

## Analysis of Türkiye's National Translation Capacity

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### Abstract

Türkiye's translation capacity is expanding with its diversifying multicultural demographic, increasing commercial and artistic interaction with the world, and educational opportunities and human resources in translation studies. This capacity, which has been dealt with separately on the sub-branches of translation studies (e.g., translation training in Türkiye, translation of Turkish literature, translation as a profession), has not been examined within a comprehensive framework by addressing each sub-branch with their mutual effects. To this end, this paper aims to map out Türkiye's translation capacity based on the concept of National Translation Capacity (NTC) recently developed by Ren and Li (2023). NTC is a conceptual framework for identifying the combined ability of all relevant actors (individuals and institutions) in a country to build out the necessary infrastructure, offer translation services, and support translation activities. NTC is categorized into four sub-capabilities as translation management, translation services, translation dissemination, and translation development. Translation management capacity refers to the formulation and implementation of laws, policies, and accreditation systems. Translation services capacity includes institutional translation, translation by freelancers, and machine translation. Translation dissemination capacity is related to the recognition, reception, and impact of translation activities in the world cultural system. Translation development capacity includes language variety and talent reserves, translator/interpreter education, translation research, and translation technology R&D. In this paper, based on the picture that emerges from the analysis of each sub-capacity, Türkiye's translation capacity to contribute to its cultural power and economic power will be discussed and various support and development policies will be suggested.

**Keywords:** national translation capacity, Türkiye, translation management, translation services, translation dissemination

### 1. Introduction

Before and after the foundation of the Republic, Türkiye established bonds with neighboring societies and various countries due to its geographical location as well as its political, cultural, and commercial relations. One of the most important tools in establishing these bonds has

undoubtedly been translation. Translation practices, which were initially limited to diplomatic and military interpreting in the Ottoman period, started to develop in the 17th and 18th centuries with Westernization efforts but still had organizational limitations. However, it formed the basis of the translation practices that would emerge in the modern Republic of Türkiye (Aksoy, 2005). In the period of reforms that followed the proclamation of the Republic, translation was at the heart of efforts to change the social and intellectual landscape. To that end, the state-sponsored Translation Bureau was founded in 1940, which is indubitably a turning point in the history of translation in Türkiye, and the bureau translated 1120 works by 1966 (Aksoy, 2005, p. 15). In her seminal book on the politics and poetics of translation in Türkiye between 1923, the year of the proclamation of the republic, and 1960, Tahir-Gürçağlar (2008) explains that the translation of the classics was a demand by officials, writers, and publishers with the purpose of westernization in the 1930s and that the Translation Bureau, established in 1940, emerged as a response to this demand (p.23). In this context, it is possible to say that the state-led translation activities in the early Republican period started as a means of creating a literature pool and enlightening the society, and they were the first steps in the formation of Türkiye's national translation capacity.

In Türkiye, where political volatility never ceases to be discussed, in the 1960-1980 period, it is possible to argue that the politics of the country and the political views and ideologies that developed in this context pulled translation literature to the center and translation became a means of expression of ideologies. In her study analyzing the literary activities of the twenty years in question, which was an ideological period, in terms of publishing house policies, translated works and prominent magazine activities, Albiz (2018) argues that transfer ideologies entered the country through translation literature due to the political instability in the country. In the meantime, by the 1980s, the act of translation began to take on an academic dimension in Türkiye, and, in line with the advancements in the field worldwide, the groundwork for Türkiye's academic translation education was started to be established in higher education. Changes and revolutions in scientific research and activities in the field of translation started to occur during these years with the founding of separate translation studies departments at universities. The way science views translation also evolved and changed with these developments. When we look at this period, it can be claimed that translation activity in the country remained under the influence of a politicized period, but finally gained an academic infrastructure.

Moving forward to the present day, it is impossible not to talk about the undisputed dominance of technology; translation tools, translated texts, translation training, and platforms that enable translation as a job are just a click away. This advanced technology, which may further serve the perception that anyone who can speak a foreign language can

translate, is likely to continue to be a problem for translators who still have not achieved the desired legal and social gains in terms of professionalization despite offering functional tools. On the other hand, even though it is felt all over the world, geographically the migration flows are at their most intense and Türkiye has become both a transit route and a settlement destination. The translation implications of this are many, from community interpreting to bilingual signage practices. Also, the translation of cultural and artistic products, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, is a field that is gaining strength both as a serious business and as a means of cultural recognition. Looking at translation training, the diversity of undergraduate and postgraduate translation education in the country can be seen as promising in terms of the capacity of qualified human resources. It is evident that there are many branches of translation that mutually influence each other, not only in Türkiye but in any country. The picture that emerges from this mutual influence can provide an up-to-date and overall picture of the translation activity in that country.

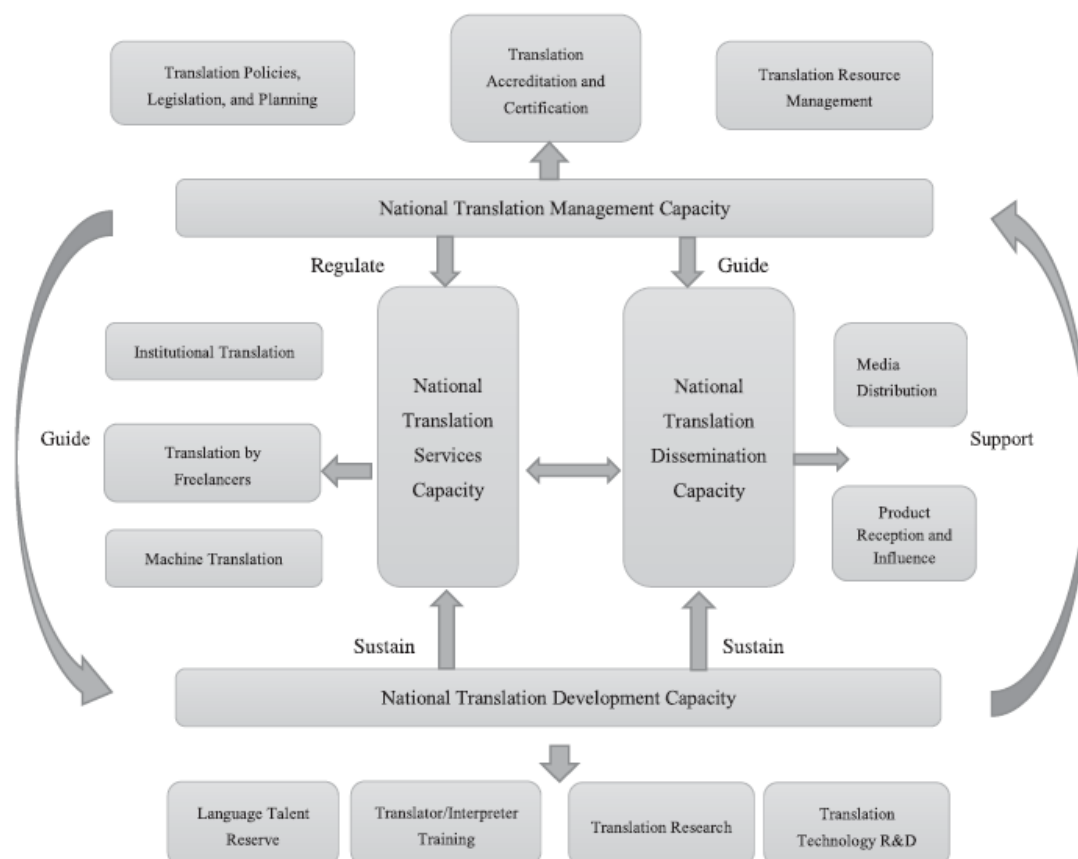
It is possible to analyze this multifaceted and interactive structure under various sub-branches. In their study, Ren and Li (2023, p.1), starting from China's current situation by questioning "the role of the state as a promoter, facilitator, and sometimes patron of translation activities", try to describe what this role is in the promotion and development of translators and interpreters, and how to map out the contribution of translators and interpreters to the soft and hard power of the country in return. In the belief that a comprehensive framework would provide answers to these and related questions, they created the concept of National Translation Capacity (NTC) which they define as "the total capacity of all relevant actors (both individuals and institutions) of a country to develop infrastructure for translation activities, provide translation services, and promote translation activities" (p. 9).

The researchers state that the NTC concept is subsumed under the concept of National Language Capacity (NLC) developed by Brecht and Walton (1993, p. 6). NLC is briefly defined as the ability of a country to meet proficiency demands in certain languages depending on various factors, including its capacity to provide instruction in languages not currently or widely offered. However, NLC only defines NTC in terms of the machine (-aided) translation or in the context of China; it does not properly and sufficiently define NTC. Therefore, Ren and Li (2023) elaborate on the scope of the NTC with key focal features. First of all, NTC is a multilayered framework for analyzing the interaction between different actors/agents of translation activity in a given country. It rejects the notion that the national government or state institutions are the only ones accountable for translation activity. The state, which initiates, sponsors, and promotes significant translation efforts, as well as translation-related enterprises, institutions, regulations, and technology are examples of translation actors in addition to individual translators and interpreters. In this regard, the researchers divide NTC

into four sub-capabilities of “translation management, translation services, translation dissemination, and translation development” (p.10) and elaborate in terms of content and interaction as in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*A Framework of NTC (Ren & Li, 2023)*



Examination of the four sub-capabilities with their interaction with each other allows for a holistic assessment of a country’s translation capacity in terms of cultural, political, and economic contribution with the involvement of all actors and thus maps a country’s translation capacity in all its components. With a diverse populace that is becoming increasingly multicultural, higher international trade and artistic exchange, improved educational opportunities, and a growing pool of human resources for translation studies, Türkiye’s national translation capacity is expanding every day. This capacity has not been investigated in a thorough framework that takes into account the interactions between each sub-branch. Thus, this paper aims to present Türkiye’s national translation capacity through this map by presenting the current situation in each sub-capacity and discussing the areas for improvement. In this regard, the scope of each sub-capacity will be summarized under separate headings and the relevant situation in Türkiye will be described. In the last section, based on

the picture that emerges from the analysis of each sub-capacity, the country's translation capacity to contribute to its "cultural power and economic power" will be discussed and various support and development policies will be suggested.

## **2. Türkiye's National Translation Capacity**

### **2.1. National Translation Management Capacity**

Ren and Li (2023) point out that translation management planning is directly related to language planning and language policy studies. In this respect, they take language planning as a basis, which Cooper (1999) categorizes into status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. They specifically argue that status planning and acquisition planning provide a foundation and assurance for the operation and expansion of the translation industry. Status planning refers to purposeful efforts (often by sovereign nations) to affect the distribution of functions among the languages of a community and acquisition planning refers to coordinated attempts to encourage the learning of a language. Accordingly, the creation and administration of translation accrediting systems, the distribution and utilization of pertinent resources, and the creation and execution of translation-related laws, policies, strategies, and standards are all aspects of translation management capacity.

Öner (2012) describes the translation sector in Türkiye as "a sector where there are no standards, no job security, or no standard remuneration" (p. 60-61). According to Coşkun and Tunalı's study (2020), which involved interviewing thirteen translators employed in Türkiye's state and private sectors, translation is still not a fully recognized profession in Türkiye. Despite the fact that society does not value translation, translators portray themselves as extremely competent professionals and view their work as a lifelong learning process. Perhaps the low social status attributed to the translation profession by the society in Türkiye is also responsible for the fact that this profession has not yet reached the desired level in terms of legal regulations. There is still a belief in society that anyone who speaks a foreign language can work as a translator or interpreter in the translation sector. It is possible to think that even employers are of the same opinion and that when hiring someone, they do not focus on proven professional competence, but on how low the wage of the person who will do the translation work will be.

When it comes to standards and rights, it is necessary to refer to the related legislation. The legal legislation on translators in Türkiye includes the Turkish Criminal Code No. 5237, the Code of Civil Procedure No. 6100, the Notary Law No. 1512, and the Regulation on the Notary Law (Köktürk, 2015, p. 108). To start with, Article 96 of the Regulation on the Notary Law No. 1512 stipulates that "the translation of documents from one language into another

language or from one writing into another writing and its approval by a notary public is called translation” and “in order for the notary public to appoint any person as a translator, the notary public must be convinced that the person knows the language or languages to be translated correctly by seeing the diploma or other documents”. It suggests that in order to be officially appointed as a translator, an exam result measuring foreign language skills may be sufficient and a notary public is the authority to approve the translation. In Türkiye, there is no exam for translators to obtain a certificate of professional competence. Also in Türkiye, the translator is considered equivalent to the expert witness, and therefore translators are evaluated in accordance with the expert witness law and regulation. The task of expert witnesses is to prepare a written or oral assessment and report on a matter or situation in dispute in their field of expertise by adding their own opinion, knowledge and interpretation, but translators cannot include their subjective opinion in the translation, cannot establish the cause-effect relationship related to the translation and cannot prepare a report to be submitted to the court. The translator assists the judge but is never authorised to intervene in the decision (Kurt, 2012 pp. 49-57). Although their job descriptions are different, the fact that they are lumped together indicates that there is no need to give a separate status to the profession of translation and interpreting in the law.

Despite the shallow definitions in the related law, the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) published UMS-Translator-6 (National Occupational Standard) for translators in 2012: “Interpreter/Translator (Level 6) is a qualified person who performs the work organisation and initial preparation activities of the translation process within the framework of relevant regulations and/or contracts, OHS<sup>1</sup> measures, quality standards, and service procedures; performs interpretation, sign language interpretation and/or written translation activities and sustains his individual professional development”. The fact that the VQA includes translation in its National Occupational Standard, which was developed with the help of many prominent names and academicians of the sector, and that the standard defines the profession to a large extent; the fact that many translation associations integrate with their members with common and different goals and develop day by day are very important steps towards the professionalisation of translation (Uysal et al., 2015, p. 265). However, there is still a need for a fully authorised professional body that conducts examinations for the awarding of the title of translator with certification, takes the lead in accreditation and standardisation, and is responsible for monitoring the legal rights of translators.

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<sup>1</sup> Occupational Safety and Health

## 2.2. National Translation Services Capacity

NTC is realized in the capacity of translation services. Researchers exemplify this realization through the practices of human and/or machine translators/interpreters such as “translation, interpreting, sign language interpreting, audio description, machine (-aided) translation, and AI translation”. One of the components of this sub-capacity is institutional translation capacity, which is used to describe the translation and localization services provided, generally by the language services sector, governmental or non-governmental organizations, schools, and other social institutions (Ren & Li, 2023, pp. 11-12).

In Türkiye, the translators in the state sector are hired under the General Administration Services (GİH) category, which puts them in the same category as associate degree public officials and requires them to perform administrative functions. In the private sector, translators operate without a contract and face pressure from low fees, a demanding workload, and deadlines. Employers in this scenario are searching for translators who charge less, which could lead to talented translators choosing to pursue other careers (Uysal, 2017, pp. 149- 150). However, the private sector should not be restricted to organisations offering such poor conditions. Among the private sector organisations in which translators have the opportunity to work, i.e., publishing houses, press and media organisations, international companies, etc. can be satisfactory in terms of financial opportunities and rights. As indicated in Figure 1, National Translation Management Capacity “regulates” services capacity. There are protective laws for translators in the public sector in terms of salary and personal rights, but the same may not be true for those in the private sector and freelancers. Translation fees are not set according to a certain standard, which means that translations can be done for almost any price, anyone can take on this work, and this can lead to work of questionable quality. In this sense, ÇEVBİR<sup>2</sup> (Turkish Association of Literary Translators) publishes informative and suggestive posts on its website regarding translation service tariffs according to current market conditions.

Freelance translators are rightly included in this sub-capacity because of their important position among service providers, even though they are not institutionally affiliated. As the name suggests, anyone who provides translation services without working for a specific organisation can be considered a freelance translator. The qualifications of a translator that are required in state organisations or in the private sector may not apply to freelance translators, as a foreign language speaker from any professional group can also work as a freelance translator, either as a profession, as a side job or even as a hobby. This means eliminating regular income, job guarantee, and personal rights from the beginning. In their

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<sup>2</sup> <https://cevbir.org.tr/tarife>

study on the problems encountered by Turkish freelance translators, Ersoy and Odacıoğlu (2014) categorised the problems under three main headings: problems caused by translation departments at the associate degree level, problems related to notarisation, which gives translation documents a legal status, and translation fees. Similarly, Seçkin (2021) found that freelance technical translators work for irregular and low wages, without social rights, with excessive workload, and without professional recognition.

Since Machine Translation (MT) is now indispensable as a non-human actor in translation, it is further grouped and encompasses various forms of techno-empowered translation. Although computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools provide an advantage for fast and consistent translation, they also pose technical limitations for translators. For example, translation tools are quite costly and translators have to buy them mostly by their own means, and it is difficult for translators to work in different programmes (Seçkin, 2021, p. 1146). Furthermore, the current debate on how MT tools will affect the role of the translator centres on the view that increasingly sophisticated tools will place the translator in the position of the person who will apply post-editing to the translated text that is produced with these tools. It has been observed that machine translation systems generally preserve the integrity of meaning in the translation of specialised texts and transfer stylistic and grammatical features to the target text thanks to the developing technology, but they have difficulties in preserving the integrity of the text when transferring literary texts to the target language, and they are not yet competent enough to cover the style, figures of speech, language games, and letter drops of the text in the target language (Ayık-Akça, 2022). Therefore, the post-editor role of the translator can be considered to be more essential, especially in the translation of literary texts than in the translation of technical texts. In short, it remains to be seen whether MT tools and translators will be teammates or fierce competitors, and how this will be reflected in translation service capacity.

Ren and Li (2023) consider translation service capacity as closely related to the economics of translation. In this respect, in a previous study, a literature review to access the volume of the Turkish translation market and the employment information of freelance translators working in this sector, as well as information requested from the Turkish Statistical Institute's website, proved fruitless (Seçkin, 2021). Moreover, the fact that the last report prepared by the state on the Translation and Interpreting Profession in Türkiye was published in 2015 in an updated version poses a problem both in terms of the importance attributed to the profession and in terms of academic studies that need official data such as this one. To sum up, since there is no official data on the number of institutionally employed or freelancer translators in Türkiye in this sub-capacity, which is regulated by National Translation



Management Capacity's ever-insufficient legal regulations, it is not possible to provide a clear indication of the service volume.

### **2.3. National Translation Dissemination Capacity**

This sub-capacity, which is associated with a country's and its languages' reputation and discursive power, characterizes the dissemination, reception, and influence of the translation industry's activities. In the end, it shows how valuable translation products are by way of product impact, media distribution capability, etc. The term "media distribution" describes the range and quantity of media formats, such as "print, electronic and digital media or any combination thereof" used to transport and distribute a translated work. According to researchers, "book sales, library collections, number of readers, media coverage, reviews, citations in publications, entries into classrooms", "box office receipts, viewers' comments, reviews, research papers, peripheral products and their sales" can be indicators of reception and influence in the target cultures (Ren & Li, 2023, p. 12).

Among the four sub-capacities discussed in this study for Türkiye, perhaps one of the two sub-capacities where an analysis based on quantitative data is possible is dissemination capacity and the other is development capacity. To start with, print media distribution in Turkish can be traced to the Turkish Publishers Association's latest annual report for 2022. According to the report, in 2022, 1.5% of all books published were imported, which corresponds to approximately 5,709,704 titles. These imported publications include printed language education books, digital platform sales, printed/digital academic and reference books, digital book and digital database subscriptions, and imported culture and arts printed books (TürkYayBir, 2023).

Compared to the works translated into Turkish, the translation of works from Turkish into world languages is more recent. Translations of Turkish literature into English began to increase after 1980. For example, in the late nineties, 11 novels by Yaşar Kemal were translated into English. In the following years, works by authors such as Orhan Pamuk, Bilge Karasu and Elif Şafak were also translated into English and their names were mentioned in various award lists. The announcement of the TEDA Project in 2005 was also an important development. Following this, Orhan Pamuk's Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006 drew the attention of foreign editors to Turkish literature (Suçin, 2021). TEDA Project is supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye. It is a publication and translation subsidy program that offers incentives to international publishers who want to publish Turkish literature and works on Turkish art and culture in foreign languages. Within the scope of the TEDA Program, 3,110 works translated into 63 different languages were published and introduced to readers from 2005 to 2021. Among these translated languages, the Balkan

languages and the languages of neighbouring countries (Arabic, Persian, Greek, Russian, etc.), with which Türkiye has cultural and geographical proximity, take the lead. Among Western languages, German, English, Italian and French are translated into a total of 502 (19.38%) with a secondary rank (*Rakamlarla TEDA*, n.d.). In addition, Kalem Agency<sup>3</sup>, a private initiative, has been contributing to Türkiye's dissemination capacity since 2005. The agency has succeeded in promoting Turkish literature not only in English and French, but also in a total of 64 languages, including Georgian and Danish, and has signed more than 3000 contracts. In addition to representing Turkish authors abroad, the agency also represents foreign agencies and publishing houses in Türkiye.

As Figure 1 shows, the management sub-capacity "guides" the dissemination sub-capacity. The translation of Turkish literature into various languages as part of this state project is an example of a major state-led guidance and contribution to dissemination. In addition, the academic contribution of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ICC) to the dissemination capacity can be mentioned, and so, under the heading of media distribution, we can move on to Turkish Series, which are considered Türkiye's soft power. In 2023, a comprehensive study was carried out by researchers from media and journalism departments with the support of ICC, and the book called *Turkish Series in the Process of Cultural Change and Industrialization 2010 – 2020*<sup>4</sup> was published. The book describes the impact of Turkish Series on social life, tourism, health, fashion, cosmetics and other areas with examples from both Türkiye and abroad, and provides approximate data on the revenue generated from series exports. The book summarizes Türkiye's series export capacity as follows:

In terms of the number, turnover, and effects of Turkish series, which are exported to 85 countries today, the rapid acceleration experienced in national and international platforms in the last decade is remarkable. The total turnover of the 20 highest-paid TV series producers in Türkiye increased by 16% compared to 2013 and reached 622 million Turkish liras. The total turnover of 45 producers who sold TV series to channels in 2013 was 750 million Turkish liras (Forbes Türkiye, 2014). In 2015, the export figure for Turkish series approached 300 million dollars. In this direction, our country's export target for 2023 is expressed as 1 billion dollars. Although the impact of the pandemic and the current economic conditions have caused a negative process in terms of achieving this goal, it is no longer a dream to reach or even exceed these figures. Türkiye, which still ranks second on a global scale after the USA in TV series exports, continues to work to rank first in the near future. (p.14)

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<sup>3</sup> <https://kalemagency.com/about-us/>

<sup>4</sup> Online publication. <https://online.fliphtml5.com/kkfkn/rmap/#p=1>

As for the product reception and influence, Turkish series watched in 85 different countries has interesting effects on social life. In addition to the desire to visit Türkiye as a tourist attraction, there are examples such as people in Argentina choosing the names of their children from Turkish Series, the example of an American woman who converted to Islam after being influenced by a Turkish Series, and the teaching of Turkish as a subject in the schools of Hungary (Güngör-Kılıç, 2023, p. 107).

In Türkiye's translation dissemination capacity, it would not be wrong to say that Turkish series are more effective than any other media in the recognition of Turkish culture in the societies where they are watched. It is also possible to say that video-on-demand platforms and internet broadcasting in general also have a great contribution to this. Of course, this dissemination is realised through translation: in terrestrial broadcasting, dubbing is mainly done by the in-house dubbing artists of the production companies, while in internet broadcasting, there are in-house subtitle translators and even fansubbers who do this job voluntarily. Here, it can be clearly seen that everyone from state organs to fansubbers, namely translation actors, are contributing to this national translation capacity. This proves that this map created by Ren and Li (2023) is in line with reality.

#### **2.4. National Translation Development Capacity**

National Translation Development Capacity ensures the sustainability of translation capacity and provides resources and support. Under this sub-capacity are the sub-clusters of "language talent reserves, translator/interpreter education, translation research, and translation technology R&D" (Ren & Li, 2023, pp. 12-13). Language talent reserve is about the availability of various language combinations for translation; a higher capacity for translation development is correlated with a greater availability of language combinations. Türkiye's language talent reserve and its richness can be traced from the official data of the Council of Higher Education, undergraduate and associate degree program catalogue. When Translation and Interpreting undergraduate and associate degree programs are scanned without making any distinction between faculties or colleges, or state and foundation universities in Türkiye, translation and interpreting education is offered in 10 different languages. In order of the number of programs, these languages are English, German, Arabic, French, Bulgarian, Chinese, Persian, Japanese, Spanish, and Russian (YÖK Atlas, 2023).

There appear to have been ongoing efforts to raise the level of professionalization in translation, as seen by the growing number of university-based translation programs. However, quantitative analysis of a survey of translation graduates reveals that a disproportionate number of women translate, that graduates often work freelance, and that although most graduates have a positive view of their education, they do not feel ready to enter

the workforce after graduation. Even if there have been major advancements made toward solidity and professionalization, the results of document and empirical investigations demonstrate that translation still lacks many characteristics of an established profession (Yılmaz-Gümüş, 2018). Another study conducted with students of the Department of Translation and Interpreting and professional translators and interpreters working in various cities of Türkiye showed that both groups thought that translation was perceived as a low-status profession (Akçayoğlu & Özer, 2020). Looking at the impact of technology on translator employment, a survey was conducted with 70 translation workers living in Türkiye and working on digital labour platforms. The study revealed that the conditions of employment of translation workers in Türkiye have not improved much as a result of the integration of digital platforms into business networks and translation production, but rather put translators at risk for issues including job status, pay, work-life balance, social protections, free will, negotiating power, platform reliance, sharing of benefits and risks, and data gathering, security, and privacy (Fırat, 2021). At this point, it can be said that diversity and quantity in education have not yet contributed to the hopes of students, graduates and working translators for the future.

Translator/interpreter training places an emphasis on the diversity and quality of training programs as well as the ability to train translators and interpreters. As mentioned above, translation and interpreting training is offered in 10 languages, and these programs are offered in 129 different programs. It is important to note that these programs are not only available at the most popular universities in metropolitan cities but also at relatively small-scale universities all over Türkiye. The benefit of this nationwide human resource capable of translation was most dramatically demonstrated during the earthquake that struck Türkiye in February 2023. During the earthquake, ÇEVİR called on translators all over Türkiye to translate for search and rescue teams and members of the press from all over the world and earthquake victims who did not speak Turkish. In addition, Translation Studies researchers got organised in their own social media groups and dozens of volunteer translators took part. In those times when access to the region was very difficult, many translators were able to reach the area from the immediate neighbourhood. It was observed that the organization of emergency translation services was not provided by state bodies but by civil organizations.

In addition to undergraduate education, several universities in Türkiye offer graduate programs in translation studies. In general, under the name of “translation and interpreting” or “translation studies”, 13 universities offer master’s degrees and 10 universities offer doctoral degrees (Yıldırım-Yaşar, 2023). Since the beginning of the 2000s, postgraduate programs have been opened in this field, especially in English, and teaching staff have had the opportunity to specialise in their own fields (Eruz, 2021). The increase in the number of researchers who have chosen to specialise in translation and conduct academic studies directly affects the

developments in the translation research sub-cluster of this sub-capacity. The quantity and quality of research supporting translation practice, instruction, and technological advancement can be used to gauge the capability for translation research. To start with, theses written in the field of translation from 1985 to the present can be viewed. When viewed through the YÖK Thesis Centre database with the help of the keyword “translation” in the advanced search option, there are 826 master’s theses and 227 doctoral theses as of December 2023. When the data obtained by Çalışkan and Kartal (2021) from 1985 to the end of 2020 with the same keyword is compared with the data obtained in this study, it is seen that there is an increase of 10 master’s theses and 70 doctoral theses in only three years. This is one of the data showing the interest in postgraduate research in the field. On the other hand, considering the publications by Turkish translation studies researchers in the world’s high-ranking journals, unfortunately, we cannot see numbers equivalent to these thesis numbers. The increase in the number of studies that are of high quality and up-to-date in translation studies and that contribute to science with their methodology and findings will show the actual development in translation research.

In addition to the contributions of educational institutions and programs, the contribution of non-profit organizations to Türkiye’s translation development capacity can also be mentioned. One of these is The Women’s Library and Information Centre Foundation<sup>5</sup>, which defines itself as Türkiye’s first and only women-centered library and archive. The foundation regularly organizes “Translation Workshops from Poems by Women Poets”, bringing together expert translators and translation students. It is also worth mentioning the online meetings that have become more common during and after the pandemic. Webinars, which are free of charge and open to all relevant segments of the society, are organized by translation departments of universities and their student societies. These organizations, where academics or translators from almost every sub-discipline of translation studies are speakers, are also beneficial for the professional development of students and translators, and ultimately for the country’s translation development capacity.

Finally, the translation technology R&D sub-cluster of this sub-capacity describes the research and development of products and technology associated with translation, such as natural language processing and speech recognition. As revealed by the curriculum analysis conducted in the study by Yıldırım-Yaşar (2023), the majority of postgraduate translation programs in Türkiye do not include courses on machine translation. This suggests that postgraduate translation education partially ignores technological advancements and market demands. Thus, if the aim is to train researchers to take part in translation technology, the first step could be to offer relevant courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels in all

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<sup>5</sup> <http://kadineserleri.org/>

translation programs without exception. For example, interdisciplinary studies with engineering sciences can be emphasised in the development of translation technologies. One of the important examples of such cooperation, Dikte, one of the world's most advanced speech recognition software developed by the Turkish software company CTD Systems with the support of computer processor manufacturer Intel's Türkiye office, was an important technology development in 2008 (*Intel'den Türk yazılımına önemli yatırım*, 2018). There have been many developments in this technology until now and today there are applications that can instantly translate into the desired language through speech recognition. With the technology bases established at universities (METU- Teknokent, Gazi TeknoPark, Ankara University- Teknokent, etc.) and the work of translation and interpreting departments, even more advanced technology products can be developed. In short, the human resources to develop translation technology are available both in the fields of translation studies and engineering, and the physical infrastructure for these studies is provided by many universities. Therefore, it can be said that Türkiye's national translation development capacity is promising if the necessary steps are taken.

### **3. Conclusion**

The ability of a country to assist and facilitate translation labor, to encourage the distribution and reception of translation products, and to support further translation endeavors should all be taken into account simultaneously (Ren & Li, 2023, p.6). As the researchers underline, national translation capacity is the outcome of a collective effort, neither the achievement of a single translator nor a state-led translation practice. All components affect each other positively or negatively. In this study, after analysing all the four sub-capacities of Türkiye's national translation capacity, the relationship between sub-capacities has been tried to be revealed.

National Translation Management Capacity is seen to directly regulate National Translation Services Capacity with the legal rights that have not yet reached the desired level, the arbitrariness of translation tariffs, and the lack of certification of the translation profession. These problems can be solved by first establishing an overarching professional association that will coordinate all processes related to translation and interpreting. In this way, more concrete steps can be taken to solve problems, especially the legal rights of translators.

Management capacity positively guides the National Translation Dissemination Capacity through programmes such as TEDA, the promotion of Turkish series in international fairs by state-affiliated institutions such as ICC, and the support of academic studies on the subject. Also, dissemination capacity is obviously sustained by the National Translation Development Capacity with human resources and translation technology to translate print or

digital media into many languages around the world. The subtitling and dubbing of series, which contribute to Türkiye's recognition in 85 countries around the world, are the work of Türkiye's translator capacity, not to mention the economic return it brings to the country. Thus, language talent reserve can be utilized in cultural and economic power by establishing university-sector collaborations. For instance, production companies or publishing houses exporting Turkish print or audiovisual media worldwide can hire students or graduates in translation jobs. The state can also put in place practices that incentivize the private sector in this regard. Such a collaboration will benefit both graduates and freelancers who are worried about their future. Also, as the economic and cultural benefits of translation services become more apparent, i.e., as the role of translation services in the realization of cultural circulation and the resulting economic benefits becomes clearer, it may be possible for the profession to achieve the desired standardization. Furthermore, it is conceivable that translation technologies that will facilitate and accelerate translation services, whose importance and necessity will attract attention, will also gain momentum with this effect.

National translation development capacity "sustains" service capacity, which is evident in the recent migration, which requires translation to and from Turkish for a wide range of issues, from legal matters to daily life needs. On the other hand, the earthquake, which is a reality in Türkiye, has shown how vital crisis translation services are, and how we need to get better at organizing around it. There is an urgent need for an organization where our existing translator resource will be managed by the state or a professional association to be established for such situations.

To conclude, National Translation Capacity is indeed a map that depicts structures that regulate, sustain and guide each other. The examination of each sub-capacity in this study has shown that each of them has a knock-on effect. This study has attempted to present as much of Türkiye's national translation capacity as an article can cover, so missing professional issues, unmentioned translation services, or unavailable official data will be limitations of this study. Such detailed descriptive research may be possible in future studies by addressing each sub-capacity separately and in detail.

## **Disclosures**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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