

**Skills and competencies needed for translators to be competitive in the modern labor  
market of Kazakhstan**

Zhuldyz Yesbatyrova

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Master of Arts

in

Translation Studies

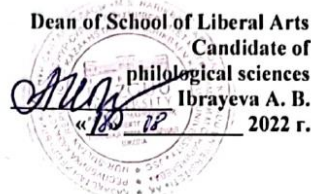
M. S. Narikbayev KAZGUU University

School of Liberal Arts

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## TECHNICAL ASSIGNMENT

### For Senior Project

#### «Skills and competencies needed for translators to be competitive in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan»

#### I. Justification of the relevance, originality, and novelty of the project.

##### The relevance of the project:

Translation is one of the oldest professions existing now. If to look through history, translators were the facilitators of communication between different parties. According to Sayols (2018), translators of the last century had to use their basic skills and a pen with a pencil to perform a translation, and physical dictionaries were used to facilitate the process. However, the trends happening nowadays lead people to have up-to-date skills in their work, and the translators' work process was affected seriously by this progress, as well (Gomez, 2017). Taking this into consideration, it is highly essential to explore the changes in the Translation field and its new demands.

##### The originality of the project:

There are some gaps in the study of skills and competencies of translators. There are papers indicating the modern technologies used by translators or the new disciplines that should be added to the curriculum of the students of Translation Studies such as Competence-based curriculum design for training translators (Albir, 2017) or Training translators or translation service providers (Biel, 2011). However, it is not clear what skills exactly translators should learn in order to meet the requirements of employers and stay competitive in the modern market. Therefore, the paper aims to find out the skills and competencies needed for translators of Kazakhstan based on the experience of translators, themselves, as well as to identify the demands of employers in the Translation market of Kazakhstan.

##### The novelty of the project:

The new directions in the translation field are becoming more and more widespread and they need to be learned. To be more precise, the paper aims to address the demands of the Kazakhstan labor market for translators using the sequential mixed method. This research will help students of Translation Studies major know what to learn in addition to their study disciplines before becoming translators and then easily find a job. The results of this paper can be used as a checklist for translators to know what skills they have and what they need to acquire.

#### II. Project object

The purpose of this research paper is to explore the basic skills of translators and use them to discover the skills and competencies needed to be learned additionally by translators to be highly competitive in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan.

In this regard, the following research questions will be posed:

1. What skills and competencies are in demand in the Translation field of Kazakhstan?
2. What are the employers' expectations from freelance translators, agency translators and staff translators?

### III. Scope, order, and terms of work performance.

Stage 1. Conducting an analysis of the existing literature on the selected topic.

Stage 2. Description of the research methodology, justification for the choice of method (quantitative, qualitative).

Stage 3. Description of the means of data collection (interviewing, document analysis, survey).

Stage 4. Description of the results of the study.

Stage 5. Description of the conclusion, recommendations.

### IV. Project quality indicators.

a) The use of relevant regulatory documents and literature at the time of writing the senior project;

b) Writing a graduation project in accordance with the Guidelines for writing a senior project;

c) Compliance by members of the Scrum Team with the requirements of the Academic Integrity Policy regarding anti-plagiarism is implied.

### V. The responsibility matrix of MT members.

Explanation: the matrix of responsibility of group members can be built in the form of a table, diagram or otherwise, allowing to determine the degree of involvement of each member in the implementation of each individual design stage.

Example: project name: "Skills and competencies needed for translators to be competitive in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan".

Stages	Supervisor's full name	1 <sup>st</sup> student's full name
<b>Stage 1. Conducting an analysis of the existing literature on the selected topic.</b> 1.1 Collecting literature in this field 1.2 Creating Literature matrix 1.3 Making analysis and comparing data from the literature 1.4 Writing literature review January 10-25, 2023	Bainova Olga Yuryevna	Yesbatyrova Zhuldyz Zamirovna
<b>Stage 2. Description of the research methodology, justification for the choice of method (qualitative).</b> 2.1 Analyzing the previous works' methodologies 2.2 Explaining the methods 2.3 Describing research sample, design, instrument 2.4 Predicting some limitations February 5-15, 2023	Bainova Olga Yuryevna	Yesbatyrova Zhuldyz Zamirovna
<b>Stage 3. Description of the means of data collection (interviewing, document analysis, survey).</b> 3.1 Data collection (March 1-30, 2023) 3.2 Analysis of collected data (April 1-7, 2023)	Bainova Olga Yuryevna	Yesbatyrova Zhuldyz Zamirovna
<b>Stage 4. Description of the results of the study.</b> 4.1 Writing findings 4.2 Writing the discussion part April 7-15, 2023	Bainova Olga Yuryevna	Yesbatyrova Zhuldyz Zamirovna
<b>Stage 5. Description of the conclusion, recommendations.</b>	Bainova	Yesbatyrova

5.1 Making conclusions 5.2 Adding references 5.3 Adding appendices April 15-25, 2023	Olga Yuryevna	Zhuldyz Zamirovna
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**Explanation of abbreviations:**

S - Supervisor

C1 - Contractor 1

N/A - Not Applicable

**VI. Project Completion Form.****Project Completion Form:**

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**Supervisor:**

**Bainova Olga Yuryevna**  
MA in TESOL, Ph.D. in Education candidate  
Senior Lecturer  
School of Liberal Arts  
JSC M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University

**Student:**

**Yesbatyrova Zhuldyz Zamirovna**  
BA in Translation Studies  
Master's student  
School of Liberal Arts  
JSC M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University

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Date: 18.05.2023

## **Abstract**

### **Skills and competencies needed for translators to be competitive in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan**

This qualitative study analyzes the abilities and competencies that translators require to remain competitive in Kazakhstan's dynamic labor market, with a focus on Astana, the capital city. The research aims to answer two major research questions considering most-in-demand skills and competencies in Kazakhstan's translation industry and expectations of employers from freelancers, agency translators, and staff translators. Semi-structured interviews with various professionals involved in the translation process were conducted to find answers. Participants included freelancers, agency translators, staff translators, HR experts from specialized company translation departments, and translation agency employers. The study's findings reveal a gap between the skills and competencies commonly cited in existing literature and professional standards and those discovered in this study. New skills and competencies were introduced, indicating the shifting demands in Kazakhstan's translation field. This study, however, is limited to Astana, which is a significant limitation. As a result, future research in other cities is encouraged to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the competencies required for translators in Kazakhstan's modern labor market. This study emphasizes the significance of ongoing skill development and adaptability for translators seeking to remain competitive in Kazakhstan's rapidly changing linguistic and professional environment.

*Keywords:* skills, competencies, translators, freelance, expectations

## Аңдатпа

### **Қазақстанның қазіргі еңбек нарығында бәсекеге қабілетті аудармашыларға қажетті дағдылар мен құзыреттер**

Осы сапалы зерттеуде аудармашылардың Қазақстанның серпінді еңбек нарығында бәсекеге қабілетті болып қалуы үшін қажетті қабілеттері мен құзыреттері Астана қаласына назар аударып отырып талданады. Зерттеудің мақсаты Қазақстанның аударма саласындағы аса сұранысқа ие дағдылар мен құзыреттерге және жұмыс берушілердің фрилансерлерден, агенттіктердің аудармашыларынан және штаттық аудармашылардан күтулеріне қатысты екі негізгі сұраққа жауап беру. Жауаптарды іздеу үшін аударма саласында жұмыс істейтін әр түрлі мамандармен жартылай құрылымдық сұхбаттар жүргізілді. Қатысушылар арасында фрилансерлер, агенттік аудармашылары, штаттық аудармашылар, аударма бөлімдерінің HR сарапшылары, сондай-ақ аударма агенттіктерінің жұмыс берушілері болды. Зерттеу нәтижелері қолданыстағы әдебиеттерде және кәсіби стандарттарда жиі айтылатын Дағдылар мен құзыреттер арасындағы алшақтықты анықтады және осы зерттеуде табылған. Жаңа дағдылар мен құзыреттер анықталды, бұл Қазақстандағы аударма саласындағы өзгермелі талаптарды көрсетеді. Алайда, бұл зерттеу Астана қаласымен шектелген, бұл айтарлықтай шектеу болып табылады. Сондықтан Қазақстанның қазіргі еңбек нарығында аудармашыларға қажетті құзыреттер туралы неғұрлым толық түсінік алу үшін басқа қалаларда болашақ зерттеулер жүргізу ұсынылады. Осы зерттеу Қазақстанның тез өзгертін тілдік және кәсіби ортасында бәсекеге қабілетті болып қалуға ұмтылатын аудармашылар үшін дағдыларды тұрақты дамыту мен бейімделудің маңыздылығын атап көрсетеді.

*Түйінді сөздер:* дағдылар, құзыреттер, аудармашылар, фриланс, күту



## Аннотация

### **Навыки и компетенции, необходимые конкурентноспособным переводчикам на современном рынке труда Казахстана**

В настоящем качественном исследовании анализируются навыки и компетенции, необходимые переводчикам, чтобы оставаться конкурентоспособными на рынке труда Казахстана, с фокусом на Астану. Цель исследования - ответить на два основных вопроса, которые касаются наиболее востребованных навыков и компетенций в переводческой отрасли Казахстана и ожиданий работодателей от фрилансеров, переводчиков агентств и штатных переводчиков. Для поиска ответов были проведены интервью с различными специалистами, работающими в переводческой отрасли. Среди участников были фрилансеры, переводчики агентств, штатные переводчики, HR-эксперты из отделов переводов, а также работодатели переводческих агентств. Результаты исследования выявили разрыв между навыками и компетенциями, которые обычно упоминаются в существующей литературе и профессиональных стандартах, и теми, которые были обнаружены в данном исследовании. Были выявлены новые навыки и компетенции, что свидетельствует о меняющихся требованиях в области перевода в Казахстане. Однако данное исследование ограничено г. Астана, что является ограничением. Поэтому для получения более полного представления о навыках, необходимых переводчикам на современном рынке труда Казахстана, рекомендуется проводить будущие исследования в других городах. Исследование подчеркивает важность постоянного развития навыков и адаптации для переводчиков в быстро меняющейся языковой и профессиональной среде Казахстана.

*Ключевые слова:* навыки, компетенции, переводчики, фриланс, ожидания

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## **Introduction**

Translation is one of the oldest professions existing now. If to look through history, translators were the facilitators of communication between different parties. Initially, they were those who knew two or more languages (Gomez, 2017). However, there have been great changes in the process of translation as time passed. Gomez (2017) states that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the translation profession became more popular as countries started to work more collaboratively. According to Sayols (2018), translators of the last century had to use their basic skills and a pen with a pencil to perform a translation, and physical dictionaries were used to facilitate the process. Nevertheless, the emergence of computers and the fact that they became more and more common in the late 1900-s has changed the world (Odacıoğlu & Kokturk, 2015). In addition, the changes in terms of globalization do occur in the world. As a result, the translators' work process was affected seriously by this progress, as well (Gomez, 2017).

## **Background Information**

Computers, technological advancement, and other global factors have caused the direction of professions to shift dramatically (Odacıoğlu & Kokturk, 2015). According to Pietrzak (2015), the traditional translation competencies and skills are those mentioned above, such as using a pen and pencil and physical dictionaries, understanding the source language, and producing text with the same meaning in the target language. However, given the new trends, the modern world necessitates the acquisition of additional skills and competencies to be highly competitive in the market.

In the context of this study, a skill is defined as an ability required to complete a task, and there are two different types of skills: hard and soft skills (Phillips et al., 2014). Competency is a larger term that includes not just skill, but also conduct and knowledge in

order to execute a task successfully (Wong, 2020). As a result, even at the greatest level, the ability to translate is insufficient to meet the modern world's market needs (Rado, 2016). New approaches to translation are becoming increasingly common, and they must be learned. Translators, for example, use a variety of applications. One of them is a translation utilizing a computer-assisted translation (CAT) tool, which is a must-have tool for translators in the twenty-first century, and its features must be understood in order to be used (Alotaibi, 2014). These CAT tools are used to improve the efficiency of translation. There are numerous other fields to learn as well. As a result, modern translators should now understand how to maintain current skills and competencies in order to satisfy employers and remain highly qualified professionals.

### **Problem Statement**

The paper addresses the issue of translators not being competitive enough in today's labor market. Translators study the languages and cultures of other countries in order to accurately translate texts from one language to another. However, given the changing world, it can be concluded that these skills are no longer sufficient for translators to be qualified (Rado, 2016). The issue is that there are some gaps in the research on this topic. There are papers indicating the modern technologies used by translators or the new disciplines that should be added to the Translation Studies curriculum (Albir, 2007). As per studies in terms of Kazakhstan, there is research that explains the new trends in Translation Studies, however, it concerns the training of students in HEIs (Mirzoyeva, 2013). Mirzoyeva (2013) examines the opinions of students of Translation Studies regarding their disciplines and curriculum. In addition, another paper was conducted in the field of new trends arising among translators, including Kazakhstani ones, however, these researchers study the new skills and competencies that are related to technologies

only (Baishymyrova et al., 2022). There are International Professional Standards for Translators such as ISO 17100:2015. In addition, the Professional Standard for Translator has been formed in 2021 in Kazakhstan (APTITC, 2021). However, this standard covers different types of translation texts and provides little information on skills and qualities translators need to acquire. These papers show the changes in the field, but still, it is unclear what specific skills and competencies translators should learn to fully meet the expectations of employers and remain competitive in today's market. To be more specific, the paper addresses the translator labor market demands in Kazakhstan and discovers this problem from the perspective of both translators and employers. Moreover, the paper shows the differences in skills and competencies needed for the translators as freelancers, translators of Translation Agencies and staff translators of companies with one specific direction. The expectations of employers from the perspective of HRs of Translation Departments of companies with one activity direction and employers of Translation Agencies are also described.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this research paper is to identify the skills and competencies that are required for translators to remain competitive in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan. The aim is to gain a thorough understanding of the experiences and perceptions translators of three categories: freelance translators, agency translators and staff translators. In addition, the paper aims to find out the expectations of employers from translators.

### **Research Questions**

1. What skills and competencies are in demand in the Translation field of Kazakhstan?

2. What are the employers' expectations from freelance translators, agency translators and staff translators?

### **Significance of the study**

The research work carries significant importance in today's rapidly evolving global environment. This study not only sheds light on the current demands and expectations in the translation industry but also provides a framework for translators, educational institutions, and policymakers to better prepare for the future.

By identifying the key skills and competencies required for translators to excel in Kazakhstan's labor market, this research contributes to the enhancement of translator education and professional development programs. As a result, it enables aspiring and experienced translators to adapt to emerging trends and technologies, and to better meet the needs of various clients and industries.



## **Literature Review**

The world is becoming increasingly digitalized and globalized (Autio et al. 2021). These factors have an impact on every part of the world, including the translation industry (Mirzoyeva, 2013). Therefore, the modern market demands should be analyzed and learned by translators in order to be competitive enough. The purpose of the work is to examine the skills of translators and to identify the additional and new skills and competencies needed to be learned by translators to be highly competitive in the labor market of Kazakhstan. To study this issue, first of all, the literature concerning the translation field and the work of translators was reviewed and thoroughly analyzed. The review of literature has shown the important things to be considered by translators. In this literature review, I discuss the traditional competencies of translators to show the basic set of skills of translators. After that, the additional skills that are beyond language knowledge are reviewed. The changes in the market and expectations of translation agencies are examined, as well. And in the end, there is a review of works conducted on the problem concerning training for translators that can be beneficial in solving the problem of being not enough competitive.

### **Traditional skills and competencies of translators**

Translators were people who knew two or more languages and could transfer information from the source language to the target language (Gomez, 2017). Consequently, one may consider that these things are the only basic skills needed to translate. Similarly, in the work of Pietrzak (2015) it was mentioned that at the first glance, it may seem that being bilingual is enough to be able to be a professional translator. However, Coban (2015) argues that translational competencies differ from what is implied by being bilingual. Bilingualism here means being fluent in two languages (Coban, 2015).

Bearing this in mind, the competencies that should be learned by translators in order to become a professional in the field covers a big range of skills. There are different works where authors tried to describe the basic skills of translators and there were many empirical research works conducted to see the process of translation by professionals. These competencies, however, slightly differed from each other in works and that is why they were not officially documented for a long time. Let us take a look at these research works. In the work of Coban (2015), the author described the research conducted by PACTE Research Group in 1998. According to this research, translators' main competencies are lexical, grammatical, and textual knowledge of both these source language and target language (Coban, 2015). In addition, the theory of Gopferich which implies that the skill needed for translators is being strategic has been analyzed in the work of Coban (2015). However, there are many arguments regarding the basic set of skills of translators. Some authors define one set of skills to be needed for translators, while others think in a different way. Conversely, there are even those who consider that there is no need to identify the basic skills as all translators are different. For example, Pietrzak (2015) argues that the competencies and skills that are described by researchers of PACTE research group or others are idealized capacities, in other words, describing skills in such way can be not correlative to the reality. Instead, translators' professionalism can be evaluated by their actual performance which can show the real course of work of translators and their style or approach to work can differ from each other (Pietrzak, 2015). Therefore, the performance of one translator in real-life conditions could be compared to the performance of another translator to identify the common features used by both translators and also discover a way of work that leads to the best outcomes (Albir, 2012). However, if to refer to the works of Coban (2015) and Schäffner and Adab (2000) where authors describe the skills to be a professional translator, we can come up with one full

basic set of skills consisting of those mentioned in both works. Accordingly, the traditional basic skills needed to become a professional translator can be skills to be able to comprehend a source text, analyze it and adequately create a text that is equivalent in meaning in the target language. Moreover, knowledge of culture, lexical features, and thinking in a strategic way can be described as basic skills. Some other works in the field describe basic set of skills to be as deep of knowledge of different terminologies and field knowledge in medicine, law, some other sciences, literature, technical area (Bassnet, 1998; Bernardi, 2004). Below is a Table 1 showing the traditional skills and competencies of translators from the perspective of different authors analyzing this field in a chronological order.

**Table 1**

*Traditional Skills and Competencies*

No.	Traditional skills	Author
1	Being equipped with terminology	Bassnet, 1998
2	Comprehending a source text, analyzing it and adequately creating a text that is equivalent in meaning in the target language	Schäffner and Adab, 2000
3	Knowledge in medicine, law, some other sciences, literature, technical area and others	Bernardi, 2004
4	Lexical, grammatical, and textual knowledge of both the source and target languages	Coban, 2015
5	Transferring information from the source language into the target one	Gomez, 2017

**Additional skills and competencies in the field**

Taking into account globalization and digitalization of the world, we can conclude that possessing the skills and competencies mentioned in the first section of the literature review is insufficient to be a competitive and highly professional translator capable of

meeting the demands of the modern market. According to Pym's (2009) research, the changing world has a significant impact not only on people's everyday lives, but also on all spheres of our planet, and the field of translation is no exception. The reason for the changing world is globalization and the advancement of technology, says Pym (2009). According to Rado (2016), even though globalization began in the twentieth century, new skills in the translation field are being developed in the twenty-first century. These abilities are emerging as the translation field evolves. According to Biel (2011), today's translators' work does not simply entail translating books or official documents, as was common in the previous century.

Another thing to consider is localization in translation. Raído (2016) points out that nowadays the virtual world is overweighting the real world. In this regard, the knowledge of using software is crucial. For instance, video games' translation and localization are in high demand nowadays. According to Pym (2009), localization is one of the new areas of translation that modern translators should thoroughly research. This view is supported by Raído (2016) who writes that localization is gaining more and more popularity in the translation field. It should be noted that localization does not include just the translation of different advertisements, books, and music. A broader perspective has been adopted by Biel (2011) who argues that the process of localization implies the understanding of the cultural features of both languages. In other words, to be able to localize the text of the advertisement, for example, a translator needs to know the trends happening in the country of source and target language (Pym, 2016). In addition, new types of localization are becoming common.

In addition, software use in translation is also another important change in the Translation field because technologies are being integrated in the process of translating (Mrochen, 2014). These technological tools include not only the use of e-dictionaries, but

this integration is more about using software to facilitate the work of translators (Pym, 2016). There are different computer assisted translation tools, such as SmartCat, Trados, MemoQ and others (Baishymyrova et al, 2022). Mrochen (2014) explains that there is an arising popularity of such tools because translators not only can save the translation memory of their documents, but also exchange this information with others via cloud translation. Malenova (2019) also states that use of cloud technologies accelerates the process of translation when several translators work on the same project so they can see how their peers do their work.

**Table 2**

*Additional skills*

No.	Additional skills	Author
1	Knowledge of technology	Pym, 2009 Mrochen, 2014 Baishymyrova et al, 2022 Malenova, 2019
2	Ability to localize	Pym, 2009 Biel, 2011 Raído, 2016

**Translation market employers' demands and expectations**

Understanding the type of markets is crucial not only for those who intent to work as a translator for a specific company, but freelancers need to know different aspects of markets as they can work with different work suppliers. As previously stated, advancements in the form of globalization and digitalization of the world have changed all aspects of our lives. It should be noted here that not only the skills required by translators, but also the course of work of translators and market demands, are undergoing revolution

and change. In order to better understand this trend, Int (2005) examined the various types of markets that arose as a result of globalization. Nowadays, translators should be aware of the following markets: global market, virtual market, specialized market, national and international market, and decentralized market (Int, 2005). The same concept is mentioned in Albir's (2012) work, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the demands of various types of markets. However, the market is described in a more generalized manner, with only societal demand mentioned. Understanding the emergence of new market types allows for adaptability (Albir, 2012).

These market's demands can be classified into several ones. The first thing that employers can search for from translators is the appropriate behavior of a translator, in other words, social factors play a significant role here (Albir, 2012). Social factors can include the way of living, for example, the citizenship, previous work experience and reputation of a translator, as considers Marquis (2013). Similarly, Pym (2009) found that translators should consider social demands when applying for a job. This means that the modern translation marketplaces a high value on social factors. Social demands can be attributed to life-long learning, interpersonal communication, and translators' understanding of knowledge gaps (Pym, 2009). As mentioned earlier in this section, life-long learning can be also a highly valued factor for employers, this is about acquiring additional knowledge, too, and Samuelsson-Brown (2004) and Horbačauskienė et al. (2017) agree on the importance of specialized knowledge in other fields. So, it is to say that specialists need to have an ability to do more than just translate. Agencies anticipate that they will have translators that can do some other work additionally to translating. According to Horbačauskienė et al. (2017), even self-trained translators with substantial knowledge can be in demand. Bowker (2015) agrees with this idea explaining that

translator is a lot more than merely a text reader and broadcaster; he or she also serves as project manager and editor on occasion.

The other thing that employers consider when hiring translators is the way of their work and tools that they use for work (Marquis, 2013). According to Kerremans and Hosseini (2019), market demands from translators to have corresponding degree in the Translation Field. And the emergence of technologies creates new requirements for translators (Raído, 2016). They include the following requirements: knowing how to use some memory tools to fasten the process, quality assurance systems, machine tools, OCR tools, terminology databases, speech recognition software, as stated by Bowker (2015). Employers also pay attention to emotional intelligence of translators, as the work of translators implies big volume of work when translators need to be stress-resistant and creative (Horbačauskienė et al., 2017).

Another important thing in the market is being able to be competitive enough compared to other translators. In the light of globalization and effect of Covid-19, many employers seek for translators via Internet (Farahani & Shomoossi, 2021). The emergence of e-market is especially good for freelance translators, as they search for job online (Alotaibi, 2014). So, the ability to analyze the market and see the demands of translation agencies and companies is crucial for translators (Farahani & Shomoossi, 2021).

The modern translation market is dynamic and continuously evolving, influenced by factors such as globalization, digitalization, and technological advancements. To thrive in this environment, translators must not only possess linguistic skills but also be well-versed in the various types of markets, including global, virtual, specialized, national and international, and decentralized markets. Employers value translators with appropriate behavior, social factors, specialized knowledge in other fields, and adaptability in their

work methods and tools. Emotional intelligence and competitiveness are also essential attributes for translators, particularly in the digital age and the era of e-market platforms.

As the translation industry undergoes significant changes, it is crucial for translators to stay abreast of market demands and continuously adapt their skills and competencies. This includes mastering new technologies, engaging in lifelong learning, and understanding the specific requirements of different market types. By doing so, translators will be better prepared to meet the expectations of employers, and in turn, contribute to the overall growth and success of the global translation market.

### **Training for translators**

Additional training is required for translators to meet modern market demands and keep up with the times (Munday, 2016). In this regard, translators should keep in mind that, in addition to a bachelor's or master's degree, modern-day translators must be trained to meet the expectations of agencies and be adaptable (Baker, 2018). There are various pieces of training for translators that can help them become professionals, be more competitive, and be in demand all the time. Kerremans and Hosseini (2019) examined trends in the translation industry and concluded that soft skills must be learned during training. Soft skills are now highly appreciated by human resources managers. Many soft skills are required for modern-day professionals, and those required for translators now include critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving (Kerremans and Hosseini, 2019). These are the abilities that distinguish a translator as a true professional.

The value of creativity is mentioned in the work of Horbačauskienė et al. (2017). Creativity can help translators be more flexible in terms of translating unusual texts; it can be the skill that distinguishes a translator from others, and as a result, it can lead to more customers (Horbačauskienė et al., 2017).



Furthermore, according to Kerremans and Hosseini (2019), pieces of training for translators help translators work collaboratively. Considering the virtual market mentioned by Int (2005), teamwork of translators in various software is becoming increasingly common. Translators, for example, can collaborate with others using computer-assisted translation tools, where they can share a common glossary and monitor their peers' work processes (Alotaibi, 2014). Collaboration can also help translators build networks, according to Horbačauskienė et al. (2017).

According to Kerremans and Hosseini (2019) and Pym (2009), trained translators also practice lifelong learning, which is essential for translators because they must be aware of all new developments in the world. According to Kerremans and Hosseini (2019), these pieces of training are beneficial for translators to learn professional ethics and observe how other translators behave during the translation process. The Table 3 shows the skills and competencies classified by different types analyzed in this Literature Review section.

**Table 3**

*Different categories of skills and competencies*

No.	Categories	Authors
1	Basic set of skills	Being equipped with terminology Bassnet, 1998  Comprehending a source text, analyzing it and adequately creating a text that is equivalent in meaning in the target language Schäffner and Adab, 2000 Gomez, 2017  Knowledge in medicine, law, some other sciences, literature, technical area and others Bernardi, 2004  Lexical, grammatical, and textual knowledge of both source language and target language Coban, 2015
2	Additional skills	Localization Pym, 2009; Biel, 2011; Raído, 2016  Cat-tools Mrochen, 2014; Pym, 2016; Baishymyrova et al, 2022  Cloud technologies Mrochen, 2014; Malenova, 2019

3	Market demands	Social factors such as being stress-resistant and creative	Samuelsson-Brown, 2004; Pym, 2009; Albir, 2012; Marquis, 2013; Bowker, 2015; Horbačauskienė et al., 2017
		Professional factors such as life-long learning	Marquis, 2013; Bowker, 2015; Raido, 2016; Horbačauskienė et al, 2017
		Knowledge of Internet to be able to find work and customers	Alotaibi, 2014; Farahani and Shomoossi, 2021
4	New skills to be learned	Soft skills	Kerremans and Hosseini, 2019
		Creativity Teamwork	Horbačauskienė et al., 2017 Int, 2005; Alotaibi, 2014; Horbačauskienė et al, 2017; Kerremans and Hosseini, 2019
		Life-long learning	Pym, 2009; Kerremans and Hosseini, 2019

### Professional standard

ISO 17100:2015, an internationally recognized standard, defines protocols for the provision of translation services, defines the obligations of service providers, preliminary requirements for translators and other important aspects of the translation process (ISO, 2015). It is widely accepted as an indicator of translation quality in the professional sector and is supported and used in many countries around the world. The standard outlines several critical requirements for translators:

1. Translators are expected to have the necessary qualifications, most notably an advanced degree in translation studies.
2. The standard necessitates a high level of translation quality.
3. To accomplish this, translators should follow a process that includes translation, subsequent review, proofreading, and final changes.
4. Translators must also maintain client confidentiality and establish effective communication channels.

In Kazakhstan, a professional standard for translators was established in 2021. The Association of Professional Translators, Interpreters, and Translation Companies (APTITC) created this standard to emphasize certain translator requirements. These include teamwork, ethical considerations, and intercultural and interethnic tolerance, in addition to translation skills and competencies. Rather than emphasizing specific skills and competencies, the document highlights various types of translation work, such as technical texts, official documents, journalistic texts, medical texts, and others. There is, also, a requirement for translators to have C1-C2 level of proficiency. This standard also extends its requirements to interpreters.

This standard can be also analyzed in the context of one of our neighboring country, China. The translation industry in China has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, leading to the establishment of various quality and professionalism standards. The China Standardization Administration and the China Association for Standardization collaborated to develop the GB/T 19363.1-2008 standard, which serves as a guideline for translation service providers (SinoStandards, 2008). It outlines the requirements for providing translation services, including human resource management, quality control, and service delivery. This standard emphasizes the importance of hiring translators with formal education or practical experience, using skilled reviewers, and maintaining confidentiality. It provides guidance on the translation process, with components such as project management and responding to client feedback (SinoStandards, 2008).

In comparison to the standard of Kazakhstan, the Chinese standard takes a more directive approach, requiring explicit qualifications and experience. In contrast, the Kazakh standard provides a more comprehensive view of the range of translation work types and more flexibility in terms of qualifications and competencies (APTITC, 2021;

SinoStandards, 2008). These disparities reflect the distinct circumstances and needs of the translation industries in China and Kazakhstan, respectively.

The literature has been reviewed to identify trends and comprehend the changes that translators face today. A review of the literature could help to see the basic set of skills of translators, the market and employer demands. There was also a review of works on translator training and new skills to be learned by them. There is, however, a gap in the literature. There should be empirical research conducted on translators to see the problem from their perspective. Furthermore, the work should be done with the Kazakhstani market in mind.

A conceptual framework for this research will be structured around the following key elements:

1. **Translator skills and competencies:** This concept refers to skills and competencies translators need to possess to be successful in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan. These skills and competencies may include language proficiency, technical skills, subject matter expertise, skills in communication, and project management skills. They will be divided, also, by categories for freelance translators, translators of translation agencies and staff translators.
2. **Employer expectations:** This concept refers to the expectations of employers of translators, including HRs of Translation Departments of Companies and Translation Agency Employers, from freelance translators, agency translators, and staff translators. Employer expectations may include language proficiency, subject matter expertise, technical skills, communication skills, and project management skills.

The conceptual framework will explore the relationships between these key concepts and how they impact the competitiveness of translators in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan. It will be informed by existing literature on translator skills and competencies, the freelance translation market, translation agencies, and translation departments of companies with direction in other spheres. The framework will be used to guide the research design and data collection process, as well as the data analysis and interpretation of results.

## **Methodology**

This research is being conducted in the field of translation and the skills required for modern market translators. There were some reasons to conduct the study in this area. It is the fact that the world is rapidly changing nowadays, affecting all other spheres. Once again, technological advancements and other factors have a crucial influence on the work of translators (Odacoglu & Kokturk, 2015). Translators are concerned about whether they should learn new languages in order to be more competitive. To investigate this area, the following questions were answered: what skills and competencies are currently in demand; what strategies translators use to improve their skills; and what skills translators must learn to meet the employer's expectations in the Kazakhstani market.

This section of the work discusses the methodology that was used for the study. Here, the following information was described: design, sampling, data collection, piloting, data analysis and ethical considerations.

### **Design**

This study was conducted using qualitative research method because it enabled to explore complex and context-specific issues in-depth, which was particularly relevant to understand the skills and competencies needed for translators in the dynamic and evolving labor market of Kazakhstan (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative methods emphasize the importance of participants' perspectives, enabling a comprehensive and nuanced grasp of the issue under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenological technique was used for this study because it could investigate and comprehend lived experiences, perceptions, and opinions of translators and their employers regarding the skills and competencies required to succeed in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach allows to gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon by examining a

meaning participants attach to their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Triangulation interviews were used to validate data from several sources and increase the study's validity and credibility (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). In this research, interviews were conducted with three types of translators and two types of employers of translators to gain multiple perspectives on the skills and competencies required for translators in Kazakhstan (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014).

In this phenomenological study, semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection approach. This method was chosen because it enables for the identification of participants' experiences, attitudes, and feelings linked to the study issue while ensuring consistency across interviews (Turner, 2016). Semi-structured interviews, according to Sloan and Bowe (2017), are particularly effective for phenomenological research since they enable to obtain a comprehensive understanding of participants' lived experiences and subjective viewpoints. Semi-structured interviews enable translators from a variety of professional backgrounds to convey their unique experiences and perspectives, which can help to fully comprehend the skills and competences required for success in the translation field (Laverty, 2016). The study could collect numerous viewpoints on the abilities and competencies required for translators to prosper in Kazakhstan's modern labor market by interviewing individuals from various professional contexts (Finlay, 2016). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were well-suited for eliciting the perspectives of employers with firsthand experience hiring and managing translators (Turner, 2016). By interviewing these individuals, I was able to determine the exact abilities and competences they look for when employing translators, as well as the elements they believed were critical for translator success in today's labor market.

## Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in the study since it enables for the selection of participants based on their individual experiences, competence, or other traits relevant to my research issue (Palinkas et al., 2015). I was able to ensure that participants had the requisite background and knowledge to provide comprehensive and informative information regarding the abilities and competencies required for translators in Kazakhstan's modern labor market by employing purposive sampling (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

The research sites were chosen based on their relevance to the translation profession and their capacity to connect translators and employers of all types. This study's research site was Astana, the capital city of Kazakhstan. This city was chosen for its high concentration of translation agencies, companies with translation divisions, and a thriving freelance translator community. Choosing study sites that can provide rich data linked to the research issue is critical for qualitative investigations, according to Fusch and Ness (2015).

The study included three categories of translators and two types of translator employers to collect varied viewpoints on the skills and competences required for success in the translation business:

a) Freelance Translators: Freelancers were chosen based on their translation expertise and willingness to share their insights into the skills and competencies required to succeed in Kazakhstan's modern labor market (Dworkin, 2017).

b) Translators working in Translation Agencies and Translation Departments of Companies: These participants were selected based on their experience and diverse professional backgrounds, which enabled the study to capture a broad range of



perspectives on the skills and competencies required for success in the translation field (Palinkas et al., 2015).

c) HRs of Translation Departments of Companies and Translation Agency

Employers: These participants were selected based on their direct involvement in hiring and managing translators. By interviewing these individuals, the study could identify the specific skills and competencies they were looking for when hiring translators and the factors they consider crucial for translators' success in the modern labor market (Etikan et al., 2016).

Creswell (2013) suggests that a sample size of 5-25 participants is appropriate for phenomenological research, consequently, three participants from each group of translators and employers was an adequate number. However, initially the number of participants were considered to be based on saturation.

### **Data collection instrument**

This paper used semi-structured interviews for collecting data. There were five lists of interviews that I conducted with five different types of respondents: three freelance translators, three translators of translation agencies, three staff translators, three employers of translation agencies and three HRs of translation department of companies. For each type of respondents there were 10 questions prepared initially which I tested in pilot interviews. According to the results I had collected during pilot interviews I have changed some of the questions to align them with literature. For example, in the interview question for three types of translators I removed questions about challenged they faced during their work. Instead, questions about specific knowledge and expertise were added. For example, "How important is subject matter expertise in your work as a translator? Can you provide an example of a project where subject matter expertise was particularly important?" In

interviews for employers and HRs of translation departments I have removed questions concerning language pairs they work in. The reason is there are many language pairs that these companies and agencies use to provide translation. As a result, the questions were updated in a way allowing me use them to answer my research questions and, in addition, to discuss results based on the interview answers comparing to the literature I have earlier reviewed.

### **Piloting**

Given the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic and trends that changed the worldview of people, interviews were conducted via ZOOM conference platform as it was more convenient for the participants of the study. According to Salmons (2020), such meetings can offer a safe and efficient way to collect data from participants who might be reluctant or unable to meet in person. Zoom interviews can also be recorded easily, allowing for accurate transcription and analysis of the data (Archibald, Ambagtsheer, Casey, & Lawless, 2019). The interviews lasted for 30-40 minutes. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling, as described earlier. Initial contacts were made via email and phone calls, briefly explaining the study's purpose and inviting participants to participate in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After obtaining participants' consent, I scheduled interviews at a mutually convenient time that were conducted by Zoom. Prior to conducting the interviews, I developed an interview protocol, including a table that contains open-ended questions and potential follow-up ones, to ensure consistency across interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The protocol was pilot tested with a small number of individuals who met the study's participant criteria to refine the questions and ensure their relevance and clarity (Creswell & Poth, 2018). During the interviews, I used the interview protocol to guide the conversation, asking open-ended questions and follow-up probes as necessary. Participants were asked to share their experiences, perceptions, and opinions

that related to the skills and competencies needed for translators to be competitive in Kazakhstan's modern labor market. I was taking notes during the interviews and, with participants' consent, recording the interviews for later transcription and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Data analysis**

To analyze the collected data, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and cleaned to remove any irrelevant information or filler words. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The application of thematic analysis allowed for the discovery of essential themes and patterns in data. These themes and patterns were assigned codes. The data was evaluated using a conceptual framework generated through a survey of relevant literature. The conceptual framework highlighted the key abilities and competencies required for translators to compete in Kazakhstan's modern labor market. The coded data was evaluated to investigate these critical abilities and competencies. Thematic analysis was used effectively in previous studies to identify key themes and patterns in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The use of a conceptual framework based on a review of relevant literature was also supported as a useful tool for organizing and interpreting qualitative data (Bazeley, 2013; Saldaña, 2016).

### **Ethical considerations**

Participants were given an informed consent form outlining the goal of the study, what they were entitled to as participants, and the possible hazards and advantages of participating before the interviews begin. Upon their agreement, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and were requested to sign an informed consent form. The form can be found in the Appendix F. In the sake of protection, the privacy of participants, all identifying information was removed from the transcripts, and pseudonyms were used

instead. The data is stored securely and only accessible to me. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants was ensured throughout the research process and will be confidential. Participation in the study were entirely voluntary, and participants had the option to quit at any moment without penalty. During the informed consent process and at any moment during the study, participants were notified of their right to withdraw from the study. During the informed consent process, participants were instructed about the potential risks and advantages of getting involved with the study. I took steps to minimize any potential risks to participants, such as discomfort during the interview process. The study was conducted in a respectful and professional manner, and the welfare and dignity of participants were prioritized throughout the study. I adhered to the guidelines and regulations set out by the ethics committee. The findings of the study are disseminated in a manner that is respectful and protects the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. I will not share any identifying information without the consent of the participants.

**Table 4**

*Research Timeline*

Stages	Supervisor's full name	1 <sup>st</sup> student's full name
<i>Stage 1. Conducting an analysis of the existing literature on the selected topic.</i>		
<i>1.1 Collecting literature in this field</i>	Olga Bainova	Zhuldyz Yesbatyrova
<i>1.2 Creating Literature matrix</i>		
<i>1.3 Making analysis and comparing data from the literature</i>		
<i>1.4 Writing literature review</i>		
<i>January 10-20, 2023</i>		
<i>Description of the research methodology, justification for the choice of method (qualitative).</i>		
<i>1.1 Analyzing the previous works' methodologies</i>	Olga Bainova	Zhuldyz Yesbatyrova
<i>1.2 Explaining the methods</i>		
<i>1.3 Describing research sample, design, instrument</i>		
<i>1.4 Predicting some limitations</i>		
<i>February 5-15, 2023</i>		
<i>Stage 3. Description of the means of data collection (interviewing, document analysis, survey).</i>		
<i>3.1 Data collection (March 1-30, 2023)</i>	Olga Bainova	Zhuldyz Yesbatyrova

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3.2 Analysis of collected data (April 1-7, 2023)

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Stage 4. Description of the results of the study.

4.1 Writing findings

Olga Bainova Zhuldyz  
Yesbatyrova

4.2 Writing the discussion part

April 7-15, 2023

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Stage 5. Description of the conclusion, recommendations.

1.1 Making conclusions

Olga Bainova Zhuldyz  
Yesbatyrova

1.2 Adding references

1.3 Adding appendices

April 15-25, 2023

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## **Findings**

### **Freelance translators**

Freelance translators in Kazakhstan encounter distinct challenges compared to those working for translation agencies or as staff translators within companies. These challenges encompass promoting their services, managing their workload, maintaining a varied client base, and keeping abreast of industry trends and technological advancements. Considering these challenges, the following findings are crucial skills and competencies required for freelance translators to thrive in Kazakhstan's contemporary labor market.

#### ***Expertise in Specific Subject Areas***

The importance of subject matter expertise for freelance translators was a recurring theme in the interviews. While a general understanding of various fields might suffice for some translation projects, many clients need translators with specialized knowledge in specific domains, such as law, medicine, finance, or technology. This specialized knowledge ensures accurate translation and adherence to industry-specific terminology and standards. To stay competitive, freelance translators should continuously expand their subject matter expertise and stay informed about the latest developments in their specialization fields. They can achieve this through ongoing professional development, attending industry-specific conferences, and networking with other professionals in their areas of expertise.

#### ***Proficiency in Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) Tools***

The significance of technical skills, particularly proficiency in computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, was also emphasized in the interviews. CAT tools are software applications that help translators streamline their work with features like translation

memory, terminology management, and automated quality checks. These tools not only enhance translation efficiency and accuracy but also foster collaboration between translators and clients. To remain competitive in Kazakhstan's modern labor market, freelance translators must be proficient in popular CAT tools such as Trados, MemoQ, or Wordfast. They can develop these skills by attending training workshops, participating in online courses, and seeking guidance from experienced colleagues or mentors.

### ***Flexibility and Adaptability***

Freelance translators often enjoy the benefit of working from any location, offering increased flexibility and autonomy. However, this flexibility also demands adaptability to various work environments, time zones, and project requirements. Freelance translators should be comfortable working remotely and using diverse communication and project management tools to stay organized and collaborate effectively with clients and other translators.

### ***Effective Communication and Interpersonal Skills***

Strong communication and interpersonal skills are required for freelance translators because they contact directly with clients and establish professional ties. Building rapport with clients, understanding their needs, and communicating clearly and concisely can lead to long-term working partnerships and recurring business. Freelance translators should also be skilled at contract negotiation, rate setting, and managing client expectations. They can improve their communication skills by networking with other freelancers, attending communication workshops, and learning from real-life experiences.

### ***Marketing and Networking Capabilities***

Freelance translators, unlike staff translators or those employed by translation companies, are responsible for marketing their services and acquiring clients. To be successful, they must have a strong online presence, develop a professional website or portfolio, and participate in networking events or industry-specific forums. Freelance translators should also actively seek new clients while maintaining relationships with existing ones. This may entail contacting new clients by email, social media, or phone, as well as attending industry events and conferences to expand one's professional network.

### **Translators of Translation Agencies**

The Kazakhstan labor market is vibrant and demanding today, with translation companies functioning as crucial connectors for businesses and organizations to overcome linguistic and cultural differences. In this setting, translators working by translation companies must have a diverse set of skills and abilities in order to remain competitive and provide high-quality services to clients. When opposed to freelancers, these translators face unique hurdles, such as managing larger, more complex projects, effectively engaging with clients, and possessing specialist knowledge in numerous fields. The following conclusions, based on the interviews, emphasize the most crucial abilities and competencies for translators working in translation agencies in Kazakhstan's modern labor market.

### ***Project Management Skills***

The magnitude and complexity of the tasks handled by freelance translators and those engaged by translation services are significant differences. Large-scale projects involving many languages, tight timeframes, and demanding quality standards are frequently undertaken by translation services. As a result, translators working for these companies must have strong project management abilities in order to manage their



workload efficiently, assure timely delivery, and maintain uniformity across all translated materials. Translators can develop project management skills through formal training programs, online courses, or by learning from experienced colleagues within their organization. These skills are crucial for translators to excel in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment and contribute to their agency's overall success.

### ***Effective Communication and Interpersonal Skills***

In order to effectively communicate with clients, coworkers, and other stakeholders, translators working in a translation agency must act as representatives of their agency. Understanding client needs, communicating information succinctly, and upholding professional relationships are all necessary for this. In addition to producing top-notch translations, excellent communication skills are required to uphold the reputation of the translation agency. In lectures, role-playing exercises, and everyday interactions, translators can hone their interpersonal and communication abilities. These abilities are especially crucial when dealing with foreign clients because translators may have to get over linguistic and cultural barriers.

### ***Expertise in a Variety of Subject Areas***

Since translators working in translation agencies may work on various projects, including legal documents, medical reports, or materials from international organizations, it is frequently expected of them to have specialized knowledge in a variety of fields. As a result, translators need to possess a variety of skills as well as the capacity to pick up new ones quickly. Interpreters must constantly broaden their knowledge, stay current with emerging trends across industries, and be ready to take on new challenges if they want to remain competitive. This can be accomplished by connecting with authorities in various fields, taking part in industry conferences, and continually honing their skills.

### ***Technical Proficiency in Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT) Tools***

For translators working in a translation agency, technical expertise is required, particularly when it comes to CAT tools. Terminology management, automated quality control, and translation memory are all CAT technologies that speed up translation. These tools facilitate collaboration between translators, clients, and other stakeholders while also boosting productivity and accuracy. Translators employed by translation agencies must be proficient in well-known CAT tools like Trados and MemoQ. Attending training sessions, taking part in online courses, and asking knowledgeable coworkers or mentors for guidance are all examples of ways to develop these skills.

### ***Adaptability and Flexibility***

Projects at translation agencies can vary significantly in terms of scope, subject matter, and deadlines. As a result, translators need to be adaptable and flexible to accommodate a wide range of project requirements and work effectively under pressure.

### **Staff translators of translation department of companies**

In today's Kazakhstan labor market, company-based staff translators within translation departments confront distinct challenges, setting them apart from freelance translators or those employed by translation agencies. To remain competitive and excel, staff translators must acquire a diverse array of skills and competencies. They need to navigate multiple challenges, including dealing with various subject areas, collaborating with colleagues across different departments, and finding the right balance between translation skills and technical expertise. The following findings outline the key skills and competencies essential for staff translators working in translation departments of companies in Kazakhstan's contemporary labor market.

### ***Adaptability Across Various Subject Areas***

Despite staff translators potentially working for a company focused on a specific industry, they frequently manage translation projects encompassing different areas. This necessitates adaptability and a broad knowledge base to accurately convey meaning and adhere to industry-specific terminology and standards. By continuously expanding their subject matter expertise, staying updated on the latest developments across various fields, and preparing to tackle new challenges, staff translators can cultivate adaptability. Continuous professional development, attending industry-specific conferences, and networking with professionals across different fields can aid in achieving adaptability.

### ***Communication and Collaboration Competencies***

Because they frequently cooperate with colleagues from other divisions within the organization, staff translators must have great communication and collaboration abilities. Because of this collaboration, they can raise questions and clarify specific terminology or concepts with subject matter experts, resulting in accurate and high-quality translations. Participating in workshops, team-building exercises, and learning from real-world experiences can help staff translators improve their communication and cooperation abilities. These abilities are essential for maintaining a healthy work atmosphere and facilitating information sharing inside the firm.

### ***Less Emphasis on Technical Skills***

In contrast to freelance translators or those employed by translation agencies, staff translators in companies generally have access to dedicated IT specialists for technical support. Consequently, technical skills are not as emphasized for staff translators. However, basic proficiency in computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools and other

relevant software applications can still be beneficial. By attending training workshops, participating in online courses, and seeking guidance from experienced colleagues or mentors, staff translators can develop these skills. Gaining a fundamental understanding of popular CAT tools, such as Smart Cat, can help staff translators boost their efficiency and accuracy.

### ***Language Proficiency and Ongoing Improvement***

Regardless of the company's industry or specific focus, language proficiency is critical for staff translators. They should maintain and continuously enhance their language skills through various strategies, such as attending language courses, participating in language exchange programs, and interacting with native speakers. Moreover, keeping up with industry news, cultural developments, and trends in their source and target languages can help staff translators to be sure in the accuracy and cultural sensitivity of their translation.

### ***Project Management Capabilities***

Although project management skills might not be as vital for staff translators as for those working in translation agencies, they are still required for effectively managing deadlines, workload, and quality control. Staff translators should be able to prioritize tasks, allocate resources, and monitor progress to ensure translation projects do meet the deadlines and quality standards of a company. Staff translators can develop project management skills through formal training programs, online courses, or by learning from experienced colleagues within their organization. These skills can help them succeed in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment and contribute to the overall result.

## **Employers of Translation Agencies**

In today's rapidly evolving labor market in Kazakhstan, competition is intensifying, and the demand for skilled translators is on the rise. Translation agencies have particular expectations from their translators to guarantee the provision of top-notch services and the highest level of client satisfaction.

### ***Effective Communication and Accountability***

A significant finding from the interviews is that translation agencies place a greater emphasis on communication skills and accountability rather than language knowledge alone. While language proficiency is undeniably crucial, employers regard effective communication as the cornerstone of triumphant translation projects. Translators should possess the ability to efficiently communicate with clients, project managers, and their colleagues, ensuring seamless coordination and cooperation throughout the translation process. Additionally, translators are expected to exhibit a strong sense of accountability and professionalism. Employers value translators who can effectively manage their workload, meet deadlines, and consistently maintain high-quality standards in their work. The capacity to present oneself professionally is essential, as it fosters trust with clients and paves the way for enduring professional relationships.

### ***Proficiency in Multiple Languages***

Another noteworthy discovery from the interviews is that translation agency employers frequently look for translators who are proficient in more than just two languages. Within the context of Kazakhstan, possessing proficiency in English, Russian, and Kazakh is deemed a significant advantage. Being multilingual allows translators to accommodate a broader spectrum of clients and projects, increasing their competitiveness in the labor market. Employers appreciate translators who can provide an array of

language pairings, as it enables agencies to expand their range of services and cater to a more extensive client base.

### ***Familiarity with Translation Management Systems***

Translation agency employers also expect their translators to be well-versed in Translation Management Systems (TMS). TMS are software tools that provide capabilities such as terminology management, translation memory, and automatic quality control checks to optimize the translation process. These tools not only enhance efficiency and precision but also promote collaboration among translators, clients, and other parties involved. Proficiency in TMS is considered a valuable asset, as it enables translators to monitor their projects, ensuring consistency and quality in their translations. Employers value translators who can effortlessly adapt to their existing TMS and workflows, thereby streamlining the overall translation process.

### ***Skills in Project Management***

Apart from the core expectations outlined above, translation agency employers also appreciate translators who possess project management skills. Translators who can effectively oversee translation projects, including delegating tasks to other translators and synchronizing their efforts, contribute to the overall success of the agency. Employers value translators who can not only produce high-quality translations but also supervise projects, ensuring their timely completion and adherence to budget constraints. Translators equipped with project management skills can enable translation agencies to better serve their clients by guaranteeing efficient project completion and client satisfaction. By adeptly managing the work of other translators, these professionals also contribute to the overall productivity and triumph of the translation agency.

## **HRs of translation departments of companies**

Distinct industries and organizations maintain particular expectations for translators, especially those employed in translation departments of companies concentrating on a specific area of expertise.

### ***In-Depth and Specialized Knowledge in Their Domain***

A primary expectation from HRs in translation departments of companies with a focused direction is that translators have extensive and specialized knowledge within their area of activity. As these companies often operate in niche markets or highly specialized sectors, it is vital for translators to possess a deep understanding of industry-specific terminology, concepts, and practices. This expertise allows them to deliver accurate translations that effectively communicate the intended meaning while adhering to the standards of their respective fields.

### ***Effective Collaboration with Colleagues from Different Departments***

HRs also emphasize the importance of translators' ability to collaborate efficiently with colleagues from various departments. In specialized companies, translation projects frequently require input from several stakeholders, including subject matter experts, managers, and technical staff. Translators are expected to work closely with these individuals to gather information, clarify requirements, and ensure that translated materials align with the company's goals and expectations.

### ***Cultural Adaptability and Consciousness***

Given the global presence of many specialized organizations, HR expects translators to display cultural flexibility and consciousness. This includes recognizing and appreciating cultural variations among clients, colleagues, and business partners.

Translators must handle cultural nuances and alter their translations accordingly to ensure that the content is appropriate and well-received by the intended audience.

### ***Familiarity with Labor Laws and Joint-Stock Company Regulations***

HR departments need translators to be well-versed in key laws and regulations, such as labor laws and joint-stock company regulations, in addition to specialized expertise and cooperation abilities. This is especially important when dealing with legal documents, contracts, and corporate communications. Translators must ensure that their translations are in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and accurately depict the company's legal obligations and commitments.

### ***Certifications and Evident Professionalism***

HR departments may occasionally need translators to have professional qualifications in their field of specialization in addition to linguistic fluency and specialized knowledge. These credentials serve as proof of the translators' competence and professionalism, giving businesses confidence that the translators have the abilities and knowledge to manage the company's specialized translation assignments.

The table below provides an overview of the required skills and abilities for freelance translators, translators working for translation agencies, and staff translators in company translation departments. Specialized knowledge in specific subject areas, competency in computer-assisted translation systems, flexibility to varied work contexts, outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, and marketing and networking talents are required of freelance translators.



**Table 5***Skills and competencies by three types of translators*

<b>Skill/Competency</b>	<b>Freelance Translators</b>	<b>Translators of Translation Agencies</b>	<b>Staff Translators of Translation Departments of Companies</b>
<b>Expertise in specific subject areas</b>	Required, with an emphasis on ongoing professional development and networking with experts in the field	Required, with an emphasis on broadening subject matter expertise and staying updated on the latest developments across various fields	Required, with an emphasis on expanding knowledge base to convey meaning and adhere to industry-specific terminology and standards
<b>Proficiency in computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools</b>	Required, with an emphasis on being proficient in popular CAT tools such as Trados, MemoQ, or Wordfast	Required, with an emphasis on being proficient in popular CAT tools like Trados, MemoQ, or Wordfast	Basic proficiency is required, with an emphasis on using relevant software applications to boost efficiency and accuracy
<b>Flexibility and adaptability</b>	Required, with an emphasis on being comfortable working remotely and using diverse communication and project management tools	Required, with an emphasis on being adaptable and flexible to accommodate a wide range of project requirements and work effectively under pressure	Required, with an emphasis on being adaptable to accurately convey meaning and adhere to industry-specific terminology and standards
<b>Effective communication and interpersonal skills</b>	Required, with an emphasis on establishing rapport with clients, negotiating contracts, and managing client expectations	Required, with an emphasis on understanding clients' needs, providing clear and concise information, and nurturing professional relationships	Required, with an emphasis on possessing strong communication and collaboration skills to work effectively with colleagues across different departments within the company
<b>Marketing and networking capabilities</b>	Required, with an emphasis on establishing a robust online presence, creating a professional website or portfolio, and engaging in networking events or industry-specific forums	Not required, as translation agencies handle marketing for their translators	Not required, as staff translators generally do not need to market their services

They should also maintain their skills by participating in professional development activities such as visiting industry conferences and networking with other professionals. Similarly, translators in translation agencies must have subject matter expertise, project management abilities, CAT tool competency, and good communication and interpersonal skills. They also need to work on large-scale, complex projects, manage clients from different countries, and meet stringent quality standards. Staff translators in translation departments of companies should have adaptability to work with different subject areas, communication and collaboration skills, language proficiency, continuous learning and improvement, and project management abilities. Translators should have effective collaboration with colleagues in other departments, set task prioritization, determine resource distribution, and monitor progress to ensure that translations are completed on time and at a high quality. To maintain competitiveness in a rapidly changing job market, translators of all types must continually improve their skills through professional development and training.

In addition to other skills like communication, project management, and specialized knowledge of their field, translators are required to know the language in both translation agencies and corporate translation departments. Another highly valued skill is the capacity to change with new workflows and technology. These expectations must be understood by translators, and they must work to develop the knowledge and abilities required for success. The most crucial competencies and skills for each group are compiled in the table below:

**Table 6**

*Skills and competencies expected by employers*

<b>Skill/competency</b>	<b>Employers of Translation Agencies</b>	<b>HRs of Translation Department Companies</b>
-------------------------	------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------

Effective Communication and Accountability	Emphasize the importance of effective communication and accountability in translation projects, along with language proficiency	Also value effective communication and accountability, but place more emphasis on specialized knowledge in a particular domain
Proficiency in Multiple Languages	Frequently seek translators who are proficient in more than two languages, particularly English, Russian, and Kazakh	May require translators to be fluent in a particular language, depending on the company's specialization
Familiarity with Translation Management Systems	Expect translators to be well-versed in TMS, which streamline the translation process and ensure quality and consistency	May not place as much emphasis on TMS proficiency, but expect translators to have knowledge of translation software and tools to use during their work
Skills in Project Management	Appreciate translators who possess project management skills, such as the ability to oversee projects and delegate tasks to other translators	Expect translators to collaborate efficiently with colleagues from various departments, but may not require project management skills
In-Depth and Specialized Knowledge in Their Domain	Not a primary expectation, but employers recognize the importance of subject matter expertise and staying up-to-date with industry-specific developments	Primary expectation, as companies require accurate translations that adhere to industry-specific standards and terminology
Cultural Adaptability and Consciousness	Not a primary expectation, but may appreciate translators who can navigate cultural subtleties	Expect translators to demonstrate cultural adaptability and consciousness, especially when dealing with clients and business partners from different cultures
Familiarity with Labor Laws and Joint-Stock Company Regulations	May not require a working knowledge of labor laws and regulations, but expect translators to adhere to quality and confidentiality standards	Expect translators to ensure that their translations comply with applicable laws and regulations, particularly when handling legal documents and corporate communications
Certifications and Evident Professionalism	May not require professional certifications, but value translators who exhibit professionalism and maintain high-quality standards in their work	May require translators to possess professional certifications in their area of expertise as an endorsement of their competence and professionalism, and to distinguish themselves in a competitive labor market

Analyzing these two perspectives, it can be concluded that most of the skills and competencies that translators own meet the expectations of employers. For example, the need for effective communication that was mentioned by both employers and HRs are met by all the types of translators. Knowledge of computer-assisted translation is mentioned as important only by freelancers and translation agency translators but not by staff translators;

however, the HRs of translation departments look for translators who do have skills of working with CAT tools. Proficiency in multiple languages are expected by employers of Translation Agencies and this expectation coincided with the answers of translators: only freelancers and translation agency translators have mentioned about its importance in their work. Work in translation management systems and having specialized knowledge in other areas was common in the answers of both translators and employers, as well. Translators did not mention about the need to know labor law and law on JSC; however, this factor is highly significant for HRs of Translation Departments of companies.

## Discussion

This study aimed to explore the crucial abilities and proficiencies translators need to remain competitive in Kazakhstan's current job market. To accomplish this, semi-structured interviews were conducted with freelance translators, translation agency translators, staff translators, employers, and HR experts from translation departments. The results are consistent with earlier research in the translation studies field. For instance, Bernardi (2004) and Gomez (2017) stress the importance of specialized knowledge in areas like medicine, law, and social sciences. Such expertise allows translators to effectively comprehend, analyze, and generate corresponding texts in the target language (Schäffner and Adab, 2000; Bassnet, 1998).

Mastery of computer-assisted translation, in other words CAT, tools and system for managing the translation process is another essential competency, as highlighted by Mrochen (2014), Pym (2016), Baishymyrova et al. (2022), and Malenova (2019). Rapid technological progress has led to the widespread adoption of these tools, improving the translation process and overall efficiency. Moreover, marketing and networking skills are crucial for translators to obtain work and forge relationships with clients, as emphasized by Alotaibi (2014) and Farahani and Shomoossi (2021). This is particularly important for freelance translators, who must actively market their services and build a professional network to secure projects.

Project management abilities and dedication to lifelong learning are also critical for translators' professional growth (Int, 2005; Pym, 2009; Kerremans and Hosseini, 2019; Horbačauskienė et al., 2017). These skills enable translators to handle their workload effectively and keep up with the latest industry trends and technological innovations. HR specialists in translation departments particularly appreciate these abilities, as staff translators often work with other departments, necessitating efficient collaboration.

The findings of the existing literature are consistent with the importance of subject-matter expertise as stressed by staff translators, freelance translators, and translation agencies. The critical significance of specialized knowledge in fields like medicine, law, and the social sciences is stressed by Bernardi (2004) and Gomez (2017). If one is knowledgeable in these areas, it is simpler to comprehend, analyze, and reconstruct pertinent texts in the target language (Schäffner and Adab, 2000; Basset, 1998). It is important to have knowledge in this field to ensure accurate and contextualized translation, as evidenced by the overlap between field observations and academic literature.

Additionally, the significance of using translation management systems (TMS) was emphasized for translation agency employers. Baishymirova et al. (2022) confirm this conclusion by mentioning the use of various computer translation tools such as SmartCAT, Trados, and MemoQ. Mrochen (2014) explains the increasing popularity of these tools, citing their ability to not only save the memory of document translations, but also to facilitate the exchange of this information through cloud translation. Malenova (2019) expands on this potential of TMS for collaboration, arguing that the use of cloud technologies speeds up the translation process. When several translators work on the same project, they can observe and learn from the work of their colleagues, resulting in increased collective productivity. This convergence of field data and existing literature emphasizes the significance of TMS in modern translation practice, particularly in strengthening collaboration and increasing efficiency.

An intriguing aspect to consider is the limited focus on localization as a growing trend in translation during the interviews. While employers mainly require translators for translation tasks, localization is viewed as an additional area that warrants separate learning. Nevertheless, Pym (2009), Biel (2011), and Raído (2016) regard localization as

extra skill translators can develop to distinguish themselves from their peers and gain a competitive advantage.

If to analyze these findings comparing them to the data given in the Professional Standard for Translators by APTITC (2021), some similarities can be found. For example, the Standard points out the knowledge of language at advanced level (C1-C2) is an obligatory requirement. This idea was mentioned as basic skill by translators and employers, too. Moreover, there was a requirement from the Standard to be able to translate different types of documents such as medical, technical, journalistic texts. According to the answers of freelance translators and translators of Translation Agencies, expertise in specific area is crucial to be competent in the market. However, the Standard is limited only to these requirements for translators and, consequently, lacks for data on other specific skills and competencies that can make translators competitive and satisfy the demand of Translation Market of Kazakhstan. Given that, the following figure in the form of an infographic was developed to show the result of this research paper which can be used by translators, future researchers in this area, and HEI curriculum developers, as well. The figure was constructed taken into consideration the expectations of employers from translators and shows only those skills and competencies that were not mentioned in the Literature and Professional Standard.

**Figure 1**

*Skills and competencies needed for translators as a result of the research*



In summary, this research expands our understanding of the required skills and competencies for translators to stay competitive in Kazakhstan's contemporary labor market. These identified abilities and proficiencies, supported by existing literature, emphasize the significance of specialized knowledge, technological expertise, soft skills, and professional development in the translation field. To remain competitive, translators should focus on refining these skills and competencies through targeted education, training, and hands-on experience.



## Conclusion

This in-depth phenomenological research study's conclusion provides a thorough examination of the state of the translation industries in Kazakhstan as a whole. It provides a thorough overview of the constantly changing demands made by companies in the translation industry and explains the necessary skills and competences to be competitive in the sector. In order to do this, the study used semi-structured interviews with a variety of translators, including freelancers, translators employed by translation agencies, and staff translators. It also included interviews with employers, who were represented by Human Resources specialists from translation departments of companies and employers of translation agencies. This methodology allowed the study to produce a wealth of insightful results that have improved upon our prior knowledge and comprehension of the issue.

The study was motivated by the pressing need to define the precise skills and competencies that translators should develop and improve in order to meet changing employer demands in light of shifting market trends. Although both the national Kazakhstan Professional Standard and the worldwide ISO 17100:2015 standard offer recommendations for translators, they fall short of defining the entire range of skills and competencies that are essential for contemporary translators. Further complicating matters, earlier research carried out within the borders of Kazakhstan tended to concentrate mainly on the curriculum requirements within Higher Education Institutions and the adoption of new technologies, leaving a glaring gap in our comprehensive understanding of the skill set that contemporary translators must possess.

Existing literature divides translators' skills and competencies into two categories: traditional skills and additional skills. Furthermore, the literature divides employer expectations into three distinct but interconnected categories: social aspects, professional considerations, and extensive online knowledge. These categories emphasize the

importance of lifelong learning and continuing professional growth in maintaining and improving translation competency.

The study methodology, based on a purposeful saturation sampling approach, was developed to address and fill this knowledge gap. The research discovered a variety of previously unstudied skills and competencies through a series of Zoom interviews with nine translators and six employers in Astana. The translators' professional experiences, day-to-day operating processes, and the skills and competences that they bring to their professions were all explored in these interviews.

The study's findings shed light on a number of critical competences required of all types of translators, in addition to the traditional and additional skills and competencies already recognized in the literature. These include adaptability and flexibility, as well as developed interpersonal skills and effective communication abilities. Our research also revealed that certain skills and competencies are more important for various types of translators:

- For freelancers, marketing and networking skills have been identified as particularly beneficial.
- Staff translators, on the other hand, stand to gain from holding professional certificates and possessing a thorough knowledge of labor law and the law on Joint Stock Companies.
- Lastly, translators employed within agencies have been found to need a proficiency in project management skills.

This detailed comprehension of the skills and competencies required for modern translators to keep their competitive edge is an important contribution to the body of literature.

The research made a contribution to the Translation Area by finding new types of skills and competencies that were not mentioned in the Literature. The new set of translation skills and competencies can be helpful for further research to be used in quantitative research to cover a broader range of participants from the theoretical perspective. From the practical point of view, the findings of this study can contribute to educational programs developers to include them in the curriculum so that students learn relevant skills and acquire modern competencies.

There could be limitations to my research. The study only includes participants from a capital in Kazakhstan (Astana) and may not be representative of the entire country. Additionally, the participants who would like to be a part of the study may not be representative of the population of translators in Kazakhstan.

In this regard, the study in this area can be conducted covering other parts of Kazakhstan to see how things differ.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Protocol

#### **Freelance translators:**

##### Background Information

1. Can you tell me about your experience working as a freelance translator in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan?

R1

2. What are the most important skills and competencies that a freelance translator must possess to be successful in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan?
3. Have you had any professional development courses to increase your knowledge and be more competitive?
4. How do you maintain and improve your language proficiency as a freelance translator? Do you have any specific strategies or techniques?
5. What technical skills are essential for a freelance translator in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan? How have you developed these skills?
6. Can you provide examples of how technology and tools have improved or hindered your translation work?
7. What other things are important for freelance translator except language proficiency and technical skills?
8. How important is subject matter expertise in your work as a translator? Can you provide an example of a project where subject matter expertise was particularly important?
9. What else do clients expect from you as a translator?
10. How do you manage and meet these expectations as a freelance translator?
11. What advice would you give to future freelance translators?

## Appendix B

### Interview Protocol

#### Staff translators:

##### Background Information

1. Can you tell me about your experience working as a staff translator in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan?

R1

2. In your opinion, what are the most important skills and competencies that a staff translator must possess to be successful in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan? Please provide examples.
3. How do you maintain and improve your language proficiency as a staff translator? Do you have any specific strategies or techniques?
4. How important is subject matter expertise in your work as a staff translator? Can you provide an example of a project where subject matter expertise was particularly important?
5. What technical skills are essential for a staff translator in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan? How have you developed these skills?
6. Communication skills are crucial for a staff translator to effectively work with colleagues and other departments within the company. How do you ensure effective communication in your work as a staff translator?
7. Project management skills are necessary for managing deadlines, workload, and quality control. Can you provide an example of how you have effectively managed a translation project as a staff translator?
8. Can you describe the expectations of your employer regarding your language proficiency, subject matter expertise, technical skills, communication skills, and project management skills?
9. How do you manage and meet these expectations as a staff translator?
10. In your opinion, how do the expectations of employers for staff translators differ from those of freelance translators or translators working for translation agencies in terms of the required skills and competencies?

## Appendix C

### Interview Protocol

#### **Translators of Translation Agencies:**

##### Background Information

1. Can you tell me about your experience working as a translator in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan?

##### R1

2. In your opinion, what are the most important skills and competencies that a translator must possess to be successful in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan? Please provide examples.
3. How do you maintain and improve your language proficiency as a translator? Do you have any specific strategies or techniques?
4. How important is subject matter expertise in your work as a translator? Can you provide an example of a project where subject matter expertise was particularly important?
5. What technical skills are essential for a translator in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan? How have you developed these skills?
6. Communication skills are crucial for a translator to effectively work with clients and colleagues. How do you ensure effective communication in your work as a translator?
7. Project management skills are necessary for managing deadlines, workload, and quality control. Can you provide an example of how you have effectively managed a translation project in the past?
8. Can you describe the expectations of your employer or clients regarding your language proficiency, subject matter expertise, technical skills, communication skills, and project management skills?
9. How do you manage and meet these expectations?
10. How do you think the expectations of employers for freelance translators, translators of translation agencies, and staff translators differ in terms of the required skills and competencies?

## **Appendix D**

### Interview Protocol

#### **HRs of Translation Department of Companies:**

##### Background Information

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your company and the translation services you provide?
2. What types of translation projects do you typically handle? (e.g. legal, medical, technical, etc.)
3. What are some of the most common languages that you translate to/from?

##### R2

4. How do you typically recruit translators for your department?
5. What qualifications or certifications do you consider important when hiring translators?
6. What specific translation software and tools do you expect translators to be proficient in?
7. What qualities or characteristics do you look for in a translator?
8. How do you assess the quality of translations produced by translators?
9. What advice would you give to aspiring translators looking to enter the field in Kazakhstan?

## Appendix E

### Interview Protocol

#### Employers of Translation Agencies

##### Background Information

1. What types of translation services are most in demand in Kazakhstan currently?

R2

2. Can you provide examples of specific translation projects that your agency has completed recently? What were the specific requirements of these projects?
3. What skills and competencies do you consider essential for translators to possess in order to be successful in the current job market?
4. How do you go about selecting and hiring freelance translators and staff translators for your agency?
5. How do you manage and monitor the quality of translation work done by your translators?
6. Can you describe the tools and technologies that your agency uses for translation projects? How do these tools and technologies affect the workflow and efficiency of your translators?
7. Are there any upcoming or anticipated changes in the translation industry or market that you feel will affect the skills and competencies needed for translators in the future?
8. Are there any other factors that you consider when evaluating the performance of your translators, beyond technical skills and language proficiency?
9. What do most of translators lack that you are looking for?
10. Finally, are there any recommendations or suggestions you would make to translators

looking to improve their skills and remain competitive in the current labor market of

Kazakhstan?

## **Appendix F**

### **Informed Consent Form**

**Participant's Initials:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Title of study**

Skills and competencies needed for translators to be competitive in the modern labor market of Kazakhstan

#### **Principal investigator**

Yesbatyrova Zhuldyz

Student of Master's degree, KAZGUU University

+7(707) 314 0721

zh.esbatyrova@gmail.com

#### **Purpose of study**

The purpose of this research paper is to explore the basic skills of translators by interviewing them and later use them to discover the skills and competencies needed to be learned additionally by translators according to the translators and employers to be highly competitive in the labor market of Kazakhstan now.

#### **Confidentiality**

You can be sure that your name and other disclosed information will remain confidential.

There will be no harm to you.

#### **Voluntary participation**

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Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is entirely up to you whether or not to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be required to sign a consent form. After signing the consent form, you may withdraw at any moment and without explanation. Withdrawing from this study will have no effect on your relationship with the researcher, if you have one. If you leave the research before the data collection is finished, your data will either be returned to you or deleted.

### **Consent**

I have read and understand 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 giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_