



The future of the language professions

Focus on the *professionals*:
Translators' occupational status

Helle V. Dam



Studies on translators' occupational status

(Dam & Zethsen)

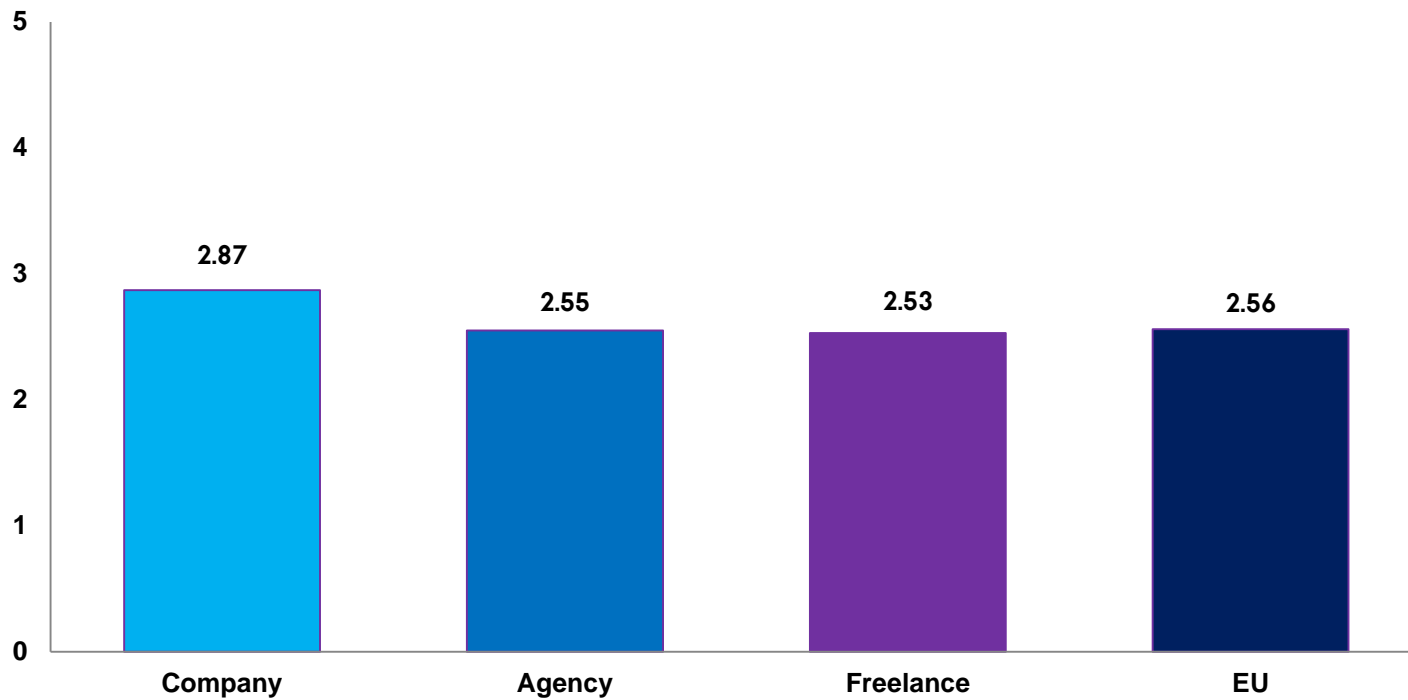
- 47 Danish company translators
- 66 Danish agency translators
- 131 Danish freelance translators
- 63 Danish EU translators

Assessments of occupational status:

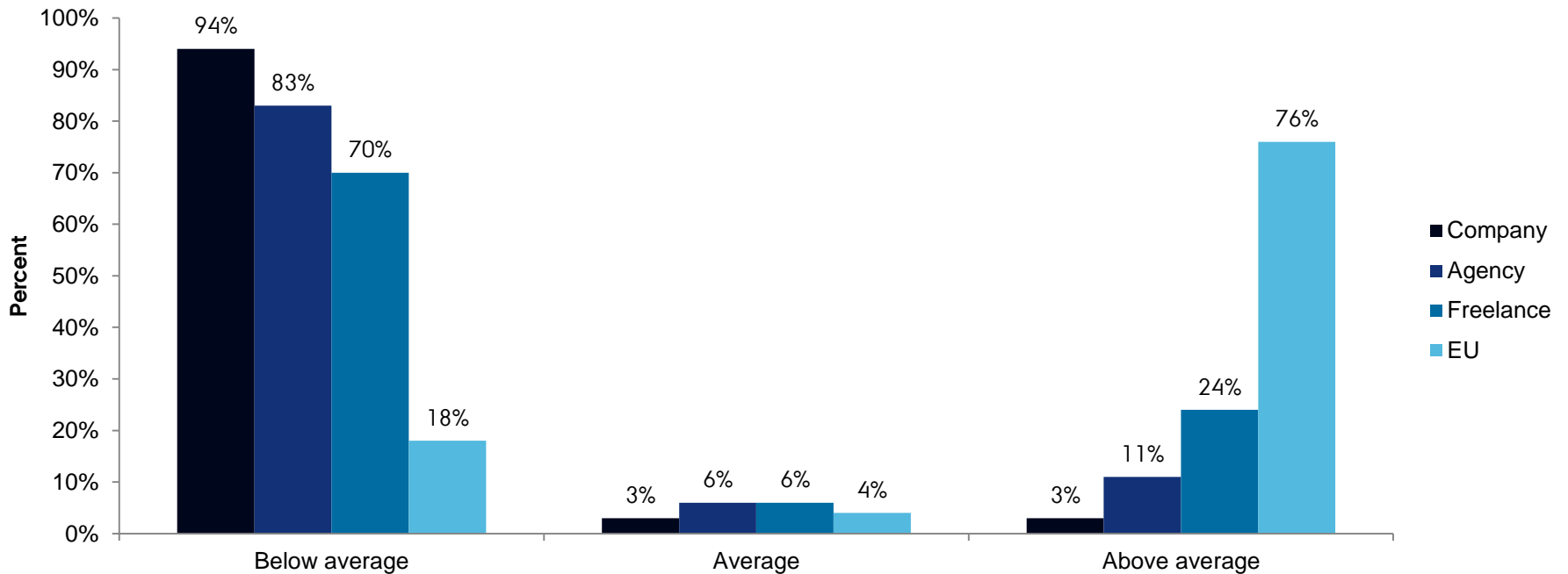
- (1) Income
- (2) Skills/expertise,
- (3) Visibility
- (4) Power/influence



Translators' assessment of occupational status

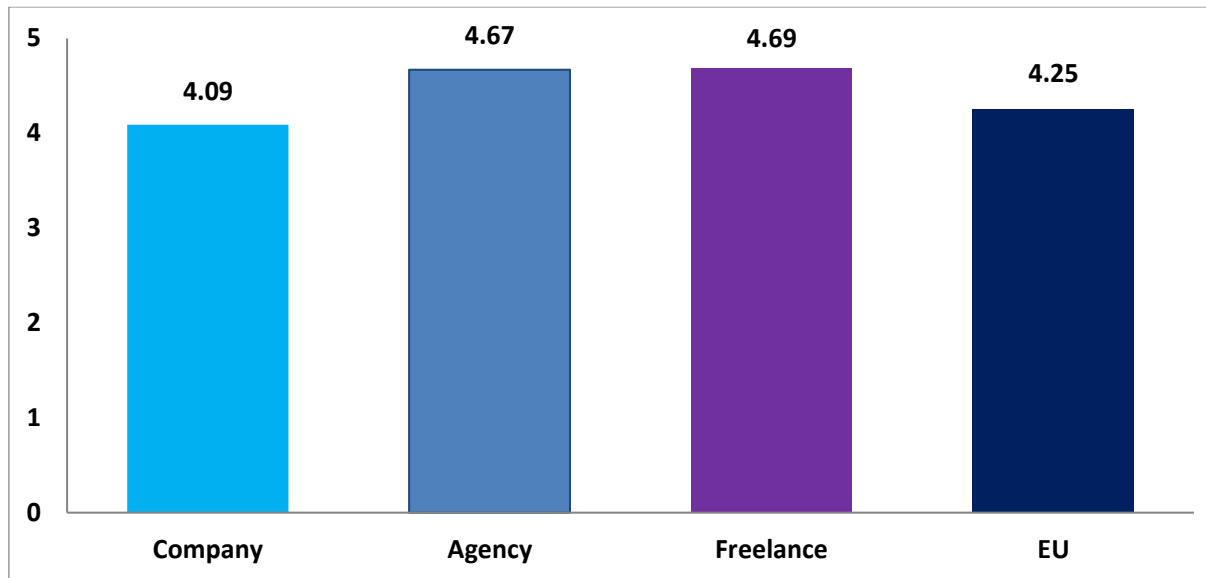


The translators' level of income in relation to comparable professionals

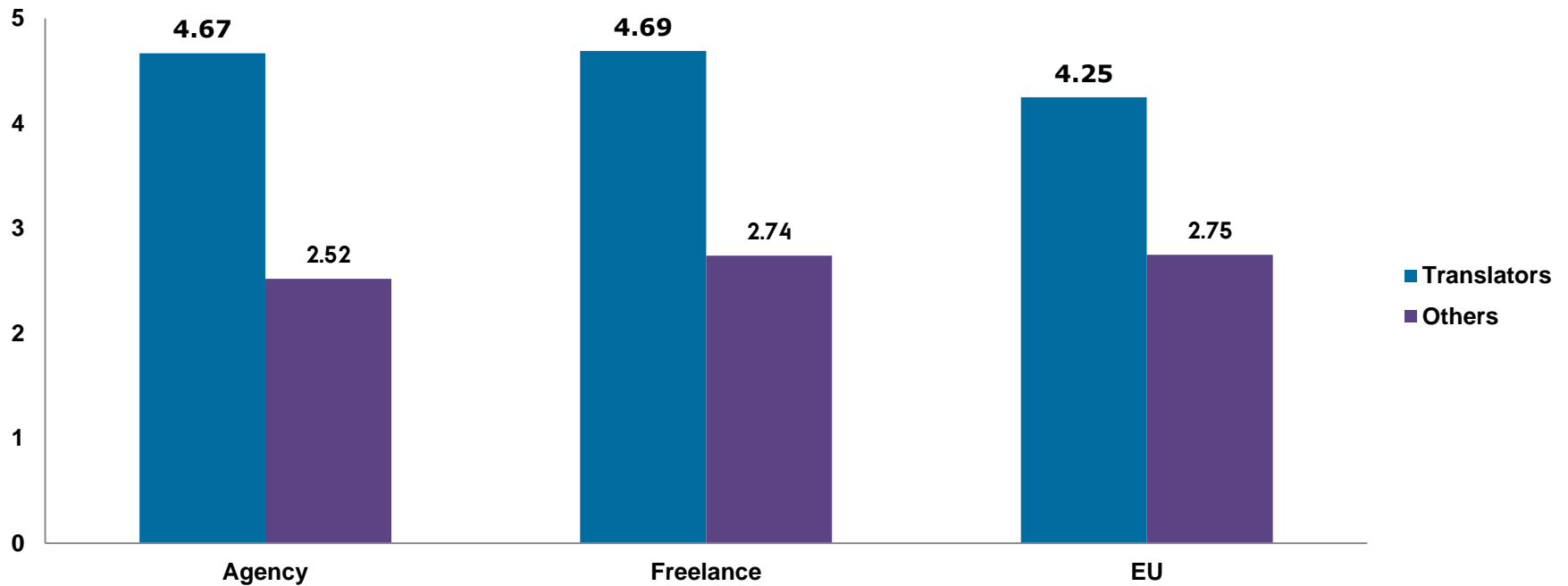




Expertise required to translate

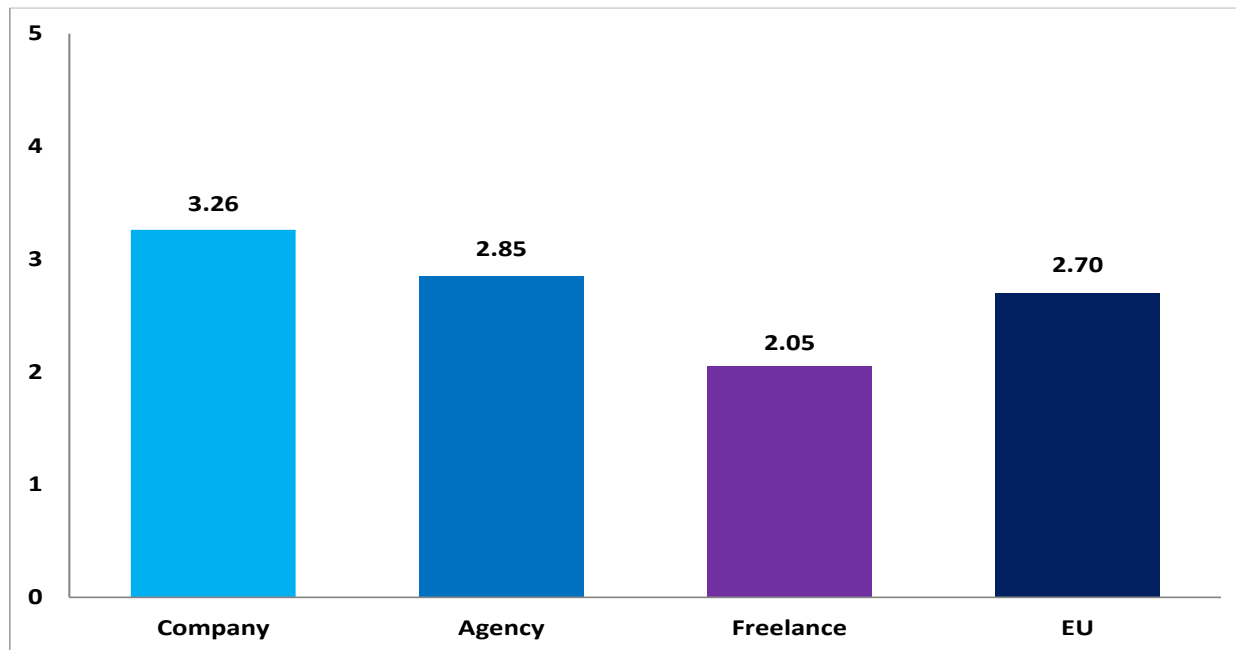


Expertise perceptions – translators vs. others



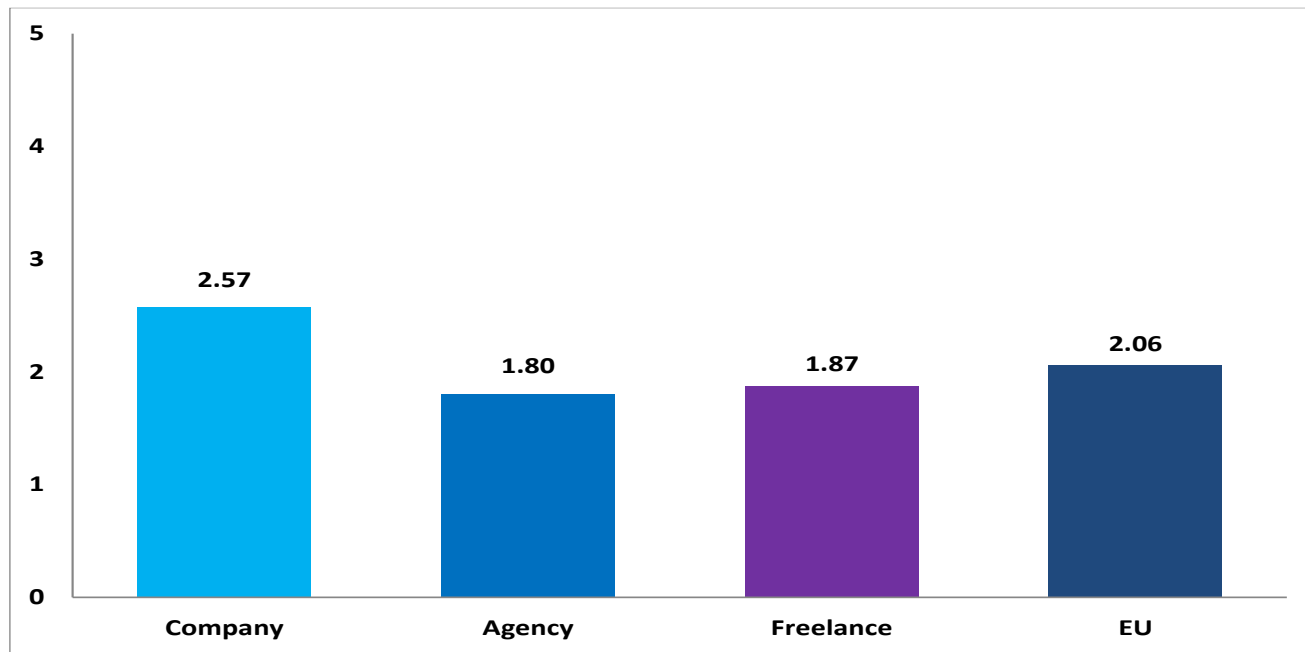


Professional visibility





Job influence





In sum

- Highly demanding profession, a job that requires a high level of skills and expertise

vs.

- Low-status image



Consequences

- problems of recruiting young talents to the profession
- (good) professionals leave the profession (adverse selection)
- proliferation of new names:
 - › localization, transcreation, multilingual communication, ...



Threats to the profession?

- Machine translation, translation technologies?
- Volunteer translators, crowdsourcing?
- The quality of the professionals!



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Criteria for a profession

- (1) public recognition of professional status
- (2)** professional monopoly over specific types of work
- (3) professional autonomy of action
- (4) possession of a distinctive knowledge base
- (5) professional education regulated by members of the prof.
- (6)** an effective professional organization
- (7) codified ethical standards
- (8) Prestige and remuneration reflecting professional standing

Weiss-Gal & Welbourne (2008)