MOCK conference as a tool for interpreters' skills development: A case study

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ABSTRACT

Mastering skills in consecutive interpretation is indispensable for translator profession. The MOCK Conference, as a teaching tool, should be utilized to model the real-life conditions faced by interpreters in their work. This case study aims to identify the benefits of the MOCK Conference and the challenges encountered by trainee translators. The study involved 45 senior students from a private university in Kazakhstan. Data were collected through a survey, which included a Likert-scale questionnaire and open-ended questions for trainee translators. These were then analyzed using descriptive percentages. The results indicated that the respondents positively viewed the opportunities to develop key professional skills and competencies such as bilingual and cross-cultural competence, subject-specific knowledge, and the application of language-specific strategies. These competencies were considered by the participants to be the most essential interpreters' skills for successful performance in their prospective careers. Additionally, the study revealed that some challenges arose during the MOCK Conference process. Stress, concentration difficulties, note-taking challenges, and time management issues were identified by the research participants as the main obstacles faced during the procedure. The core findings of the study have several implications for pre-service interpreters training, including the evaluation of positive and negative aspects of the MOCK Conference as interpreters training tool, and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: MOCK Conference, pre-service translator training, professional translator skills, personal attributes of translators

INTRODUCTION

One of the prevailing trends in contemporary translation is the increasing prominence of consecutive translation, which necessitates the identification of appropriate techniques to train students in Translation Studies and equip them with the required skills and competences. In consecutive translation, the interpreter begins translating only after the speaker has completed their speech or part of it. The nature of this type of interpretation involves translating either the entire speech after it has been delivered or, less frequently, individual sentences: "paragraph by paragraph" or "phrase by phrase." Consequently, consecutive translation includes two categories: paragraph and phrasal translation. Both types, "phrase by phrase" and "paragraph by paragraph," require specific skills such as presentation, analysis, note-taking and reformulation (Gillies, 2019). Additionally, some market-related skills are needed. Muminov (2013) pointed out that in consecutive interpreting process, the full content of the message in source language must be comprehended before the interpreter can render it in the target language.Thus, this complicated process requires a range of skills, including highly developed listening comprehension, fluency in both the source and target languages, vocabulary competence, note-taking skills, and various strategic skills. As Wang (2012b) pointed out, interpreters employed specific strategies and tactics

for cognitive processing that encompass both interlingual and intercultural aspects of interpreting. Moreover, Wang (2012a) suggested to define standards of interpreting as the shared values and concepts among interpreters and their clients, and highlighted "commonly accepted interpreting methods and strategies and on appropriate interpreting behaviors".

Concerning the stages of interpreters' skills development, Albl-Mikasa (2013) outlined three phases: (1) initial stages based on traditional classroom-based interpreter training, (2) skill sharpening through simulated practices and internships (if available), and (3) lifelong learning through professional work experience.

Research consistently shows that consecutive interpretation is inherently stressful, presenting significant challenges for interpreters, especially trainees (Geiko, 2018). Anxiety is a major factor that can hinder performance, with students often reporting difficulty completing assignments due to fear and stress. Key sources of anxiety include individual traits, language-related challenges, inadequate note-taking skills, environmental distractions, performance pressure, and teacher-related factors such as testing and feedback. High mental demand is a central component of the stress experienced during consecutive interpreting, and increased cognitive load is linked to poorer interpretation quality, as shown by both subjective measures and brain imaging studies. Anxiety not only raises the likelihood of speech errors, such as conceptual, lexical, and syntactic mistakes, but also interacts with language proficiency and working memory, further affecting performance. Effective strategies to reduce stress involve both teacher-related interventions (like supportive feedback and clear instruction) and trainee-focused approaches (such as skill development and anxiety management techniques). Understanding and addressing these stressors is crucial for interpreter training and for improving overall interpreting quality (Ferdowsi & Razmi, 2024; Yan et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2023).

Pre-performance Excitement and nervousness are common, but once the translator begins, excitement turns into concentration, and nervousness transforms into attentiveness. Conversely, a lack of excitement can lead to imprecise translation, significant generalizations and omissions. The main key to success is self-confidence, stemming from the experience of solving complex translation problems and theoretical pre-service translators' training. University translation instructors emphasize addressing these challenges and teaching various translation techniques. In addition, skilled translators are often able to intuitively and rapidly resolve problems. Kren noted that in consecutive interpretation, the translator's actions can be represented as follows: they listen to the message, take notes concurrently, and generate the translation based on those notes. At the same time, analysis, comprehension and memorization of information occur, leading to the creation of the translated message (Aluthman & Al-Buraidi, 2024; Chen, 2020; S. Aluthman & Al-Buraidi, 2024).

In summary, training in consecutive interpretation aims to develop a wide range of personal attributes and professional skills thereby preparing pre-service translators for this multifaceted activity. One effective tool that simulates real life conditions in consecutive interpretation, specifically in conference translation, is a MOCK Conference. This practice is gaining popularity in different countries with various traditions of translation such as China, Russia, Belarus, EU countries, Asian countries like Turkey, Kazakhstan. Even the EU Commission website (EU Commission) provides numerous materials related to MOCK Conferences including Ad-hoc videos of MOCK conferences filmed by interpreters to facilitate practice, speech repository and some recommendations about MOCK Conference management. Bayraktar Özer (2022) defined MOCK Conference as a simulation exercise implemented through students' collaboration, using authentic materials in teaching oral translation (especially for developing skills in consecutive translation). In contrast, Li (Li, 2015) focused on the situated character of MOCK Conferences and emphasized that integrating MOCK Conference into interpreters' training is based on such principles as "student-centered learning environment, authenticity, scaffolding, reflection, interactive and collaborative practice, access to a community of practice and authentic assessment" (Li, 2015).

Some scholars have examined aspects of MOCK Conference such as it's situated learning dimension (Angelelli, 2004; Li, 2015) and its role as a simulation (Laet, 2010) that imitates the real conference conditions. MOCK Conferences provide the appropriate communicative settings

for various types of communication and involve pre-service interpreters in different types of professional activities such as interpersonal, socio-cultural and intercultural communicative activities (Wang, 2019). The primary advantages of MOCK Conference include self-reflection on translators' strengths and weaknesses, integrated skill usage, and the cultivation of professionalism (Li, 2015). Furthermore, by simulating the real conference settings, MOCK Conference contributes to enhancing translation accuracy, improving skills in target language and refining interpreting personal skills and manners (Zhao, 2023).

Thus, MOCK Conference is a multifaceted phenomenon which should be implemented into the process of pre-service translator training program. This case study seeks to gain a better understanding of the issue within the Kazakhstani context, identifying the indispensable positive factors and challenges faced by pre-service translators participating in MOCK Conference.

Based on the consideration, the following research questions guided the entire research process regarding Translation Studies students' perceptions of MOCK Conference: What are the main advantages of MOCK Conference as a tool for interpreters' training? And what are the main challenges faced by pre-service interpreters?

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to examine Translation Studies students' perceptions of the MOCK Conference as a tool for developing their skills in consecutive interpretation within the field of Financial and Official translation, as well as to assess the development of soft skills, which are crucial for aspiring interpreters.

To explore the research problem more thoroughly and gain a comprehensive understanding of the MOCK Conference phenomenon, this case study employed qualitative method (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This study involved (1) observation of MOCK Conference procedure (see the description below); (2) conducting a descriptive survey of students' opinion on the positive impact on their professional skills and challenges students experienced while participating in MOCK Conference (Gürbüz, 2017). The data collection instrument used was a descriptive survey, which included Likert-scale questions as well as open-ended responses from the students. These formative methods were focused on identifying the positive effect of MOCK Conference on personal and professional skills.

This research was conducted in a private university in Almaty, Kazakhstan during the Fall semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. The participants were students from Translation Studies program who attended the course on Techniques of Financial and Official Translation, Faculty of Education and Humanities. A total of 53 (i.e. 2 academic groups) agreed to participate in this study by signing consent form. Importantly, students' personal data were not disclosed, and only general information about the research population was used. Also, it is necessary to highlight that only 45 students out of 53 filled the Google form in, and therefore the findings regarding students' opinion and their suggestions concerning MOCK conference conducted as part of of Techniques of Financial and Official translation are based on the responses from these 45 participants. The demographic information of the participants is presented in the table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of participants

	Category	Number (%)
Gender	Male	6 (13,3%)
	Female	39 (86,7%)
Age	19-20	37 (82,3%)
	21-22	8 (17,8%)
Major	Translation Studies (pre-service)	100%
Status	Senior Students (3rd year students)	100%
Total of participants	45 students	

The case study was conducted during one semester and was divided into two parts, with two language combinations: English Kazakh and English Russian. Initially, all students were

required to prepare presentations centered around the key issues in the field of Economics and Finances. Those presentations were delivered in English, and the interpreters' task was to translate them from English into Kazakh or Russian. Project objectives were also related to translators' skills formation; the primary goal was to raise students' awareness of global issues, foster the development of their intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence, and improve their language skills in the field of Economics and Finance. Also, Translation Studies students were trained in information search and processing, and they developed their creativity, logical thinking, presentation and problem-solving skills. The presentation itself should take no more than 5-6 minutes, and students were required to incorporate vocabulary while studying the course. Project format was individual, and the preparation process went along with the timeline (Table 2).

Presentation assessment criteria were divided into four categories tailored to various presentation skills relevant for interpreters' work. Each category was scored out of 25 points, with a total of 100 points possible (Table 3). In the second part of the project, all 53 students worked as consecutive interpreters for each other. The crucial aspect of this process was that nobody knew in advance whose speech they would translate; the presenter randomly chose the interpreter. The interpreters' skills were assessed based on rubrics proposed by the European Union Commission and acedemic papers dedicated to interpretation assessment problems (Liu et al., 2004; Russo, 2011; Shafiei, 2024). Table 4 were the rubrics criteria.

Table 2. Project timeline

Week	Stages
1 – 2	Choice of the topic
3 – 6	Searching for information about the chosen topic
7	Project portfolio preparation
9 – 10	Processing the selected information
11 – 13	Project presentation drafting and editing
14	Capstone presentation

Table 3. Presentation assessment criteria

No	Criteria	Scores
1.	Coverage of the chosen topic and structure of the speech	25
2.	Language skills (grammar accuracy/complexity and vocabulary range, especially use of the subject vocabulary)	25
3.	Presentation skills	25
4.	Design of the presentation and creativity	25

Table 4. Interpretation assessment criteria

No	Criteria	Scores
1.	Content of speech: Coherence/plausibility; Completeness/ Accuracy; Knowledge of passive language	25
2.	Content delivery/ speech form Quality of active language Communication skills	25
3.	Interpretation technique: Applying interpretation strategies Literal rendition of speech or intelligent processing of content? Use of interpretation strategies (paraphrasing, output monitoring, ability to condense information, "telescoping")? Ability to monitor output? Note-taking technique? Time of delivery (shorter/longer than original speech)? Was the overrun excessive? Finishing sentences?	25
4.	Stress resistance and problem-solving skills	25

Resource: https://europa.eu/interpretation/doc/marking_criteria_en.pdf

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The survey consisted of four groups of questions. The first group aimed to clarify participants' familiarity with the MOCK Conference as a phenomenon and its' rules. The second group comprised seven Likert-scale questions (Brown, 2000), where students were required to choose one of the answers to indicate the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with the statements concerning various characteristics of MOCK Conference as a multifaceted phenomenon. As presented in the first diagram, the queations is "how would you rate your familiarity with MOCK conference rules?", the overwhelming majority of the research population demonstrated a clear understanding of the MOCK Conference concept: 51.1% of participants reported being very familiar with it, while 44.4% indicated that they were somewhat familiar (Figure 1).
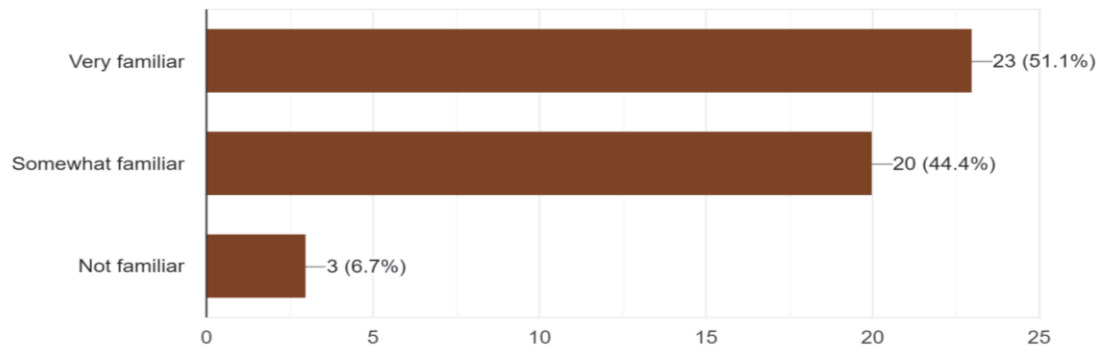

Figure 1. Respondents' familiarity with MOCK conference rules

The second group consisted of seven questions designed to explore students' perceptions regarding various professional skills and the opportunities for their development through participations in MOCK Conferences. Each question focused on a particular skill set related to one of interpreters' competences. For instance, Question 2.1. was dedicated to Bilingual competence, which encompasses skills such as Analytical Listening comprehension, Delivering messages in target language, Monitoring of speech production, and Fluency/Linguistic agility. For the Analytical listening and the Delivery message in target language, the responses were predominantly positive. Specifically, for analytical listening, 31 respondents (69%) strongly agreed, and 14 respondents (31%) agreed. In the case of message delivery in the target language, the responses were even more favorable, with 36 respondents (80%) strongly agreeing and 9 respondents (20%) agreeing. Regarding speech production monitoring and fluency/linguistic agility, there were some neutral responses: 6 respondents (13.3%) were neutral for speech production monitoring, and 2 respondents (4.4%) were neutral for fluency/linguistic agility. In conclusion, the findings indicate a generally positive attitude towards the opportunities provided by MOCK Conferences for the development of bilingual competence (Figure 2).
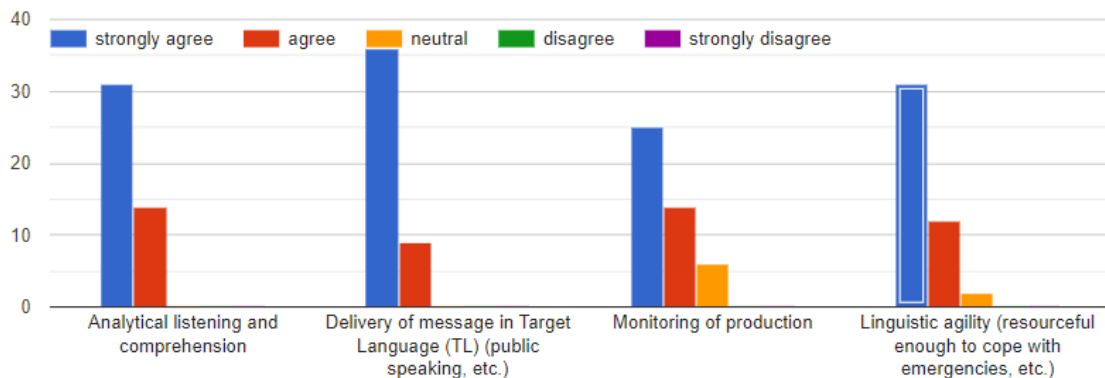

Figure 2. Bilingual competence development

Respondents' answers for Question 2.2 concerning Knowledge competence, or subject-specific knowledge were also predominantly positive. 24, or 53,3% strongly agreed, 18 respondents (40%) agreed, and 3 respondents (6.7%) remained neutral (Figure 3).

At the same time, the situation regarding cross-cultural competence of pre-service interpreters is not entirely positive or unequivocal. One participant (2,2%) dissagreed with the positive role of the MOCK Conference in Non-verbal communication skills development; while four participants (8,9%) are neutral. However, 88,9% of students' answers were positive, reflecting a similar trend for the development of culture-specific strategies (Figure 4).
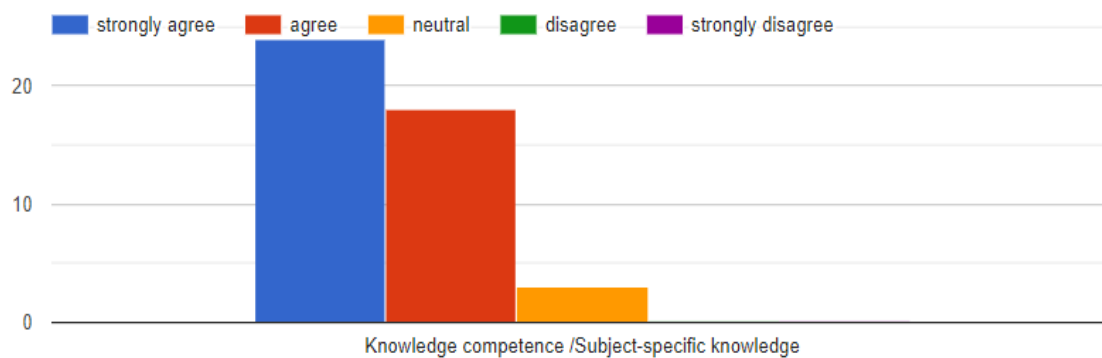

Figure 3. Knowledge competence/subject-specific knowledge
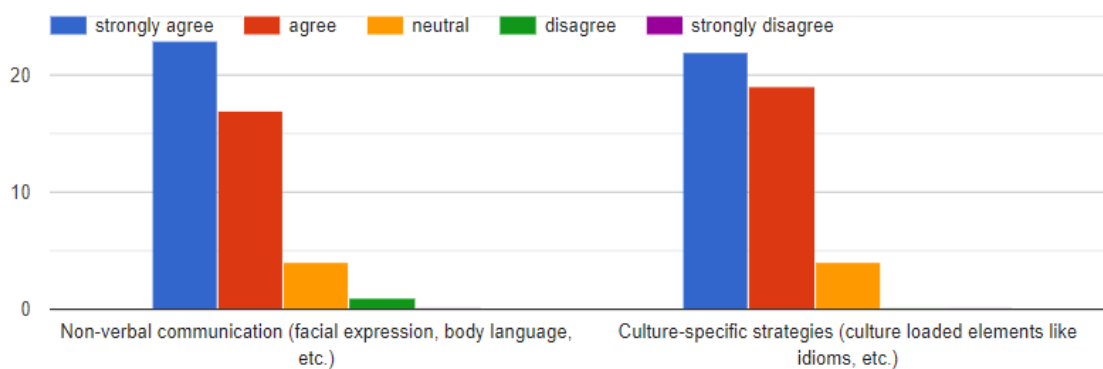

Figure 4. cross-cultural communication

There is no doubt that one of the key translator's skills is using specific strategies for rendering certain terms, phrases and utterances. As shown in Figure 5, the majority of the research participants expressed a positive attitude towards transfer competence. 24 students (53%) of the research population showed positive attitude concerning development of terms rendering strategies while participating in MOCK Conference. 21 students (47%) strongly agreed with the statement about strategies to render phrases, and18 students (40%) of research population demonstrated strong agreement with the statement about rendering syntactic patterns (which seems to be one of the most difficult in our case as both target languages, i.e. Kazakh and Russian, have a lot of differences in syntactic patterns with English as a source language). However, a relatively large proportion of students displayed neutral attitude towards specific translation strategies development while participating in MOCK Conference. The correlation between their experience and the development of these strategies was not immediately clear. For instance, 11 participants (25%) selected the neutral option regarding strategies for rendering numbers, while 8 students (18%) chose the neutral option concerning the rendering of syntactic patterns (Figure 5).

Concerning the important competence of psychological skills for translators, a wide range of answers with the prevalence of positive attitude was observed. It is clear that MOCK Conference provides the opportunity for concentration development. However, the ability to remain calm under pressure was less evidently demonstrated, as indicated by one participant (2.2%) who disagreed with this statement. In terms of dividing attention between receiving

information in the source language and producing speech in the target language, some participants exhibited neutral answers – one (2,2%) and five participants (11,1%) correspondingly. Also, five participants (11,1%) expressed neutral answers concerning mental agility, or interpreters' flexibility (Figure 6).
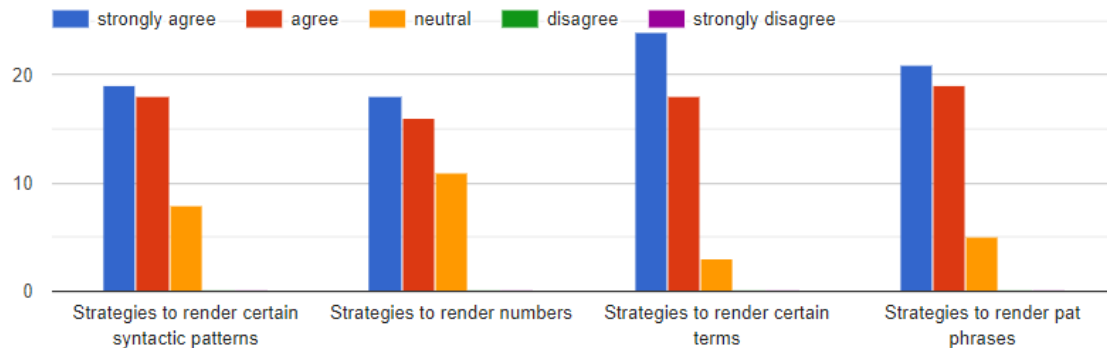

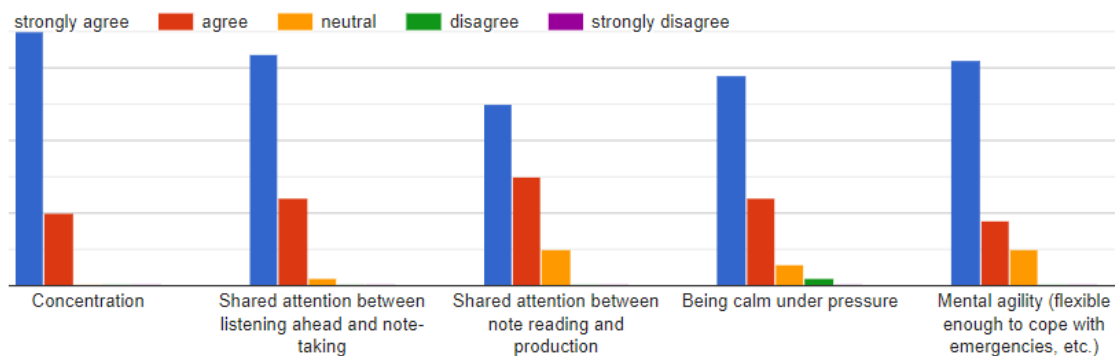**Figure 5. Language-specific strategies**

Figure 6. Psychological competence

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that there were no negative answers concerning the role of MOCK Conferences in Strategic Competence development, which consists of identifying the appropriate translation strategy, or technique (25 participants, or 55,5% strongly agreed; 15, or 33,4% of our respondents agreed, whereas 5 of them, or 11,1% were neutral) (Figure 7).
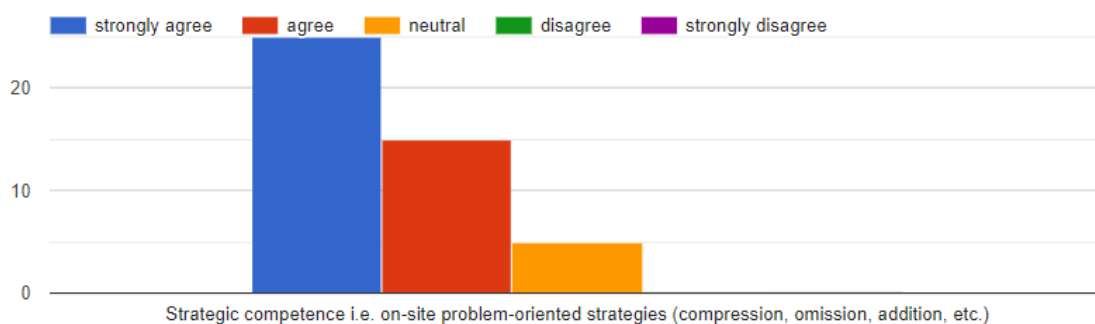

Figure 7. Strategic competence development

Also, the respondents demonstrated similar attitude towards Professional development through MOCK Conference. For instance, there was one case (2,2%) of disagreement about such specific interpreters' knowledge and acquirements as Ethical issues in interpretation and even dress-code of interpreter, and the interpreters' ability to conduct self-reflection about their own strengths and weaknesses. Nonetheless, the positive feedback about MOCK Conference as a tool to develop interpreters' professionalism also predominated. Specifically, 37 students (68%) strongly agreed about the preparation process, including working with a glossary (in our case, related to Economics) and gathering background information to support their work. It is evident

that the majority of respondents provided positive feedback about professional ethics and self-reflection skills development. 28 students (62%) agreed with the statements on professional ethics, and 27 students (60%) agreed on the value of self-reflection (Figure 8).
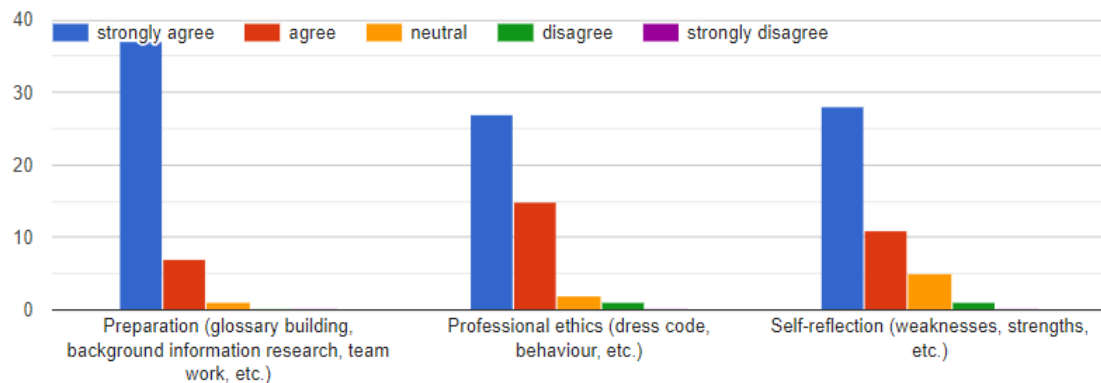

Figure 8. Professionalism development

The last two questions required the participants' own answers, aimed at capturing both positive impressions and challenges students faced while participating in MOCK Conference. The third section of the survey included the following question: What were your impressions about MOCK Conference project during its implementation?. This open-ended question required students' to provide their own answers. Most of the answers (39 out of 45, or 87%) for this question were positive, with common responses such as: "I'm satisfied. It's good practice for me"; or "I consider it as a good experience for a translator".

However, the majority of participants offered more insightful and analytical answers, which allowed us to find out the most important aspects of MOCK Conference as a multifaceted phenomenon and its' future implementation into Translation Studies program. For instance, Participant 3 (Female) shared*: "I felt the real professional atmosphere where the interpreters must behave. Also, preparing for the MOCK conference helped me gain a lot of background information about my topic. Although I was fully concentrated on my speech and translation, I gained a lot of new knowledge during other speeches and translations."* Participant 41 (Male) drew special attention to some key professional skills development: "[We studied…] *How to keep stress and spread attention, note taking and translating, writing shortly."* Participant 12 (Female) focused on both speaker and interpreter specific activities: "*It was a very effective experience towards translation studies and also practicing performing. While attending this conference we learnt and developed skills as preparation of data, analysis and to work independently."* Several participants specified the real-life conditions of interpreters' work provided at MOCK Conference.

For example, Participant 26 (Female) said: "*It's a good practice for translators. We always translate conferences from YouTube, and we psychologically don't take it seriously. But the MOCK Conference it's more real, and we can feel the pressure and responsibility. We follow the real person, and if we don't know something, we have developed our problem solving ability in real life".* Participant 33 (Male) stated: "*During the implementation of the MOCK Conference project, I've noticed that it's a valuable exercise for honing translation and interpretation skills. It offers a simulated environment where participants can practice handling real-world scenarios and challenges they might encounter in professional settings".* Participant 6 (Female) claimed: "*… in the process of translating, all you can think about is how to deliver the speech to another language. Overall, it gave me an impression of being in a real Conference as a translator."*

Also, some research participants (9 out of 45, or 20%) highlighted the opportunities to master such professional skills as selection and use of the appropriate vocabulary including idioms and phrases (in our case, for Financial sphere). Participant 9 (Female) said: "*…everything was interesting to listen to how others translated, also I learned about interesting translations about financial idioms."* Participant 40 (Female) mentioned *a lot of skills like how to correctly translate deep meaning of a word and etc.* Also, Participant 34 (Female) stated: "*Since it was my first*

experience in such conference, I felt really nervous. I really liked this kind of activity, as it helped to expand my knowledge of the subject and improve my vocabulary". Participant 30 (Female) said: "*During consecutive translation in the MOCK conference, I encountered some difficulties, particularly with vocabulary selection."*

Among professional skills pre-service translators need to improve to become proficient conference interpreters, participants highlighted note-taking techniques (6 participants, or 13% of our research population). Participant 21 (Female) said: "*It was hard to keep information in mind/make notes.* Participant 13 (Female) also stated that *it was hard to keep information in mind/ make notes*."

On the other hand, many participants pointed out that MOCK Conference format provided opportunities to develop not only professional but also personal (soft) skills. Participant 6 (Female) stated: "*During the implementation of the MOCK Conference project, I found it to be incredibly beneficial. It provided a practical platform for learning and skill development, fostering collaboration and critical thinking among participants.* Participant 23 (Male) highlighted the following strong points: "*The MOCK Conference project showcased active engagement, collaboration, and problem-solving skills among participants, reflecting real-world conference dynamics. It was a stimulating and enriching experience overall".* Also, many students focused on communicative skills, adaptability (concerning both personal and professional skills, i.e. interpreters' listening competence) and lingua-cultural competence. Participant 1 (Female) commented: "*It also emphasizes the importance of effective communication, cultural awareness, and adaptability".* Participant 42 (Female) said: "*I really liked the process. It was informative and interesting to listen to different kinds of speeches and their interpretations which were done by students".* Participant 27 (Female) commented: "*The MOCK Conference project has been helpful. It's like practicing for a real conference where you get to improve your communication and problem-solving skills".*

In conclusion, the perceptions of pre-service interpreters towards MOCK Conference represent various trends like Figure 9.
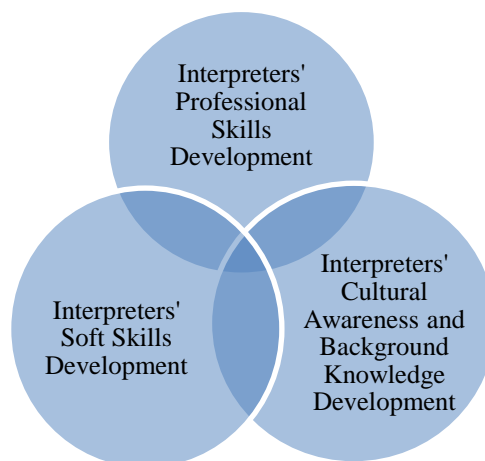

Figure 9. Pre-service interpreters' impressions towards MOCK conference

Finally, the fourth and last part of the survey focused on analyzing the challenges encountered by students while participating in the MOCK Conference. As shown in the survey results, most of the research population (28 out of 45 students, or 62%) mentioned anxiety or stress as the most important challenge. For instance, participant 19 (Female) stated: "*It was not as difficult as it seemed to be. But still it made me feel a bit stressful, though it was a pleasant experience for me."* Participant 3 (Female) remarked: "*Yes, I was nervous at the beginning, but MOCK Conference helped me to be more confident."* Participant 33 (Male) commented: "*It was slightly stressful but very useful overall;* Participant 1 (Female): *I faced stress. It was difficult to*

concentrate." Participant 45 (Female) said: "*... sometimes because of worry, you can forget what you want to say.*"

The second challenge identified by the research participants was problems with concentration. They found it challenging to focus on the presentation in the source language while simultaneously translating it into the target language. Participant 2 (Female) said: "*Concentration is the key to the best translation. As for me, I find it very difficult due to many personal reasons. But while practicing, I gained vast experience which helped me during other Consecutive translation tasks.*" Participant 8 highlighted: "*Consecutive translation can be challenging because you must listen, understand, remember, and then accurately convey the message in another language. It requires quick thinking, excellent memory, and strong language skills in both languages. Additionally, maintaining focus and concentration for an extended period can be demanding.*" Totally, 22 participants out of 45, or 49% of the research population gave accent to that problem.

The third challenge mentioned by the participants was lack of background knowledge, noted by 17 out of 45 participants (or 38%). One participant stated: *"The most challenging thing was not having enough background knowledge. It was also hard to come up with some equivalences. I also thought that if you have good language skills in the target language, then it's easier to translate."*

It should also be pointed out that Translation Studies students attemted to identify their personal preferences and determine which techniques were most appropriate for them. While analyzing their MOCK Conference experience, some of the participants attempted to understand whether it is better to use notes, or to keep the information in mind. For instance, participant 14 (Male) said: "*…and I still couldn't find out my own way of working: with taking notes, or not*" In total, 7 participants (15.5% of the research population) considered this issue. On the other hand, 4 research participants, or 8,8 % focused on the problems with time management during the MOCK Conference e.g. "*I've found it tricky to accurately convey the speaker's message, manage time well*". The main challenges faced by the research population can be summarized as in Figure 10.
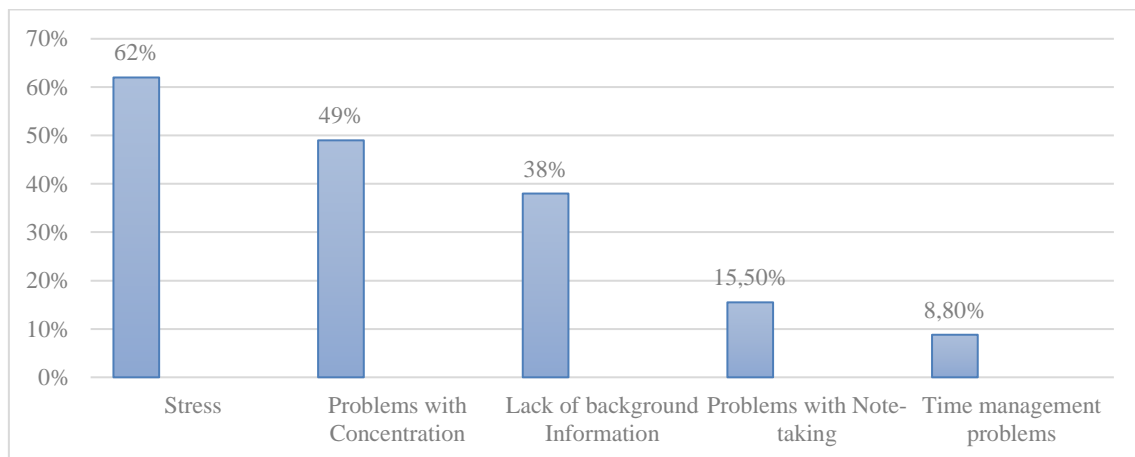

Figure 10. MOCK conference challenges

Overall, as demonstrated by research data, the responses from research population were mostly positive. Pre-service translators appreciated the opportunities to work under conditions of the real-life conferences and to reflect on their experiences during MOCK Conference. This allowed them to recognize its positive aspects and opportunities to develop their personal and professional skills based on a variety of competences such as bilingual, subject-specific, cross-cultural, psychological, and strategic ones.

Discussion

Figure This qualitative research aimed to explore pre-service translator perceptions, specifically senior university students in Translation Studies towards MOCK Conference, based on their own experiences and reflections. Overall, the research findings provided answers to the two research questions and demonstrated various advantages of MOCK Conference implementation under Kazakhstani conditions as well as challenges faced by the research participants.

The first question examined the positive effect of the MOCK Conference as perceived by population research. The survey showed a mostly positive perception of the opportunities provided by MOCK Conference to develop interpreters' skills and competences such as psychological, strategic, cross-cultural etc. These findings confirmed earlier studies about MOCK Conferences as a kind of internship for pre-service translators (Ilhem, 2021), or a kind of "scenario" approach (Alexeeva, 2020; Volkova, 2023). As an activity based on the communicative approach, it "forms a number of competences (linguistic, discursive, social and cultural, strategic, etc.)" (Tikhonova et al., 2015). Thus, Bezzaoucha (2021) concluded that in her experiment conducted in Algeria, it was "definitely much better than any kind of traditional methods". It was highlighted in this research that introducing MOCK Conference as a teaching technique allowed to obtain several skills and competences, e.g. managing real time difficulties, "command over stress and time, controlling communication process, developing listening and speaking skills" (Bezzaoucha, 2021). Moreover, Bezzaoucha (2021) suggested to give students "a free choice of topics for a more challenging and diverse context"; and we did it while implementing MOCK Conference into our teaching process. In contrast, Alexeeva (2020) recommended using all possible activities performed by professional translators in teaching translation, including conference and seminar interpretation, press conference interpretation, and translating various types of negotiations.

The second research question investigated the main challenges faced by students while interpreting their groupmates' presentations at MOCK Conference. The findings indicated that the main challenges relied on such factors as stress, lack of concentration, limited background knowledge and note-taking skills. This supports the findings of Alvstad et al. (2011), who stated that "it is useful to conceive of the activity of translating as a sequence of different ways of producing language". Moreover, it confirmed the study by De Laet (2010) who described MOCK Conferences with the focus on situated learning and simulation of the real conferences settings and problems erasing such as interpreters' stress and simultaneous processing of information and speech production. Additionally, Xiangdong (2015) and Conde at al. (2019) focused more on various forms of communication and translators' self-reflection after the MOCK Conference. There is no doubt that MOCK Conferences, unlike traditional consecutive interpretation classes (Bezzaoucha, 2021), allowed students to develop the skills proposed by competent bodies, such as the National Interpretation (European Commision, 2024) initiated by the Translators Association of China (TAC) as the main criteria for assessing interpreters' competence (Zhao et al., 2023). Although these studies represent different approaches to MOCK Conference as a teaching tool, they reveal similar problems that pre-service translators face and must overcome, such as the need for vocabulary skills and various language-specific strategies development, gaining cross-cultural competence, obtaining stress resistance etc.

CONCLUSION

This case study research concludes that MOCK Conference offers both positive impact and present challenges for trainee translators, as perceived by Kazakhstani University students in Translation Studies. The findings sugges that the research participants appreciated many benefits of the MOCK Conference like the opportunities to develop both professional and personal skills and competencies such as bilingual and subject-specific competencies, language-specific strategies which are of paramount importance for consecutive interpretation. The most important fact is that in the frame of MOCK Conference, pre-service interpreters were able to experience the atmosphere of real consecutive interpretation, which facilitated the development of mental

agility and flexibility. Therefore, the MOCK Conference played a significant role in the systematic development of key professional characteristics, functioning as

However, there were some challenging factors, or hindrances faced by trainee translators. For instance, our research participants identified stress as one of the most crucial challenges, along with issues related to concentration and time management. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate preliminary exercises to help facilitate the conference interpretation process.

Besides, there were some limitations in this study. Thus, the research was confined to a single private Kazakhstani University, which resulted in a limited sample size. Also, the MOCK Conference was conducted within the scope of Financial and Official translation and dedicated exclusively to the problems of business and economics.

Looking ahead, the MOCK Conference as a tool modelling the real settings of interpreters' work should be implemented widely into the process of interpreters' training at the universities. A wider range of topics, such as International Relations and Legal Issues, should be covered. Furthermore, the format of the conference closely resembles real-world conferences, for example, by providing the "audience" with a printed version of the program and potentially organizing a plenary session. In our opinion, this would serve as an accurate model of interpreters' work under realistic conditions, allowing Translation Studies students to acquire essential professional skills. Moreover, as MOCK Conference is not routine work in traditional classrooms, it can help the instructors to activate students' schemata.

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