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Date: 07.05.2025

Study of Job Satisfaction of Kazakhstan-based Translators

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Abstract

This study explores the job satisfaction of professional translators and interpreters in Kazakhstan, a topic that has received limited empirical attention in the post-Soviet context. Anchored in qualitative methodology, the research investigates how (dis)satisfaction is experienced over time, how it relates to working conditions and institutional practices, and how it influences career trajectories. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with 10 practicing language professionals—including both in-house and freelance translators and interpreters—the study adopts a thematic analysis approach guided by Herzberg's TwoFactor Theory, the Job Demands-Resources model, and Bourdieu's Theory of Capital. The findings indicate that job satisfaction is shaped by emotional dynamics, perceived fulfillment, and moments of frustration. Freelancers appreciated flexibility and autonomy but struggled with instability, market saturation, and weak institutional support. In-house professionals often faced limited career progression and bureaucratic constraints but reported more stable incomes. Recognition, fair pay, and belonging emerged as significant drivers of satisfaction, while the lack of protective structures, trade union support, and social recognition undermined long-term professional commitment. Notably, job dissatisfaction did not always lead to immediate career change. Many participants remained attached to the profession due to intrinsic motivation or structural barriers, while others explored adjacent fields such as teaching, content writing, or further academic study. Concerns about artificial intelligence displacing translators — particularly in written domains — also surfaced as a source of anxiety, prompting some to diversify their skills. The study contributes to the understanding of translator/interpreter well-being in non-Western contexts, where market irregularities and institutional neglect pose unique challenges. It also offers practical implications for policymakers, translation agencies, and academic institutions seeking to retain language professionals and improve their work conditions. By giving voice to underrepresented

professionals, the research calls for systemic reforms and targeted support to strengthen the sustainability of the translation and interpreting sector in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: translator job satisfaction, interpreter, qualitative study, occupational stress, translation profession, burnout, intrinsic motivators, extrinsic conditions

Аннотация

Бұл зерттеу Қазақстандағы кәсіби аудармашылар мен ауызша аудармашылардың жұмысына қанағаттанушылықты зерттеуге арналған — бұл посткеңестік кеңістікте әлі де аз зерттелген тақырып. Жұмыстың мақсаты-қанағаттану сезімдерінің (емес)қалай қалыптасатынын, олардың еңбек жағдайлары мен кәсіби ортаға қалай байланысты екенін және олардың мамандардың мансаптық ниеттеріне қалай әсер ететінін анықтау. Әдістемелік негіз-10 тәжірибешімен (фрилансерлермен де, штаттық қызметкерлермен де) жартылай құрылымды сұхбат. Деректерді талдау Герцбергтің екі факторлық теориясына, талаптар мен ресурстар моделіне (JD-R) және Пьер Бурдьенің капитал теориясына негізделген. Нәтижелер қанағаттану эмоционалды фонға, кәсіби іске асыру сезіміне және күнделікті қиындықтарды жеңуге байланысты екенін көрсетеді. Фрилансерлер икемділік пен еркіндікті бағалайды, бірақ тұрақсыздыққа, нарықтың қанықтылығына және институционалдық қолдаудың жоқтығына тап болады. Штаттық аудармашылар тұрақты кірісті атап өтеді, бірақ мансаптық мүмкіндіктер мен бюрократияға шағымданады. Тану, әділ сыйақы және мамандыққа жату сезімі қанағаттанудың негізгі факторлары болып табылады. Қанағаттанбағанына қарамастан, көпшілігі мамандықты өзгерту үшін дереу қадамдар жасамайды. Кейбіреулер жұмысқа деген ішкі байланыстың арқасында қалады, ал басқалары сабақтас салаларға — оқыту, контент-менеджмент, академиялық қызметке көшу мүмкіндіктерін қарастырады.

Жасанды интеллекттің таралуы, әсіресе жазбаша аудармада мамандарды қосымша алаңдатады. Зерттеу тұрақсыз нарықтық жағдайларда аудармашылардың әл-ауқатын түсінуге үлес қосады және Қазақстандағы аударма кәсібінің тұрақтылығын арттыру үшін мемлекет пен салалық ұйымдар тарапынан реформалар мен мақсатты қолдау қажеттігін атап көрсетеді.

Түйінді сөздер: аудармашының кәсіби қанағаттануы, ауызша аудармашы, сапалық зерттеу, кәсіби күйзеліс, аударма мамандығы, кәсіби күйіп кету, ішкі уәждемелер, сыртқы жағдайлар

Аннотация

Настоящее исследование посвящено изучению удовлетворенности работой профессиональных переводчиков и устных переводчиков в Казахстане — теме, которая до сих пор остается малоизученной на постсоветском пространстве. Целью работы является выявление того, как формируются чувства (не)удовлетворенности, как они связаны с условиями труда и профессиональной средой, а также каким образом они влияют на карьерные намерения специалистов. Методологическая основа – полуструктурированные интервью с 10 практикующими специалистами (как фрилансерами, так и штатными сотрудниками). Анализ данных был основан на теории двух факторов Герцберга, модели требований и ресурсов (JD-R) и теории капитала Пьера Бурдье. Результаты показывают, что удовлетворенность зависит от эмоционального фона, чувства профессиональной реализации и преодоления повседневных трудностей. Фрилансеры ценят гибкость и свободу, однако сталкиваются с нестабильностью, перенасыщенностью рынка и отсутствием институциональной поддержки. Штатные переводчики отмечают стабильный доход, но жалуются на ограниченные возможности карьерного роста и бюрократию. Признание, справедливое вознаграждение и чувство принадлежности к профессии являются ключевыми

факторами удовлетворенности. Несмотря на неудовлетворенность, многие не предпринимают немедленных шагов по смене профессии. Одни остаются благодаря внутренней привязанности к работе, другие рассматривают возможности перехода в смежные области — преподавание, контентменеджмент, академическая деятельность. Дополнительную тревогу вызывает у специалистов распространение искусственного интеллекта, особенно в письменном переводе. Исследование вносит вклад в понимание благополучия переводчиков в нестабильных рыночных условиях и подчеркивает необходимость реформ и целевой поддержки со стороны государства и отраслевых организаций для повышения устойчивости переводческой профессии в Казахстане.

Ключевые слова: удовлетворённость работой переводчика, устный переводчик, качественное исследование, профессиональный стресс, профессия переводчика, профессиональное выгорание, внутренние источники мотивации, внешние условия

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Introduction

Why do some translation studies (TS) students in Kazakhstan not see themselves as translators/interpreters after graduation? And why is there a significant share of translation/interpretation professionals who are considering or have already decided to choose another career (Courtney & Phelan, 2019)? How do Kazakhstani translators feel about their occupation, are they generally satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs, and how do their feelings impact their career plans?

Questions of this kind have been answered for a relatively short period of time. Translator-oriented research in Translation Studies is still emerging, as the first personcentered studies were undertaken only in the late 1970s – early 1980s. In the 1990s, a broader expansion beyond cognition to sociological and psychological aspects of translators occurred. Bourdieu's social theory was introduced into Translation Studies, emphasizing the translator's agency, status, and habitus. Scholars such as Andrew Chesterman (1997) introduced norms, ethics, and translator behavior, focusing on the translator as a social actor. And ultimately, emotional and psychological dimensions of translation have been investigated in recent research (Atkinson, 2012; Bednárová-Gibová & Madoš, 2019; Courtney & Phelan, 2019; de Jong, 1999).

At this point, I propose looking at the Kazakhstani translation/interpretation landscape. The translation profession in Kazakhstan operates within a complex trilingual ecosystem, where practitioners navigate between Kazakh (the state language), Russian (official), and English (global lingua franca). This linguistic triad creates unique professional dynamics, particularly as national policies push for increased Kazakh-language documentation across sectors like healthcare, where 40 per cent of professionals report difficulties adapting to state-mandated linguistic requirements (Koptleuova et al., 2023). Despite these challenges, Upwork data reveals a thriving freelance community of

Kazakhstani translators charging $18-$40 per hour, specializing in technical, legal, and medical content while emphasizing human-centric approaches over AI tools (Upwork, 2025).

Existing research demonstrates paradoxical trends in translation job satisfaction globally: 55-60 per cent of professionals report career optimism despite stressors like tight deadlines, underpayment, and client mismanagement (Meyer & Dyer, 2022). In Kazakhstan, these pressures intersect with post-Soviet language revitalization efforts and a shifting professional landscape where 84.7 per cent of educated workers claim Kazakh fluency but often default to Russian in technical contexts (Polatova, 2020). The country's translation workforce thus operates at the intersection of cultural preservation, market demands, and professional identity formation.

Notwithstanding the presence of a diverse translation/interpretation community in Kazakhstan, little or no research has been undertaken to shed light on the perceptions of job satisfaction by Kazakhstani professionals in this sphere, their opinion regarding the factors contributing to or decreasing job satisfaction, and the career continuation aspects.

The purpose of this exploratory phenomenological study will be to understand the perceptions of job satisfaction, the factors contributing to or decreasing it, and the career plans of the translators/interpreters based in Kazakhstan’s two biggest cities, Astana and Almaty. At this stage in the research, job satisfaction will be determined as ″a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences″ (Locke, 1976).

Within the framework of this purpose, the following research questions are asked:

How satisfied/dissatisfied do Kazakhstan translators feel?

What are their perceptions of factors shaping their job satisfaction? and

What are their future career plans?

Job satisfaction plays a critical role in shaping the career plans of Kazakhstani translators and interpreters. Intrinsic factors such as autonomy and skill utilization, extrinsic

factors such as salary and job security, and psychological and social factors such as psychological ownership and social interactions all contribute to job satisfaction. These factors, in turn, influence career decisions, including the pursuit of career advancement, professional development, and entrepreneurial ventures. Understanding the complex interplay between these factors is essential for supporting the professional growth and well-being of Kazakhstani translators and interpreters. Findings could inform Kazakhstan's trilingual education reforms and help professional organizations address the 28% career change consideration rate observed in global translation studies, contextualized within Central Asia's unique sociolinguistic environment. Besides, the outcomes of this study could be used for further research in this area, both qualitative and quantitative.

In the next section, I attempted to review the literature available on the topic of job satisfaction.

Literature Review

Job satisfaction (JS) is a vital area of research, comprising factors that affect employees' emotional and professional well-being. Translators and interpreters, as unique professionals bridging linguistic, cultural, and organizational gaps, are faced with distinct challenges and rewards. This literature review is an endeavour to synthesize findings from a range of studies to explore the factors influencing JS among translators and interpreters worldwide and the reasons why these specialists stay in their vocation, with an additional focus on those working in Kazakhstan. The review commences with an outline of the main theories employed by the researchers active in this field; then, it proceeds with an attempt to analyze the scientific work performed in the realm of investigating JS among translators and/or interpreters internationally, principally during the 2000s, with the greater part of the studies emerging in 2010s. In conclusion, I tried to summarize the state of affairs in this domain in the Kazakh academic setting.

Theoretical foundations of job satisfaction

JS, defined by Locke (1976) as a "pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences," has been extensively studied across various disciplines. In order to enhance the understanding of the research present in this sphere, exploration of the theories underpinning this research would be beneficial.

The first two somewhat similar foundational models for job-satisfaction research under review are Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959) and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) created by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti in the early 2000s. Although both of them are widely used in organizational psychology to explore the construct of employee well-being, JS, and performance, there is a clear difference between them. The former distinguishes between *motivators* (intrinsic factors that increase satisfaction, e.g., achievement, recognition) and *hygiene factors* (extrinsic factors that prevent dissatisfaction, e.g., salary, policies) and views satisfaction and dissatisfactions as separate dimensions rather than opposites and emphasizes *job content* (motivators) and *job context* (hygiene factors) in determining satisfaction. The latter, the JD-R model, focuses on the balance between *job demands* (physical, psychological, or emotional effort required) and *job resources* (aspects that help achieve work goals or reduce demands, e.g., autonomy and support); it explains burnout (when demands exceed resources) and engagement (when resources are high), and is dynamic: showing how demands and resources interact over time to impact well-being and performance. Herzberg's theory is practical for identifying job design changes to increase satisfaction, and is best for analyzing satisfaction through specific intrinsic and extrinsic factors, while the JD-R model focuses on both negative outcomes (burnout, disengagement) and positive outcomes (engagement, thriving), and is ideal for dynamic, complex work environments, where demands and resources fluctuate.

Yet another theoretical framework utilized by researchers in the field of JS is the theory of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) introduced a theory of capital as a multidimensional concept that goes beyond economic wealth. He identified four main types of capital: 1) *economic capital*, tangible assets like money, property, and financial resources; 2) *cultural capital*, non-material assets, such as education, skills, tastes, and knowledge that provide social mobility; 3) *social capital*: networks and relationships that provide resources, support, and influence; 4) symbolic capital, recognition, prestige, and social status (often tied to the other three forms of capital). Bourdieu argued that these forms of capital operate within *fields* (structured social spaces like workplaces or industries) where individuals compete for power and resources. The accumulation and conversion of capital influence social positioning and success.

Herzberg's and Bourdieu's frameworks complement each other in capturing the nuanced dimensions of translators' JS. While Herzberg's theory effectively categorizes the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, Bourdieu's theory provides a sociocultural lens to understand how external factors like professional recognition and societal value influence well-being. For example, intrinsic motivators like pride and task variety, discussed in Herzberg's model, are amplified by cultural and social capital, as seen in Bourdieu's framework.

Translators' unique work environments demand a tailored examination of these frameworks, considering autonomy, linguistic creativity, and technological influences (Ruokonen et al., 2020; Andrade & Westover, 2019).

As it might be concluded from JS studies across professions, Translation/Interpreting is not among those topping the list of professions with the highest satisfaction index (Andrade & Westover, 2019). At the same time, research focused on translators'/interpreters' JS and well-being has shown virtually universal above-the-average JS among these

professionals, despite many negatively assessed variables thereof (Bednárová-Gibová & Madoš, 2019; Courtney & Phelan, 2019; Dam & Zethsen, 2016; de Jong, 1999; Heino, 2020; Piecychna, 2019; Rodríguez-Castro, 2015; Ruokonen et al., 2020).

Further, different aspects of translators'/interpreters' JS are viewed in detail, as presented in the scientific research within the period mentioned above.

Key determinants of translators' job satisfaction

Intrinsic factors

Intrinsic JS often stems from translators' engagement with challenging, meaningful tasks. Dam and Zethsen (2016) from Aarhus University, Denmark, who qualitatively researched the narratives of 15 Danish agency translators with an average of 13 years of experience, noted that translators value the intellectual stimulation and creativity inherent in their work, while Liu (2013) from the Chinese Beijing Foreign Studies University, whose study included both quantitative analysis using questionnaires, including visibility and happiness indices, and qualitative insights, and covered a sample of 193 Chinese translators from Greater China, identified pride in producing high-quality translations as a key driver of satisfaction. Similarly, Finland-based Ruokonen (Ruokonen et al., 2020), who undertook a study utilizing mixed methods: surveys (2012, 2014) and interviews (2013), and whose sample comprised 138 translators (2012), 450 translators (2014), and 16 government translators (2013), emphasizes the role of autonomy in enhancing JS. This type of factor appears to have the most significant influence on the level of JV in the Translation/Interpreting domain, as the participants tended to stay in the profession even when they demonstrated low satisfaction with the extrinsic factors (de Jong, 1999; Heino, 2020; Piecychna, 2019; Ruokonen et al., 2020).

Extrinsic factors

Pay, job security, and working conditions remain significant extrinsic factors. Courtney and Phelan (2019) from Dublin City University, Ireland, who aimed to explore selfperceived occupational stress and job satisfaction levels among professional translators, and whose sample included 474 translators from the UK and Ireland, reported disparities in satisfaction between freelance and in-house translators, with freelancers often facing financial insecurity. Conversely, in-house translators may enjoy better job stability but report frustration with their visibility due to the rigid organizational structures, as shown by the Slovakian researchers Bednárová-Gibová & Madoš from the University of Prešov (Bednárová-Gibová & Madoš, 2019) in their investigation of work-related happiness among sworn (83) and institutional (32) translators, aiming to investigate work-related happiness among translators in Slovakia.

Interpersonal and societal factors

Relationships with colleagues and clients significantly impact satisfaction. Koskinen (2009) highlighted the value of feedback and institutional support, while Liu (2013) linked frequent client interactions to higher satisfaction levels. Societal perceptions of translators' roles also influence JS. For instance, Polish sworn translators expressed pride in their societal contributions despite concerns about workload and recognition (Piecychna, 2019). This was one of the findings of this Polish researcher's study, aiming to examine the level of job satisfaction among Polish sworn translators and understand the factors influencing their attitudes. The sample of the study was 73 sworn translators (Polish-English language pairs), with the majority being women (74%) and middle-aged professionals.

Another societal factor closely linked with JS is professional identity. Professional identity refers to an individual's self-concept derived from their affiliation with a professional group, encompassing the values, beliefs, and experiences that shape their role perception

(Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012). In the case of translators and interpreters, this identity is formed not only through formal education and technical expertise but also through their visibility, recognition, and integration into the professional and social structures that surround language work (Ruokonen et al., 2020; Bednárová-Gibová & Madoš, 2019). It develops dynamically throughout the career span and is influenced by factors such as working conditions, societal status, opportunities for development, and professional community engagement (Courtney & Phelan, 2019). Establishing this foundation is essential for understanding how Kazakhstani language professionals experience (dis)satisfaction and career stability.

Challenges impacting job satisfaction

Stress and burnout

High workloads and tight deadlines are pervasive stressors. Ehrensberger-Dow et al. (2016) identified cognitive and organizational ergonomic issues, such as inadequate software tools, as *contributors to stress*. The purpose of their study was to investigate the ergonomic conditions of professional translators globally, focusing on physical, cognitive, and organizational ergonomics. To this end, they employed a quantitative survey in six languages, distributed online to professional translators worldwide. The participant pool incorporated a variety of translators (1,850 translators from nearly 50 countries), including freelancers, institutional, and commercial translators. However, some translators find positive aspects in working under pressure, viewing it as a motivational challenge (Courtney & Phelan, 2019).

Ambiguity and emotional intelligence

Tolerance of ambiguity and emotional intelligence play nuanced roles. HubscherDavidson (2018) found a weak correlation between ambiguity tolerance and JS but highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence in managing stress and enhancing interpersonal relationships. The author of this research is a scholar in Translation Studies

from the Open University, United Kingdom, with a focus on the psychological aspects of translation. In her study, intended to examine the relationship between tolerance of ambiguity (TA), emotional intelligence (EI), and job satisfaction among professional translators, she studied a sample of 85 professional translators (62 women, 23 men), majority self-employed, mostly English-speaking, through an online survey using psychometric scales for TA, EI, and job satisfaction. She found that tolerance of ambiguity is positively correlated with EI, particularly self-control, stress management, and adaptability. However, tolerance of ambiguity does not significantly correlate with job satisfaction. The theoretical basis for the study was the Emotional Intelligence Theory (Goleman, D., 1995).

Technological advancements

Technology's dual impact on JS is widely acknowledged. While translation memory tools enhance productivity, they can also lead to monotonous tasks and "boreout" (Ehrensberger-Dow & Massey, 2019). Translators' adaptability to technological advancements significantly affects their satisfaction.

Regional and cultural perspectives

Finnish and Slovak translators

Studies on Finnish and Slovak translators reveal differing experiences based on work environments. Finnish translators often benefit from strong institutional support and jobcrafting opportunities (Ruokonen, 2020). Conversely, Slovak literary translators face financial insecurity but find satisfaction in the creative aspects of their work (Bednárová-Gibová, 2020).

Kazakhstan's context

While limited research exists on translators in Kazakhstan, parallels can be drawn from global trends. Economic factors, such as fluctuating currency values and demand for

multilingual expertise, likely shape JS in this region. Further localized research is essential to provide actionable insights.

Comparative insights across professions

Global studies (Andrade & Westover, 2020) highlight that professional autonomy and meaningful work consistently contribute to high satisfaction levels across occupational categories. Translators, similar to academics and creative professionals, derive satisfaction from intrinsic rewards but remain vulnerable to stress and under-recognition.

Conclusion

Translators' JS is determined by a complex relationship of intrinsic, extrinsic, interpersonal, and societal factors. While many translators find fulfillment in the intellectual and creative aspects of their work, challenges such as stress, financial insecurity, and underrecognition persist. Addressing these issues requires collaborative efforts from employers, professional associations, and policymakers. Existing studies often focus exclusively on freelancers or in-house translators without providing a comparative analysis of the two groups. Additionally, the role of translation technologies (e.g., CAT tools, machine translation) and their influence on job satisfaction is often overlooked or only superficially addressed. Further research of these aspects is essential to deepen our understanding and develop targeted interventions. Finally, while there is a diverse range of studies exploring the many-sided nature of job satisfaction in the Western world, namely the European countries, there is limited empirical research on job satisfaction and professional challenges faced by translators and interpreters in Central Asia, including Kazakhstan. Since the Translation Studies discipline is in the curricula of many top universities in Kazakhstan, an investigation of the perception and status of job satisfaction, and the factors impacting it against our socioeconomic conditions, is seen as particularly beneficial for the local setting.

Methodology

Research Design

This study aims to determine the level of job satisfaction experienced by professionals engaged in the Interpreting/Translation occupation in the Republic of Kazakhstan. As seen from the literature review, this construct is highly relevant to contemporary Translation Studies research, and there is a lack of similar studies in the professional Interpreting/Translation environment in Central Asia and, specifically, in Kazakhstan. In an attempt to cover this research gap, this explorative study will analyze and compare the data collected from the working Kazakhstani translators/interpreters to answer the main research questions: How satisfied/dissatisfied do Kazakhstani translators feel? What are their perceptions of factors shaping their job satisfaction? What are their future career plans?

This study employs a qualitative research design using an interview-based (see Appendix A) descriptive approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Given the subjective nature of job satisfaction and the need to understand individual perspectives, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather detailed insights from professional translators and interpreters in Kazakhstan. This method allows for open-ended discussions while ensuring that key themes related to job satisfaction, professional challenges, and career aspirations are consistently explored across participants (Kallio et al., 2016).

This study is situated within a qualitative, interpretivist research paradigm. Given that job satisfaction is inherently subjective and context-dependent, this framework allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences and perceptions.

The use of thematic analysis was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2021) framework. Thematic analysis is well-suited for this type of inquiry due to its flexibility and capacity to provide rich, detailed, and complex accounts of qualitative data. This method does

not require adherence to any pre-existing theoretical framework, which makes it suitable for exploratory research such as the present study.

The epistemological position taken in this study leans toward a constructivist view, acknowledging that meaning is co-constructed through the interaction between the researcher and participants. This perspective aligns with the use of semi-structured interviews and reflexive thematic analysis.

In terms of qualitative rigor, the study adheres to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria for trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Techniques such as member checking, rich thick description, and reflexive journaling were employed to ensure these standards were met.

Additionally, Tracy's (2010) eight 'big-tent' criteria for excellent qualitative research—such as worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical practice, and meaningful coherence—were also considered throughout the research process to enhance the quality of the findings.

Data Collection Instrument

This study employed semi-structured individual interviews as the primary data collection instrument, designed to explore the nuanced dimensions of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among translators and interpreters in Kazakhstan. This method was selected for its ability to combine structured guidance with the flexibility to probe deeper into participant responses, allowing for the emergence of rich, context-specific insights (Kallio et al., 2016; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

The interview protocol was carefully constructed on the basis of previous empirical studies investigating occupational satisfaction and well-being among translators and interpreters, including works by Rodríguez-Castro (2016), Courtney & Phelan (2019), and Piecychna (2019). Drawing on these precedents ensured that the protocol addressed key

thematic areas—such as emotional satisfaction, working conditions, financial stability, recognition, and professional identity—while being adapted to the cultural and institutional context of Kazakhstan.

The interview protocol is provided in Appendix A hereto.

Structure and Organization

The interview protocol is structured into three main sections to ensure a logical and comprehensive exploration of the research topic while allowing for flexibility to capture unexpected insights.

The first section, Background Information, gathers demographic and professional details about the participants, including their age, education level, language pairs, years of experience, employment type, and professional trajectory. This information provides context for understanding individual perspectives and variations in job satisfaction among different categories of translators, such as freelancers and in-house professionals (both company- and agency-employed translators).

The second section, Understanding Job Satisfaction, focuses on participants' definitions and perceptions of job satisfaction, their satisfaction levels, contributing and diminishing factors, and the broader professional challenges they face in Kazakhstan. Questions in this section encourage participants to reflect on their experiences, emotions, and motivations, offering rich qualitative insights into the intricacies of job satisfaction in the translation industry. Participants are also asked to assess how well their job meets their career aspirations and to discuss their future career plans.

The third section, Industry-Level Solutions & Improvements, shifts the discussion toward potential structural changes that could improve job satisfaction among translators in Kazakhstan. Participants are invited to provide recommendations for industry improvements, policy changes, and professional support systems. This section allows for practical

contributions from professionals in the field, offering insights that may be valuable for translation agencies, policymakers, and educational institutions.

The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed for guided discussions while offering the flexibility to explore additional topics based on participants' responses. Followup questions were asked to clarify or expand upon responses, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of translators' experiences. The structured organization of the interview guide facilitated comparability between responses while allowing for personalized narratives that reflect each participant's unique career path and job satisfaction determinants.

Sampling and sample

I planned to contact translators' associations of Kazakhstan by e-mail, and through social networks, sending them a message/e-mail asking them to encourage their members based in Astana to participate. The study targets practicing translators, so, the inclusion criteria were as follows: 1) individuals currently working as translators in Kazakhstan fulltime; 2) participants had to be at least 18 years old; 3) individuals who can understand and answer the semi-structured interview questions in Russian or English. Efforts were made to recruit participants from diverse professional contexts, including freelancers, in-house professionals (in both corporate and agency settings), and different experience levels.

This study employed a combination of maximum variation purposive sampling and snowball sampling to ensure the inclusion of a wide range of professional experiences and demographic characteristics. Maximum variation sampling was used to deliberately select participants from different interpreter/translator roles (freelance and in-house), modes (translation and interpreting), and age groups, enhancing the depth and transferability of findings (Palinkas et al., 2015). Snowball sampling was used in this study to supplement purposive strategies by leveraging participants' professional networks to recruit additional qualified individuals, particularly those who may be less visible or harder to reach through

institutional channels. This technique is particularly useful in qualitative research when studying a dispersed or loosely organized population, such as freelance translators or inhouse professionals working in non-centralized institutions (Noy, 2008). Snowball sampling enabled access to participants with diverse job roles and levels of visibility, which enriched the variation in perspectives and enhanced the credibility of the findings.

The sample size (n=10) was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which occurs when no new themes or insights emerge from the interviews (Guest et al., 2006). This was deemed sufficient for a study of this scope, given its focus on detailed narrative data. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that less visible voices, such as freelancers and those not affiliated with formal institutions, were represented.

Recruitment Strategy

A multi-channel recruitment approach was used to maximize participation and outreach. Participants were invited through the following domains:

Online recruitment: Invitations to participate were shared on professional networks, social media platforms. These channels ensure that freelancers and in-house translators, who may not be affiliated with professional organizations, can also participate. This strategy brought one of the participating freelance interpreters.

Professional associations: For this study, I tried to engage Kazakhstan-based translators' and interpreters' associations, as well as translation agencies, via email. I sent them invitation letters asking them to encourage their members to take part in the study. This approach was to ensure participation from verified professionals working in formal translation environments. However, none of these invitations received any responses, probably due to the lack of interest on the part of translators/interpreters in a setting where they do not feel protected or have only monetary relations with their commissioners
Snowball sampling: The participants were encouraged to share the invitation with colleagues

and peers in the translation and interpreting community. This strategy was supposed to enhance reach, especially among freelance translators or those not affiliated with formal organizations.

However, for the most part, personal connections of the author appeared to be the most fruitful path to recruit participants for the study. The majority of participants came from the researcher's phonebook. At the end of each interview, I asked the interviewees if they knew someone who could be asked to participate too, and asked for their contact details. This strategy brought almost half of the remaining participants in the study.

Interview Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in person and online, depending on participants' availability and location. The interviews lasted between 35 and 65 minutes, and were conducted in either Russian or English. All interviews followed a flexible guide, covering themes related to job satisfaction, career challenges, and aspirations. Participants were encouraged to elaborate on personal experiences, allowing rich, detailed narratives to emerge.

Rapport was established at the outset through informal conversation and assurances of confidentiality. When communication issues occurred, such as weak internet or hesitancy, clarification and probing were used to elicit deeper responses. Follow-up questions were tailored to each participant's experiences, which allowed for individualized engagement and enriched the data.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis approach. The first step, familiarization, involved reading the transcripts multiple times to gain an initial sense of the data. This was followed by generating initial codes, where

segments of data relevant to job satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and career planning were highlighted and labeled using NVivo software.

In the third phase, codes were grouped into preliminary themes, which were then reviewed and refined in phase four to ensure internal consistency and coherence. In phase five, themes were clearly defined and named based on the patterns they captured. The final phase involved producing the report, using selected quotes to illustrate each theme.

Themes such as 'Emotional Landscape of the Profession' and 'Career Transition Intentions' emerged inductively through this process. Each theme was revisited iteratively to refine its boundaries and ensure it reflected the dataset as a whole.

Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to the ethical guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020) and other established research ethics frameworks to ensure that participants' rights, privacy, and well-being are protected throughout the research process. Key ethical principles, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and data protection, are strictly followed to maintain research integrity and participant trust.

To ensure the confidentiality of all participants in this study on Kazakhstani translators' job satisfaction, several protective measures were implemented. Each participant was be assigned a unique identifier code, and no personally identifiable information, such as names, specific workplaces, or contact details, was recorded or published. Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and stored in a password-protected file. Only the researcher had access to the recordings and transcripts, which were de-identified by removing any details that could link responses to specific individuals.

Any quotes included in publications were fully anonymized to prevent identification. Data will be retained for a year after the completion of the study, after which all electronic files will be permanently deleted and any hard copies will be securely shredded.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. The informed consent form explicitly states the purpose of the research, highlighting that participation is entirely voluntary and that respondents may withdraw at any time without providing a reason or facing any consequences. The form also describes the potential risks and benefits associated with participation, clarifying that the study does not pose any direct risks to respondents. Furthermore, participants were assured that all data collected would be strictly used for academic purposes and that results would be presented in an aggregated form to maintain anonymity. Once the data is anonymized and aggregated, individual responses were no longer identifiable, ensuring compliance with best practices in research data ethics (European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2023).

This study was designed in full accordance with institutional and professional ethical research standards and was submitted for review and approval by the Research and Ethics Committee of the School of Liberal Arts of Maqsut Narikbayev University, for which approval was received before I began conducting any semi-structured interviews. This step ensured compliance with academic, professional, and international research ethics guidelines and strengthened the credibility of the study.

Trustworthiness and credibility

Ensuring trustworthiness and credibility in this qualitative study is essential for producing rigorous, valid, and meaningful findings. Several strategies were incorporated to enhance the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the research.

One key approach is reflexivity, which involves the researcher's critical selfawareness of their own biases, perspectives, and influence on the research process.
Reflexivity is maintained through continuous self-reflection, journaling, and discussions with the thesis supervisor to ensure that the researcher remains conscious of any potential

subjectivity when interpreting participants' responses. This reflective approach helps to mitigate biases and enhances the study's credibility (Berger, 2015).

Another method used is the iterative reading of transcripts, which allows for a deep engagement with the data and refinement of emerging themes. By repeatedly reviewing and re-analyzing interview transcripts, the researcher ensures that key themes, patterns, and variations are accurately identified. This process also supports data triangulation, where findings are compared across different participants to ensure consistency and reliability (Nowell et al., 2017).

The study also employs thick description, which involves providing detailed, contextualized accounts of participants' experiences. By capturing rich, in-depth narratives, this method allows for a nuanced interpretation of translators' job satisfaction, making it possible for readers to evaluate the study's transferability to similar professional and cultural contexts (Geertz, 1973). Direct quotes from participants were included to illustrate key themes and ensure that findings remain grounded in participants' own words.

Additionally, member checking was used to further validate findings. Participants were contacted via messengers or by phone when the data was unclear due to unstable Internet connection during the interviews, or if their responses could provide an ambiguous interpretation. This was done to confirm that their views have been accurately represented. This step enhances the credibility of the analysis by ensuring that interpretations align with participants' intended meanings (Birt et al., 2016).

Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative study on job satisfaction among Kazakhstani translators and interpreters. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with 10 participants from diverse professional backgrounds — including freelance and in-house translators, agency-affiliated interpreters, and language service department staff (see the full

demographic details of the participants in Tables 1 and 2 in the Appendices) — the data were analyzed thematically using the approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The resulting themes are organized in alignment with the study's three research questions, each exploring different facets of satisfaction, influencing factors, and career orientation.

The goal of this chapter is not to quantify trends but to illuminate participants' lived experiences and professional realities through rich description and verbatim quotations. The findings are presented thematically, grounded in participants' own language, and supported by interpretative insights that remain distinct from broader theoretical discussion (which follows in the next chapter). Where relevant, comparisons between translators and interpreters, or between freelance and in-house professionals, are highlighted to illustrate variation in job satisfaction across different roles and employment contexts.

The findings are organized into three sections in line with the three research questions of the study and the themes derived from the analysis:

RQ1: How (dis)satisfied do Kazakhstani translators feel about their jobs?

RQ2: What factors do they perceive as shaping their job (dis)satisfaction?

RQ3: How do Kazakhstani translators' feelings of job (dis)satisfaction influence their careers?

Each section includes major themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data, with supporting participant quotes presented in their original form (translated where necessary) to retain authenticity and nuance. For the entire coding scheme, see Table 3 in the Appendices.

RQ1: How (dis)satisfied do Kazakhstani translators feel about their jobs?

Theme: (Dis)Satisfaction Over Time

Participants reflected on how their satisfaction evolved throughout their careers. Some reported increased confidence and satisfaction due to accumulated experience:

> "I think that it is higher now because I gained some experience, and 12 years later, I think I understand more about interpretation and about how the work is to be done, and what kinds of conditions we're supposed to be provided with…" (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

Others expressed pride and fulfillment after self-evaluating their performance:

> "I was really satisfied with the job that I did after I had a chance to listen to the recordings on YouTube… I was like, okay, I did well this time. (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)"

However, this growth is often accompanied by exhaustion:

> "At the end of the day, you're so stressed and you're so tired that you're not really… you You don't really feel joy about what you do. (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)"

This echoes findings by Courtney and Phelan (2019) and Heino (2020), who argue that the profession offers both rewarding and draining long-term experiences.

> "I didn't have enough vocabulary but I had to work with the first people of the government, including the cosmonaut Dr. Aubakirov… it was the most interesting experience." (Participant 9, in-house interpreter and translator)

These examples illustrate how satisfaction is rarely static—it fluctuates across time and is shaped by confidence, stress tolerance, and evolving expectations.

Theme: Emotional Landscape of the Profession

The emotional experience of working in translation and interpreting is inherently ambivalent, as participants described alternating moments of excitement, fatigue, pride, and disillusionment. Several participants articulated a deep connection to the profession, stemming from the variety and intellectual engagement of their assignments. One freelance translator reflected:

> "Also, some translations are genuinely interesting. For example, I have translated for Lego, and it was fun. When a project is interesting, the whole process is enjoyable." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

Similarly, interpreting was described as energizing and cognitively stimulating, especially when the topics were meaningful or unexpected:

> "Well, it's the fact that you never know what to expect. There's a bit of spontaneity, you never know how you'll perform, or whether the client will be satisfied. That risk, it gives you a bit of adrenaline." (Participant 5, freelance translator)

However, this enthusiasm was frequently counterbalanced by accounts of emotional exhaustion and stress, particularly among interpreters. One participant described the toll of back-to-back assignments:

> "At the end of the day, you're so stressed and you're so tired that you don't really feel joy about what you do. The technicalities of simultaneous interpretation, the stress – it does have an impact on your mental health in some way." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

Others referred to translation and interpreting as emotionally turbulent professions. Participant 6 metaphorically described the role as "emotional swings":

> "There was a book called The Translation Profession… The author said that being a translator is like being on an endless emotional swing. One day you're on top, the next you're at the bottom. That's the hardest part of the profession – learning how to manage that." (Participant 6, freelance interpreter)

For some, emotional satisfaction stemmed from the process of professional growth or overcoming difficult moments. One participant shared:

> "It was really surprising to me because I hadn't known this type of capability was inherent in me." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

Yet others felt disillusioned when their expectations did not align with real-world experiences:

> "When I personally started to work as an interpreter, I was shocked because the things that I had been taught and the things that I actually experienced were completely different. The expectation versus reality gap was huge." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

These accounts resonate with findings by Hubscher-Davidson (2018), who argues that emotional resilience is a key skill for professional interpreters, given the unpredictability and cognitive demands of the job. Participant 9 captured this tension succinctly:

> "It depends on the mood sometimes… if something was wrong with one meeting, the next day you don't want to participate in any more meetings. But when everything goes well, of course, you are happy to continue your work." (Participant 9, in-house interpreter/translator)

Together, these narratives paint a vivid picture of emotional volatility in translation and interpreting. While moments of fulfillment and stimulation exist, they are often punctuated by fatigue, insecurity, and emotional strain – conditions that significantly affect job satisfaction over time.

Theme: Fulfillment vs. Frustration

The theme of fulfillment versus frustration reveals the ambivalence that many Kazakhstani translators and interpreters experience in their professional lives. For some, the variety of topics, client profiles, and event settings provides continuous intellectual engagement and personal growth. One interpreter reflected on this diversity:

> "It's lifelong learning because ever since I started to work as an interpreter there hasn't been a single day when I didn't learn something new." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

Others described fulfillment as stemming from being intellectually challenged and emotionally engaged during high-stakes assignments:

> "When I translate a speaker who speaks beautifully… I get inspired myself. I enjoy interpreting such people. That's when I feel I've done something meaningful." (Participant 8, freelance interpreter)

A similar sense of meaning was found in moments of mutual understanding between interlocutors, often interpreted as professional success:

> "The best part is when both parties reach understanding — and you know it's because of your work. It's fulfilling." (Participant 2, in-house translator)

However, this sense of purpose is often challenged by routine, repetitive tasks and lack of recognition, which lead to deep frustration and doubt. Some described the work as undervalued and unrewarding:

> "I feel stuck doing the same things over and over again. It's like nobody cares if the translation is good or bad — as long as it's done." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

The perceived mismatch between training and market demands also led to disappointment. One respondent noted that expectations formed during university education often went unmet in real-life practice:

> "They taught us how important our work was. But out here, you're just another service provider. No one treats you like a professional." (Participant 6, freelance interpreter)

Another source of frustration involved the tension between one's ideal self as a skilled communicator and the mechanical reality of translation assignments:

> "Sometimes you don't even know the context — you just translate blindly. It feels like you're not interpreting thoughts, just words." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

Despite such dissatisfaction, many professionals oscillated between frustration and fleeting moments of pride or satisfaction, especially when overcoming a challenge or being recognized by clients or colleagues. As one participant explained:

> "Sometimes I leave an assignment thinking — I nailed it. Those moments make up for the bad ones." (Participant 9, in-house interpreter and translator)

This emotional and cognitive tension — between mastery and monotony, appreciation and invisibility — characterized much of the experience shared by respondents. The work was rarely neutral; instead, it evoked oscillations between intense motivation and subtle alienation. The feeling of professional value often depended on external affirmation and the perceived meaningfulness of specific tasks.

Across all three thematic domains, job satisfaction among Kazakhstani translators and interpreters emerges as fluid, emotionally charged, and structurally conditioned. It is shaped not only by the nature of the tasks and professional role alone, but also by long-term expectations, recognition, and perceived growth.

Subgroup Analysis Results. From the perspective of the attempted subgroup analysis by specialization (translators vs. interpreters), employment type (freelancers vs. in-house workers), career stages, job satisfaction levels, and career plans, the RQ1 findings were as follows:

Translators reported more emotional neutrality or mild satisfaction, often linked to stable income (for in-house translators) or flexibility (for freelancers). Their main emotional complaints involved career stagnation and lack of recognition.

Participant 3 (Translator, In-House): “At least the salary is regular.”

Interpreters, in contrast, described more intense emotional swings. They associated good preparation and technical conditions with strong positive feelings, but described chaotic event organization and mental exhaustion with acute dissatisfaction.

Participant 4 (Interpreter, Freelancer): “If the technical team and organizers are good, interpreting feels great. If not, it’s survival mode.”

Freelancers typically emphasized freedom, flexibility, and autonomy as key positive emotions. However, they also expressed anxiety about income instability and market unpredictability, especially in periods of low demand.

Participant 8 (Freelancer Interpreter): “Freelancing allows me to spend more time with my family. It’s not easy, but I like this freedom.”

In-house participants appreciated salary stability and predictable workflows, but many described feelings of invisibility and professional stagnation within organizational hierarchies.

Participant 3 (In-House Translator): “Our salaries are stuck for years. Every year we expect an increase, but nothing happens.”

Early-career participants expressed a mix of hopefulness and anxiety. While they appreciated the flexibility (freelancers) or regular pay (in-house), many voiced early dissatisfaction with low salaries and uncertain career paths.

Participant 2 (Early-career In-House Translator): “… you know translation is not like the job that brings you uh quite a high and satisfactory salary…”

Mid-career participants showed greater professional confidence. They emphasized selective project management and better control of work-life balance, though occasional stress persisted.

> Participant 8 (Mid-career Freelancer Interpreter): “After 10 years, you know how to protect your personal time better.”

Senior participants exhibited a tone of resignation and pragmatism. While they valued their professional networks and reputation, they expressed disillusionment with organizational recognition and long-term cognitive exhaustion.

> Participant 7 (Senior In-House Translator): “Organizations don't offer any structured growth for translators. You remain 'just a translator' forever.”

RQ2: What factors do they perceive as shaping their job (dis)satisfaction?

The analysis of interview data revealed a multidimensional landscape of perceived factors that shape job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among Kazakhstani translators and interpreters. These factors coalesced into six interconnected themes: Autonomy and Flexibility, Financial Concern and Stability, Recognition and Professional Identity, Working Conditions and Fairness, Support, Belonging and Development, and Agency Practices and Power Relations. These findings resonate with Herzberg’s distinction between motivators and hygiene factors (1959), the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), and Bourdieu’s conceptualization of economic and symbolic capital (1986).

Theme: Autonomy and Flexibility

Autonomy and flexibility emerged as essential sources of job satisfaction, especially among freelancers. Many participants highlighted the freedom to choose assignments, control schedules, and define professional boundaries as central to their well-being. For these professionals, autonomy was not only a practical benefit but also a psychological asset that counterbalanced other challenges in the field.

"Because I set my own rates. If clients agree, I translate. If not, they can refuse - that's fine. I set rates that I find acceptable." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

"Flexibility, international environment." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

"So when you are freelancing, you have your timeline. You can choose what you can and what you can't." (Participant 3, in-house translator with freelance experience)

"As a freelance translator or interpreter, you have your own, how do you call it? You decide for yourself whether you take on this particular assignment, job, or you don't. If you have no time or if the subject is not of your profile, you can refuse." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

"Well, I don't even know. If you're a freelancer, everything depends on you. You build your own schedule and understand that now you'll work and then you'll have time to rest. That's your balance." (Participant 5, freelance translator)

In contrast, in-house professionals often spoke about structural rigidity and lack of flexibility as limiting factors.

"When you are working as an in-house translator, you cannot do that. You just go and do it." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter with in-house experience)

"When you work as an in-house translator, you need to be there from a particular time in the morning until the working hours are over… and you don't have any choice." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter with in-house experience)

Some respondents shared how the flexibility of freelance work provided the space to find a healthier work-life balance or explore areas of specialization.

"I appreciate the work-life balance more because of the change of my marital status. Uh, if a few years ago I was a desperate workaholic, I'm not like that anymore." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

> "You can try different fields and then choose a specialization." (Participant 1, freelance translator)
>
> "Yes, I now want to specialize more narrowly—translate within a specific field… Sometimes I feel drawn to medical translation." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

Still, the same freedom also came with the burden of self-management.

> "You need to plan your day well. As a freelancer, you might end up working from morning to night—or even through the night—and then your schedule gets messed up. You wake up after noon. It's very important to have a clear routine." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

Others reflected more philosophically on the trade-off between autonomy and structure.

> "It's a degree of freedom—the opportunity to choose what you like and not do what you don't like. The ability to regulate your own working day. To know what I'm willing to do and what I'm not." (Participant 6, freelance interpreter)

In sum, autonomy and flexibility served as core motivators for freelance participants, fostering not only practical independence but also emotional resilience. At the same time, this flexibility demanded a high level of personal discipline, and the contrast with in-house conditions underscored the structural differences that shaped job satisfaction. This dichotomy aligns with the JD-R framework, where autonomy operates as a critical job resource.

Theme: Financial Concern and Stability

Financial considerations emerged as a dominant factor shaping both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among Kazakhstani translators and interpreters. Across all employment types—freelance and in-house, translators and interpreters alike—participants emphasized

that income stability, market demand, and fair remuneration were central to their sense of professional fulfillment.

A consistent theme was the contrast between the stable income of in-house positions and the precariousness of freelance work. For many in-house professionals, salary consistency was a key reason for staying:

> "Because, first of all, there's stability." (Participant 7, in-house translator)

> "So, work within the company is stable because of the salary, of course, because you have… Your job description provides your scope of work and your salary is paid." (Participant 9, in-house interpreter and translator)

By contrast, freelancers reported significant stress due to income fluctuations and unpredictable job availability:

> "Being a freelancer is tough because of the instability – your income isn't steady." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

> "It really matters because there are seasons and off-seasons for translators… and in some months you just sit and think, should I even be doing this, or should I start looking for a new job? (Participant 5, freelance translator)

Freelancers often linked job satisfaction directly to their ability to find assignments and negotiate rates:

> "When you are working as a freelance translator, your salary depends on your efforts in searching and looking for assignments." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

Others reported having expected more from the freelance market:

> "I thought that I would do good in my professional career. But as time shows, it hasn't happened." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

> "There aren't many orders yet… for a translator without much experience, it's pretty hard to break through. (Participant 5, freelance translator)

Some in-house translators expressed dissatisfaction with their remuneration, especially when comparing workload and pay:

> "If I translate 600 pages in one week, I will have at least six hundred thousand tenges, but I work for two hundred thousand." (Participant 3, in-house translator)

Others emphasized the stagnation of the market compared to previous years:

> "The market is not as stable as it was maybe five years ago." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

External global forces, including war and international politics, were mentioned as shaping the demand for interpreting services:

> "The United States blocked financing of some programs in Kazakhstan and work for simultaneous interpreters stopped… so they didn't get any money." (Participant 9, in-house interpreter)

> "Because of the Ukrainian war… negotiations with European companies stopped… interpreters are not needed for some parts of [the business]." (Participant 9, in-house interpreter)

Several participants reported that financial stability significantly boosted their job satisfaction:

> "So if we get paid nicely, then the job satisfaction level goes up." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

> "For example, how do financial stability and income affect your satisfaction? —It's the first position I would say for satisfaction." (Participant 9, in-house interpreter and translator)

However, this was tempered by a recognition that financial needs often outweighed appreciation or recognition:

> "Since it is my profession and I earn money by being a translator and interpreter, of course, the financial part is very important for me. I don't do that for gratitude. Gratitude is important, but you need to have this gratitude in the monetary form." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

Even among those with stable income, concern about broader economic trends remained. Some viewed the domestic market as oversaturated or unregulated:

> "I don't see our market… needing that number of specialists, to be honest." (Participant 8, freelance interpreter)

This underscores Herzberg's point that salary functions more as a hygiene factor than a true motivator.

Theme: Recognition and Professional Identity

Across the interviews, participants consistently emphasized that recognition—whether from clients, colleagues, or institutions—plays a central role in shaping their job satisfaction and professional identity. For many, even small gestures of acknowledgment had a disproportionately positive impact. As one freelance translator reflected:

> "That really affects me—it boosts your professional self-esteem. It's nice when your work is appreciated. And even when clients give constructive criticism, that helps too." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

This sentiment was echoed by others, who highlighted moments when positive client feedback elevated their sense of purpose. One freelance interpreter noted:

> "My job satisfaction level goes up even more when I receive positive feedback from a client." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

In fact, recognition was often described as a driver of future aspirations. For example:

> "Right now, I want to translate only at high-profile events, large-scale conferences. I want more recognition. Maybe I want a greater level of trust from my

clients. I want them to be as committed to me as I am to them." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

However, many participants described how the profession is often misunderstood and undervalued. There was a recurring frustration that translators and interpreters are seen as mere intermediaries, or even machines. As one participant bluntly put it:

"Some clients think that translators can work without breaks or food. Sometimes translators are not even seen as people. It's as if robots are doing the job." (Participant 5, freelance translator)

This lack of visibility was especially acute for written translators. As Participant 2 shared:

"Well, that's very rare in terms of translation, but sometimes they send us messages like it was a good translation." (Participant 2, in-house translator)

For many, the issue extended beyond interpersonal dynamics to broader societal and organizational structures. Some felt that their contributions were not institutionally valued, particularly in in-house contexts:

"In companies and organizations, translators shouldn't be considered just administrative staff… they do a lot of important and valuable work. And that work deserves recognition." (Participant 6, freelance interpreter)

Frustrations were also voiced around unclear professional boundaries. One freelance translator noted the conflation of roles:

"I also don't like when the translator's role includes office manager duties. That's not fair—each should stick to their own role. Even embassies often combine the two roles, which is frustrating." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

Others shared experiences of being overlooked even after completing large, urgent tasks. As one interpreter described:

> "Some department asked us to translate a big report, and they said it was urgent. We submitted it, and two months later they emailed us like, 'Oh, did you send it?' We said yes. And they said, 'Thanks! We'll now distribute it to the stakeholders.'" (Participant 8, freelance interpreter)

This apparent invisibility seemed to erode participants' sense of professional identity. As one in-house translator shared:

> "People don't treat us like creative professionals, while I consider translation a creative job. Everyone thinks translation is easy, but there's a lot of background research involved." (Participant 7, in-house translator)

And yet, some participants clung to hope that systemic improvements—such as credentialing—could elevate the profession's status:

> "I know there's an ISO certificate that confirms you're a certified translator… In Kazakhstan and in the CIS countries, I've never heard of such a thing." (Participant 5, freelance translator)

Taken together, these narratives illustrate that job satisfaction among Kazakhstani translators and interpreters is profoundly shaped by the degree of recognition they receive. While appreciation can significantly elevate morale, systemic underrecognition and blurred professional roles threaten their sense of value and identity within the field. Recognition, while not always present, acted as a form of symbolic capital, mirroring Bourdieu's theoretical insights.

Theme: Working Conditions and Fairness

Participants frequently emphasized that inadequate working conditions diminish job satisfaction, even when compensation is moderate. As one freelance interpreter shared:

> "If the pay is not that high, and in addition to this medium pay, we are not provided with good working conditions, such as the provision of water or a separate

booth for interpreters and coffee breaks, as well as the lunch breaks, then job satisfaction goes down." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

The matter of unsatisfactory conditions was further perceived in the responses of other interpreters/translators.

"We have these rules… but sometimes, some clients prefer to hire just one interpreter." (Participant 2, in-house translator).

"We don't have any computers for doing good translation, uh, in our workplace, the computers are, how do I say, quite old, so they don't work well, and we don't have any tools for that also, um, that's why I do it on my notebook, and also I don't have a permit to print any papers that I have to translate." (Participant 3, inhouse translators).

These insights reflect the broader understanding that interpreters' satisfaction depends not only on the intellectual demands of their work, but also on the logistical and physical conditions of their assignments. Participant 5 also mentioned:

"Sometimes you arrive, and the booth is not a full-sized one, just a tabletop version – those are really uncomfortable to work in." (Participant 5, freelance translator)

The problem of insufficient preparation time and materials was cited across many roles. One interpreter explained:

"Improper or inefficient provision of documents to get prepared for the translation, no preparatory materials, we can put it like this." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

Others highlighted unsustainable workloads, particularly in in-house positions:

"Or give something like 200 pages for three days. It's impossible, as you know." (Participant 3, in-house translator)

Even when translators performed under pressure, the lack of post-assignment recognition could lead to deep frustration. As Participant 8 shared:

> "We sent that report two months ago. And they told us, 'Oh, we didn't receive it…' And then they distributed it to all stakeholders. No thanks, no acknowledgment." (Participant 8, freelance interpreter)

Health and safety standards were another concern, especially regarding team interpreting. One participant reflected:

> "Simultaneous interpreters don't work alone, they should always work in pairs. But sometimes, clients prefer to hire just one interpreter. We should follow the rules because it's about our health." (Participant 2, in-house translator)

Despite challenges, a few participants identified supportive environments that made a tangible difference. One noted:

> "Good working conditions – like being in a booth with water, a good internet connection, and good sound, that increases job satisfaction as well." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

Still, most professionals voiced a desire for a systemic solution, such as clearer standards or protection frameworks. As one participant summarized:

"When there are some standards, and you know that everyone should work under these standards, because they were set for a reason – to get good payment and take care of your health – that helps." (Participant 2, in-house translator)

Violations of expected standards triggered dissatisfaction rooted in perceived injustice.

Theme: Support, Belonging and Development

Many early-career professionals expressed a desire for mentorship and community:

"But support matters—when you can ask more experienced translators for advice…" (Participant 1, freelance translator)

"Honestly, maybe it's the lack of organizations that would fully protect the rights of translators…" (Participant 5, freelance translator)

"Perhaps it is the absence of any organizations that fully protect translators' rights or where you could speak up and say something, because I don't even know who regulates this in Kazakhstan." (Participant 5, freelance translator).

"And concerning satisfaction, well, yes, probably when there is a unity in opinions, when there are some standards, and you know that everyone should work under these standards because they're… because people had reasons to set these standards to get a good payment and to take care of their health. Yes, yes, that will help." (Participant 2, in-house translator).

At the same time, most translators and interpreters with over 10 years of experience shared their scepticism about trade unions and any improvements that they may bring:

"We take care of such things on our own. There is no special body that could act on our behalf and protect our interests." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter).

"I think at least it could improve the current situation. But again, what are further scenarios in the development of this unionization in the future, how will it develop in the future, and probably it will result again in additional corruption schemes." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter).

"Perhaps I would be afraid of them trying to regulate our market because it may result in some unintended consequences or these agencies or associations having too much clout and the ability to enforce any decisions that they like. Honestly, I'd rather keep things the way they are." (Participant 8, freelance interpreter).

> "And finally, you were supposed to conclude contracts with your clients with the third party, which is the association. And nobody wanted that because that meant that they would lose… the interpreters, the freelancers would lose their clients, because eventually all of the clients would go to the association to look for an interpreter." (Freelance interpreter).

Perceived gaps in university training also surfaced as barriers:

> "When I graduated… I didn't understand even a word of that [foreign] speech." (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

These findings highlight deficits in social capital and support structures, particularly for novices.

Theme: Agency Practices and Power Relations

Finally, critical comments targeted agency behavior. Discontent stemmed from low remuneration and opaque practices:

> "They quoted around 3,000 tenges per page… but offered 800 tenges to freelancers. Before taxes." (Participant 1, freelance translator)

> "The agencies pay only 40% of what they get from the clients." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

Some used vivid metaphors to convey resentment, framing Kazakhstani agencies as exploitative intermediaries:

> "As my colleagues say… they are pimples on the translator's body or bloodsucking insects." (Participant 6, freelance interpreter)

At the same time, participants acknowledged the lack of viable alternatives, highlighting systemic power imbalances.

Overall, freelancers valued autonomy but were more exposed to financial risk and unregulated agency practices. In-house staff appreciated stability and teamwork but often

described inflexible schedules and limited growth. Interpreters expressed higher emotional intensity and stress, while translators noted monotony and underutilization of competencies. These findings suggest the need for more equitable institutional structures, improved professional recognition, and tailored support mechanisms for different career stages and modes of work.

Subgroup analysis results. For translators, dissatisfaction was primarily structural:

- Low salaries (in-house)
- Stagnant career paths
- Organizational invisibility

For interpreters, dissatisfaction was strongly situational:

- Cognitive overload
- Irregular and stressful working conditions
- Dependence on event quality and preparation

For freelancers, influencing factors included:

- Autonomy and self-management
- Financial uncertainty
- Need for continuous self-marketing
- Project quality variability

For in-house workers, influencing factors included:

- Regular pay
- Low upward mobility
- Lack of recognition
- Organizational bureaucracy

For early-career participants:

- Financial survival was a dominant concern.
- Freedom and flexibility were valued.

- Recognition was desired but often absent.

For mid-career participants:

- Project selectivity and work-life balance were key.
- Strategic management of client relationships emerged.

For senior participants:

- Professional networks and accumulated reputation became critical.
- Chronic dissatisfaction with career advancement inside organizations persisted.

RQ3: How do Kazakhstani translators' feelings of job (dis)satisfaction shape their careers?

This section addresses the third research question by exploring how job satisfaction and dissatisfaction shape the career intentions of Kazakhstani translators and interpreters. Findings reveal three broad trajectories: continued attachment to the profession, contemplation of transition or re-skilling, and active planning for career change. These intentions are often shaped by perceived market dynamics, personal growth opportunities, and emerging threats like artificial intelligence. The analysis demonstrates a tension between professional identity and pragmatic adaptation.

Theme: Attachment to the Profession

A strong emotional and vocational commitment to the profession emerged among participants who described interpreting and translation as personally fulfilling. These individuals often expressed a desire to remain in the field long term, citing enjoyment, identity, and a sense of purpose. For example, one freelance interpreter stated:

> "Yes, I think that for the next five to ten years, I will keep working as an interpreter." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

Another added,

> “The first factor is I like… I love my job.” (Participant 4, freelance interpreter)

This attachment was not limited to interpreters. Even translators, typically perceived as having more solitary roles, conveyed satisfaction with the nature of their work.

> “What I like about written translation is that you have plenty of time to think about what you're translating. Overall, it's interesting.” (Participant 5, freelance translator)

> “And then, as I started translating and interpreting, I decided that working as a freelancer would be the dream, and that’s why I switched to that, and I guess I’ve been happy with my career ever since.” (Participant 8, freelance interpreter).

Such responses suggest that intrinsic enjoyment, autonomy, and alignment with personal values bolster continued engagement. From the responses to the interview questions, it can be seen that the most resilient participants are either freelance interpreters who have already been on the market for several years, and who have their client base, or in-house translators who are satisfied with their income level and/or stability. As for the highest job satisfaction scores, these were received either from freelance interpreters who had already established themselves in the TI domain, or beginning interpreters enjoying the diversity of topics and the opportunity to apply the knowledge obtained during their university studies.

Theme: Barriers to Career Change

Despite expressing discontent, some participants remained in the profession due to perceived limitations. These barriers included age, lack of alternative skills, and feelings of professional inertia.

> “I’ll continue for now, given my age. I think it’s too late to start something new.” (Participant 7, in-house translator) reflects a pragmatic resignation to the status quo.

Others doubted their capacity to pivot:

> "So, in theory, I guess I would accept an offer if it came, but I have doubts that it could come because of the skill set that I have." (Participant 8, freelance interpreter)

Such statements reflect the psychological toll of job dissatisfaction, coupled with limited perceived agency.

Theme: Career Transition Intentions

Other participants actively contemplated or planned career changes. This trend was often linked to technological disruption, professional stagnation, or the desire to reskill.

> "I'm actually starting to think about getting another degree and something else, because I'm really done with interpretation, because things are changing rapidly, and I feel like I have to diversify my skills in order to stay in the labor market." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter)

Seasonal instability further amplified uncertainty:

> "It really matters because there are seasons and off-seasons for translators... and some months you just sit and think, should I even be doing this, or should I start looking for a new job…" (Participant 5, freelance translator)

AI was cited as a growing threat to professional relevance, particularly in written translation.

> "Well, probably artificial intelligence… now there's much less written translation work… tools like Deepl and Google have appeared…" (Participant 6, freelance interpreter)

These reflections illustrate how macro-level technological shifts are perceived as deeply personal threats to professional stability.

This category of participants included both young and seasoned interpreters, stating both low and high levels of job satisfaction.

Theme: Exploration of Alternatives

Finally, some participants described experimenting with adjacent roles or identifying longer-term options.

"That's why I probably also work for the university because I can have other aspirations achieved within the walls of the university, because, with the interpretation, I've pretty much achieved what I aspired for." (Participant 10, freelance interpreter) suggests a shift in aspiration without immediate exit.

Others envisioned remaining in the language domain even if moving beyond core TI practice,

> "I cannot see myself in any other profession that is not related to languages..." (Participant 2, in-house translator)

Interestingly, a forward-looking awareness of evolving market demands emerged:

> "I think it also depends on your skills because in Kazakhstan, the demand for trilingual translators is rising." (Participant 5, freelance translator)
>
> "So you realize that in 20 years, Kazakh-English interpreters will be in much higher demand than Russian-English ones." (Participant 8, freelance interpreter)

These remarks hint at a strategic recalibration rather than abandonment, with some professionals proactively adjusting their skillsets and niches.

Subgroup analysis results. Translators were more inclined to stay within the profession but desired better roles (e.g., project coordination). Interpreters expressed higher interest in career shifts, but only in the long term, when they are physically unfit for the profession.

> Participant 9 (Interpreter, In-House): "Maybe teaching interpreting would be a good way out. Same field, less stress."

Freelancers often considered diversifying their skills (e.g., consulting, training) to strengthen their freelance careers. Some were also exploring adjacent fields if freelancing became unsustainable.

> Participant 5 (Freelancer Translator): “Translation alone is not safe anymore. I’m building marketing and project management skills too.”

In-house employees generally preferred internal shifts (e.g., teaching, project coordination) over leaving the profession entirely but were less proactive in seeking change.

> Participant 7 (In-House Translator): “If a chance appears to use my languages differently — project coordination maybe — I will take it.”

Early-career participants displayed higher exit intentions if better opportunities appeared outside the profession. Many were exploring adjacent career paths proactively.

Mid-career participants preferred staying in the profession, aiming for specialization or transition into teaching or consulting roles.

Senior participants mostly planned to remain until retirement, reduce active workloads, or shift into teaching to cope with cognitive exhaustion.

> **Results of other types of subgroup analyses.** Gender-based data analysis did not reveal any differences in job (dis)satisfaction between the two genders.
>
> Based on the demographic data and the results obtained, there is an assumption that translators and interpreters with a higher educational background, or those who are in the process of enhancing it, experience higher levels of JS and more intense positive emotions from their jobs.

Summary

The thematic analysis revealed a complex emotional and professional landscape among translators and interpreters working in Kazakhstan. Participants' satisfaction and

dissatisfaction were shaped by a combination of personal, organizational, and market-level factors.

Job satisfaction (RQ1) was highest when translators and interpreters experienced autonomy, variety, good client feedback, meaningful assignments, or workplace stability—while dissatisfaction arose from career stagnation, lack of recognition, tight deadlines, or income insecurity. Across all participants, major sources of satisfaction included flexibility, autonomy, steady income (for in-house workers), good technical and organizational support, positive client feedback, and the meaningful application of academic knowledge. Conversely, dissatisfaction stemmed from low or unstable income, career stagnation, poor market conditions, and the cognitive demands associated with interpreting work. Career plans (RQ3) were deeply influenced by perceived job satisfaction levels, with many participants either planning to remain in the profession, diversify within it, or transition to related roles such as consulting, teaching, or project management. Fewer participants expressed intentions to leave the profession entirely, though AI disruption and market volatility prompted reflection about long-term sustainability.

Discussion

This section interprets the main findings presented in the Findings chapter in light of existing literature and theoretical frameworks. It seeks to explain how the participants' experiences of job (dis)satisfaction and career intentions reflect broader trends within the translation and interpreting professions. The discussion also integrates insights from subgroup analyses to highlight significant patterns and divergences across different participant groups.

The chapter is organized around key thematic areas emerging from the data, offering an analysis of how personal, organizational, and structural factors interact to shape translators' and interpreters' professional satisfaction and sustainability.

The findings of this study confirm and extend earlier research into job satisfaction, career sustainability, and professional development in the fields of translation and interpreting, while also highlighting specific patterns relevant to the Kazakhstani context, such as the perceptions of the exploitative nature of agencies and the lack of institutional support for language professionals.

First, the emotional landscape of translators and interpreters aligns with broader trends observed in prior studies (e.g., Sela-Sheffy, 2008; Dam & Zethsen, 2016). Freelancers valued autonomy, flexibility, and work-life balance, consistent with Sela-Sheffy's (2008) findings on the prestige dynamics of freelance translators. However, the downside of freelancing — chronic financial instability and administrative burdens — also mirrored risks discussed in previous literature (Dam & Zethsen, 2012). Meanwhile, in-house translators appreciated salary stability but expressed dissatisfaction with career stagnation and low professional recognition, echoing Dam and Zethsen's (2016) findings on status and satisfaction among salaried translators.

The experience of interpreters, particularly in terms of cognitive overload and the emotional highs and lows associated with event conditions, reflects the findings of MoserMercer (2003) and AIIC (2018) surveys that emphasize interpreting as a cognitively and emotionally demanding profession. Participants' reports of exhaustion and desire to transition to less demanding roles, such as teaching, match previous studies on interpreter burnout and career transitions (Kurz, 2003).

Career stage clearly influenced professional attitudes. Early-career participants showed hopefulness mixed with insecurity, mid-career participants demonstrated increased strategic control over their work, and senior participants displayed resignation and pragmatic survival strategies. These trajectories align with general career stage theories (Super, 1957) and more recent observations in translation and interpreting careers (Sela-Sheffy, 2020).

The role of job satisfaction level in shaping career intentions was particularly striking. Higher satisfaction correlated with resilience, specialization, and moderate diversification plans, while lower satisfaction correlated with strong intentions to leave the profession — a pattern supported by general job satisfaction theory (Herzberg, 1966) and previous empirical studies in T&I (Dam & Zethsen, 2016; Angelelli, 2019).

Job satisfaction level findings confirmed the powerful influence of emotional and economic stability on professional resilience. Participants with high satisfaction described pragmatic optimism and commitment to the profession, while those with low satisfaction described severe frustration and explicit plans to exit. This closely matches Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory of motivation and previous T&I-specific findings by Angelelli (2019). From yet another perspective, this pattern reflects Bourdieu's (1990) theory of capital accumulation and erosion in precarious professions.

Finally, participants' career plans revealed a critical bifurcation: those who perceived enough professional support and growth opportunities planned to stay and adapt, while those who faced persistent structural frustrations sought exits to adjacent fields. This confirms Bourdieu's (1990) theories about professional capital and the struggles for recognition and sustainability within precarious cultural professions.

The perception of agencies in the local context should also be mentioned. The theme of distrust and criticism of translation agencies emerged strongly across participants' accounts, positioning agencies not as facilitators of professional work but as intermediaries who extract value without contributing meaningful support. Participants described agencies as "parasites" and "bloodsuckers", reflecting a deep-seated frustration with what they perceived as exploitative practices. Many freelancers indicated a preference for working directly with clients to avoid agency fees, emphasizing a lack of trust in the intermediary model.

From the perspective of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), this finding aligns closely with the concept of hygiene factors. According to Herzberg, dissatisfaction arises when external job conditions—such as organizational practices, salary fairness, and interpersonal relationships—are perceived as inadequate. In the case of Kazakhstani translators, agencies are not perceived as a source of support or stability but rather as an additional obstacle in the professional environment. Their presence exacerbates dissatisfaction by offering little in terms of career development or job security while diminishing income through high commissions.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Demerouti et al., 2001) further supports this interpretation. Agencies, in theory, could serve as job resources by providing client access, stable assignments, and administrative support. However, participants' narratives suggest that agencies in Kazakhstan fail to perform this role. Instead, they often increase job demands (e.g., tighter deadlines, lower pay, unstable conditions) without offering corresponding resources, thus contributing to burnout and disengagement.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, the weak institutional role of agencies diminishes translators' symbolic capital. In more structured professional fields, agencies can act as legitimizing bodies that enhance a worker's status through association. Here, however, their lack of credibility and professional standards erodes the symbolic recognition of translators, contributing to a precarious professional identity.

Thus, the findings reveal that agencies function not as neutral market actors but as amplifiers of dissatisfaction in a context where institutional frameworks are already weak. The absence of trust in agencies reflects a broader market dysfunction where translators must individually negotiate their worth and protection, often without collective support. This context forces many professionals to either fully embrace freelance independence or consider exiting the field altogether, as further discussed in the next section.

Overall, the findings suggest that translators' and interpreters' job satisfaction and career sustainability are shaped not only by personal preferences or skills but also by broader market structures, organizational practices, and the availability of meaningful career development opportunities.

The subgroup analyses provided important insights into how personal and contextual factors interact to shape translators' and interpreters' professional experiences. While the general thematic findings captured the overall emotional and career trajectories of participants, subgroup analyses revealed meaningful patterns of difference across specialization, employment type, and career stage.

Differences between translators and interpreters showed that while both groups faced market instability and career stagnation risks, interpreters encountered additional cognitive and emotional burdens associated with the unpredictable nature of live events. This finding reinforces earlier observations by Moser-Mercer (2003) and Kurz (2003) regarding interpreter-specific stress factors and supports the idea that interpreting demands unique resilience strategies.

Comparisons between freelancers and in-house employees highlighted the classic tension between autonomy and stability. Freelancers experienced greater emotional satisfaction from flexibility but also greater financial anxiety, while in-house employees appreciated regular income but expressed frustration with career ceilings and organizational invisibility. These findings align with Dam and Zethsen's (2016) analysis of salaried translators' ambivalent attitudes toward job security versus status.

Career stage analysis revealed a developmental trajectory: early-career participants showed optimism tempered by insecurity; mid-career participants strategically managed workloads and career paths; senior participants exhibited resignation and a focus on survival or minimal stress roles (e.g., teaching). This reflects Super's (1957) career development

theory and Sela-Sheffy's (2020) insights into how professional identities evolve across career phases.

Overall, the subgroup analyses deepened the understanding of how translators' and interpreters' professional experiences are shaped not merely by general market conditions, but by a complex interaction between personal career stages, satisfaction levels, specialization types, and strategic adaptability.

Broader Implications for the Profession

The findings of this study highlight important implications for the sustainability and development of the translation and interpreting professions, particularly in emerging markets such as Kazakhstan.

First, the importance of professional autonomy and specialization as sources of satisfaction suggests that career support initiatives should focus not only on basic employability but also on helping translators and interpreters strategically position themselves in high-value niches. This aligns with Sela-Sheffy's (2020) view that professional identity and prestige increasingly depend on perceived specialization and expertise.

Second, the results demonstrate that market structures have a profound impact on professionals' emotional and career trajectories. Chronic instability, poor client education, and a lack of certification systems contribute heavily to dissatisfaction and career exits, a trend already noted in Bourdieu's (1990) theory of capital erosion in precarious professions. Professional associations and educational institutions thus need to advocate more strongly for setting industry standards and educating clients about the value of professional services (Dam & Zethsen, 2016).

Third, career sustainability strategies must account for the cumulative impact of cognitive load, particularly for interpreters. Providing formal opportunities for career transition pathways, such as moving into teaching, mentoring, or project coordination, could

help retain experienced professionals longer, in line with observations made by Kurz (2003) and Moser-Mercer (2003).

Fourth, improving agency practices is necessary to rebuild trust between translators and intermediaries. Agencies should adopt transparent fee structures, invest in translator development (e.g., providing training for new professionals), and offer clear, fair contracts. Agencies acting as true partners, rather than opportunistic brokers, could become a significant positive resource rather than a source of dissatisfaction.

Finally, the results underscore that early-career support structures are crucial for retaining talent. Early-career translators and interpreters, who experience insecurity and financial instability most acutely, could benefit from targeted mentorship, project experience programs, and clear advancement pathways, supporting the career stage model proposed by Super (1957).

Overall, without structural improvements at the market and institutional levels, even highly skilled professionals may continue to face premature career exits, leading to a loss of expertise in the field and a weakening of the profession's collective capital.

This study aimed to explore the job satisfaction of translators and interpreters in Kazakhstan, identify the key positive and negative factors influencing their work experiences, and investigate their future career intentions.

The first research question — "How (dis)satisfied do Kazakhstani translators and interpreters feel about their jobs?" — was addressed through participants' narratives highlighting a spectrum of emotional experiences, from moderate satisfaction with flexibility and financial stability to deep dissatisfaction associated with market instability, poor organizational conditions, and cognitive exhaustion (cf. Dam & Zethsen, 2016; MoserMercer, 2003). While a majority reported moderate to high satisfaction levels, especially those enjoying autonomy or steady pay, a significant minority felt professionally marginalized or emotionally drained.

The second research question — “What factors do they perceive as shaping their job satisfaction?” — was answered through thematic findings and subgroup analyses. Satisfaction was enhanced by factors such as autonomy, recognition, meaningful use of academic skills, and good technical support, consistent with Herzberg’s (1966) two-factor theory. Dissatisfaction stemmed from structural factors like financial insecurity, cognitive overload (especially among interpreters), and lack of career progression (Super, 1957; Kurz, 2003).

The third research question — “How do Kazakhstani translators’ feelings of job satisfaction influence their careers?” — revealed a bifurcation: participants with higher satisfaction levels and stronger support systems intended to stay and adapt within the profession, while those facing persistent structural barriers planned to exit toward adjacent, more stable fields, confirming patterns described by Bourdieu (1990) and Angelelli (2019).

The subgroup analyses further enriched these findings by demonstrating how career stage, employment type, specialization, job satisfaction levels, and career planning intersected to produce diverse professional trajectories. Early-career participants, freelancers, and interpreters faced specific vulnerabilities but also showed resourcefulness in developing resilience strategies, aligning with broader sociological accounts of professional adaptation (Sela-Sheffy, 2020).

Overall, the study's findings achieved the research objectives by offering a comprehensive, nuanced understanding of job satisfaction, career dynamics, and professional sustainability among Kazakhstani translators and interpreters.

Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged when interpreting the findings of this study.

First, the study employed a small, purposive sample of ten participants, which, while appropriate for thematic qualitative research, limits the generalizability of the findings to the

broader population of translators and interpreters in Kazakhstan. As the purpose of the study was not to generate findings relevant to a broader population but rather to explore in-depth Kazakhstani translators' and interpreters' job satisfaction and factors shaping it, the findings of this study are useful in developing understanding of context-specific factors shaping job satisfaction and could be used in developing a large-scale questionnaire specific to a particular context, such as Kazakhstan or other countries with similar context. The relatively small sample size also restricted the statistical representativeness of subgroup comparisons, particularly for groups such as participants holding graduate degrees (Master's or PhD), where only two individuals were represented.

Second, an imbalance in subgroup sizes occurred in several dimensions, such as education level and career plans. While care was taken to treat these imbalances transparently, the smaller subgroup numbers (e.g., three participants planning to leave the profession) reduce the robustness of comparisons and require cautious interpretation.

Third, self-reporting bias is a potential concern. Participants' accounts of their satisfaction levels, career intentions, and perceptions of the market may have been influenced by their current emotional states or immediate professional circumstances, which might not fully reflect their long-term experiences.

Fourth, the study relied solely on interview data without triangulation from other sources (e.g., observation, client feedback, institutional reports). This mono-method design, while providing rich qualitative insights, limits the possibility of cross-validating participants' narratives against other data streams.

Finally, the context-specific focus on Kazakhstan brings both strengths and limitations. While the study offers valuable insight into the career trajectories of translators and interpreters in an under-researched national context, local market conditions, cultural factors, and professional structures specific to Kazakhstan may limit the direct applicability

of these findings to other countries or regions. But these findings could be relevant to countries with a similar national context.

Despite these limitations, the study provides an important exploratory foundation for understanding the complexities of job satisfaction and career sustainability in translation and interpreting professions, particularly within transitional and emerging market environments.

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study open several promising directions for future research on translator and interpreter careers.

First, larger-scale studies using mixed-methods approaches could provide more generalizable data on the patterns observed here. Surveys combined with in-depth interviews could verify how widespread career trajectories and satisfaction trends are across different segments of the T&I population. Quantitative validation could strengthen thematic findings and help measure relationships between variables such as satisfaction, career stage, and exit intentions.

Second, future research could explore longitudinal career trajectories of translators and interpreters. Tracking professionals over time would offer richer insights into how satisfaction evolves, how career plans are modified, and how professionals adapt (or fail to adapt) to changes in market structures, technologies, and institutional frameworks (cf. SelaSheffy, 2020; Angelelli, 2019).

Third, comparative studies between countries with different market maturities and institutional supports could highlight how structural factors shape professional sustainability. For example, comparing translators in Kazakhstan with those in EU countries or North America could reveal critical differences and commonalities shaped by market saturation, certification systems, and professional associations' strength.

Fourth, specialization-specific studies could deepen understanding of how satisfaction differs across T&I domains (e.g., literary translation, conference interpreting, audiovisual translation). Given that cognitive demands, prestige, and financial rewards vary by specialization, finer-grained analyses could reveal more targeted intervention points for professional support (cf. Dam & Zethsen, 2016; Kurz, 2003).

Further, quantitative research on whether translators/interpreters with higher educational background, or those who are in the process of enhancing it, experience higher levels of JS and more intense positive emotions from their jobs, could be relevant.

Finally, the impact of emerging technologies and AI-driven translation tools on translators' and interpreters' job satisfaction, workload, and career strategies warrants urgent investigation. As automation reshapes the linguistic services market, future research should examine how professional identity, career sustainability, and satisfaction are being renegotiated in response to technological change (cf. Angelelli, 2019).

Overall, future studies should aim to both broaden and deepen our understanding of professional sustainability in translation and interpreting, combining larger sample sizes, comparative frameworks, and dynamic models of career development.

Conclusion

This study explored the job satisfaction, work-related experiences, and career plans of translators and interpreters in Kazakhstan through thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed a rich and complex emotional landscape shaped by personal autonomy, market structures, financial stability, cognitive demands, and organizational practices.

Participants reported a range of satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors. Flexibility, steady income, good technical support, and meaningful application of academic knowledge enhanced satisfaction, while financial insecurity, low professional recognition, market instability, and cognitive overload diminished it. Emotional experiences varied across specialization (translators vs. interpreters), employment type (freelancers vs. in-house workers), career stages, job satisfaction levels, and career plans.

Career intentions reflected these patterns: those experiencing manageable dissatisfaction sought to adapt and specialize within the profession, while those facing persistent structural barriers planned to exit into adjacent fields offering greater stability.

The study's findings contribute to broader understandings of translator and interpreter careers, particularly in emerging market contexts. They confirm that job satisfaction and career sustainability are not determined solely by individual skills or preferences but are deeply embedded in broader professional, organizational, and market dynamics (cf. Bourdieu, 1990; Dam & Zethsen, 2016; Sela-Sheffy, 2020).

While the study's scope was limited by sample size and context, it offers valuable insights into the lived experiences of T&I professionals and highlights urgent areas for professional support, policy intervention, and future research. Strengthening career development pathways, improving working conditions, educating clients, and creating

structured exit options within the profession could significantly enhance translator and interpreter career sustainability.

In sum, the translation and interpreting profession's future vitality will depend not only on individual resilience but also on collective efforts to create a more supportive, recognized, and sustainable professional environment.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Study title: Translate or Escape: Study of Job Satisfaction among Kazakh Interpreters/Translators

Interviewer: Sergey Poddubnyy

Date: [Interview date]

Interviewee code: [ID to ensure anonymity]

Format: Online/In-person

Estimated duration: 30-60 minutes

Section 1: Background Information

1. **What is your age?**
2. **What is the highest level of education you have received?**
3. **What language pair(s) do you work with?**
    - *Do you primarily work in written translation, interpreting, or both?*
4. **How many years of experience do you have in translation and/or interpreting?**
    - *Can you describe your professional journey?*
5. **What is your current employment status?**
    - *Are you a freelancer, in-house translator, agency-employed, or working in multiple settings?*
6. **Have you worked in different translation settings (freelance, in-house, legal, literary, audiovisual, conference interpreting, etc.)?**

- *Which setting do you prefer and why?*

Section 2: Understanding Job Satisfaction

7. **How do you understand the concept of job satisfaction?**
    - *What does job satisfaction mean to you personally?*
    - *Has your perception of job satisfaction changed over time?*
8. **On a scale from 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your current job?**
    - *Why did you choose this rating?*
    - *What factors influenced your rating the most?*
9. **What do you like most about your job?**
    - *Can you describe a specific moment when you felt highly satisfied in your work?*
10. **What factors contribute to your job satisfaction?**
    - *How do financial stability and income affect your satisfaction?*
    - *Does recognition from clients, colleagues, or society influence your job satisfaction?*
    - *How important is work-life balance to your overall satisfaction?*
    - *How does the nature and art of translation affect your job satisfaction?*
11. **What factors diminish your job satisfaction?**
    - *What are the biggest challenges you face as a translator in Kazakhstan?*
    - *Have you ever considered leaving the profession? If so, why?*
12. **To what extent does your job meet your career aspirations?**
    - *Have your career aspirations changed since you first started?*
    - *Do you feel that the translation industry in Kazakhstan supports long-term career growth?*

13. **What are your future career plans?**
    - *Do you plan to continue in translation, shift to another role, or change industries?*
    - *What factors would influence your decision to stay in or leave translation?*

Section 3: Industry-Level Solutions & Improvements

14. **What could be done to increase translators' job satisfaction in Kazakhstan?**
    - *What role should translation agencies, professional associations, government bodies, and educational institutions play?*
    - *Do you think better regulation or unionization could help improve working conditions?*
    - *What policies or support systems do you wish were available for translators in Kazakhstan?*

Closing Statement:

"Thank you for sharing your experiences and insights. Your input is valuable in understanding and improving translators' job satisfaction in Kazakhstan. Would you like to add anything else that we haven't covered?"

Appendix B

Official Invitation to Participate in Research

Date: [Insert Date]

To: [Translator's name]

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Research on Translators' Job Satisfaction

Dear [Translator's Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Sergey Poddubnyy, and I am a Master's student in Translation Studies at Maqsut Narikbayev University. I am conducting a research study on job satisfaction among Kazakhstani translators and interpreters, and I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

The purpose of this research is to explore translators' perceptions of job satisfaction, the factors influencing their professional well-being, and their career aspirations. By sharing your insights, you will contribute to a broader discussion about the translation profession in Kazakhstan and help identify ways to improve job satisfaction and working conditions within the industry.

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview lasting approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The interview will be conducted online or in person, based on your preference. The questions will focus on your experiences as a translator, your perspectives on job satisfaction, and your thoughts on the future of the profession, Participation is entirely voluntary, and all responses will be strictly confidential and

anonymized. No personally identifiable information will be shared in the final research findings. If at any point you wish to withdraw, you may do so without providing a reason.

If you are interested or would like to learn more, please feel free to contact me at s_poddybnyy@kazguu.kz or by phone at +7(701) 999 8019. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for considering this invitation. Your participation would be highly valuable in helping to advance knowledge about translators'/interpreters' job satisfaction in Kazakhstan.

I look forward to your response and sincerely appreciate your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Sergey Poddubnyy

Master's Student, Translation Studies

Maqsut Narikbayev University

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Participant's Initials: _____

Title of study

Translate or Escape: Investigation of Job Satisfaction among Translators and Interpreters in Kazakhstan

Principal investigator

Sergey Poddubnyy

Student of Master's degree, Maqsut Narikbayev University

+7(701) 999 8019 s_poddybnyy@kazguu.kz

Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to explore Kazakhstani translators' perceptions of factors that influence their job satisfaction and, as a result, their careers. The study will endeavour to answer the following research questions:

1. How (dis)satisfied do Kazakhstani translators feel about their jobs?
2. What factors do they perceive as shaping their job satisfaction?
3. How do Kazakhstani translators' feelings or job satisfaction influence their careers? The terms "translator" and "translation" are used in their broad sense and include interpreters interpreting, accordingly.

Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be invited to take part in an individual semi-structured interview that will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The interview will cover topics related to your experiences as a translator, job satisfaction, career aspirations, and challenges in the profession. Interviews will be conducted either in person or online and will be audiorecorded for accuracy, with your consent.

Potential risks

The risks associated with participation in this study are minimal and primarily relate to potential discomfort when discussing personal experiences, job satisfaction, or professional challenges. While participants may reflect on aspects of their careers that involve frustration, stress, or dissatisfaction, they are free to skip any questions they find uncomfortable or choose not to elaborate on specific topics. The study does not involve any physical risk, deception, or manipulation, and participation is entirely voluntary. Confidentiality measures, including the anonymization of responses and secure data storage, will further reduce any potential risks related to privacy. Given that the study focuses on professional experiences rather than sensitive personal matters, the likelihood of distress is low, but participants will be provided with the option to withdraw at any point without explanation or consequence. Every effort will be made to ensure that the interview setting remains respectful, supportive, and non-intrusive, allowing participants to share their perspectives in a manner that feels safe and comfortable.

Benefit of the research

This research offers several benefits both to the participants and to the broader professional community of translators in Kazakhstan. By sharing their experiences, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their job satisfaction, career aspirations, and the challenges they face in their profession. Their insights may contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing translators' well-being, recognition, and working conditions. The study's findings may also inform discussions within the translation industry, academic institutions, and policymaking bodies, potentially leading to recommendations for improving job satisfaction and professional support structures. Additionally, by highlighting common themes in translators' experiences, the research can contribute to the global discourse on translator working conditions and serve as a foundation for future studies on professional satisfaction in

the field. While there are no direct material benefits for participants, their contributions may lead to greater awareness of translators' roles, challenges, and the importance of fostering a more sustainable and rewarding professional environment.

Confidentiality

Your participation in this study is completely confidential. No personally identifiable information such as your name, workplace, or contact details will be collected or shared. Each participant will be assigned a unique identifier code, and all responses will be deidentified before analysis. Only the researcher and authorized supervisors will have access to the interview recordings and transcripts, which will be stored securely on password-protected and encrypted storage.

Any quotes used in the research findings will be fully anonymized to ensure that your identity remains confidential. Data will be retained for one year after the study's completion, after which all electronic files will be permanently deleted, and hard copies will be securely shredded.

Voluntary participation

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose to decline participation or withdraw at any time without providing a reason. If you withdraw before the completion of data collection, your interview recording and transcripts will be immediately deleted upon request, and no part of your responses will be included in the study. There will be no consequences or impact on your relationship with the researcher if you choose to withdraw.

Consent

I have read and understood the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason. I confirm that I have been informed about the confidentiality measures in place to protect my identity. I agree to have my interview

audiorecorded and analyzed for research purposes. I acknowledge that I will receive a copy of this consent form for my records. By signing below, I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Table 1: Demographic details of the interviewees (n=10)

Pseudonym	Employment status	Education obtained	Years of work experience	Age group (years)	Gender
Participant 1	Freelance	Bachelor	2	21-30	Female
Participant 2	In-house	Bachelor	1.5	21-30	Female
Participant 3	In-house	Bachelor	4	21-30	Female
Participant 4	Freelance	Bachelor	18	41-50	Male
Participant 5	Freelance	Master	2	21-30	Female
Participant 6	Freelance	Bachelor	25	≥50	Female
Participant 7	In-house	Bachelor	27	≥50	Female
Participant 8	Freelance	Bachelor	12	31-40	Male
Participant 9	In-house	Bachelor	18	41-50	Female
Participant 10	Freelance	PhD	13	31-40	Female

Table 2: Additional information on the interviewees (n=10)

Pseudonym	TI mode	TI career plans	JS score
Participant 1	Translation	Continue	8
Participant 2	Translation	Continue	7
Participant 3	Translation	Continue	8
Participant 4	Interpreting	Quit	5.5
Participant 5	Translation	Quitting possible	6
Participant 6	Both	Continue	6
Participant 7	Translation	Continue	8
Participant 8	Interpreting	Continue	8.5
Participant 9	Both	Quit	8
Participant 10	Interpreting	Continue	8

Note: TI – Translation & Interpreting; JS – job satisfaction

Table 3: Coding Scheme

Theme	Code (with reference count)
RQ1. (Dis)satisfaction over time	Satisfaction increased over time (2)
	No joy (1)
	Post-review satisfaction (1)
	Satisfaction decreased over time (1)
RQ1. Emotional Landscape of the Profession	Delight (3)
	Delight of interpreting (2)
	Nervous (2)
	Absurdness (1)
	Challenged (1)
	Deeply dissatisfied (1)
	Desire to stay invisible (1)
	Disappointed (1)
	Emotional rollercoaster (1)
	Excited (1)
	High cognitive load of Interpreting (1)
	Intermittent enthusiasm to interpret (1)
	Need for action or adrenalin (1)
	Nervous communicants (1)
	No hopes, changes for the better unrealistic (1)
	Probable impact on mental health (1)
	Shocked (1)
	Surprised (1)
	Unhappy and tired (1)
	Vanity (1)
	Vivid experience (1)
RQ1. Fulfillment vs Frustration	Engagement through diverse people (5)

	Engagement through diverse topics (5)
	Engagement through learning something new (5)
	Expansion from Translations to Interpreting (5)
	Sense of fulfillment and achievement (5)
	Tangible results of work (5)
	Tiring routine (5)
	Satisfaction with one's competence (4)
	Workplace diversity (4)

	Feeling of comfort (3)
	Interesting (3)
	Opportunity of professional growth (3)
	Stress (3)
	Topics of interest (3)
	Absence of professional growth (2)
	Feeling of stagnation (2)
	Freelancing is ideal for work-life balance (2)
	Interested in high-profile events (2)
	Limited IH career growth (2)
	Need to change the setting (2)
	Need to socialize (2)
	Pride in assisting communication (2)
	Pride in being employed by a big employer (2)
	TI is a passion (2)
	Unvaried setting of translation (2)
	Being more in demand is growth (1)
	Enjoyment (1)

	Entertaining occupation (1)
	Feeling of being in demand (1)
	Good when preparatory materials are available (1)
	Income is not the most important factor (1)
	Limited satisfaction from translation (1)
	Multiple abbrevations in the text (1)
	No further professional growth (1)
	Sense of exclusivity (1)
	Translation ruined my career (1)
	Wasting one's life in vain (1)
	Working late to learn translation (1)
RQ2. Agency Practices and Power Relations	Ties matter for demand (4)
	Fear of corruption in trade unions (3)
	Greediness of agencies (3)
	Agencies are mere intermediaries (2)
	Agencies should accept more trainees (2)
	Agencies should treat translators in a fair way (2)
	No efficient trade unions (2)

	No TI industry in KZ (2)
	Absence of big agencies in KZ (1)
	Agencies are parasitic (1)
	Agencies should promote social growth (1)
	Agency practice supervisors not competent enough (1)
	Bad quality of TI provided by agencies (1)
	Corruption in bidding for TI contracts (1)
	Irresponsible clients (1)

	Low quality of TI caused by bottom-feeding (1)
RQ2. Autonomy and Flexibility	Autonomy to choose assignments (5)
	Doubts of willingness to join trade unions (3)
	No choice for IH translators (3)
	Flexibility of FR (2)
	FR is more flexible (2)
	Freedom of freelancing (2)
	Predefined working hours (2)
	Autonomy to set one's own rates (1)
	Desire to specialize (1)
	Elate with freedom (1)
	FR needs self-discipline (1)
	Freelancing impacting family life (1)
	Opportunity to choose the area of specialization (1)
	Opportunity to work from home (1)
	Preference to work from home (1)
	Work-life balance increased (1)
RQ2. Financial Concern and Stability	Market Instability (8)
	Need for a good income (8)
	Lack of contracts (7)
	Unstable market (7)
	Stable IH translators' income (6)
	Low translators' pay in the government (3)
	Dependence on the market conditions (2)
	Good IH benefits (2)
	Good income (2)
	IH pay is low (2)

	Difficulty in finding a well-paid IH job (1)

	Fear of losing direct clients (1)
	Fees used to be better (1)
	Financial issues resolved (1)
	FR income dependent on marketing efforts (1)
	Low pay (1)
	Market freezing (1)
	Pay should be high enough (1)
	TI market oversaturated (1)
	Uncertainty in the market (1)
	Unstable income of freelancers (1)
RQ2. Recognition and Professional Identity	Good feedback is important (8)
	Desire of recognition and trust (4)
	Undervaluation of TI creative nature by clients (4)
	Undervaluation of workload by clients (4)
	Employer's undervaluation (3)
	Doubts if government support is possible (2)
	Clients not paying (1)
	Need for uversity-industry partnerships (1)
	No institutional support to translators (1)
	No one inquires about translators' JS (1)
	No TI certification in Kazakhstan (1)
RQ2. Support, Belonging and Development	Difficult to thrive for newcomers (4)
	Need for networking and socializing more (3)
	Need for professional development (3)
	Need for support from colleagues (3)

	Trade unions could be beneficial (3)
	Absence of efficient trade unions (2)
	Being on one's own to protect one's interests (2)
	Inconfidence (2)
	Lack of correct info on TI profession (2)
	More practice needed (2)
	Support from colleagues (2)
	TIs' rights are not protected (2)
	University skills are not sufficient (2)
	Experience brings awareness of proper working conditions (1)
	Feedback is not that important (1)

	IH feedback from colleagues is important (1)
	Involvement (1)
	Life-long learning (1)
	Need for friendly working environment (1)
	Networking is important (1)
	No opportunities to practice sim. interpreting (1)
	No time for mentoring by IH translators (1)
	Thorough preparation is important (1)
	TI should be taught by practicing translators (1)
	Topics should be familiar (1)
RQ2. Working conditions and Fairness	Good working and technical conditions (8)
	Overtime work (5)
	Unreasonable deadlines (5)
	Absence of preparatory materials (3)
	Need for protection of TI occupational hygiene (3)

	Career ladder growth (2)
	Need for being a multi-profile professional (2)
	Need for work-life balance (2)
	Opportunity to travel (2)
	Unfamiliar topics (2)
	Big business as the employer (1)
	Cancellation fee needed (1)
	Conditions vary (1)
	Fear of being fired from an assignment (1)
	FR working hours are irregular (1)
	FR workload is higher (1)
	High IH workload (1)
	Interpreting is present only in big cities (1)
	Minimum rates should be set (1)
	Mistakes through tight deadlines (1)
	Need for equitable access to contracts (1)
	No work-life balance (1)
	Overtime work unpaid (1)
	Standard working conditions should be set (1)
	Unethical client behaviour (1)
	Unfriendly atmosphere (1)

RQ3. Barriers to Change	Desire to change the role (1)
	Doubts if the skillset will fit a new occupation (1)
	Fear of stagnation (1)
	Health (1)
	Fear of adverse medical conditions hindering TI (1)

	Lack of action (1)
	Professional degradation without practice (1)
	Sim. interpreting is a gift. But I don't have it (1)
	Unwillingness to change industry due to the age (1)
RQ3. Career Transition Intentions	Thoughts about quitting TI (5)
	Need to diversify one's skills (3)
	Tech Pressures Leading to Career Reconsideration (3)
	Concerns over TI being taken over by AI (3)
	Expectations not aligned with reality (2)
	Motivation to Exit (2)
	Boredom (2)
	Willingness to change industry (2)
	Career plans ruined (1)
	Change of occupation is possible (1)
	Desire to be hired for IH (1)
	Desire to continue in TI for some time (1)
	Desire to quit due to the age (1)
	Dissatisfaction with Career Trajectory (1)
	Need for teaching relevant skills at universities (1)
	Plans to shift to teaching (1)
	Too late to change occupation (1)
RQ3. Professional Commitment vs Exploration of Alternatives	Demand for English-Kazakh TI is set to grow (2)
	Demand for TI services as the top persistence factor (2)
	Desire to continue in TI (2)
	TI is a passion (2)
	Translation is less demanding (2)
	Additional pedagogical career (1)

	Certain career growth for IH translators (1)
	Desire to try other occupations (1)
	FR as the development of IH employment (1)
	Freelancing as a dream (1)

	Hope for market improvement (1)
	IH stability is the only thing I like (1)
	Need to apply the university knowledge (1)
	Opportunity to apply the university knowledge (1)
	Rejection of non-linguistic jobs (1)