Practices in the Translation and Editing of Humanities and Social Science Texts for Publication in English: A Qualitative Survey of Language Professionals

Abstract

In 2006 the American Council of Learned Societies published the *Guidelines for the Translation of Social Science Texts*. Following a panel discussion at the annual conference of Mediterranean Editors and Translators on their continued relevance in an international publishing landscape increasingly populated by writers who use English as an additional language (EAL), a qualitative survey consisting of ten open-ended questions was conducted in 2020 through several European language professional associations. At that time, the extent to which the practices of translators into English and editors working directly with EAL authors in the humanities and social sciences conformed to the self-reflexive methods of the *Guidelines* was not known. The 52 responses from language professionals (LPs) based in European countries (44), North America (7), and Israel (1) were coded to obtain qualitative data on professionals' opinions and practices. Respondents' self-identifications were roughly divided between translators and editors, but further examination revealed 25 in fact working as translator-editors, 14 as editors, and 13 as translators. Most respondents engaged in some form of communication with the authors of the source texts regarding their translating/editing choices, though the strategies varied. Most attempted to retain the authors 'voice' but also felt the competing need to comply with prevailing expectations of international academic discourse in English. This article presents themes that emerged from the survey, which revealed both compliance with and divergence from the *Guidelines* across diverse academic and linguistic contexts, suggesting the need for updated guidelines and additional research on these mostly occluded author–LP practices.

Keywords

Social sciences, humanities, authors' editing, translation, English for research publication purposes, English as an additional language

Introduction

Inspired by practical questions raised about translating and editing in the humanities and social sciences (HSS) during a workshop on ethnographic writing given by anthropologist and translator Susan DiGiacomo at a Mediterranean Editors and Translators (MET) annual conference (DiGiacomo, 2018), a group composed of university-based and freelance editors and translators and a researcher in applied linguistics organized a special MET-HSS panel to evaluate the continued relevance of the American Council of Learned Societies *Guidelines for the Translation of Social Science Texts* (Heim and Tymowski, 2006, hereinafter the *Guidelines*) to the work of language professionals (LPs) (Burgess et al., 2019). As the first and only international and multilingual attempt to specify what is distinctive about social science texts, why their translation requires an approach that differs from approaches used in translating scientific, technical, or literary texts, and who should do this work, the *Guidelines* have had a significant impact in the field. They have become one of the rare, definitive references on the topic, cited in numerous scholarly and professional articles and books and incorporated into translation curricula around the globe. Despite the significant expansion since their publication in 2006 of the field of English for research publication purposes (ERPP) and the exponential increase in researchers writing in English as an additional language (EAL) (Flowerdew, 2022), the *Guidelines* remain the only text to provide guidance on self-reflexive practice for translators, and by extension, editors working in HSS. To date, no other such text exists. Given increased scholarly attention to the role of text 'mediators' in regulating texts, Englishes, and epistemologies (Lillis and Curry, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Burgess and Lillis, 2013; Heng Hartse and Kubota, 2014; Luo and Hyland,

2017; Solin and Hynninen, 2018; Pienimäki, 2021; Burgess, 2022), the group saw a need to better understand how academic-adjacent LPs hired directly by EAL writers to support their HSS writing for international publication put the *Guidelines*' self-reflexive method into practice and whether this method needs updating today.

It is the self-reflexive practices built into the *Guidelines* that interest us here. According to one of its original project participants, the *Guidelines*' challenge was 'to design a "guide" to humanities translation for publishers, translators, and readers/researchers which would be neither prescriptive nor normative' (Poncharal, 2007: 99) but that would instead specify the kind of self-reflexive translation process that could produce 'sensitive translations of studies written from the diverse perspectives offered by diverse languages and cultures' (Heim and Tymowski, 2006: 27). The American, Chinese, French, and Russian translators involved in producing the *Guidelines* were asked to footnote any translation problem they encountered relating to conceptual terminology, syntax, argument organization, and 'the construction of discursive coherence' (Poncharal, 2007: 100) with detailed reflections on the translation problems encountered, the translation choices made, and the strategies adopted to facilitate the transmission of meaning across language pairs. The project's multinational group of translators, social science researchers, journalists, and publishers then discussed the translations and footnoted strategies together, allowing both translators and social science authors to appreciate the complexity and linguistic and ideological stakes of translation work.

Taking this reflexive methodology and the clear and continued scholarly and professional interest in the practice of LPs working in the social sciences to heart, the 2019 MET-HSS panel discussants followed up with a qualitative survey. Launched in March 2020, the 'MET Humanities and Social Sciences Survey' was designed to gather more detailed information from individual LPs on the difficulties they encounter in translating and editing HSS texts, how and why they make their choices, and the level of self-reflexive agency they

exert when mediating between author, text, and target publisher. Using several major areas of continued translation and editing difficulty outlined in the *Guidelines* as a touchstone, the survey added questions relevant to the prevalence of ERPP practices and EAL writers today. This article presents the results and conclusions of that survey.

The survey

The survey was announced through three associations with a broader geographical membership, but based in European countries where scholars using EAL often need translation and editing services to help them to publish their work in English in international journals: MET based in Spain, the Society of English-language professionals in the Netherlands (SENSE), and Nordic Editors and Translators (NEaT) based in Finland. We targeted translators and editors of HSS texts who work directly with and on the part of authors on the assumption that many respondents would work in both capacities, and that translators who work with EAL scholars often find that the translation process involves substantive editing. Their task therefore includes adapting the texts to help them meet the requirements for publication in English, whether the original text is submitted to them in English or another language. These so-called *authors' editors* (Burgess and Lillis, 2013; Burrough-Boenisch, 2013; Burrough-Boenisch and Matarese, 2013; Kerans 2013; Matarese, 2013, 2016) are often also, in fact, *authors' translators*, a professional profile that has received little attention in the literature because it has remained largely occluded. Although not currently in wide use in professional editing associations outside Europe, the term authors' editor has been used in the United States since the early twentieth century to describe literary editors and since the 1960s to describe editors of medical and scientific research articles who work closely with authors to make draft texts fit for publication (Matarese, 2016: 51–58). The same set of skills pertains to both authors' editors and authors' translators: a mix of linguistic and content expertise, familiarity with publication strategies,

and close collaboration with authors during the translation and editing process. Despite their major input in producing texts for publication, authors' translators and editors are still rarely mentioned in the acknowledgements of research articles (Burrough-Boenisch, 2019; Matarese and Shashok, 2019, 2020; Paul-Hus et al., 2017).

The survey was publicized in the MET, SENSE, and NEaT newsletters and was made available on the online Survey Monkey platform from 17 February 2020 to 31 March 2020, just as the first Covid-19 wave hit Europe. Links to the online survey were also publicized on the MET, SENSE, and NEaT Facebook pages, in Twitter and LinkedIn profiles, and in various Facebook groups for editors, including Academic Editors, Editors Association of Earth, EAE Backroom, SOS! Academic Translators, and ESL Editors of Earth. Because we opted to exclude collection of respondents' personal information (first name, last name, email address, IP address), we were unable to track respondents' identities or contact them for follow-up. We did pose three preliminary demographic questions for use as sample data concerning the respondent's country of residence, the job title the respondent most used to describe themselves, and the number of years' experience they had in their role. Fifty-two professionals based in European countries (44), the USA (6), Canada (1), and Israel (1) responded. European respondents came from the Netherlands (13), the UK (9) Spain (7), France (4), Germany (3), Czechia (2), Finland (2), Italy (1), Sweden (1), and Switzerland (1). The number of years' experience of the survey respondents differed widely. More than half the respondents had over 16 years' experience: 21 respondents had 21+ years' experience and six had between 16 and 20 years' experience. The remaining 24 respondents had between 0 and 15 years' experience: nine respondents had between 11 and 15 years' experience, nine had between 6 and 10 years' experience, and six had between 0 and 5 years' experience, with one response left blank. Respondents' self-identifications ('What job title do you most commonly use to describe yourself?') were roughly divided between translators and editors,

but further examination of responses in the dataset revealed 25 respondents in fact working as translator-editors, 14 as editors, and 13 as translators. As an artefact of the survey question format, this discrepancy between job title self-identification and language practice demonstrates the practical overlap of translation and editing tasks. The respondents did not necessarily have any knowledge of the *Guidelines*.

The survey consisted of ten open-ended questions about professional practice based on the content of the *Guidelines* and the 2019 MET-HSS panel discussion: whether you need to be an 'insider' to work on HSS texts (Q1); how work with HSS and STEM texts differs (Q2); how much communication with the author is required in working with HSS texts (Q3); handling machine translation of HSS texts (Q4); handling issues of foreignization and domestication in HSS texts (Q5); handling HSS concepts and conceptual false cognates (Q6 and Q7); level of intervention in syntax (Q8); handling of the author's and/or LP's voice (Q9); and the impact of EAL authors on what counts as 'good' academic English (Q10). The ten questions had a 98.5% response rate (n=512/520). The responses were loaded into QDA Miner Lite qualitative data coding software, and initial codes were generated in a systematic fashion to highlight relevant features of the dataset. These codes were then collated into emergent themes to produce a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) clustered into four categories: (1) insider specialization and author–LP dialogue; issues of foreignization versus domestication in (2) terminology and concepts and (3) syntax, voice, and 'good' academic English; and (4) the impact of machine translation of HSS language work.

Because the ten survey questions were open-ended, respondents could be as detailed or as superficial in their responses as they liked. Some respondents were highly reflexive and offered examples, caveats, and if-then contingencies. The 52 respondents produced 18,788 words in response to the ten questions. The average total response length to all ten questions was approximately two paragraphs in length (364 words). Ten respondents produced more

than two manuscript pages (500 words) and seven produced less than the length of an average paragraph (100 words). The longest total response, from a translator-editor (case #48), was 1,416 words. The shortest response, from a translator (case #44), was 34 words, with four responses left blank (Q1 Specialization, Q2 HSS vs STEM, Q6 Concepts, Q8 Syntax). Copies of the datasets are available on request to the corresponding author.

Results and discussion

Insider specialization and author–LP dialogue

> The author may act as a useful partner in the translation process, answering the translator's and editor's queries, providing the originals of reference materials, etc. (Heim and Tymowski, 2006: 20)

While the *Guidelines* advise that commissioners of translations of published foreign-language social science works hire academic social scientists to do the translating, with the strong encouragement for them to undergo formal training in translation, in the practices surrounding ERPP, the respondents to our survey were most often hired directly by the EAL author at an earlier stage of drafting, well before submission to a publisher, and a few of them worked for university language services. These LPs generally had 'specialized training and/or experience in the social sciences' (13) and received ongoing training in translation and editing through language professional associations. Because the broad category of 'experience' covers many variables we did not probe (e.g., formal training, certification, and continuing professional development in translation and editing; academic degrees in a HSS or related disciplines; career trajectories across self- and in-house employment with publishers, journals, and academic authors; types of translation and editorial work engaged in), we concluded that the dataset was insufficient to correlate themes to years of experience.

We wanted to find out how far our respondents considered specialization a necessity or requirement for their task.

> Q1. Do you need to be an 'insider' to work on HSS academic texts? E.g. is the ideal a social scientist translating or a translator doing social science? How do you engage in 'deep hanging out' with your texts, e.g. reading widely in the field?

The respondents were split on the need to be an HSS insider. Of the 24 LPs who responded that they thought it 'useful' or 'better' to be an HSS insider, four stated that they had either completed higher degrees related to their specialist area or had practiced professionally in the areas they worked in. Of the 24 who thought that specialization in an HSS field was not necessary for working with HSS texts, 16 did, however, think that a 'general background in social sciences/humanities' (case #23), 'some knowledge about the field you're editing in' (case #34), overlap of 'your own background and experience (whether from study or work experience) [...] with the discipline of the text you're working on' (case #49), and familiarity with 'the terminology and jargon of the field' (case #14) were important. Others mentioned training and experience as a translator and editor and a good relationship with the client as important factors, as well as the ability to 'feel an instinctive inner shudder' (case #14) when detecting errors. Yet others commented that while LPs should not assume that their own knowledge will be sufficient, cross-disciplinary relations between training in HSS and language fields can broaden an LP's reach:

> My academic background is Modern Languages but I edit confidently in Philosophy, Politics, History. It's more about technical ability and an 'awareness of what you don't know' – i.e. an instinct about what you may need to check/research further […] That said, my language degree and MA included French Philosophy, Latin American Politics, for eg, so there is always a cross-disciplinary grounding. (case #8)

The respondents suggested multiple ways for non-specialized LPs to bridge knowledge gaps and deal competently with specialized texts. Nine specifically mentioned the requirement of 'research' as part of the task, with an emphasis on the need for good research skills: 'you can't know about everything anyway, so research is inevitable' (case #2). Thirteen respondents mentioned the usefulness of 'reading' in the field, but four stated that it was not part of their practice. Some also stated that LPs need to be 'well-read' (cases #4, #22) and willing to engage in 'wide reading around the text' (case #48). Four mentioned the need to 'learn' if you do not have a priori inside knowledge.

> [...] we who are occasional 'legitimate peripheral participants' (Lave and Wenger, 1991) are less well read than academic insiders in 'the' field of an author (the language provider is VERY rarely/never a true insider in EXACTLY 'the' field of an author), but we have to at least be comfortable with the manner of admirable discourse in that field and have read things we consider useful knowledge contributions in HSS. (case #48)

A translator-editor highlighted a possible advantage of not being an insider:

> It cuts both ways. […] Sometimes having an 'outsider's hat' on can be an advantage because you don't have so much understanding and are perhaps more likely to ask when the line of reasoning doesn't make sense. (case #30)

Some respondents championed the role of the LP, stating that they were primarily translators doing HSS translations rather than the other way around:

> I am definitely a translator doing social science, and this seems to suffice. (case #41)
>
> The ideal is a professional translator who specializes in particular HSS fields, has an academic background and understands how research is done, takes the time to learn about the terminology and writing style of the field, understands what constitutes good academic writing, and works closely with the author. (case #37)

I think you need to be a trained/experienced translator with attention to detail as well. (case #50)

It's useful to have a background in the field, but one's professional skills are the most important factor. A skilled translator can pick up enough of the jargon to be effective in short order, but a social scientist has to train from scratch to become an effective translator. (case #5)

While respondents highlighted the advantages of 'knowing your field' (case #40), having a 'social science background' (case #45), or 'having a PhD in a humanities field that serves me very well as background about the culture of academe and academic writing' (case #34), only two preferred the HSS specialist profile:

I think the ideal would be a scientist/academic trained in a particular niche field. (case #21)

The ideal is a professional translator who specializes in particular HSS fields, has an academic background and understands how research is done... takes the time to learn about the terminology and writing style of the field, understands what constitutes good academic writing, and works closely with the author. (case #37)

The expediency of a double specialization in HSS and language expertise was overtly stated in two responses:

A qualified translator who is also a qualified academic in an HSS subject, translating HSS academic texts. (case #7)

I think either of the situations you describe (social scientist translating or vice versa) is workable, as long as the social scientist has excellent translating skills and the translator, excellent research abilities. (case #5)

Because the *Guidelines* maintain that social science texts are 'sufficiently distinctive to warrant an approach to translation distinct from that used for natural science texts and

technical texts' (3), we wanted to gain insight into our respondents' perceived differences across research genres.

> Q2. If you work with both HSS and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) texts, what are the differences? Consider the role of voice, style, and concepts, level of intervention, skills, and time commitments.

Of the respondents to this question, 22 either stated specifically that they did not work with STEM texts, left the answer blank, or indicated not applicable. Five respondents stated that they worked with both HSS and STEM texts and 19 commented on both in the other areas of their answers. Two respondents stated that although they did not work with STEM texts, they dealt with the areas of technology and computer science in one case and health and medicine in the other.

Several respondents considered that the main difference between the text types is that HSS texts are less structured and 'wordier' than STEM texts, which they considered to be more direct and concise:

> The HSS texts are wordier and sometimes lack structure. (case #31)
>
> I find many HSS texts are needlessly wordy and complex. (case #28)
>
> In my experience scientific/technical texts are often shorter and focus is on stating facts. (case #41)
>
> H/M [health and medicine] authors write far more directly [...] whereas HSS authors tend to include a lot of redundancy and tend to be wordy. (case #47)

The respondents put the perceived greater clarity in STEM texts down to a number of factors: STEM texts were more 'technical', using more specific terminology and greater mono-referentiality; HSS texts lacked structure relative to STEM texts; and STEM authors were more confident in writing in English than HSS writers, who tend to work more in their

mother tongue. Two respondents specifically mentioned the lack of formulaic structures such as IMRAD in the production of HSS texts.

A number of respondents commented specifically on the differences between voice in STEM and HSS texts, stating that 'voice may be more important in SS texts' (case #46), 'there seems to be more room for the author's voice in HSS texts' (case #18), 'in Angloamerican HSS authorial voice is central' (case #50). One translator-editor noted that 'voice […] DOES exist in science (etc.) texts […] though inexperienced HSS-saturated readers don't always know how to detect it. […] You can see it in the most brilliant, daring scientists' writing' (case #48). An editor noted that in German texts a 'kind of bureaucratic expert voice' is 'promoted over individual authorial style' (case #50). This was borne out in the comments of a translator-editor on the continued attachment to the depersonalized voice within STEM, especially outside Anglophone discourse communities:

> Many of my STEM clients are resistant allowing their voice to come through or even have a style of their own. The texts are full of passive voice, nominalizations, a flat style that hews to an outdated template. Even if you show them that the Anglo model of STEM writing is actually rather varied and that a more active style is possible and often even preferred, they're not buying into it. (case #49)

This difference in awareness and use of voice across STEM and HSS genres may have to do with perceptions of the role of voice in signalling stance and authority. STEM authors' disavowal of personal voice and style in their writing echoes Price's (2008) reflection that 'technical language that aspires to be a universal terminology […] also seems to entail, or is at least strongly associated with, the scientist's self-willed alienation from the language in which she lives' (352). But if avoidance of voice by STEM authors can be both a 'powerful tool' (Elbow 2007: 12) and a 'tool of power' when building knowledge (DiGiacomo 2013: 112), HSS authors use voice as a way to write with 'rhetorical power' (Elbow 2007: 1) and

make their ‘subject position […] manifest in the text’ (DiGiacomo 2013: 110), as a different form of power.

While the *Guidelines* place social science texts somewhere in between STEM and literary texts, claiming that ‘social science texts do not as a rule depend for their meaning and impact on the manner of expression’ (4), some social science genres – notably anthropology, history, and sociology, but increasingly traditionally more quantitative disciplines such as geography, political science, and education – take a more literary and narrative approach that requires author and LP attention to how voice can both lead and mislead readers. The respondents commented on the need for sensitivity and negotiation with HSS authors when intervening in voice, since, as one editor put it, ‘some HSS writers can be resistant to suggestions that would subjectively improve their texts [...] as these would affect their personal style’ (case #5). This respondent postulated that STEM authors were more receptive to changes made to voice and style because of ‘the idea that significant editorial intervention can increase their chances of acceptance and making it through the peer review process more smoothly’ (case #5).

Regarding the different way respondents dealt with HSS versus STEM texts, while one stated that they would not feel ‘comfortable’ tackling HSS and STEM texts without training in both fields (case #29), they saw little difference in terms of intervention and time commitment. Three others also stated they saw no or little difference in the intervention of the translator or editor, which depends largely on the writing skills of the author (case #30), even where there are ‘all sorts of differences in terms of the text’ (case #7). Four respondents maintained that HSS texts require more time because they lack the conceptual and lexical clarity of STEM texts. Some respondents embraced the differences perceived, citing ‘more leeway for technical terms and long, complex sentences in STEM’ (case #12), and ‘[p]ossibly

I spend more time on some qualitative texts, because they allow more room to beautify the language' (case #19).

The question of contact between author and LP is dealt with very briefly in the *Guidelines,* where it can be summed up as being 'helpful' but potentially 'problematic' (7). Interestingly, one of the factors influencing possible contact as mentioned in the *Guidelines* is the author's personality. No mention is made of the LP's personality. To understand the extent to which LPs work in close relationship with the authors who hire them, the degree of autonomy with which they work, and the kinds of decisions they make on theoretical, conceptual, and argumentative issues in the text, we asked specifically about the nature of the author–LP relationship, aware that '[i]n any given structure, the actors will have agency, but this agency (or *habitus*) is structured by the context' (Kinnunen & Koskinen, 2010: 7–8), and here, by the relationship.

> Q3. Communication with the author: Do you regularly enter into dialogue with the author of HSS texts concerning concepts, theory and argument? How do you achieve this: in-person, video chat, telephone, email, comments in Word, other?

Forty-six LPs said that they had contact with the authors and only six that they did not (two of these were copyeditors), and one stated that they instead generated discussion in workshops with PhD students facing editing tasks for their own journal articles. Of those who responded positively, four stated that contact depends on the client-author. For those who expressed frequency of contact, the responses varied from 'not usually' (case #38) or 'not very often' (case #49) and 'only where absolutely necessary' (case #23) to 'regularly' (case #19) and 'always' (case #3), although the number of positive responses indicate that this is a common practice.

Contact with the author was mainly cited for the purpose of specific comments and queries involving, among other examples, syntax, use of gender, pronouns, inconsistencies,

conceptual words and terms. Others engaged in more general conversations about clarity of ideas and expression for readers, and some offered the author alternatives to changes they had made to the text. One translator wrote that 'this communication often consists of clarifying specific concepts, theories and terminology to make sure I've understood and conveyed them correctly' (case #43), and another that they 'regularly contact authors by email before delivering the text, in order to clarify formulations or to better understand concepts or reasonings' (case #19). But in most cases, respondents said they did not discuss concepts or theories with authors, for various reasons:

> I rarely touch on conceptual issues unless I spot something that is clearly problematic. (case #5)
>
> I am far more likely to discuss references or an individual word than the subject of the paper. (case #11)
>
> I don't discuss their concepts or theory with them as I am not an expert in their field. (case #18)
>
> I don't usually ask them about concepts or theories as I can research those myself if necessary. (case #24)

More than half those who contacted authors used email and comments included in the text, often in combination. Less frequent were telephone calls and personal meetings; video calls were cited by five respondents, one of whom indicated it as the only method used (case #52). Several respondents specifically indicated that they considered this dialogue with the author to be a positive, two-way process:

> […] authors work with me in detail on their texts, by email, back and forth. I like that process and find it interesting. Both sides learn from it. (case #24)
>
> When I deliver the document I invite the author in my email to contact me if they have queries and occasionally they do. (case #35)

> Primarily comments related to language but other issues often arise. (case #26)
>
> It's important to me to make it clear to authors that I won't always adopt their suggestions word for word, but that I will try to understand the reasons for their changes and deal with their concerns fully. (case #37)
>
> When editing and translating HSS texts with direct clients, I encourage a collaboration and ask more questions about what translation suits best. (case #50)

Foreignization versus domestication: terminology and concepts

> Social science discourse is also distinctive in that it communicates through concepts that are shared (or contested) within a specific community of scholars or groups […] Concepts tend to take the form of technical terms, which in turn tend to be culture-specific. Their specificity may be linked to the period in which they originate as much as to ethnic or ideological characteristics. (Heim and Tymowski, 2006: 4)

The *Guidelines* stress the need for authors and translators to reach an agreement on the extent to which the translated text should be adapted to the expectations of the target audience. To find out how this issue is handled among LPs hired during the drafting phase, we asked the respondents how far they went in foreignizing terminology and concepts. Because concepts are both central to HSS analysis and an area of translation and EAL writing where the balance between foreignization and domestication can go awry, we also probed LPs' handling of HSS conceptual false cognates or 'false friends'. We were particularly interested in the degree to which they conducted background research on these elements and collaborated with the author to clarify them. We asked the following questions:

> Q5. Foreignization vs domestication. When translating into or editing in English, do you leave anything in the author's source language? Are there 'foreign' aspects (concepts, style) that the readers in English have to know or learn?

Q6. Handling concepts: When working with HSS concepts in an author's text, do you regularly consult texts cited by the author? Do you consult other background literature (articles, books, online sources)?

Q7. Handling conceptual false cognates (terms that are very similar in two languages, but have different meanings in each): Do you encounter these regularly? What resources do you use to handle them? Dictionaries, thesauruses, corpora, term databases, in-text references, literature reviews?

Of the 52 respondents, 23 stated that they sometimes leave terms in a foreign language, eight that they often do so, and 11 that they never do so. Of those who left terms in a foreign language, several mentioned key concepts and theories that were developed in the source language, terms that were particular to a local situation or law, words related to politics, and names of institutions, schools, and social programmes. Four stated that the decision to translate or not depended on the target audience.

When discussing their handling of HSS concepts and conceptual false cognates, LPs frequently referred to issues of foreignization and domestication, taking special care in rendering them and making sure to highlight their provenance for the readership. Many LPs often left source-language words or phrases in the English text, turning them into 'loanwords' (Heim and Tymowski, 2006: 10–11) borrowed more or less whole from the source language in the hope that they could then circulate in English. Peppering English texts with conceptually complex but 'important' foreign words and 'untranslatable' concepts (case #16) and then providing a gloss was a common fix among the LPs. When respondents left words in the foreign language, unless the term was well known to scholars in the field, they gave an explanation in parentheses or in footnotes. One translator stated, 'I've occasionally added glossaries and other back matter clarifying some terms or choices, and in one or two cases I've written a substantial translator's foreword' (case #37). Glossing key, theoretically

nuanced, or untranslatable terms retains their complexity, something Poncharal (2007) describes as making the translator into a 'player in the intellectual debate' (104) and Price (2023) describes as offering 'a path to epistemological liberation' (160). One translator-editor noted that they might 'leave a concept in French, with an explanation, if no true equivalent exists in English' (case #3). An editor was more circumspect with regard to what kinds of foreign words could be left in the foreign language, giving proper nouns as examples:

> If there's a word that has no equivalent in English because the exact thing does not exist outside of its original context (e.g., a certain type of school or social program in some other country), then it would be appropriate to keep the original term and define it in English in parentheses. (case #38)

Notably, none of the LPs mentioned providing a literal translation into English of source-language conceptual terms, an approach the *Guidelines* refer to as 'loan translation' or 'calque', one of 'two time-honored approaches to devising equivalents for technical terms' (Heim and Tymowski, 2006: 10, 15–16). The respondents seemed to prefer either to find an accepted term in the relevant English discourse community or to leave the term untranslated. We surmise that this is due to a particular feature of the community of our respondents, whose work with EAL scholars seeking to publish their work in international journals is generally occluded and therefore not accounted for in the *Guidelines*.

Given that HSS analysis often discloses the deceptively familiar, everyday nature of social facts as covering up great complexity, one translator-editor pointed to the difficulty of capturing the nuanced polysemy of HSS concepts relative to STEM concepts as they travel across languages and cultures into academic English:

> H/M [health and medicine] is far easier, mainly because you can be quite sure that there is just one (or very few) equivalence(s) for a concept, whereas in HSS, a word may

look like an everyday language word but be really difficult to pin down in terms of meaning. (case #47)

The overwhelming majority of LPs stated that they consulted texts cited by the author and other background literature when working on HSS concepts. They mentioned a variety of sources, primarily those available online: journals, Google Books, Google Scholar, Wikipedia, online corpora, and reference texts. Six respondents, primarily those who answered the survey questions with one-word or brief statements ('no' or 'n/a') rather than detailed accounts of their editing or translating process, stated that they did not consult outside materials when working with HSS concepts. An editor cited author expertise and job scope: 'The author is the expert, so they should ensure concepts are accurate. That deep of concept checking is not in the scope of my projects' (case #6).

Several LPs described the need to bridge the gap between their own knowledge of conceptual terms and the author's, working in both directions. They consulted cited or background texts in an effort to align their knowledge with that of the author, clarify complex subjects necessary for the translation or editing, or verify the author's use of a concept if it appeared incorrect or unusual. A translator-editor described such research as a way to bring their 'level of knowledge closer to that of the author' (case #3). A translator conducted research 'to get a quick idea of their arguments for the purposes of clarifying something the author of the text I'm working on is trying to explain' (case #21). Translators and editors also mentioned cross-checking the author's usage of a concept when something is 'off' (case #16) or 'odd' (case #11), for suspected misquotation (case #38), or for 'presumably inadvertent' plagiarism (case #49). A translator-editor noted their cautious approach to HSS concepts:

I rarely touch on conceptual issues unless I spot something that is clearly problematic (e.g. incorrect or insensitive use of gender terms, pronouns). I usually flag such issues

immediately via email to resolve them before continuing with further revision. (case #5)

Research was especially useful in the case of ambiguity stemming from various sources: when a concept was ‘hard’ for the LP ‘to grasp’ (case #3), when it did ‘not map directly into English’ (case #41), or when the LP felt they had to clarify what an EAL author was ‘trying to say’ (case #19). One translator-editor expressed this ambiguity as intuiting that ‘there are other issues in play that I don’t fully understand’ (case #41). An editor noted the usefulness of background research for philosophical concepts that have their ‘roots and main development in a foreign language and culture’ (case #8).

Although we did not ask about author–LP dialogue in this context, many LPs mentioned their relationship with and loyalty to both authors and readers, lending credence to the assertion that ‘translations forge a relationship between translator and author, while also crafting a textual plane that will mediate future relations with readers’ (Savage, 2020). Some asked for author recommendations on ‘additional material’ (case #28) or on ‘what sources might contain relevant terminology or exemplify the desired style’ (case #37).

Time investment, which surfaced as a theme across several survey questions, was noted as a factor limiting LPs’ background research on concepts; accessing online sources quickly was preferable to looking up and reading texts cited in the manuscript: ‘It takes too much time’ (case #16). A translator-editor described project length and pay grade as determinate:

> For handling concepts – when translating a book project I expect to deal with these issues in the brief, or during the translation revision. Often for shorter texts I am not paid enough/do not have enough time to include getting onboard with and reading around the concepts in subdisciplines outside of my own. (case #50)

Because foreign concepts are for the most part well-tolerated by HSS discourse communities, the preference for foreignization over domestication of concepts shifted when

issues of argumentative style, syntax, or voice were at stake. One translator-editor noted that readers were generally more 'likely to accept the foreignness of a word/concept (and its reason for existence)' than they were willing to accommodate a writing style that is 'culturally specific', reasoning that readers would experience foreign styles as '"boring", "obscure", or "pretentious"' (case #2). Another translator-editor noted that the relative importance of foreign concepts sometimes dictates changes in syntax: 'I […] sometimes rearrange things to put the key concept in a prominent place' (case #51).

Foreignization versus domestication: syntax, voice, and 'good' academic English

> As a rule of thumb […] the translator should stretch the stylistic confines of the target language as far as they will go to reflect the peculiarities of the source language, and stop just before the result sounds outlandish in the target language. In other words, the translation needs to be comprehensible, but need not read as if it were written by a social scientist in the target culture. (Heim and Tymowski, 2006: 8)

The *Guidelines* stressed the interplay between syntactic style, intended message, and the shape of an HSS argument. Because HSS writing adopts a nominal syntactic style (Martin, 2003), it has often been criticized for being 'too' long, complex, convoluted, or difficult to read (Heim and Tymowski, 2006: 8). Working on the assumption that, when compared to other languages, English syntax tends to favour shorter sentences, translators 'may be moved to turn a complex, highly polyvalent French text, for example, into a text of short, pellucid sentences' (8). The *Guidelines* advise against such pursuit of brevity. Instead, they recommend careful attention to how the author's preferred syntactic style both 'bears a message' and 'unpack[s] an argument', e.g., inductive or deductive; empirical or speculative (8–9). The goal for the translator is then to strike a balance between allowing 'a note of "foreignness"' to enter the English translation and respecting the 'structure of the target language' (8). As Sally Burgess pointed out during the MET-HSS panel (Burgess et al.,

2019), this careful orchestration of authorial intentions and discourse community expectations into a recognizable authorial voice requires the conscious and collaborative use of 'the full gamut of choices' by all who intervene in the text: author, translator, editor(s) and peer reviewers. Because styles, rhetorical structure, and syntactic preferences change over time and with new historical impetuses, the *Guidelines* also exhorts translators to 'guard against linguistic and cultural anachronism' (10) and instead foster 'contributions from diverse linguistic and cultural communities' (13). If we are to take the *Guidelines* at their word, then the orchestration of these multiple voices, styles, syntaxes, rhetorics, and Englishes should carefully balance between cultural specificity and the presupposition of 'interactions between cultures' (4).

To understand how LPs navigate the competing questions of translingual syntax, authorial voice, and the constraints of being expected to impose English-language discourse and disciplinary genre standards, we asked three interlinked questions. The first question in this series (Q8) probed how often LPs shorten sentences or change syntax, what kinds of changes they make, and how they think about them. The second (Q9) gauged how much care LPs take when rendering HSS authors' voice when they work on a text, and how they make room for the author's linguistic choices. The final question (Q10) was unique in that it began with an assertion about the role EAL authors play in changing English-language academic writing practices. Our goal here was to probe LPs' openness to change in standards concerning what constitutes 'good' academic English.

> Q8. Level of intervention into syntax: Given the complexity of syntax used in HSS academic texts, does much of your translation or editing work involve shortening sentences or changing syntax? What kinds of changes do you make and what are your concerns when making them?

Q9. Whose voice? As a language professional, are you conscious of 'singing in tune with' the author, in other words, of not intervening too much or 'hijacking' their text? What do you think your authors want or expect you to do with their voice?

Q10. 'Good' academic English? Multilingual authors are changing English-language academic writing (citation practices, stance markers, rhetorical structure etc). Does this affect your notion of what 'good academic English' is or your role as a language professional?

Intriguingly, every LP who answered the question stated that their translation or editing work involved shortening sentences and changing syntax and that they took great care not to 'hijack' authors' voice, but less than half were open to EAL author influence on what constitutes 'good' academic English, exactly half were not open to EAL influence, and three gave no opinion. While some found it 'exciting to be around long enough to notice changes' in academic English and to not always 'correct with a knee-jerk reaction' (case #30), others felt that the 'often terrible prose' resulting from the publication of unedited 'non-native English' affects the field adversely by setting textual examples for others to follow (case #14). One translator-editor voiced the opposite worry about the impact of academic English 'on [Spanish] rhetorical style and the possible reality that we are converging someday to all languages being written like [English]' (case #47).

Because the authors' primary goal is to publish, some survey respondents expressed a clear loyalty to clarity of the message and textual fit with accepted genre and academic English conventions over retention of authorial voice. The translator-editor who noted in their response to our question about HSS specialization (Q1) that being an outsider can help LPs to react instinctively to certain expressions and put them into plain English also expressed a clear loyalty to textual clarity (message) over voice, even going so far as to place authorial voice at the service of clarity: 'I'm less interested in preserving the authors "voice" than I am

in making sure that the author's voice expresses clarity' (case #14). A translator who intervened in syntax for the purpose of clarity and flow had no qualms about the imposition of their 'own style, i.e., the style generally used in English in that field', and pointed to the metric of client satisfaction as a sign that the translator had 'captured their voice' (case #19). Notably, EAL influence on the standards of what counts as 'good' academic English did not 'influence' this translator because they applied their 'own set ideas about proper academic English' to all texts. Another translator who also valued clarity of the message over retention of voice reported spending 'a great deal of time reworking sentences completely' and only being concerned if the author 'lets me know if I've misunderstood something (which may have happened once or twice)' (case #21). An editor stated that they had 'zero concerns' about making changes to 'overlong sentences with Byzantine grammar' in the service of clarity, reminding us that if LPs don't intervene, the author 'runs the risk of not getting published, not getting tenure, not having a career' (case #34). Another translator-editor made the point that ensuring that a text is 'grammatically correct' is not enough to pass peer review; to be accepted, the argument needs to be made 'clearer' and the staging more 'fluid': the text must 'read more naturally (so it is closer to what an EN native speaker would have written)' (case #35).

Nevertheless, the LPs' primary interest of helping authors gain access to an audience via publication often competed with the impulse to not over-regulate or flatten the author's voice too much, creating real dilemmas for many of them. One translator-editor explained the predicament, noting that while changing syntax was their 'main job in editing', doing this in tune with the author was 'key', but that when it came to the question of what constitutes 'good' academic English, disciplinary genre conventions were often less flexible:

> I work almost entirely in history, where there are strong stylistic dictates coming from English. Authors often say to me 'But does it sound like something XX (venerated

> American academic) would have written?' This affects not only general rhetorical structure, but also the beauty and originality of style. […] At the same time, of course, there is a sense of wanting to defend the writing conventions the author grew up with – mainly to do with structure and level of explicitness. Added to the mix is a belief that writing perfect English is the mark of a good historian, thus a fear of losing face. This is a genuine dilemma. I am unhappy about homogenization, but on the other hand I don't want 'my' authors to be at a disadvantage. What to do?? (case #2)

Negotiations over textual ownership by the author, the LP, peer reviewers, the publisher, the reader, and the larger discourse community emerged strongly in the responses and extended to the author's ownership of the text, intended message, distinctive voice, and level of English. One editor noted that their main worry when intervening in EAL syntax was that they would go 'too far' and end up 'removing the foreign': 'I don't actually want to make the text feel as if it's written by an English mother-tongue person' (case #8). With too much imposition of genre and English-language conventions, the author can experience the edit as 'an erasure' and 'no longer their text'. Even in those cases where an author 'wants to be "hijacked" by their editor', striking the right balance between author, LP, and genre ownership of the text is achieved by using least-to-most intervention and changing syntax only in cases where 'meaning' would otherwise be lost, all 'in consultation with the author'. Despite deep intervention, another translator-editor saw voice as inviolable: 'I hope I never hijack a text, interventionist (with dialog) though I may sometimes be' (case #48).

The boundaries of textual ownership surfaced as a prominent theme in the responses of a translator who stated that, while their aim was 'to make my author sound like they know what they are talking about and can say it', they did 'not see it as my job to make the text my own. I'd never have written it in the first place. My own writing is a very different thing' (case #24). Textual ownership extended to ownership of the English language, with the

translator able to relativize their own preferences in deference to changes to academic English introduced by EAL authors and readers: ‘There are things that have become entirely acceptable in academic English that I personally don’t see as “proper English”, but if they are part of the discourse I use them’ (case #24).

One translator-editor who emphasized the need to intervene in syntax and voice such that the text reads ‘as if it had been written by a native speaker of English and to get the author’s message across’ in order to ‘get the article published’ nevertheless felt that retention of the author’s ownership of the text was prime:

> I think my authors want to feel it is still their article and so to recognise themselves in it, but for their message to come across more effectively than if the article hadn’t been edited. A feeling of ‘This is what I would have said if English had been my first language’. And that means it is publishable. (case #32)

For some LPs, producing a ‘clear and accurate text that effectively communicates the research message to journal editors, peer reviewers, and readers of all kinds’ (Matarese, 2016: xvii) is not the only way academics can gain access to a reading public. One translator-editor in both HSS and STEM, who also taught, instructed their students ‘not to muffle or distort author voice’ when intervening in HSS syntax and to use marginal comments rather than ‘drastic edits’ (case #31). For this LP, unlike researchers in the sciences whose texts are often co-authored and require interventions for clarity and precision over voice, authors in the humanities ‘are trying hard to create their own credible scholarly voices’. Another translator-editor noted that academic distinction involves being able to transgress and mould accepted genre norms.

> Sentences that don’t work get changed on second, third, and maybe more drafts of my translation or edit. By the time I’m in the later drafts and have engaged with the author as needed, I’m quite familiar with the author’s preferences and style, and some of that

> gets factored in. [...] Concerns? Clarity, readability, voice, genre appropriateness. The last is a default concern. But I've occasionally worked for a transgressive author and voice has trumped genre, to a certain degree. (case #48)

The importance this translator-editor attached to dialogue and familiarity with 'their' authors was striking throughout their responses, pointing up the primacy of loyalty to the authors' vision for the text even while working to help the author publish it. Their point about a 'transgressive' authorial voice trumping the 'default concern' of 'genre appropriateness'. raises the question of how authorial voice relates to authorial agency in the public sphere. LPs are attempting to help authors claim two things: 'the ability to establish narrative authority over [their] own circumstances and future, and, also, the ability to claim an audience' (Malkki, 1996: 393). To tell their research stories in novel and unique ways, their texts must be capable of cultivating an 'effective presence' (400, fn 22) in the space of English-language academic publishing. As Peter Elbow has observed, although texts are little more than 'silent semiotic signs', 'when humans read (and write) they usually infer a person behind the words and build some kind of relationship with that person' (Elbow, 2007: 10).

The unique style and voice of the author surfaced in other responses as well. One translator-editor was particularly interested in the problem of mapping foreign-language styles onto English style. For this LP, voice was whatever 'makes the author's style unique' and how that style 'functions in the text', meaning that, when authors with distinctive styles and voices 'write in unconventional ways', it is 'because their purposes are unconventional'. To do justice to the Belgian poet and literary scholar Geert Buelens' 'unconventional, lyrical narrative' prose […], a translator would need to find a 'novel style and form' that is 'at least as compelling in the translation as it is in the original' (case #37).

But the LPs clearly also discerned authors' different abilities and needs. When asked about voice, a translator-editor felt that author status and English skills determines the level

of intervention: ‘I do try to leave their voice, especially if they are an established academic. I worry less about this if it’s a PhD student with poor English’ (case #35). Another translator-editor emphasized the author’s grasp of English language and genre as a determining factor: ‘Again, this depends on the author’s skill in his genre in English. I intervene as much as I feel is necessary. My authors want me to take their texts to successful publication’ (case #46). Another translator-editor who regularly intervenes in syntax for reasons of ‘clarity and ease of reading’ for EAL readers noted that many academic authors ‘are not aware of their voice’ (case #30). As an LP who finds it ‘exciting to be around long enough to notice changes’ in English and who tries not always to ‘correct with a knee-jerk reaction’, this translator-editor was also sensitive to authors who have their ‘own style’ and distinctive ‘way with words’, or who ‘enjoy the art of writing’ (case #30). Yet another translator-editor described split loyalties to the reader in non-HSS texts and to the author and their voice in HSS texts, pointing to the level of writing ability – ‘crap’ versus ‘beautifully crafted text’ – as the litmus test for whether to intervene in or preserve the voice:

> I work in academia and for better or for worse it’s publish or perish, so that’s how I try and help authors. At one level, some texts are crap (or seem so to me, but??who am I to judge??), so it’s my job to make them less crap. And where does that leave the author’s voice? I have rarely felt I was translating beautifully crafted text, once in a blue moon yes, but so long ago I can’t remember, I only have the memory of it. […] In the end, I suppose I feel more loyalty to the reader than the author for RAs [research articles], but within RAs I am more aware of the author (and their voice) in HSS than I am in non-HSS texts. (case #47)

The impact of machine translation in the humanities and social sciences

> [T]he effort required on the part of the human practitioner to turn MT or even CAT [computer-aided translation] drafts into publishable translations can be as onerous as

> that required for the more traditional process. As a result, linguistically sophisticated texts meant to reach a large, discerning audience will for the foreseeable future continue to call for just the process set forth in these guidelines. (Heim and Tymowski, 2006: 25)

In 2006, well before the advent of the translation capacity based on billion- and trillion-word corpora or large language models we see being used today, the *Guidelines* maintained that whereas machine translation (MT) can be used to translate key words or search for raw material for summaries, human translators using the reflexive process they outline will remain unrivalled for 'linguistically sophisticated' social science texts (24). While the latest developments in machine translation and 'artificial intelligence' may offer EAL scholars an affordable alternative to paying translators or editors (Bowker and Buitrago, 2019), they are still far from being a complete solution for all EAL writers, who will often seek the services of authors' translators or editors. But more than this, the new forms of machine translation fail in the one area humans excel at and that academic writing requires: critical, creative thought. Susan DiGiacomo emphasized to MET members in 2018 that machine translation can never replace the uniquely human capacity for critical thought because there is 'no single right answer, but a whole range of better and not so good interpretations'. DiGiacomo thought that what HSS translators and editors might valuably talk about is 'how we tell those better solutions from the ones that are not so good' (Burgess et al., 2019). Our question about machine translation was therefore meant both to determine the extent to which machine translation is currently being used in the practice of HSS translation and editing and to elicit LPs' attitudes toward it.

> Q4. Impact of machine translation: Have you been asked to post-edit machine-translated texts for HSS academics? (machine translation is generated by e.g. Google

Translate or DeepL.) Do you or your authors use machine translation? If so, what do you do differently?

The responses show a generally negative attitude towards machine translation. Of the respondents, 10 answered that they had been asked to post-edit machine-translated texts, 40 answered that they had not, and the remaining two (editors) answered 'not applicable'. Five stated that they had worked on machine-translated texts. Many respondents stated that they would refuse to post-edit because it was more work than translating from scratch. Several respondents answered that it could work for the more controlled IMRAD texts, but not for HSS, in which 'presentation and authorial style/voice are key' (case #50).

Seven of the respondents stated that they used machine translation themselves when translating and a further seven that they did not. Those who used it stated that it was 'useful for finding technical words you don't know' (case #22), or that they used it 'as a dictionary' (case #37) or 'to get different options' (case #49).

A translator predicted that the influence of progressively sophisticated machine translation will eventually change translators' roles and bring the English used by EAL authors more in line with standard English:

> Language is organic but it will depend on what is considered acceptable by publishers in the future. Professional machine translation for academic texts is getting better all the time so this will inevitably change our role as more authors get access to it. In theory, this will also 'standardize' the English used by multilingual authors who will logically opt for machine translation rather than writing from scratch [in] a foreign language. (case #22)

It can therefore be concluded that the respondents did not consider machine translation suitable for producing translated texts, but some did include it among the

set of tools they used to produce a human translation. As the *Guidelines* point out, unedited machine translation is currently unable to produce texts of publishable quality. However, it may be a useful tool for helping EAL scholars to overcome the barriers to publication in a language that is not their own. Furthermore, as the above respondent states, this practice could have an effect of standardizing the syntax and style of work published by these scholars.

Conclusions

The purpose of our survey was to evaluate the continued relevance of the *Guidelines for the Translation of Social Science Texts* published in 2006 to the current practices of LPs working with EAL writers in HSS today. In conducting our survey, we aimed to mirror the self-reflexive approach to translation processes reflected in the *Guidelines* and extend its method to the practices of translators and editors working directly with EAL authors publishing internationally in English. Given the 'more occluded' (Burgess, 2022: 208) mediation of these texts by translators and editors working outside academia who are hired before submission to academic gatekeepers for review, we saw a need to better understand how these academic-adjacent LPs put the *Guidelines*' self-reflexive method into practice and whether the method needs updating. Though a few respondents gave only cursory answers, many, as we had hoped, used the survey as an opportunity for self-reflection, providing us with rich information on their practices.

One of the overarching trends we identified from the responses was the presence of the LPs' agency in their practice and their view of themselves not only as providers of a professional service in which they are the experts, i.e., language, but also as EAL author enablers in a process in which the ultimate goal is the publication of academic work in high-stakes English-language journals and books. While the *Guidelines*' overriding assumption is that translators come from agencies, our survey's respondents were self-employed and hired

directly by the authors, allowing them greater freedom in working directly with and for the authors. Most showed no hesitation in establishing communication with their authors, which was very much seen as a two-way process between equals.

With regard to specialization, the respondents were split as to the need for insider HSS specialization for the purpose of translation and editing, though the majority of those responding in the negative nevertheless recognized the need for familiarity and extra research. The respondents were proactive in carrying out the required research to fill knowledge gaps, using a variety of self-sourced resources, sometimes in collaboration with the 'expert' writer as necessary. Deferring to the author's specialization in content, many gave priority to language and communication skills over content.

Working to further the author's aspirations for their texts, the respondents emphasized clarity in conveying the intended message of the author, respect for the author's voice, and little desire to 'own' the text themselves. Many respondents indicated that style and voice were far more important in HSS texts than in STEM texts, though some argued that voice does also have its place in STEM texts by top-level scholars. With regard to foreignization versus domestication in translation and in works written in English by EAL scholars, foreignization was most often attained via the retention of source-text words or phrases in the interest of maintaining specific conceptual information, or in the addition of paratexts in the form of appositives, footnotes, or glossaries, described by Paloposki as 'the one spot in the translation that is clearly the translator's own voice' (2010: 87). With regard to syntax, a large majority of respondents were in favour of domestication for the sake of accepted academic genre and English-language norms, a choice that calls into question how much leeway authors and LPs have in changing the syntactic constraints of languages. While academic writing may be a 'complex open and emergent social system that can change' (Molinari, 2022: 49), the rules of nominal English style are much less malleable. This was

most clearly linked to LPs' perceived responsibility in ensuring a final text that is publishable. Intriguingly, many respondents reported that they attempted to respect the author's 'voice', a concept that remained undefined in both the survey and the responses. This almost sacrosanct area of translating and editing seemed to indicate at times issues of authorial message and content and at others issues of authorial identity and selfhood. Yet even here, LPs commented that some of their clients had insufficient command of academic English to achieve their own voice and might even desire greater intervention by their LP. A rare few worked with 'transgressive', high-level authors whose voice needed careful treatment when worked into the target text. While most LPs would not foreignize to the point of leaving a non-native syntax, a few reflected that they did not want the final text to read as though written by a native English speaker because it felt like an act of erasure. Indeed, under the pressure to help their client-authors get published, it seems that only few would adhere to the indications of the *Guidelines* to 'stretch the stylistic confines of the target language as far as they will go to reflect the peculiarities of the source language' (8).

The seeming incongruity between LPs' willingness to regularly change syntax and impose standards of 'good' academic English while working simultaneously to retain the author's unique voice may have several sources. The first possibility is that working LPs may decouple the question of finding an English syntax that best 'bears' the author's 'message' from the question of authorial voice. This is understandable in that only a prescriptivist reading of the *Guidelines*' assertion that 'syntax bears a message' (Heim and Tymowski, 2006: 8) or prevailing linguistic understandings of voice would view every change to a text as a change in voice. The second possibility is that LPs may have intuitive, untheorized, or very different ideas about what constructs voice in a text. The third possibility is that some of the texts LPs encounter are ones in which the author does not have full control over academic English grammar, syntax, and rhetorical structure and cannot therefore construct a

recognizable voice. A fourth possibility is that this discrepancy is an artefact of the online survey format: we did not ask respondents to reflect on these issues globally in relation to one another; respondents answered the questions sequentially (syntax, voice, 'good' academic English). Whatever the reasons and survey format limitations, considering LPs' responses to our questions on syntax, voice, and EAL author impact on ideas about what constitutes 'good' academic English together provides a window onto whether and how they think of these issues as related.

In the opinion of our respondents, despite recent advances, machine translation is still far from being able to produce a text of the quality required for publication. However, some respondents stated that they used it for terminology or to obtain different translation options. One particularly prescient LP opined in our 2020 survey that the exponential improvements to machine translation technology would one day lead to EAL authors opting for machine translation into English, a more realistic possibility today with the explosion in large language models.

Respondent divergence from the recommendations of the *Guidelines*, published 17 years ago, may have several explanations. The increasing awareness among LPs of how prestige Englishes marginalize 'their' EAL authors' voices may be one. The profile of our respondents, who were translators and editors directly hired by academic authors attempting to achieve publication in prestigious English-language international journals or with major English-language academic book publishers, turns them into mediators between 'their authors' and academic gatekeepers who have clear indications on what counts as 'good' academic style, voice, syntax, and English. This article is an invitation for deeper scholarly inquiry into the mediating role this occluded group of professionals plays in the HSS polysystem.

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