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Severity of Types of Violations of Research Ethics: Perception of Iranian Master's Students of Translation

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Abstract Violations of research ethics including a varieties of plagiarism by students in Iran is a concern which has lately called promising levels of attention as rules are updated and better enforced and more awareness is being raised. As to deal with any problem, a full understanding of its nature is necessary, the current study focused on how a sample of Iranian students construe this phenomenon. To collect the necessary data, an original questionnaire with 34 closed-ended items included the most common instances of violations of research ethics was designed. The items included were mainly varieties of plagiarism identified in the literature. The items were narrowed down with reference to the qualitative data from focus group interviews with a purposive sample of Iranian graduate students. In the main phase of the study, using the questionnaire, quantitative data were obtained from the responses of 274 graduate students of translation studying in various Iranian universities. The findings revealed the participants did not have a fully accurate perception and appreciation of research ethics violation as they failed to distinguish ethically acceptable from unethical conducts. The contributing sample showed indifference to most ethical issues in scholarly publication. Translating a text and presenting it as one's own in addition to text recycling were identified as the most severe instances perceived. The types, fraudulence, unacknowledged use, duplicate publication, misreferencing, excessive overuse were perceived the most severe to the least severe according to the sample. The typology and the findings on the severity of the types and instances were recommended to be used as an empirically supported guideline for curriculum design of academic writing courses in graduate programs in Iranian universities or similar contexts.

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Introduction

In the current Iranian educational setting, students' violations of research ethics—varieties of plagiarism most notably included—is a concern which has recently attracted promising levels of attention as regulations are updated by the Ministry of Science Research and Technology (2015) and are better enforced by universities and institution of higher education at a national level. Given the exceedingly fast growth of Iran in scientific output in the past few years, measured by the number of peer-reviewed publications internationally, and also in line with the increasing development of graduate educational programs in Iranian universities, to prepare the students as future scholars, more awareness on ethics of research publication especially on plagiarism is being raised.

Plagiarism is the most frequent and diverse category of academic dishonesty; it is commonly defined as stealing someone else's words, methods, works of art or ideas and passing them off as one's own, as "the moral obligation" (Roig 2006, p. 4) is to acknowledge the source when even ideas of others are benefited.

Academic dishonesty in the form of violations of research and publishing ethics has always been an issue internationally, and it has been on the rise since the advancement of technology and the subsequent further ready access to material and resources on the Internet (Devlin and Gray 2007; Hrasky and Kronenburg 2011; Park 2003; Scanlon and Neumann 2002). As Butler (2010) reports, using CrossCheck, a plagiarism detection tool, for only six months, a journal under the publication of *Taylor & Francis* rejected 23% of its accepted articles for the reason of plagiarized content. The increased violations of research ethics by students and even university lecturers (Honig and Bedi 2012) has led to researchers' attempts to understand the nature and causes within many disciplines and cultures (Ashworth et al. 1997; Maurer et al. 2006; Roig 2006; Khoshsaligheh et al. 2015).

To curb academic dishonesty, a clear picture of the issue of research ethics violations in the Iranian educational setting appears necessary for a number of reasons: a) the Iranian higher education, especially at master's and doctoral levels, is rapidly expanding, following from the symbolic and economical capitals, the graduates aspire to achieve, b) in pursuit of higher-order official, national visions, scholarly publications in recent years are strongly encouraged at state level, c) the average command of English is a challenging barrier for many students, graduates and early career scholars to publish internationally, d) limited employment opportunities for graduates of higher education has intensified scholarly publication competition to boost resumes.

As one of the main aspects to understand about any cultural phenomena is how it is perceived, the purpose of the current study was exploring the perception of a sample of Iranian graduate students regarding the most common violations of research ethics. Since a parsimonious classification of the wide variety of the instances would facilitate the description of the participants' description, the study sought to empirically categorize the most common instances of violations of research ethics into an original typology. Although other research has attempted to conceptually classify the instances (Wilhoit 1994; Brandt 2002; Howard 2002; Park 2003), the study assumes certain significance as no other research had categorized the instances into an unprecedented, empirically-supported typology.

Having focused on a selection of graduate students majoring in translation in Iranian universities, the study specifically was an attempt to address the following questions:

1. What is the typology of research ethics violations perceived by Iranian master's students of translation?
2. Do Iranian master's students of translation have an accurate understanding of research ethics violations?
3. What are the most severe types of research ethics violations perceived by Iranian master's students of translation?
4. What are the most severe instances of research ethics violations perceived by Iranian master's students of translation?

Based on the purpose of the research, a quantitative survey using an originally constructed and validated questionnaire was applied to address the research questions.

Literature Review

Why Research Ethics Violations?

The escalating problem of plagiarism challenges educators as to how to control this violation of ethics by students at higher education. In search of an effective plagiarism prevention policy, numerous scholars such as Sims (2002) have investigated the reasons for committing this academic misconduct by students. Aside from deliberate acts of plagiarism, much evidence indicates that there are many students whose academic dishonesty is a consequence of their lack of proper knowledge on what constitutes plagiarism (Deckert 1993; Gullifer and Tyson 2010; Rezanejad and Rezaei 2013, among others.).

In Iran, several studies have investigated the reasons behind students' academic dishonesty. Zamani et al. (2013) reveal that "degree-oriented" atmosphere of some Iranian universities (p. 103) is a significant factor. Classifying the reasons into individual-related and context-related, Jafari Sani and Ferasat (2013) point to learner's laziness, permissibility of plagiarism from learners' viewpoint and better grades as the individual factors, in addition to lecturers' high expectations, time pressure to deliver assignments, lecturers' indifference and students' poor knowledge of referencing as the contextual factors (p. 3). Ojaqi et al. (2012) discuss internal and external motivations: internal motivations include training and cultural categories while external motivations include educational, social, and economic causes (p. 1070). Rezanejad and Rezaei (2013) state that students of language and linguistics students believe that the ease of plagiarism and lack of a good command of foreign language are two top reasons for plagiarizing (p. 289). Riasati and Rahimi's (2013) qualitative study refers to the lack of knowledge of plagiarism, inadequate research skills, and language incompetence as the pivotal reasons. Another qualitative study concludes that lecturers' indifference to detecting plagiarism by students and students' poor writing ability are the main reasons of plagiarism among English translation students (Amiri and Razmjoo 2016).

Numerous non-Iranian studies have also investigated the reasons for plagiarism as a case of academic dishonesty. A common explanation for this unethical misconduct is inadequate knowledge of the concept. Park (2003) discusses nine reasons for plagiarism, the first of which is the lack of proper understanding of what constitutes plagiarism. Similarly, Kokkinaki

et al. (2015) reveal that there is a lack of accurate understanding of what plagiarism is among Cypriot graduate and undergraduate students. Nevertheless, there are several other reasons why students plagiarize deliberately.

Devlin and Gray (2007) study the reasons for plagiarism among Australian students. They report eight reasons including inadequate admission criteria, poor understanding of plagiarism, poor academic skills, teaching/learning issues, laziness/convenience, pride in plagiarizing, pressures, and education costs (p. 186). Bamford and Sergiou (2005) state that the most frequent reason, admitted by the international students who study in the UK, is time pressure.

A Spanish study by Comas-Forgas and Sureda-Negre (2010, p. 230) suggests the following as the main causes leading to plagiarism: a) aspect and behavior of students (e.g., bad time management, personal shortcomings when preparing assignments, the elevated number of assignments to be handed in); b) the opportunities provided by information and communication to locate copy and paste information; c) aspects related to professors and the characteristics of courses (e.g., lecturers who show no interest in their work, eminently theoretical subjects and assignments). Based on their findings, they suggest a series of guidelines both for university teachers and students to avoid plagiarism.

In another study in Australia, Goh (2015, p. 83) points out six key reasons for plagiarism: a) poor time management; b) fear of failure; c) improving grades; d) personal/family problems; e) poor level of English proficiency; and f) uncertainty about referencing and plagiarism policy. The results of that study indicate a significant difference between the attitude of fresher and senior students toward plagiarism. The findings of Trasberg and Ligi (2014) show that students' uncertainty about regulations of academic dishonesty and "their individual reasons such as not being able to memorize the necessary amount of material" are the main reasons of academic fraud (p. 1). Regarding students' views on causes of plagiarism, Doró (2014) reports that the majority of the students admit "saving time and effort and unintentional plagiarism" as a motivating reason (p. 261).

Knowledge and Perception of Research Ethics

Numerous studies have investigated students' perception of plagiarism as a frequent type of academic dishonesty. In a focus group study, Gullifer and Tyson (2010) report six themes characterizing the participants' perception of plagiarism, the most severe of which is uncertainty and confusion about the definition of the act (p. 469). Similarly, in a survey study in Iran, Rezanejad and Rezaei (2013) conclude that Iranian students have an inaccurate perception of the concept, and they need to be further familiarized with less common types. With respect to students' attitudes towards plagiarism, Ashworth et al. (1997) state that students' understanding of cheating and plagiarism is different from that of university authorities, and that the participants do not have a clear perception of the acts constituting plagiarism. They also do not perceive the punishments to match the supposedly unethical act. Deckert (1993) reveals that Chinese students perceive plagiarism as a wrongdoing mostly because they think it would hinder their learning process. However, interestingly, Adam et al. (2016, p. 14) recommend that, in order to improve students' writing competencies, teachers may take advantage of plagiarism "to work with the student to enable them to learn how to take their patch-written text and re-work it into original, correctly cited text".

Zamani et al. (2012) investigate plagiarism in relation to educational background, revealing that students of the humanities have more knowledge of plagiarism compared to the students of sciences and engineering. An American study by Wei et al. (2014), p. 293) investigates

university students' perception of academic cheating which finds five themes through a thematic analysis of the data: "a) cheating has flexible definitions; b) cheating is influenced by the environment; c) cheating can be justified by ambiguous means; and d) cheating comes from conscious decisions." Another study by Löfström and Kupila (2013) investigates and compares the attitudes of university teachers and students towards plagiarism, they find three factors as "intentional, contextual, and unintentional" plagiarism (p. 236). They observe that out of 104 university students, 76% think plagiarism is very uncommon; 21% do not have information concerning the issue, and 3% believe plagiarism is very common. Out of 30 university teachers, 77% believe plagiarism is quite uncommon, and 23% think that plagiarism is quite common. However, Wilkinson (2009) finds that the minority of both staff and students believe that cheating in assignment tasks is ordinarily common. Marshall and Garry (2006) investigate the differences between non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) and English speaking background (ESB) students in terms of their perception of plagiarism. They find that in contrast to 83% of NESB students, 65% of ESB students have been involved in serious forms of plagiarism.

In another study, Sarlauskiene and Stabingis (2014) explore the understanding of plagiarism concept among 119 Lithuanian undergraduate and MA students, and find that the majority of students do not describe plagiarism in clear and accurate ways. Moreover, having analyzed the students' views on different types of plagiarism, they find that students confuse the concepts of correct quotation, paraphrasing and plagiarism. The authors suggest that "in order to properly describe plagiarism, it is important to define all types of plagiarism […] to provide explanation of them using practical examples" (p. 646). Additionally, they find that the majority of students have negative attitudes towards the appropriateness of punishment. For example, only 32% of students mention that word for word plagiarism with no quotations deserves punishment. However, Juyal et al. (2015) recommend that "we need to strengthen our ability to detect such acts and effectively prosecute and punish the offenders. Punitive punishments alone have not helped, so corrective steps to check plagiarism are needed" (p. 80). In line with Sarlauskiene and Stabingis's (2014) study, Ibegbulam and Eze (2015) conduct a research to explore the first-year Nigerian students' knowledge and perception of plagiarism. They find that there is a significant difference between the students' knowledge of plagiarism before and after teaching the instances and types, that is to say that the Nigerian students are not familiar with the concept of plagiarism before they enter university. Therefore, they suggest that academic administrators and policymakers should give emphasis and caution on "academic integrity policies […] to lessen the extent and impact of plagiarism" (p. 126). A recent Chinese-Australian study by Ehrich et al. (2016) compares 131 Australian and 173 Chinese university students' attitudes toward plagiarism, revealing that Australian and Chinese university students similarly express "strong attitudes" against plagiarism (p. 13).

Method

The main purpose of the present study was to investigate the perception and awareness of Iranian master's students of translation about the varieties of research ethics violations specially plagiarism. For the lack of an available data collection instrument, a questionnaire in Persian was originally designed, validated and applied.

As for the sample, over 350 final year master's students of translation, studying in Iranian universities, were invited to participate on a voluntary basis. Eventually, 274 master's female and male students (60.6%, 39.4%, respectively) in English Translation (approximately %70),

French Translation and Arabic Translation agreed to contribute and participated in the study by responding to the questionnaire items. Master's programs in translation in Iranian universities are mixed-mode programs in which students take 28 to 34 units of coursework in the first three terms which is followed by a thesis project taking one to three terms. Every undergraduate or master's translation program involves Persian language and a foreign language such as English, French, Arabic or German language. The aim of all these programs is set both to improve the competence of the graduates to research translation and to translate to and from Persian. The participants were selected from nine universities from all corners of Iran.

To design the instrument, through a review of the literature including recent empirical studies both in international and Iranian context as well as seminal texts on research ethics, various possible instances of plagiarism and other examples of academic dishonesty were collected to create a pool from which the items of the questionnaire could be selected. To identify the common items in the Iranian context and help decide which items to include, in an initial qualitative phase, two focus group interviews were run using 16 male and female Iranian master's students of English Translation at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. In the end, two non-plagiarism items were also included in the questionnaire to investigate if the participants could distinguish instances of unethical from ethical and completely acceptable behavior in research publication.

To establish content validity, the first draft of the questionnaire items was subjected to the revision and comments of a few scholars. According to their recommendations, a number of items were excluded or reworded to avoid overlaps, ambiguity and irrelevance. To achieve face validity, a few participants were asked to review the items, and their comprehension of each item was sought to ensure appropriate readability and clarity, and accordingly some items were revised. Next, a five-point rating scale [0 (acceptable), 1 (fairly severe violation), 2 (moderately severe violation), 3 (severe violation), and 4 (very severe violation)] was added. In the main phase, using the originally designed closed-ended questionnaire, quantitative data were collected and analyzed.

To analyze the data to address the four research questions, IBM SPSS was used to run exploratory factor analysis (EFA), scale reliability analysis, one-sample *t*-test, repeated measures *t*-test, independent samples *t*-test, repeated measures ANOVA and descriptive statistics.

Results

Typology

Initially, to address the first research question and to establish the validity and reliability of the results of the self-designed instrument, exploratory factor analysis and scale reliability analysis were run as in the following.

The data set was collected using the self-designed questionnaire. For the purpose of assessment of the accurate understanding of the participants of the concept of research ethics violation, two of the items, N3 and N5, were intentionally included in the questionnaire even though they did not reflect an instance of academic dishonesty (additionally they were recommended to be removed in the content validity stage); therefore, the responses to only 32 of the items were considered for the main analysis.

With regard to the appropriateness of the collected data for exploratory factor analysis, the results indicated that the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .82,

which was completely optimal (Kaiser 1974) and the Bartlett's Test was completely significant ($p < .05$). They both proved that the 32-variable dataset used was appropriate for an exploratory factor analysis in search of underlying constructs and establishing construct validity.

A number of criteria were considered on factoring. Based on Kaiser's criterion, a factor solution of nine was recommended as there were nine factors with an eigenvalue of equal or larger than 1, explaining a total of approximately 58.9% of the variance in the dataset. Nevertheless, it has been criticized that Kaiser's criterion sometimes points to too many factors (Pallant 2016). Suggesting to retain all factors on the plot up to the point where the line starts to straighten, Catell's scree test (Cattell 1966) seemed to indicate to up to six factors to retain as there were more than one noticeable inflexion. Indicating that there still does not exist an ultimate objective criterion for determining the exact number to retain, Hair et al. (2010) for such exploratory research, recommend extracting several factor solutions based on the available evidence and determining which can offer the most conceptually justified structure of factors. After careful evaluation of several structures with four, five and six factors, a five-factor solution was decided the most conceptually meaningful alternative. The final solution was achieved after a number of variables, which did not load significantly on one factor or cross-loaded almost equally on more than one factor, were excluded. Having removed N11, N17, and N22, the remaining 29 variables were categorized to 5 factors (see Table 1).

After the latent constructs of the data set were specified, hence the factors, scale reliability analysis was run to measure and establish the internal consistency of each category of variables. As can be seen in Table 1, the values of Cronbach's Alpha for the factors were .80, .77, .70, .71, and .62, respectively. The results showed that the data enjoyed excellent internal consistency and were reliable. Typically, a value of approximately .7 was an indication of acceptable reliability (Pallant 2016). However, as seminal research literature explains (Field 2009; Hair et al. 2010), in case of unprecedented categorization in exploratory research in humanities where constructs are more elusive and abstract, a value of .62 especially for a factor with few number of variables is quite adequately acceptable.

As can be seen in Table 1, for the ease of discussion, each factor was labeled by considering the highest loading variables on the factor as well as the shared theme in common among all

Table 1 Final factor solution and loading values

Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3		Factor 4		Factor 5	
Unacknowledged Use of Others' Work		Excessive Overuse		Misreferencing		Fraudulence		Duplicate Publication	
Item	Factor Loading	Item	Factor Loading	Item	Factor Loading	Item	Factor Loading	Item	Factor Loading
N15	.69	N29	.75	N07	.56	N31	.66	N18	.67
N09	.65	N32	.72	N01	.54	N28	.62	N19	.64
N14	.63	N30	.68	N04	.54	N23	.60	N20	.44
N16	.59	N33	.59	N26	.51	N24	.57		
N06	.54	N34	.50	N25	.43	N02	.49		
N12	.52	N21	.46						
N10	.51	N27	.44						
N08	.44								
N13	.41								
Cronbach's Alpha: .80		Cronbach's Alpha: .77		Cronbach's Alpha: .70		Cronbach's Alpha: .71		Cronbach's Alpha: .62	

the corresponding variables (Field 2009; Hair et al. 2010). The first and largest factor, explaining a total variance of 12.16%, was labeled *Unacknowledged Use of Others' Work*. The category was represented by nine variables including: N15 mosaic, N9 taking over others' methods without acknowledgment, N14 copying a portion of a text without acknowledgment, N16 changing the meaning of the source, N6 using others' artworks without acknowledgment, N12 using others' ideas orally without acknowledgment, N10 using others' words in writing without citation, N8 taking portions of others' ideas without citation, N13 taking verbatim phrases from other sources with citation but without double quotation marks. The second largest factor, explaining a total variance of 10.60%, was labeled *Excessive Overuse*. The category was represented by seven variables including: N29 too much use of a single source, N32 too much use of direct quotations, N30 citing sources which were not studied, N33 mixing published data with new ones in a new study, N34 using translation of a piece with citation but without double quotation marks, N21 delivering one paper to two professors, N27 citing author's name for a few sections. The third factor, explaining a total variance of 8.57%, was labeled as *Misreferencing*. The category was represented by five variables including: N7 using others' ideas which were discussed in casual conversations without citation, N1 using others' ideas without citation, N4 misuse of quotation marks, N26 not citing the source author while in doubt, N25 changing the words or punctuation of the source. The fourth factor, explaining a total variance of 8.45%, was labeled as *Fraudulence*; N31 not citing co-researchers' names, N28 citing a source which does not exist, N23 translating a text and presenting it as one's own, N24 presenting portions of others' results as one's own, N2 text recycling. The fifth and final factor, explaining a total variance of 6.19%, was labeled *Duplicate Publication*. The category was represented by three variables including: N18 double publication of a paper, N19 reusing ideas previously published in new publication, N20 publishing a bigger study for a second time as new yet smaller publication.

Thus, the results of the data analysis using EFA and scale reliability showed that the findings using the data from the designed instrument enjoyed internal consistency and construct validity.

Accuracy of Perception

To address the second research question, the descriptive statistical information regarding two of the questionnaire items, which were not actually instances of academic dishonesty, was retrieved. The two ethically acceptable items related to referring to common knowledge without citing a source (N3) and publishing a conference presentation which has been orally presented (N5) had been included in the questionnaire to investigate if the participants could accurately tell the difference between an instance of ethical activity and a violation of research ethics.

As can be seen in Table 2, neither of the items received a mean score of 0, which means that the participants on average recognized both these acceptable activities as violations of research ethics at some levels of severity. N3 'Not citing common knowledge of a given field' with a mean score of 1.60 was understood somewhere between options 1 'fairly severe violation' and 2 'moderately severe violation'. N5 'Publishing a research which was presented as a conference paper' with a mean score of 2.70 was perceived somewhere between options 2 'moderately severe violation' and 3 'severe violation'.

To test if the descriptive results on the inaccuracy of the perception of the participants were statistically significant, one-sample *t*-test was used. The results revealed significant difference ($p < .05$) between both the mean scores of N3 and N5 with the value 0 indicating 'acceptable'

Table 2 Descriptive information of N3 and N5

Frequency Information		N3		N5	
Questionnaire Scale Options		%	Cumulative %	%	Cumulative %
Valid	0 = acceptable	26.3	26.6	7.7	7.8
	1 = fairly severe violation	23.7	50.6	12.8	20.8
	2 = moderately severe violation	20.4	71.2	17.5	38.7
	3 = severely violation	19.3	90.8	24.5	63.6
	4 = very severe violation	9.1	100.0	35.8	100.0
	Total	98.9		98.2	
M		1.60		2.69	
SD		1.31		1.29	

and 4 indicating 'very severe violation' – representing the participants' perception of 'Not citing common knowledge of a given field' and 'Publishing a research which was presented as a conference paper'.

Additionally, to examine the within-individual differences in how the participants perceived the two instances, repeated measures *t*-test was conducted. The perception of the participants for 'Not citing common knowledge of a given field' ($M = 1.60$, $SD = 1.31$) was significantly different $t(265) = -9.75$, $p < .05$ from that of 'Publishing a research which was presented as a conference paper' ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.29$).

Obviously and as the literature on research and publication ethics indicates, both of the above instances are ethical and clearly not a case of academic dishonesty. The average response of the participants certainly demonstrated that the Iranian graduate students of translation were not accurately familiar with research ethics, and they did not have a distinctive understanding of what is a violation of research ethics and what is not.

To go further in details, as for N3, out of the 271 valid responses, only 26.6% of the participants believed that not citing common knowledge of a given field is not unethical and not an instance of plagiarism. The remaining 73.4% of the participants believed that it was an unethical act on different levels of importance. Similarly, as for N5, out of the 269 valid responses, only 21 participants indicated (7.8%) that publishing a research which was presented as a conference paper was not unethical and not an instance of plagiarism. The remaining 92.2% of the participants believed that it was an unethical act on different levels of severity (see Table 3).

Severity of Types

To answer the third question regarding the most severe types of violations of research ethics from the viewpoint of Iranian graduate students of translation, the descriptive statistics of the

Table 3 Ranking of the types according to the participants' perceptions

Type	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Type 4: Fraudulence	274	2.91	.90
Type 1: Unacknowledged Use of Others' Work	274	2.54	.75
Type 5: Duplicate Publication	274	2.52	.89
Type 3: Misreferencing	274	2.09	.76
Type 2: Excessive Overuse	274	2.01	.85

five factors (i.e., categories or types) showed the highest mean rating of the participants (n = 274) for the type of Fraudulence (M = 2.91, SD = .90) including instances such as N31 'not citing co-researchers' names', N28 'citing a source which does not exist', N23 'translating a text and presenting it as one's own', N24 'presenting portions of others' results as one's own', and N2 'text recycling i.e. publishing the same research by reformatting, restructuring and presenting it as a new one' (see Table 3).

To test if the participants' perception mean scores significantly differed between the five types of violations of ethics, repeated measures ANOVA was employed. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi 2(9) = 59.72$, $p < .05$; therefore, Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used and multivariate tests were reported ($\varepsilon = 0.91$).

The results of ANOVA show that the perception of the participants were significantly different about the types of violations of ethics, $F(3.65, 992.19) = 84.852$, $p < .05$; also the effect size was very large (partial eta squared =0.55). Following the establishment of significant differences between the mean score of the participants about the five types, the post hoc tests, using Bonferroni adjustment for multiple comparisons, showed that there were significant differences ($p < .05$) between all the types except type 1 vs. 5 and 2 vs. 3.

According to the participants (n = 274), the two categories of Unacknowledged Use of Others' Work (M = 2.54, SD = .75) and Duplicate Publication (M = 2.52, SD = .89) with almost the same mean scores were recognized on the second most severe level of violations of research ethics. Unacknowledged Use of Others' Work included instances such as N15 mosaic, N9 taking over other methods without acknowledgment, N14 copying a portion of a text without acknowledgment, N16 changing the meaning of the source, N6 using others' artworks without acknowledgment, 12 using others' ideas orally without acknowledgment, N10 using others' words in writing without citation, N8 taking portions of others' ideas without citation, N13 taking verbatim phrases from other sources with citation but without double quotation marks. The next category on the second level of importance was Duplicate Publication including N18 double publication of a paper, N19 reusing ideas previously published in new publication and N20 publishing a bigger study for a second time as new yet smaller publication (see Table 3).

As can be seen in Table 3, the lowest ratings were given by the participants to the categories of Misreferencing (M = 2.09, SD = .76) and Excessive Overuse (M = 2.01, SD = .85) with very close mean ratings representing 'Moderately severe'. Misreferencing type included instances such as N7 using others' ideas which were discussed in casual conversations without citation, N1 using others' ideas without citation, N4 misuse of quotation marks, N26 not citing the source author while in doubt, N25 changing the words or punctuation of the source. The participants recognized Excessive Overuse type as the least serious plagiarism category to include N29 too much use of a single source, N32 too much use of direct quotations, N30 citing sources which were not studied, N33 mixing published data with new ones in a new study, N34 using translation of a piece with citation but without double quotation marks, N21 delivering one paper to two professors, N27 citing author's name only for a few sections.

Severity of Instances

To answer the fourth question regarding the most severe instances of violations of research ethics from the viewpoint of Iranian graduate students of translation, by using the descriptive statistics of each variable, the mean ratings of the items were retrieved and the items were

listed in a descending order. Table 4 shows the highest rated items as the most serious plagiarizing acts. The list enumerates N23 translating a text and presenting it as one's own, N2 text recycling, N6 using others' artworks without acknowledgment, N14 copying a portion of a text without acknowledgment, N1 using others' ideas without citation, N31 not citing co-researchers' names, N24 presenting portions of others' results as one's own, N9 taking over others' methods without acknowledgment, N18 double publication, N28 citing a source which does not exist and N10 using others' words without citation.

Additionally, Table 4 shows the lowest rated items as the least severe unethical acts. The list enumerates N07 casual interactions, N32 too much use of quotations, N21 delivering one paper to two professors, N11 resenting a previously stated idea, N34 using translation of a piece without quotation marks, N04 misuse of quotation marks, N13 taking verbatim phrases without quotation marks, N12 using other's ideas orally without acknowledgment, N29 too much use of a single source, N26 not citing the source author while in doubt, N30 citing sources which were not studied and N25 changing the words or punctuation of the source.

Discussion

Given the little empirical evidence on academic dishonesty in Iranian context, this study explored the perception of Iranian MA students of translation of the severity of different types and instances of violations of research ethics. Similar to some other studies across the world (Park 2003; Devlin and Gray 2007; Goh 2015), generally, the results indicate that the students' understanding of the notion of academic dishonesty is not quite accurate, as they believe, for instance, it is imperative to cite a reference even for common knowledge. Likewise, they incorrectly believe that publishing a paper simply presented in a conference is unethical. The participants seem not to have fully realized the notion of plagiarism and especially for what this concept does not stand. On the other hand, the participants consider some of the obvious instances of plagiarism as fairly or moderately severe, such as taking verbatim phrases without quotation marks. Moreover, no single item receives a rating score even remotely close to the fifth option (very severe) as an acknowledgement of the complete seriousness of that item. The highest rated items including translating a text and presenting it as one's own, text recycling,

Table 4 Ranking of the instances according to the participants' perceptions

Most Severe				Least Severe			
Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*	Item	*n*	*M*	*SD*
N23	273	3.10	1.08	N07	268	1.50	1.28
N02	271	3.08	1.01	N32	271	1.61	1.32
N06	266	2.97	1.13	N21	270	1.68	1.40
N14	274	2.90	1.07	N11	270	1.83	1.30
N01	273	2.89	1.15	N34	272	1.86	1.34
N31	270	2.86	1.15	N04	270	1.90	1.26
N24	272	2.83	2.18	N13	273	1.91	1.35
N09	267	2.80	1.13	N12	270	1.94	1.23
N18	273	2.73	1.23	N29	270	2.01	1.31
N28	269	2.72	1.37	N26	271	2.04	1.16
N10	271	2.70	1.29	N30	264	2.04	1.40
				N25	269	2.09	1.28

and using others' artwork without acknowledgment are barely marked just above 'severe' while nothing is rated as 'very severe'.

According to the analysis of the responses, violations of ethics in Iranian context is categorized into five major themes: no acknowledgement, excessive overuse, misreferencing, fraudulence, and duplicate publication. It is revealed that the most severe type of violations of ethics from the viewpoint of the participants is the category involving a certain kind of fraudulence such as not acknowledging other contributing authors or dishonesty regarding the originality and novelty of the content used. The second most severe type of academic dishonesty is the lack of or improper crediting of other unique methods, artwork, or ideas without proper citation. The next most severe category concerns duplicate publication and taking double credit for a single research. The results indicate that while some types of academic dishonesty are clearly recognized as plagiarizing acts and unethical, they are not given the reasonable level of Severity. In other words, the Iranian MA students of translation do not recognize such types of violations as serious breaches of academic ethics. The two lowest rated categories are misreferencing category, including instances of inaccurate use of quotation marks and excessive overuse involving too much use of a single source, too many direct quotations, or citing an author too frequently.

Some of the results vividly contradict common sense. For instance, while "nothing is worse, especially in research, than misquoting, misreferencing, or failing to give proper credit" (Wood and Ross-Kerr 2006, p. 292), the entire category of misreferencing, including cases such as inaccurate use of quotation marks, or words or punctuation of the source material is rated as the least serious type of violation of ethics. This perception and also the reason behind the act of misreferencing could perhaps follow from and reflect a deeper problem as "many of the references cited in scientific papers have not been read by the authors citing them" (Ball 2002, p. 594). Citing sources which were not studied is similarly one of the lowest rated instances by the students.

Incorrect use of quotation marks and incorrect referencing as well as changing the words or punctuation of the original are the lowest rated types. Such results and the actions which most likely follow from that perception support why Moore (2014) proposes a research focus on the accuracy of referencing besides the perceptions, attitudes and reasons behind committing plagiarism.

While one should feel "ethically obligated" to acknowledge the source (Roig 2006, p. 5) when the source ideas are obtained through personal interactions, the item using ideas obtained through personal interactions with people not necessarily involved in scholarly research is the lowest rated item and almost considered not as violations of ethics.

Over 70% of the participants believe that it is necessary to cite a reference for using common knowledge in a given field. This misconception is in line with a study by Whitaker (1993), concluding that the majority of the students confused common knowledge and plagiarism. Moreover, not mentioning the author's name when one is in doubt whether a concept is common knowledge or not is one of the least severe items for the participants, which is known as one of the typical yet unintentional kinds of plagiarism (Park 2003). Such confusion has raised the following question: what should be actually taken as common knowledge (DeVoss and Rosati 2002), if common knowledge is locale-bound, and if it may be justified on the basis of an individual understanding (Chandrasoma et al. 2004).

Even though students often confuse "the boundaries between quotation, paraphrasing and plagiarism" (Pittam et al. 2009, p. 157), the results of the study indicate that the participants

assume that word for word use of source material without quotation marks is a severe instance of violation of research ethics.

Translating a text and presenting it as one's own is the highest rated and most serious instance of violations of ethics according to the participants. Despite the obvious severity of such an unethical act, such high score can be justified by the fact that the participants as students of translation can appreciate this instance on a different and more personal level. They appear to recognize that a translation, regardless of the language and other surface level changes, loyally reflects the content of the original source, thus, the same text. On the other hand, another translation-related instance of plagiarism, presenting translation of a part of a work with citation but without enclosing it within quotation marks is considered as one of the lowest rated instances. The significant difference between the ratings seems to indicate that the students perceive translation as rewriting, recreation of a new text rather than an equivalent rendition in a new language (Lefevere 1992) and as such a kind of paraphrasing and consequently believe that their own translation—recreating the same content in a new body—with citation is enough and double quotation marks as indicative of exactness of the wording are unnecessary.

The second most severe instance of academic dishonesty is republication of a paper, using the previously published data with minor modifications in the report structure. This instance is typically referred to as one of the prevalent forms of self-plagiarism (Roig 2005; Bretag and Mahmud 2009). Another kind of self-plagiarism that is the re-publication of a study without informing the journal publisher nor the journal readers is also perceived as one of the most serious instances of violations of ethics.

The third most serious instance of violations of ethics from the viewpoint of the Iranian students is using others' artwork without acknowledgement. This instance refers to the most obvious form of artwork copyright infringement. This result is of some interest since copyright law is not fully enforced in Iran (Bizhani 2006). Given the close relation of copyright infringement and plagiarism (Stepchyshyn and Nelson 2007), the two concepts are typically confused by students as Sarlauskiene and Stabingis (2014) report.

Conclusion

This study to a certain extent confirmed and additionally supplemented previous research on poor recognition of issues in research ethics by graduate students of translation in Iran – the same as numerous other corners of the world.

The study also reveals the severity of the five types according to the Iranian graduate students of translation. But, regardless of the perceived severity, the results clearly indicate an alarming level of careless negligence towards issues in research publishing ethics on the part of the participants. Furthermore, the results confirm the inaccuracy in the participants' understanding of what a violation of ethics is (not), which further reveals participants' poor familiarity with the notion.

A noteworthy finding of the study is that even though the poor perception of students is almost at an worrying level, it does not probably originate from any malicious intent or laziness yet from negligence and lack of knowledge as, for instance, they believe it is necessary to provide accurate citation for information which ethically does not require acknowledgment of a source.

Given that the ethical problem identified seem to have mostly resulted from too much improper leniency of the educational policies and supervision, against the newly enhanced sense of responsibility as well as revised and well-enforced rules at a national level, an implication for the Iranian higher educational system can be taking more determined prevention measures through constant instruction of what constitutes a violation of research ethics and what falls under academic dishonesty in addition to focused development of students' competence in properly accessing and honestly benefiting intellectual, artistic and scholarly ideas and works by others so that the students of translation and any other fields for that matter would be able to publish fully ethically designed and conducted research internationally. Further attention of those in examining positions including lecturers, thesis supervisors, and journal editors and reviewers can lead to an effective synergy in controlling such ethical misconducts.

Considering the increasing access of students to electronic and web-based research tools, to overcome the inadvertent cases of dishonest behavior, as an awareness-raising solution, students may be encouraged to use plagiarism detection on-line programs on a voluntary basis to ensure appropriate acknowledgement of others' work.

Moreover, the achieved typology as the classification of the common varieties of violations of research ethics and the obtained information on the severity of each type and instance in the mind of a fairly large sample of Iranian graduate students seems to serve as a useful and practical guideline for the curriculum design of academic writing courses in such contexts.

Finally, the designed instrument is recommended to be used to study whether similar underlying constructs would manifest in other cultures and speech communities, or the typology would vary across comparable contexts. Additionally, further research is recommended to use the instrument to explore the perceptions of students in relation to factors such as age, field of study, social background and other possibly relevant variables.

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