led to dense, ambiguous writing that often hindered communication and led to rejection. Similarly, imitating published articles is common among less experienced scholars seeking to learn genre conventions (Swales, 1990, 2004; Li, 2005, 2006; Englander, 2009). While this may support genre acquisition, it can inhibit critical voice and originality. Mentorship—from supervisors or senior faculty—is another valuable but inconsistently available resource. Effective mentors assist with journal selection, draft feedback, and co-authorship opportunities (Lee & Norton, 2003; Lei & Chuang, 2009).

The emergence of generative AI tools represents a significant development in scholars' adaptive strategies. Recent research reveals complex patterns in how non-native English researchers negotiate identity when using ChatGPT for academic writing. While 92% report improved writing quality, scholars experience this technological assistance through five distinct orientations: reluctant adoption marked by secrecy and moral tension; conditional alignment using AI as linguistic scaffold; strategic realignment focused on performance outcomes; lingering dissonance with unresolved ethical conflicts; and reflective congruence involving careful ethical management (Hu et al., 2025). Disciplinary differences are pronounced: STEM scholars more readily accept AI as a pragmatic tool for efficient communication, while humanities scholars experience deeper identity conflicts about authorship authenticity. Empirical intervention studies with medical students confirm significant improvements in writing quality across structure, logic, and language dimensions when using ChatGPT, with 100% using English polishing functions and 64% using outline generation (Li et al., 2024). However, scholars acknowledge challenges including verifying information authenticity and the absence of discipline-specific insights, suggesting AI tools complement but cannot replace disciplinary expertise.

Notably, AI adoption often occurs not by choice but due to institutional support vacuums, with scholars describing ChatGPT as filling gaps left by absent writing centers and inadequate mentorship. Yet this technological turn introduces new vulnerabilities: AI-generated text detection systems exhibit systematic bias against non-native English writers, frequently misclassifying non-native writing as AI-generated due to lower linguistic variability, potentially creating new forms of algorithmic gatekeeping in manuscript screening (Liang et al., 2023). Institutional supports like writing centers and workshops show promise in enhancing scholarly writing and confidence (Keen, 2007; McGrail, Rickard & Jones, 2006; Hyland, 2015). However, access to these resources remains uneven, and they often lack discipline-specific customization. Recent studies of multilingual scholars document diverse coping strategies including co-authorship with native speakers (51.8% use this approach), seeking native speaker revision, professional translation services, drafting directly in target languages, research blogging as preliminary publication, and building transnational academic networks (Schnell, 2024; Piller et al., 2022). However, these strategies reflect not empowerment but scholars' resourcefulness in navigating systems that offer inadequate institutional support**.** These strategies reflect international scholars' adaptability but also underscore the broader structural inequities they must navigate. While helpful, such individual-level tactics cannot substitute for sustained, institutionally supported interventions necessary for equitable participation in global scholarly publishing.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological research design to explore how Turkish scholars experience the challenges of publishing in English. Phenomenology enables in-depth examination of individuals' lived experiences and the meanings they assign to complex academic processes (Creswell, 2013). The design is particularly suited for capturing participants' perceptions of linguistic, institutional, and structural barriers. The analysis is grounded in three interrelated theoretical frameworks: linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), the center–periphery model (Canagarajah, 1996), and the academic literacies perspective (Lillis & Curry, 2010), which together illuminate the power dynamics shaping multilingual scholars' participation in global publishing.

2.2 Participants

In the study, 20 Turkish academics from a variety of fields-engineering, social sciences, medicine, and humanities were involved. Each has experience publishing articles in English. Participants were selected by purposive sampling to ensure that they directly experienced English-language academic publishing. They range in academic rank from research assistants and assistant professors to full professors so that a more holistic account could be made about how career stage and disciplinary background shape the publishing experience. The demographic background of the participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participant ID	Academic Rank	Field of Study	Experience with English Publishing
P1	Research Assistant	Engineering	Moderate
P2	Assistant Professor	Social Sciences	High
P3	Associate Professor	Medicine	Low
P4	Professor	Humanities	High
P5	Assistant Professor	Engineering	Moderate
P6	Associate Professor	Social Sciences	High
P7	Professor	Medicine	High
P8	Research Assistant	Humanities	Low
P9	Assistant Professor	Engineering	Moderate
P10	Associate Professor	Social Sciences	High
P11	Professor	Medicine	High
P12	Research Assistant	Humanities	Low
P13	Assistant Professor	Engineering	Moderate
P14	Associate Professor	Social Sciences	High
P15	Professor	Medicine	High
P16	Research Assistant	Humanities	Low
P17	Assistant Professor	Engineering	Moderate
P18	Associate Professor	Social Sciences	High
P19	Professor	Medicine	High
P20	Research Assistant	Humanities	Low

2.3. Data Collection Tool

To explore participants' lived experiences, semi-structured interviews were employed. This method enabled flexible yet focused inquiry, allowing adaptation based on individual responses (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Ten open-ended questions were developed to examine linguistic challenges, institutional support, perceived bias, and self-directed strategies. The protocol was reviewed by three applied linguistics experts and one in academic publishing, then refined through a pilot interview (Howitt, 2010). Interviews were conducted face-to-face or online, based on participant preference. Each session began with demographic questions, followed by open-ended discussion. Interviews averaged 20 minutes and were conducted by the first author to ensure consistency. Participants were briefed on the study's aims and confidentiality. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and supplemented with field notes. No leading questions were posed, ensuring authentic responses.

2.4. Data Analysis

A thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach guided data interpretation. This method was chosen for its flexibility and ability to identify both shared and unique patterns of meaning. In the first phase, all transcripts were repeatedly read for familiarization. Open coding followed, generating descriptive and interpretive codes related to linguistic barriers, institutional gaps, and coping strategies. Next, related codes were grouped into themes, reviewed for internal coherence, and refined to ensure accurate representation. Final themes were clearly defined, supported by sub-themes, and contextualized within academic publishing literature. Illustrative quotes were selected to capture participants' voices. To ensure trustworthiness, all analytic steps were documented. The two researchers collaborated regularly to review codes

and themes, reducing bias and enhancing reliability (Adler, 2022). Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional committee. Participants provided informed consent, and pseudonyms were used to protect identities.

3. Findings

This section presents findings from interviews with twenty Turkish scholars in higher education, revealing how they experience the pressures of publishing in English-language journals. Three overarching themes emerged: Structural and Systemic Barriers, Institutional Conditions and Gaps, and Scholar Strategies and Agency. Together, these themes illustrate the complex interplay of linguistic inequality, institutional neglect, and individual adaptation. Sub-themes are supported with participant quotes to highlight both commonalities and variations across academic ranks and disciplines.

3.1. Structural and Systemic Barriers

This theme explores the broader structural obstacles participants encountered in the process of publishing in English. These barriers extended beyond individual linguistic challenges and revealed patterns tied to institutional power, economic inequity, disciplinary hierarchies, and geopolitics. Table 2 summarizes the sub-themes, codes, and participant references that illustrate these structural constraints.

Table 2. Structural and Systemic Barriers

Theme	Sub-Theme	Code	Participants	Description
Structural and Systemic Barriers	Linguistic Gatekeeping	Language-focused reviews	P4, P10	Reviewers emphasized grammar/style over intellectual content.
		Desk rejection on language grounds	P8, P13	Articles rejected before peer review due to perceived poor English.
		Unfair native-speaker expectations	P20	Unrealistic standards applied to non-native authors.
	Economic Constraints	High translation/editing costs	P5, P6	Costly editing services seen as barriers to entry.
		Expensive APCs	P9, P14	Article processing charges unaffordable for many scholars.
	Disciplinary Marginalization	Devaluation of Humanities/Social Sciences	P2, P4, P10, P13	Participants felt these disciplines are underrepresented or devalued.
		Epistemological bias favoring STEM	P4, P10, P14	Preference for positivist, quantitative research methods.
		Bias against 'local' or cultural topics	P6, P9, P13	Topics seen as 'too local' or not globally relevant.
	Geopolitical Exclusion	Bias against Global South institutions	P11, P18	Research judged less credible due to affiliation or country.
		Internalized inferiority from gatekeeping	P6, P7	Scholars internalize rejection as personal or cultural inadequacy.

Participants commonly described a sense of being judged more for their English proficiency than the substance of their work. Several mentioned that, despite using professional editing services, reviewers continued to focus on language-related issues. P4 explained:

"Even after professional editing, I was told to revise the language. There was no real comment about my argument."

This emphasis on surface-level linguistic features contributed to frustration and feelings of invisibility in the peer review process. Desk rejections also emerged as a distinct pattern. P8 recalled receiving a rejection within

a few days:
"It didn't even go to review—they said the English wasn't suitable."

Others pointed to the unrealistic expectations placed on non-native writers. As P20 put it:

"They expect you to write like someone who was raised in English. It's not something you can just fix with a tool."

These experiences reflect how language proficiency operates not just as a communication tool but as a form of gatekeeping in academic publishing. Several participants cited the financial costs associated with editing, translation, and publishing as a key structural barrier. P6 noted:
"If you want professional editing, it's hundreds of dollars. And usually, you need it more than once."

These costs were seen as especially burdensome for those working without external funding or institutional subsidies. P9 highlighted the dilemma posed by article processing charges:

"Even if your paper is accepted, the fee can be more than your salary. What are we supposed to do?"

Economic constraints, particularly when combined with linguistic demands, limited the ability of participants to compete in high-impact publishing spaces. Participants from non-STEM fields frequently described a perceived hierarchy among academic disciplines. P2 shared:

"If your work is not quantitative, you are already at a disadvantage. They do not see it as serious research."

This sense of being structurally devalued was intensified when participants submitted research grounded in local or national contexts. As P10 reflected:
"I was told my study was not international enough. But I am researching something important in this country—should I make it about somewhere else?"

P14 noted that even methodology influenced reception:

"You see the bias—quantitative papers move faster. There is an assumption that data makes it legitimate."

These reflections suggest that disciplinary and methodological hierarchies are deeply embedded in publishing systems. Finally, several participants described a perceived bias against research from less internationally visible institutions or regions. P11 stated:

"It felt like our affiliation worked against us. If this exact study came from a big-name place, it would have been accepted."

Others internalized this exclusion, questioning their own scholarly value. P6 said:

"You start to feel like you do not belong. Like maybe the problem is you."

These accounts point to the emotional consequences of systemic exclusion—not just missed opportunities but long-term doubt about one's academic legitimacy.

The findings underscore how structural forces determine whose voices are heard and legitimized in academic publishing. Factors like language proficiency, financial capacity, disciplinary alignment, and institutional affiliation function as gatekeeping mechanisms—not neutral attributes. This reflects linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), where English maintains hierarchies that favor native speakers. Similarly, recurring patterns of disciplinary and institutional exclusion illustrate the center–periphery model (Canagarajah, 1996; Meneghini & Packer, 2007), where publishing norms privilege Anglophone "centers." Scholars at the periphery often adapt their work to align with dominant epistemologies. The emotional toll—seen in participants' frustration and self-doubt—resonates with the academic literacies perspective (Lillis & Curry, 2010), which views academic writing as a socially situated, power-laden practice. These challenges do not stem from individual deficits but reveal systemic inequalities embedded in global academic publishing.

3.2. Institutional Conditions and Gaps

This theme highlights participants' experiences with the availability—or absence—of institutional support systems for English-language academic publishing. The challenges reported reflect broader systemic inconsistencies across universities and departments, alongside a general lack of structured training, mentorship, and writing infrastructure. Participants raised concerns about unequal access to editing services, discipline-

specific guidance, and institutional funding, all of which contributed to emotional strain and professional fatigue. Table 3 shows the themes subthemes and codes.

Table 3. Institutional Conditions and Gaps

Theme	Sub-Theme	Code	Participants	Description
Institutional Conditions and Gaps	Lack of Formal Support	No university-sponsored editing	P1, P15	Lack of in-house editing or proofreading services.
		No academic writing centers	P17, P18	Participants reported absence of writing training infrastructure.
		Lack of discipline-specific training	P3, P13	Generic training offered, not tailored to academic field.
		No mentorship culture	P12	Lack of senior guidance for early-career publishing.
	Uneven Access to Resources	Unrealistic expectations from institutions	P6, P11	Institutions demand English publishing without support.
		Field-based disparities in support	P4, P10	STEM researchers received more support than Humanities/Social Sciences.
		Uneven support across departments	P7, P13	Institutional support varied widely by department.
		No publication funding	P10, P18	Lack of institutional budget for APCs or language editing.
	Emotional Strain from Institutional Neglect	Sense of being unsupported or overwhelmed	P3, P6, P10, P13	Participants expressed stress and burnout from lack of systemic backing.

Participants widely reported the absence of structured institutional mechanisms to support academic writing in English. P1 described a complete lack of access to editing services:
"There is no internal support. If you want your paper edited, you either pay or ask a friend."

Others, like P17, noted that writing centers—commonly found in international universities—were either nonexistent or non-functional in their own institutions:
"I have never heard of a writing center in our faculty. There is nothing to guide you through writing academically in English."

Several participants also mentioned that when training was provided, it was too generic to meet the needs of their specific disciplines. As P3 explained:

"The workshops are about writing in general, not for people in our field. It feels like a checkbox, not real support."

The absence of mentorship also emerged as a serious gap. P12 shared:

"No one really helps you understand the process. You learn by trial and error."

These accounts suggest that although expectations for English-language publication have increased, institutional support has not kept pace—remaining fragmented, inconsistent, and largely superficial. The issue of institutional inequality was further compounded by the uneven distribution of resources across departments and disciplines. P4 observed:
"If you are in engineering or medicine, you get more attention. In our department, there is no funding or assistance."

Participants in the Humanities and Social Sciences felt particularly neglected, receiving less support both financially and administratively. P10 noted:
"We asked if the university could help with APCs or editing, and they said no—it is your responsibility."

Even within the same institution, disparities were apparent. P7 described:
"Some departments seem to have internal grants or connections. Ours does not. It is like we do not exist in the same institution."

These observations suggest that institutional support is not only lacking in general but also inequitably distributed, reinforcing existing disciplinary and departmental hierarchies. In addition to logistical challenges, participants reported experiencing significant emotional strain as a result of institutional neglect. The psychological toll included exhaustion, demotivation, and a sense of professional isolation. P6 commented:
"It is exhausting. You do everything on your own, and still get told it is not enough."

Similarly, P10 reflected:

"I have stopped expecting help. I just hope to get lucky with a nice reviewer."

These reflections reveal that the absence of systemic support structures not only creates academic barriers but also fosters emotional fatigue and diminished scholarly confidence. The challenges participants face are not personal deficits, but products of institutional neglect. Scholars are expected to meet international publishing standards without access to mentoring, infrastructure, or financial resources—placing the burden entirely on individuals. This aligns with the academic literacies perspective (Lillis & Curry, 2010), which frames writing as embedded within institutional and social contexts. The findings also resonate with Bourdieu's concept of capital, showing how unequal access to editorial support and publishing resources reinforces structural exclusion. Crucially, scholars in the social sciences and humanities reported especially limited support—both in resources and recognition—highlighting how internal hierarchies within universities reflect broader center–periphery dynamics. These disciplinary inequalities mirror global publishing norms that systematically undervalue non-STEM scholarship.

3.3. Scholar Strategies and Agency

This theme explores how participants actively responded to the structural and institutional challenges of English-language academic publishing. Rather than remaining passive in the face of exclusionary practices, participants described a range of adaptive strategies—including self-directed learning, the use of technological tools, and the formation of informal support networks. These actions reflected not only resourcefulness and creativity but also a pragmatic negotiation of the systemic barriers identified in the previous themes. Table 4 shows themes, subthemes and codes.

Table 4. Scholar Strategies and Agency

Theme	Sub-Theme	Code	Participants	Description
Scholar Strategies and Agency	Self-Directed Learning	Reading published articles	P1, P5	Learning academic norms through published literature.
		Trial and error	P17	Iteratively refining submissions based on feedback.
		Mimicking successful academic texts	P20	Imitating structure, voice, and tone of published work.
	Technological Adaptation	Use of AI tool	P6, P9, P14	Using AI tools to self-edit writing.
		Paraphrasing tools	P9	Rewriting for clarity and grammar using tech aids.
		Translation after first-language drafting	P3, P13	Initial composition in Turkish, then translated to English.
	Social Support Strategies	Peer and mentor collaboration	P8, P10, P16	Relying on colleagues and native speakers for review.
	Pragmatic Acceptance	Seeing English as a career necessity	P2, P11	Strategically complying with English publication norms.
		Resignation and emotional detachment	P4, P7	Participants accepted system flaws to maintain motivation.

Many participants described developing their academic publishing skills through self-directed learning. In the absence of formal training, they turned to model articles, peer-reviewed publications, and personal trial and error. P1 noted:

"I read a lot of published papers and tried to follow how they build arguments. You sort of learn the rhythm of it."

P17 similarly shared:

"My first submission failed badly. I learned the hard way—resubmitted to another journal after copying how introductions were framed in similar articles."

Such strategies demonstrate participants' ability to interpret and mimic successful discourse practices, often without institutional guidance—making academic survival as much a personal effort as a scholarly one.
Participants also relied on a range of technological tools to overcome linguistic barriers. P6 described their use of writing software:
"Grammarly helps me polish the final version. It is not perfect, but at least I do not miss obvious things."

Others used paraphrasing applications to improve clarity and phrasing. As P9 explained:

"Sometimes I paste a sentence into Quillbot just to see if there is a clearer way to say it."

A common workaround involved drafting in Turkish, then translating and refining in English. P13 stated:

"It is easier to think in my own language first. I translate and then edit with Grammarly or ChatGPT to make it smoother."

These tools offered a form of agency, though participants often noted that their use reflected necessity, not preference, due to a lack of institutional alternatives. Informal peer networks also played a crucial role. Several participants described relying on colleagues or mentors—especially native English speakers—for feedback and revision. P10 shared:

"A colleague read through my paper and fixed a lot of the grammar. Without that, I would not have submitted it."

P8 added:

"You build a small circle—someone who helps with structure, someone who gives honest feedback. It is not official, but it works."

Such networks functioned as literacy brokerage, compensating for the absence of formal writing mentorship within institutions. Some participants also spoke of adjusting their mindsets. Recognizing the limited prospects for systemic change, they chose to strategically comply with existing expectations. P2 put it bluntly:

"If English is the price of being seen, then we pay it. Complaining will not change anything."

P11 framed this shift as a conscious tactic:

"You play the game. You write what they want to read—clear, concise, even if it feels simplified."

Others expressed a more resigned perspective. As P4 stated:

"You get tired of fighting. I just want it published. That is it."

The shift from resistance to compliance reflects a pragmatic adaptation to systemic inequality—one that emphasizes survival over critique. Participants were not passive; they developed skills, sought informal support, and employed adaptive strategies. Yet these efforts were largely compensatory, shaped by the absence of formal institutional backing. Rather than signaling empowerment, many strategies reveal how scholars navigate a rigid system that offers little flexibility or structural support. This theme also captures an emotional shift—from initial frustration to strategic resignation—as scholars prioritize publication over protest. Taken together, the three themes reveal a publishing landscape marked by structural exclusion, institutional neglect, and disciplinary inequality, particularly affecting scholars in the social sciences and humanities. While participants showed resilience and agency, their efforts unfolded within a system that privileges certain voices and norms. These findings underscore the need for a more equitable academic publishing ecosystem—one that values diverse epistemologies and supports multilingual scholars beyond mere linguistic adaptation.

4. Discussion

This chapter builds upon the findings by examining them in light of broader academic dynamics and systemic issues. It offers an interpretation of how the challenges identified by participants reflect larger patterns within global academic publishing, particularly in relation to language, access, and institutional responsibility. The discussion is organized into four key areas: the structural dominance of English, the barriers and limited support for non-native English speakers, perceptions of bias within the publishing process, and the ways in which scholars respond and adapt to these conditions. Each section reflects on the implications of these findings for both individual scholars and the academic systems in which they operate.

4.1. The Structural Necessity of English Publishing

The findings reinforce that English is not merely a medium of scholarly communication, but a structural condition that shapes legitimacy, visibility, and career advancement. As Lillis and Curry (2010) and Hyland (2018) argue, English-medium journals enforce rhetorical and linguistic norms that non-native scholars internalize as academic standards. While often justified by the ideals of global communication, these norms act as gatekeeping mechanisms, systematically disadvantaging scholars from non-English-speaking contexts (Phillipson, 1992; Canagarajah, 1996). This is confirmed by recent large-scale research showing non-native speakers spend 50-90% more time on reading and writing tasks, face rejection rates 2.5 times higher due to language issues, and receive revision requests focused on English quality 12.5 times more frequently than native speakers (Amano et al., 2023). This issue is especially pronounced in peripheral contexts like Turkey, where scholars must conform to the publishing demands of English-dominant academic centers to meet promotion and graduation requirements (Uysal & Selvi, 2021). Similar patterns are documented among Turkish and Iraqi scholars who describe this system as "linguistic injustice/hegemony" (Alhasnawi et al. 2023). The dominance of English in indexing systems further consolidates this necessity, marginalizing research published in other languages (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Hyland, 2016). With 98% of SCI journals and 96% of SSCI journals published in English, and major publishers controlling over 50% of the $19 billion global market, scholars describe this as "linguistic neo-imperialism" maintained through publisher monopolies, indexing requirements, and institutional ranking pressures (Zeng et al., 2023). These dynamics reflect the center-periphery model (Meneghini & Packer, 2007), where epistemic authority is concentrated in Anglophone contexts, and scholars from the periphery are expected to adapt or remain excluded. Beyond symbolic capital, the study highlights the material and cognitive costs of publishing in English. Scholars must invest time, finances, and intellectual effort into translation and rhetorical adjustment, often diluting arguments or losing nuance in the process (Flowerdew, 2008; Li, 2007; Gosden, 1996). These are not individual shortcomings but systemic filters that regulate access to academic discourse and visibility. Importantly, not all participants positioned themselves solely as victims of linguistic hegemony. Some adopted a pragmatic view, seeing English publication as a professional opportunity. This ambivalence complicates binary frameworks like linguistic imperialism or the center–periphery model. It suggests that, while structural inequalities persist, scholars also exercise agency, making tactical choices to increase their visibility and networks. This reflects documented patterns of "equivalent publishing" where multilingual scholars strategically produce texts in multiple languages to balance local relevance with international visibility (Curry & Lillis, 2014). The academic literacies perspective (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Hyland, 2015) is valuable here. It reframes academic writing as a socially situated practice, shaped by access to resources, identity work, and institutional contexts. English proficiency becomes a site of both struggle and strategic engagement. Decolonial perspectives further argue that Anglophone rhetorical norms devalue the literacy traditions and epistemologies that multilingual scholars bring from their own contexts (Canagarajah, 2024). These insights reinforce the call for systemic reform—not only to recognize linguistic diversity but to redistribute institutional and epistemic resources. Without structural change, the demand to publish in English will continue to reproduce a global academic order where linguistic privilege outweighs scholarly merit (Hyland, 2015; Lillis & Curry, 2018). These dynamics were deeply felt by participants. Scholars such as P4 and P10 described how language-focused evaluations diminished their contributions, while others like P2 and P20 expressed pressure to conform to Anglophone standards for recognition. Their experiences affirm that English serves not only as a medium but as a mechanism of academic gatekeeping.

4.2. Barriers to Publishing in English and Support Strategies

The challenges faced by non-native English-speaking scholars go well beyond language proficiency. As this study shows, publishing in English requires adapting not only language but also rhetorical structure and discourse conventions. English academic writing favors explicit argumentation, linear logic, and lexical precision—features that often contrast with norms in other languages, including Turkish (Flowerdew, 2013; Hyland & Salager-Meyer, 2008). This leads to what scholars describe as epistemological translation—not simply translating words, but reshaping ideas for a different academic culture (Li, 2007; Gosden, 1996). Research with Chinese academics confirms sentence construction as the most significant challenge, followed by vocabulary and coherence—barriers consistent across non-Anglophone contexts (Wu et al., 2024). Participants' experiences confirm that translation frequently disrupts phrasing, alters argumentative flow, and dilutes meaning, amplifying the already demanding nature of academic writing. In this context, support mechanisms become critical—but they are inconsistently available. Financial barriers are particularly acute. Professional editing, proofreading, and translation services come at high cost, especially for scholars from under-resourced institutions (Canagarajah, 1996; Burgess et al., 2014). Article processing charges have intensified this burden, increasing at rates three times faster than inflation to average $2,450-$3,600 per article, while waiver programs reach less than 1% of authors (Borrego, 2023). In comparable contexts, 48.5% of Kenyan researchers report never having paid APCs due to prohibitive costs (Onaolapo et al., 2025). In the absence of institutional support, many scholars turn to AI tools like Grammarly or Quillbot (Hyland, 2018; Uzuner, 2008). While 92% report improved writing quality with generative AI, this creates identity tensions—particularly among humanities scholars who experience conflicts about authorship authenticity (Hu et al., 2025). Medical studies confirm significant improvements but acknowledge limitations in verifying information and generating discipline-specific insights (Li et al., 2024). Others rely on peer networks or machine translation, with scholars strategically using these technologies throughout the entire publication process (Zou et al., 2023). While helpful for surface-level editing, such tools fall short on coherence, tone, and academic rigor. Others rely on peer networks, but the quality of support varies widely depending on disciplinary alignment, institutional culture, and access to experienced readers (Lei & Chuang, 2009; Ferguson et al., 2011). Studies from comparable contexts reveal systematic absence of writing centers, inadequate funding, and unclear institutional policies (Almawi et al., 2024). Even Turkish early-career academics trained in English face severe challenges due to lack of support and mentorship (Ekoç-Özçelik, 2023), confirming linguistic proficiency alone cannot overcome systemic barriers. For many, informal networks fill critical gaps, while for others, support is fragmented or entirely absent. These findings highlight how barriers to publishing are multilayered, shaped by linguistic, financial, and institutional constraints. Yet scholars are not passive. Many exhibit notable agency, building self-reliant strategies to engage in global discourse. This reinforces the academic literacies framework (Lillis & Curry, 2010), which views writing as a socially situated act shaped by access and identity. However, such strategies, while necessary, remain insufficient. Scholars describe laboring "under a heavy mountain" of exclusion, experiencing anxiety, self-doubt, and depression (Piller et al., 2022), with 88.9% believing linguistic aspects negatively influence peer review and 84.3% feeling the process inadequately addresses non-native author challenges (Schnell, 2024). Without institutional reforms—such as funded writing training and equitable access to editorial support—barriers will continue to fall disproportionately on non-native English-speaking scholars, undermining equity and inclusion in knowledge production. Importantly, these challenges were not experienced evenly. Participants repeatedly noted disciplinary disparities: while scholars in STEM fields often received funding and mentorship, those in the social sciences and humanities were left to navigate the publishing process alone. This internal stratification reflects broader global inequalities and further marginalizes fields already underrepresented in dominant publishing venues.

4.3. Perceived Bias in Publishing

The findings reveal that perceived bias in the publishing process is not incidental but reflects a deep structural flaw in peer review and editorial systems. Participants reported that their work was often judged less on intellectual merit and more on linguistic proficiency. This was especially frustrating when professionally edited

manuscripts were still met with requests for language revisions—suggesting an assumption that non-native authors produce substandard English (Flowerdew, 2008). Large-scale experimental research confirms this is not merely perception: in a randomized controlled trial of 3,739 manuscripts, authors from higher-income, English-speaking countries received significantly more favorable reviewer ratings and editor decisions when their identities were known in single-blind review, while double-blind review eliminated this geographic and linguistic bias entirely (Fox et al., 2023). This provides definitive empirical evidence that peer review systematically advantages researchers from wealthy, Anglophone nations. This perception aligns with critiques of desk rejection based on language, where manuscripts are dismissed before substantive review (Curry & Lillis, 2004). Such practices devalue scholarship from non-Anglophone contexts and imply that credible research must be presented in native-like English, regardless of its underlying quality. Non-native speakers face manuscript rejection due to English at 2.5 times higher rates than native speakers (38.1% vs 14.4%), confirming participants' experiences are part of systemic patterns rather than isolated incidents (Amano et al., 2023). These experiences reflect broader geopolitical marginalization, where research from non-English-speaking regions is viewed as less rigorous or less relevant to "mainstream" discourse (Ammon, 2000; Curry & Lillis, 2004). These dynamics are central to the center–periphery model (Meneghini & Packer, 2007), which frames knowledge production as governed by Anglophone institutions in the global North. These institutions set the dominant standards for epistemology, language, and discourse, forcing scholars from peripheral contexts to conform or be excluded. Emerging technologies introduce new forms of bias: AI-generated text detection systems systematically misclassify non-native English writing as AI-generated due to lower linguistic variability, creating algorithmic gatekeeping that could further disadvantage non-native scholars in manuscript screening (Liang et al., 2023). Importantly, the bias identified is not only external—it becomes internalized. Participants reported hesitancy to submit to prestigious journals and a tendency to self-censor ideas perceived as "too local" or "too difficult to articulate in English." This emotional labor undermines confidence and contributes to epistemic inequality, where scholars question their legitimacy within global academia. As P6 and P11 shared, repeated exclusion led to doubts about their scholarly worth and belonging in the academic community. Despite growing discourse around diversity and inclusion in publishing, Anglophone norms continue to dominate—through editorial expectations, linguistic criteria, and geographic hierarchies. These surface-level commitments have yet to produce transformative change. Structural bias persists not because it is invisible, but because reform remains slow and insufficient. Addressing these inequities requires more than individual adaptation. It demands systemic interventions—such as diversifying editorial boards, embracing flexible language policies, and validating diverse rhetorical traditions. Without such efforts, global academic discourse will remain dominated by a narrow set of voices, privileging linguistic and geographic dominance over scholarly substance.

4.4. Institutional Responsibilities and Scholar Adaptation

Although English publication has become a normative expectation in Turkish academia, the study highlights a persistent lack of institutional support. Scholars face financial barriers, limited access to academic writing training, and an absence of field-specific funding—particularly in the social sciences and humanities (Curry & Lillis, 2010; Flowerdew, 2013). This mismatch between institutional demands and institutional investment shifts the burden of adaptation onto individual scholars, who must navigate a high-stakes system largely on their own. In response, many scholars turn to self-directed learning, AI-based tools, and informal reviewer feedback to develop their writing. While these strategies reflect initiative, they are partial solutions at best. As Li and Flowerdew (2007) note, such efforts cannot fully counter the systemic disadvantages facing early-career researchers or those in underfunded disciplines. Even Turkish early-career academics in English Language Teaching—scholars with the highest English proficiency—report severe challenges due to lack of institutional support, data collection difficulties, and inadequate postgraduate training (Ekoç-Özçelik, 2023). This confirms that individual effort cannot compensate for structural neglect**.** Institutions benefit from the prestige of international publication without providing the structural support necessary to achieve it. This reproduces a myth of meritocracy—where success is seen as individual effort, obscuring the role of unequal access to linguistic and academic capital. Studies from similar contexts document systematic absence of writing centers, inadequate research funding, and unclear institutional policies (Almawi, 2024), creating what scholars describe as a "support vacuum" that forces reliance on technological workarounds (Hu et al., 2025). Institutional

inconsistency further deepens this divide. While some universities offer modest support, many provide none, exacerbating disparities in who can participate in global publishing. Participants described not only delayed output but also emotional exhaustion, self-censorship, and declining motivation. Multilingual scholars report laboring "under a heavy mountain," experiencing heightened anxiety, depression, and loss of confidence as structural barriers individuate epistemic oppression (Piller et al., 2022). For many, this lack of support turns publishing into a source of frustration rather than growth. For a more equitable system, institutions must go beyond symbolic encouragement and implement tangible reforms. These include discipline-sensitive writing centers, funded language services, and advocacy for more inclusive editorial practices (Li & Flowerdew, 2007). Without such infrastructure, the emotional and financial burden of publishing will continue to fall unfairly on scholars—undermining equity in global academic exchange. Importantly, acts of adaptation—while resourceful—must not be mistaken for evidence of sufficient support. As participants like P6 and P13 noted, the effort to self-train, self-edit, and self-fund publication leads to fatigue and burnout. These strategies, though necessary, should be seen as compensatory responses to institutional neglect, not signs that current systems are working.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of Turkish scholars publishing in English-language academic journals, revealing how linguistic, financial, and institutional barriers collectively shape an unequal academic publishing landscape. While English remains the dominant medium of scholarly communication, it often serves as a gatekeeping mechanism that disproportionately affects non-native English speakers—particularly those working in under-resourced institutional settings. The findings demonstrate that these barriers are systematic rather than individual: non-native speakers invest substantially more time on reading and writing tasks, face significantly higher rejection rates due to language issues, and encounter peer review bias that favors authors from wealthy, English-speaking countries. The findings demonstrate that challenges in English publishing go beyond language proficiency. Scholars must also adapt to unfamiliar rhetorical and stylistic conventions, often at personal financial cost due to translation, proofreading, and editing services. With article processing charges averaging thousands of dollars and increasing faster than inflation—while waiver programs reach only a fraction of authors who need them—financial barriers compound linguistic disadvantages to create what scholars term "epistemic exclusion." Participants also reported perceived biases in peer review, where language quality is emphasized over research substance, contributing to higher rejection rates and reduced motivation to engage with high-impact journals. This pattern aligns with experiences documented in comparable Middle Eastern contexts where scholars describe the system as "linguistic injustice." Despite these challenges, participants showed notable agency through self-directed learning strategies, including the use of AI tools, analysis of published texts, and peer feedback. While the majority of non-native scholars report improved writing quality with generative AI tools like ChatGPT, this technological reliance creates identity tensions and ethical dilemmas, particularly among humanities scholars, and introduces new vulnerabilities through AI detection systems that exhibit bias against non-native writing. However, these efforts underscore a broader systemic issue: the burden of adaptation is largely placed on individuals rather than supported through institutional infrastructure. Even early-career Turkish academics trained in English Language Teaching face severe challenges due to lack of institutional support and inadequate postgraduate preparation, confirming that individual linguistic proficiency cannot compensate for systemic neglect. To foster a more equitable publishing environment, universities must invest in structured academic writing programs tailored to scholars writing in English as an additional language. Financial support for language services should be made available, particularly to early-career researchers and those in non-STEM fields. At the editorial level, journals should adopt more flexible language expectations, expand representation of multilingual scholars on review boards, and support options like bilingual abstracts. Evidence demonstrates that double-blind peer review eliminates geographic and linguistic bias, offering concrete policy interventions journals can implement immediately. Ultimately, if global academia is to support fair and inclusive knowledge production, it must shift from valuing linguistic fluency as a proxy for academic quality. Without systemic reforms, the publishing system will continue to exclude diverse voices and reinforce structural privilege. Addressing these disparities requires both institutional action and a renewed commitment to linguistic equity in academic discourse. Several limitations suggest directions for future research. The 20-participant sample, while appropriate for phenomenological

inquiry, may not capture experiences across Turkey's varied institutional landscape. Future research should employ larger mixed-methods designs comparing institutional types, examine disciplinary differences systematically, conduct cross-national comparisons with other non-Anglophone contexts, track longitudinal changes as AI tools evolve, analyze actual reviewer comments and editorial decisions rather than relying solely on self-reports, and investigate institutional decision-making processes regarding support infrastructure. Despite these limitations, this study contributes empirical evidence from an understudied context, documents lived experiences of scholars navigating structural inequalities, and demonstrates that linguistic barriers are not individual deficits but manifestations of systemic power imbalances in global knowledge production.

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Ethics, Declarations, and Disclosures

1. Ethics Committee Approval:
☑**.**The author(s) of this study declare that they have obtained ethics committee approval from the Ethics Committee for Social and Human Sciences Research of X University, dated 12.05.2025, numbered 34109, with decision number 2025/09-21..
2. The author(s) affirm that they have complied with all principles of research and publication ethics.
3. The author(s) accept full responsibility for the use of all images, figures, photographs, and similar materials included in this study.
4. A similarity (plagiarism) report for this study is available.