

## Plagiarism Accusation About Turkish Physicists

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Geliş Tarihi/Received: 22.02.2008  
Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 22.02.2008

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**Dear Editor,**

In an article published in *Nature* dated Sept 6, 2007, it was stated that nearly 70 articles of 15 scientists from 18 Mart, Dicle and Mersin universities have been removed from a popular preprint server by allegation of plagiarism.<sup>1</sup> Some points in the article such as value-laden statements, generalizations, and that not taking into consideration of a system which urges academicians publishing with an orientalist point of view in another language that they have not been educated appropriately, generated the thought of writing to the editor of *Nature*. I would like to share this letter, which was rejected by *Nature*, with our academic community, and sending your journal by hoping it to be accepted for publishing.

**“Sir,**

Certain issues raised by Mr. Brumfiel’s article (“Turkish physicists face accusations of plagiarism” *Nature* 449, 8, 2007) must be addressed. It mustn’t be overlooked that as yet there isn’t enough information to assess the situation thoroughly, and this essentially precludes the ability to make an ethical analysis of the situation. Although they contain some fallacies such as *ad populum* and *non sequitor*, some of the arguments made in their own defense by the accused academicians deserve to be considered seriously. For instance, they have publicly declared that some of the articles they have been accused of plagiarising were published after their work. Therefore language such as “allegedly” or “seem to be involved” is correct, not politically but factually. However, the sentence, “There are *some cultures* in which plagiarism is not even regarded as deplorable” is a counter-example. I’m not aware of any sociological research concerning this premise, perhaps it’s true; nevertheless, its inclusion makes the language value-laden. Since *culture* includes moral values which have been shaped and changed by various factors, it’s a mistake to discuss the moral atmosphere surrounding a certain scientific community without considering the factors which have shaped it, such as English barriers, as Mr. Smith mentioned (“Need to speak English puts burden on Asian scientists” *Nature* 445, 256, 2007), and local factors, such as those in Mr. Sarioglu’s formula: “They’re isolated, their English is bad, and they need to publish”. What Mr. Sarioglu didn’t include is ‘their work should interest Western editors’. If scientific work is assessed regarding editors’ interests per se, not the needs of a particular society, then publishing transforms to some kind of a price to pay, and end transforms to means.”

KAYNAK