

Investigating the Relationships Between Intercultural Competences, Academic and Professional Self-Efficacy of Translators

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Abstract

Translators are expected to have expertise and experience in the relevant field. For this reason, the study aimed to examine the professional competence, academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication competence perceptions of translator candidates on a relational basis. In this research, the relational screening model, one of the quantitative research approaches, was used. The sample of the study consists of student translators who are studying or have recently graduated from public universities in Kazakhstan. In this context, 214 translator candidates who studied at 4 different state universities in Kazakhstan and graduated in the 2023 academic year were included in the research. 'Translator Professional Competence Scale', 'Academic Self-Efficacy Scale' and 'Intercultural Communication Scale' were used as research data collection tools. Descriptive analyzes and structural equation modeling analyzes were carried out using SPSS 25.0 and AMOS 24.0 programs. According to the research findings, it was found that the professional competence, academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication competence of translator candidates in Kazakhstan were at medium levels. According to SEM analyses, the academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication competencies of translator candidates significantly affect their professional competencies, both separately and together.

Keywords: *Academic self-efficacy, intercultural competences, professional efficacy, translators*

Introduction

Translators have been traditionally referred to as being in a "secondary position" in translation studies research until recently (Simeoni, 1998). The role and status of translators have been ignored in these studies for various reasons and translation as a professional profession has not been at the centre of traditional translation studies (Dam & Zethsen, 2008). However, recent studies have shifted their focus from texts to translators (Dam & Zethsen, 2009; Vural, 2022).

According to Ammann and Vermeer (1990), the profession of translation requires not only language skills and competencies, but also an interest in and sensitivity to different cultures. Those

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interested in pursuing education as prospective translators should be curious, imaginative, and interested in cultural diversity. Conducting in-depth research is one of the requirements for obtaining an academic translation education, and it is essential for aspiring translators who want to work in this area. Translators must therefore be culturally aware and able to recognize the differences as well as the similarities between other cultures and their own.

Translators' professional, academic and intercultural communication competences cover a wide range in line with the multifaceted skills and knowledge required by the profession. Language proficiency, familiarity with terminology, and application of translation techniques are all part of a translator's professional competence (Esfandiari et al., 2019; Jemielity, 2018). These competences enable the translator to produce an accurate, fluent and natural text in the target language. Academic knowledge in linguistics, translation theory, and methodology are among the academic competencies of translators. These competences increase the translator's capacity to put theoretical knowledge into practice (Esfandiari, 2015; Oraki & Tajvidi, 2020). Translators bridge two or more cultures to convey meaning. Intercultural communication competencies and skills are critical to this process (Alenezi, 2021; Fois, 2020). To succeed, translators must possess proficiency in each of these three domains. A translator must possess a broad range of cultural and academic knowledge in addition to language proficiency in order to meet the requirements of professional, academic, and intercultural communication competences. Therefore, the profession of translation is a dynamic field that requires continuous learning and self-improvement (Beeby, 2004; Sales, 2023).

Professional Self-Efficacy of Translators

Budin (2002) argues that since specialization is becoming increasingly important in all fields of specialization, including economics, law, social sciences, and all other sciences, translators should also possess specializations and competencies in a few fields and subfields for their professional work. The aim of the qualification for the career development of translators or prospective translators is to "equip candidates with the translation skills necessary to achieve high performance in the global business world, to provide candidates with the opportunity to obtain a job in language or translation or to advance in their current job, to provide candidates with an internationally recognized qualification, to provide a universal perspective for candidates aiming for an international career" (CIOL, 2022).

Chesterman (2009) claims that in studies where the translator is given priority, texts come in second and translators come first. At this point, the door is opened to a variety of research topics, and translation studies cover subjects like professionalization, the translation industry, and translators, as Chesterman suggests. Because they are more visible in the field, translators are thus the focus of new research, which paved the way for the studies that impact many aspects of the translation field, including translator competence, professional ethics, professionalization, and standard setting. Therefore, according to Boucau (2005), professional competences should be at a high level and competences should be developed in accordance with the requirements of the age in order for translators working in the constantly evolving and growing translation sector to survive, increase their business volume by being more visible than their competitors, and achieve the status that they deserve.

Leeson and Venturi (2017) define competence as the successful completion of a recognized educational or vocational process for which a person receives a certificate. According to NAATI (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters), competence refers to a set of knowledge, skills and attributes that a person must possess or acquire in order to perform a specific task successfully and is defined as performance that meets or exceeds standards in a competence area (NAATI, 2024).

According to Bandura's (1997) studies, self-efficacy is a concept that expresses individuals' beliefs in themselves in order to demonstrate their skills on a subject. An individual's self-efficacy perception will affect whether they can successfully perform an activity that is under their responsibility (Bong, 1995). Bandura defines self-efficacy as an individual's judgement about themselves in terms of their level of successful performance of the activities necessary for them to perform a certain task. In general, while self-efficacy is expressed for a specific field, the current field is partially distinct from the beliefs about other fields that the person can realize (Pajares, 2007). Self-efficacy is related to a variety of subjects, including academics, socialization, and emotions. For example, while a university student's academic self-efficacy belief is high, their social ties with individuals of the same age may be weak (Willemse, 2008). The school is an important source of information about students' self-efficacy, where their knowledge and abilities are constantly tested, they are provided with the opportunity to be evaluated and compared socially (Bandura, 1994). In a study conducted by Locke and Latham (2002), it was stated that individuals

with high self-efficacy set higher goals for themselves. Setting high goals increases self-efficacy, but it also improves the quality of the individual's subsequent goals (Artino, 2012).

Translators' Academic Self-Efficacy

One of the variables focused on in the study is translators' academic self-efficacy. The concept of academic self-efficacy is defined as "a student's personal belief that they can successfully complete a task related to their educational life" (Chun & Choi, 2005). Academic self-efficacy includes people's beliefs about their ability to cope with academic missions instead of their beliefs about their attitudes and abilities (Millburg, 2009). Academic self-efficacy beliefs of individuals who are studying are related to motor, mental and emotional parts during learning. Individuals' beliefs about their academic self-efficacy affect their learning levels through their behavioral, mental, and emotional involvement in school activities. The level of learning also influences academic self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Recent studies indicate that there is a strong correlation between academic self-efficacy and academic achievement. Studies indicate that a positive academic self-efficacy contributes to academic success and academic success contributes to the emergence of a stronger academic self-efficacy (Millburg, 2009). A student with strong academic self-efficacy can solve a difficult problem and gain many experiences to achieve success (Bandura, 1997). According to Zimmerman (1995), the most important feature of academic self-efficacy is that self-efficacy beliefs include judgements about the potential to perform a task, not personal characteristics. International educators have planned many studies to assess the impact of academic self-efficacy in combination with other variables on academic functioning in university students. Studies indicated that students with high academic self-efficacy are more capable and intelligent. Students who complete more projects and homework have stronger and longer-lasting academic self-efficacy beliefs than other students (Bandura et al., 2001; Chemers et al., 2001; Honicke & Broadbent, 2016).

Translation competencies acquired through academic translation education are critical for translation students to translate accurately, successfully, and with high quality. In addition, translators are now required to have knowledge and skills beyond translation. This sector's quest demonstrates that translators must meet certain qualifications (Beeby, 2000; Mallidou et al., 2018). It is essential to train translator candidates to be well-equipped for the translation profession, complementing scientific education and qualifications, knowing, holding strong cultural,

communication, and intellectual competences, and expertise in their field. All these objectives include intercultural communication competency, academic self-efficacy, and skills and capabilities for the translation and interpreting professions (Alowedi, 2015; Mallidou et al., 2018; Orozco & Hurtado Albir, 2002).

Intercultural Competences of Translators

Vermeer (1996) describes translation as a cultural act. Language reflects cultural behavior patterns. According to Vermeer, people perceive events in accordance with the values and rules of their culture. Vermeer believes that translators should be aware of and adhere to cultural rules. Translation occurs in communicative environments where people from various cultures coexist and within the context of a functional purpose. Language is an essential component of cultures (Snell-Homby, 1988). Thus, many researchers have introduced a functional approach to translation on this basis, considered translation within the framework of intercultural communication, and emphasized the importance of translators possessing this competence (Schäffner, 2003; Vermeer & Chesterman, 2021).

Culture and language translation is another issue that should be emphasized in the context of language-culture relationship. Language translation is also the process of making sense of a culture. While translating a foreign language, an individual creates a new structure by making sense of the culture of the society in which that language is spoken (Janfaza et al., 2012; Moradi, 2020). Keeping culture and language separate in the translation process makes it difficult to make sense of and comprehend the language. Language and culture are inextricably linked, so it should be considered in all translation processes. Therefore, translators' intercultural communication competence is a prerequisite (Armstrong, 2014; Bishop, 2021; Komissarov, 1991).

Because of the natural relationship between language and culture, the target culture and the source culture are almost always involved in the translation process when the target language and mother tongue are active. The translation process should include both the target and the source culture. "Intercultural Communication Oriented Approach" was born based on this understanding and views (Cetinavci, 2012; Nishida, 1999). Based on the intercultural communication approach, the translator tries to establish a link between their own culture and the target culture. Establishing such a connection contributes to the translator's general and specific professional translation skills

as well as their empathy skills, awareness, and respect for differences. Within the scope of intercultural communication competence, translators are expected to have skills such as behavior, knowledge, relationship building and interpretation, interaction and exploration, and critical cultural awareness. Only in this way can translators who translate the target language achieve their communication goals (Büyükikiz, 2013; Kim & Gudykunst, 1988).

Intercultural communication competence can be discussed in five steps (Byram, 1997; Vukić et al., 2019). At the behavioral level, the individual learning the target language is expected to be curious and open to the other culture. They are expected not to be prejudiced against a new culture and to look at their own culture objectively. In the knowledge stage, it is expected to have a high level of knowledge about the practices in their own country and other countries. In addition, they are expected to have knowledge about the general processes of social and individual interaction. In the stage of establishing a relationship and interpretation, they are expected to interpret and explain an element or event belonging to another culture and gain the ability to associate it with their own culture. At the stage of mutual interaction and discovery, they are expected to gain knowledge, skills and attitudes about culture and cultural practices. Critical cultural awareness, on the other hand, involves the individual's critical evaluation of their own culture and other cultures (Byram, 1997; Collier, 1989).

Since translation is defined as an action carried out for a purpose, translation texts are created according to the needs of the target culture and it is considered as an intercultural communication, it could be argued that communication and culture and therefore intercultural communication play an important role in translation. The translators play a crucial part in translation since they rewrite the translation text for the target culture, modify it, and consider the target culture's social structure, norms, and standards. As a result, to reshape the target text, the translator must first demonstrate intercultural communication competence. The theorists who have a functional approach to translation argue that the translator is a specialist in communication, culture, linguistics, and sociology since they realise the key role of the translator (House, 2014; Liddicoat, 2016; Tomozeiu et al., 2016).

In each of the current translation fields, translators are expected to have expertise and experience in the relevant field. This practice, which is preferred especially by qualified organizations in Kazakhstan in search of quality translations, requires individuals who have a predisposition

towards certain types of texts and who have gained expertise through their translation practices and/or background knowledge to work in their field of expertise. In this context, translators are expected to develop their professional competences during their university education. Moreover, Li et al. (2023), Rufian (2023), Yang et al. (2021) pointed out the importance of academic self-efficacy in the professional skills of translator candidates. Irina et al. (2019), Melton (2008), Tarnaeva & Osipova (2020), Tomozeiu et al. (2016) emphasized the significant relationships between translator professional skills and intercultural communication competences. However, it is understood that research on the role of academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication competences together in translators' professional competences is very limited. Therefore, this study aims to examine the professional competences, academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication competence perceptions of prospective translators on a relational basis. In relation to this purpose, the following question was sought to be answered and two hypotheses were formed to be tested.

Research question:

What is the level of professional competence, academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication competences of prospective translators?

Research Hypotheses

H1: Intercultural communication positively affects translators' professional self-efficacy.

H2: Academic self-efficacy positively affects translators' professional self-efficacy.

Method

Research Design

As a quantitative research approach, this study used the survey model, which characterizes the current situation as it is. In survey models, the study subject is attempted to be described while being unchanged. "Correlational Survey Design", one of the general survey models, was chosen as the study design. Correlational survey designs are utilized to determine the degree of change among two or more variables. In this design, the relationships between factors or variables are tried to be determined and explained (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2011). In this study, structural equation

modelling (SEM) was used to determine the direct and indirect relationships between observable and latent variables with a single model based on a specific theory. When conducting structural equation modelling analyses, the theoretically based model is attempted to be verified with sample data (Mueller, & Hancock, 2018). The determination of both direct and indirect effects between variables is aided by structural equation modelling. This modelling describes relationships between structures and allows for the measurement of structures that cannot be measured directly (Timm, 2002).

Population and Sample/ Study Group/Participants

The target population of this study consists of prospective translators who are studying or have recently graduated from state universities in Kazakhstan. Non-probability sampling method was used to select the sample of the study. The subgroup selected from this sampling method is convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was employed because random or systematic sampling is impractical and hard to reach (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2011). This approach, which is notable for expediting the research process, allows for the selection of a situation that is close and convenient. This sample can be chosen based on the study's applicability, economy, and speed (Dawson & Trapp, 2001). The participants in the convenience sampling approach are appropriate for the research and can offer insightful responses to the sample questions and hypotheses (Creswell, 2012). Within this framework, the study's sample comprises prospective translators studying in four state universities in Kazakhstan who graduated in the 2023 academic year. The data of the study were collected from approximately 214 prospective translators studying in these institutions. 116 of the participants were female and 98 were male.

Data Collection Tools

The data of the study were collected through the 'Translator Professional Competence Scale', 'Intercultural Communication Competence Scale' and 'Academic Self-Efficacy Scale'.

Translator Professional Competence Scale

The translator professional competence scale was developed by the researchers based on the scale of Eser (2013). The scale has a single-factor structure consisting of 16 items in total and is in Likert form. The scale includes items related to translators' general and specific professional

competences. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was applied to explore the factor structure of the 'Translator Professional Competence Scale'. The data of 214 translator participants were used for EFA. EFA was conducted using SPSS 26.0 statistical package program. Prior to the factor analysis, the KMO coefficient was 0.90, indicating that the sample size in the study was perfectly compatible with factor analysis. According to Bartlett's test of sphericity, there is a significant relationship between the variables ($p < 0.001$). These results showed that the data set of the 'Translator Professional Competence Scale' was suitable for factor analysis. In the factor analysis, three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were formed. However, a sharp decline was found in the eigenvalue factor graph after the first point. After the first point, the slope formed a plateau. These results indicated that the scale items tended to be grouped under one factor. In the next step, the number of factors was changed to one and the factor analysis was repeated. Promax rotation technique was used to make the items gathered in the factors more distinct and to interpret the results more easily. The factor loadings of the scale items ranged from 0.46 to 0.88, according to the results of the factor analysis. The single-factor structure explains 41.12% of the total variance. When using single-factor scales, it is regarded as adequate if the variance explained is 30% or more (Cudeck, 2000). In summary, 16 items from the Translator Professional Competences Scale fell into a single factor based on the EFA results. The variance explained by the single factor structure was at a sufficient level. Alpha coefficients calculated for the scale were 0.89.

Intercultural Communication Competence Scale

'Intercultural Communication Competence Scale' developed by Arasaratnam (2009) was adapted into Kazakh by the researchers. Five of the ten statements in the scale - the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and tenth statements - are reverse coded. The statements in the scale are graded from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The higher the scores obtained from the statements, the higher the participant's Intercultural Communication Competence. Arasaratnam (2009) determined the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale as 0.77 in his study.

During the adaption phase, the scale was initially translated from English to Kazakh by two professionals who are fluent in both languages. The scale was then translated into English by two independent experts. The translations were compared to the original, and the original form was compared to a translation created by two academics with expertise in the field. Finally, a

questionnaire was given to 25 participants who were not included in the final sample to test the translation and to identify and correct possible semantic problems. After determining that there were no ambiguous statements in the translated scale and that there were no translation problems the questionnaire was administered to the main sample group.

The application of the scale was carried out on 214 people constituting the sample of this research. Prior to the factor analysis, the KMO coefficient was 0.88 and it was seen that the sample size in the study was perfectly compatible with the factor analysis. According to the results of Bartlett's test of sphericity, there was a significant relationship between the variables ($p < 0.001$). These findings demonstrated that the data set from the 'Intercultural Communication Competence Scale' was appropriate for factor analysis. The exploratory factor analysis revealed that the scale has a unidimensional structure. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency of the Intercultural Communication Competence Scale. In the analyses, Cronbach's Alpha score in the analysis was 0.79.

Academic Self-Efficacy Scale

Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1981) developed the original scale, which has a single dimension and consists of seven items that demonstrate an essential framework for academic self-efficacy. The Academic Self-Efficacy Scale was adapted into Kazakh by the researchers. The items in the scale are in the form of "5-point Likert Type Scale" (completely suits me -5-; does not suit me at all -1-). The original scale was developed by applying to 68 medical faculty students and the Cronbach's Alpha value of the scale was .87. The researchers assessed the scale's validity by examining its content, scope, and logical features. According to the researchers, the scale's content was appropriate for the subject matter, and the other academic and psychological characteristics considered provided information on the scale's validity (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1981). The factor analysis performed on the study's sample revealed that the scale had a unidimensional structure. The reliability analyses showed that the 'Academic Self-Efficacy' scale had a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.86.

Data Analysis

In this study, the data were analyzed using the two-stage approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). This approach includes a combination of measurement model and structural model along with structural equation modelling, which is a widely used method. To test a structural model, researchers must first construct a measurement model. The measurement model includes measurements of the factors underlying one or more variables. This model models the relationships between factors and assesses the level of fit of these relationships. In the measurement model, structural relationships between measurements are tested using techniques such as factor analysis. The structural model involves the testing of hypotheses and determines the effect of the independent variables of interest to the researcher on the dependent variables. The structural model builds on the measurement model to test the structural relationships between dependent variables.

Findings

Results of the Preliminary Analysis

To ascertain whether outliers were present, Cook distance values were calculated prior to data set analysis. The data set had no outliers, according to the results (maximum Cook distance values = 0.03). The data was found to follow a normal distribution because the skewness and kurtosis coefficients ($-0.73 \leq \text{kurtosis} \leq -0.08$; $-0.66 \leq \text{skewness} \leq -0.51$) were both within the ± 1 range (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). There was no multicollinearity issue, according to $\text{VIF} < 3$ (Variance Inflation Factor) values (Yurt, 2023). The VIF values for Intercultural Communication Competence (1.81), Translator Professional Competence (1.99), and Academic Self-efficacy (1.63) were obtained. These results demonstrated that there was no issue with multicollinearity among the variables. The statistical package programs IBM AMOS 24.0 and SPSS 26.0 were used to conduct the analyses.

Results of the Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Intercultural Communication and Academic Self-Efficacy and Professional Competences of Prospective Translators

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Culturel_Communic Efficacy	214	1.00	5.00	3.20	1.14
AsE	214	1.00	5.00	3.35	1.05
TPCtotal	214	1.00	5.00	3.32	0.95

AsE= Academic self-efficacy, Icc= Intercultural communication competence, Tpc= Translator professional competence

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive findings of all professional, academic self-efficacy, and intercultural communication competence assessments of prospective translators. When the mean scores are analyzed, it is seen that the item mean values were frequently greater than 2.5 but less than 3.40. Given that the medium level corresponds to 3 in 5-point Likert-type measuring tools, it could be concluded that the translator candidates' scores on all professional, academic self-efficacy, and intercultural communication competence measures were moderate.

Measurement Model

The measurement model includes three variables: academic self-efficacy, intercultural communication competence, and translator professional competence. To test the construct validity of the measurement model, confirmatory factor analysis was applied. Additionally, the model's convergent and discriminant validity were examined using the maximum likelihood method. A factor loading cut-off point of 0.50 was set, following Fabrigar et al. (1999). Goodness of fit index values were calculated to evaluate the model-data fit. The calculated goodness of fit values ($\chi^2=891.94$; Sd= 402; $\chi^2/sd=2.22$; $p<0.001$; RMSEA=0.08; SRMR= 0.04; CFI=0.92; TLI= 0.91; IFI= 0.92) indicated that the model showed an acceptable fit with the data (Bollen, 1989; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tanaka & Huba, 1985). Table 2 shows the factor loadings, AVE, CR, MSV, MaxR(H), and Alpha coefficients.

Table 2
Values Obtained by Testing the Measurement Model

Scale	Item No	Factor load	AVE	CR	MSV	MaxR(H)	Alpha
Academic self-efficacy	AsE1	0.89	0.742	0.953	0.446	0.955	0.952
	AsE2	0.91					
	AsE3	0.83					
	AsE4	0.88					
	AsE5	0.87					
	AsE6	0.82					
	AsE7	0.83					
Intercultural communication competence	Icc1	0.84	0.706	0.943	0.372	0.953	0.943
	Icc2	0.86					
	Icc3	0.93					
	Icc4	0.86					
	Icc5	0.87					
	Icc6	0.80					
	Icc7	0.70					
Translator professional competence	Tpc1	0.84	0.603	0.960	0.446	0.962	0.960
	Tpc2	0.77					
	Tpc3	0.78					
	Tpc4	0.77					
	Tpc5	0.77					
	Tpc6	0.72					
	Tpc7	0.82					
	Tpc8	0.69					
	Tpc9	0.81					
	Tpc10	0.77					
	Tpc11	0.84					
	Tpc12	0.76					
	Tpc13	0.75					
	Tpc14	0.78					
	Tpc15	0.79					
	Tpc16	0.75					

AVE= Average Variance Extracted, CR=Composite Reliability, MSV= Maximum shared variance, MaxR(H)= Maximal Reliability, AsE= Academic self-efficacy, Icc= Intercultural communication competence, Tpc= Translator professional competence

Table 2 shows that the calculated alpha values were above 0.70. This indicates that the factors' reliability based on internal consistency was at a satisfactory level (Cortina, 1993). AVE values above 0.50 and CR values above 0.70 were accepted as evidence of achieving convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Additionally, fulfilling the $CR > AVE$ condition provides further evidence of achieving convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). The obtained values for the factors in the measurement model fulfilled the specified conditions, indicating that convergent validity

was achieved. Regarding discriminant validity, the $MSV < AVE$ condition was met, and the MaxR(H) reliability value was greater than the CR values. These findings support the conclusion that discriminant validity was achieved (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Yurt, 2023).

Correlation Analysis Results

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients used to analyse the pairwise relationships between Academic Self-efficacy, Intercultural Communication Competence and Translator Professional Competence. Additionally, descriptive values of the scores for Academic self-efficacy, Intercultural Communication Competence and Translator Professional Competence were calculated.

Table 3
Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variables	Mean	Ss	1.	2.	3.
1. Translator professional competence	3.32	0.95	1		
2. Intercultural communication competence	3.20	1.14	.530**	1	
3. Academic self-efficacy	3.35	1.05	.641**	.588**	1

** $p < 0.01$; N=214

Table 3 shows that moderate positive and significant relationships were found between translator professional competence scores and intercultural communication competence ($r=0.530$; $p < 0.01$) as well as academic self-efficacy ($r=0.641$; $p < 0.01$) scores. There was a moderate positive and significant relationship between Intercultural communication competence scores and academic self-efficacy scores ($r=0,588$; $p < 0,01$).

Structural Model

The study tested two hypotheses: that intercultural communication had a positive effect on translators' professional self-efficacy, and that academic self-efficacy also had a positive effect on translators' professional self-efficacy. In order to do this, correlation analyses between variables were conducted after the creation of a measurement model. Finally, AMOS software was used to test the structural equation modelling related to the hypotheses.

To test the hypotheses of the study, the structural model shown in Figure 1 was developed and tested. The model included academic self-efficacy, intercultural communication competence, and translator professional competence as dependent variables. The model was tested using the maximum likelihood method. The calculated goodness of fit values ($\chi^2= 862.62$; $Sd= 400$; $\chi^2/sd=2.16$; $p<0.001$; $RMSEA=0.07$; $SRMR= 0.04$; $CFI=0.92$; $TLI= 0.91$; $IFI= 0.92$) indicated that the model showed an acceptable fit with the data (Bollen, 1989; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tanaka & Huba, 1985). The path coefficient, standard error value, significance level and confidence intervals are displayed in Table 3.

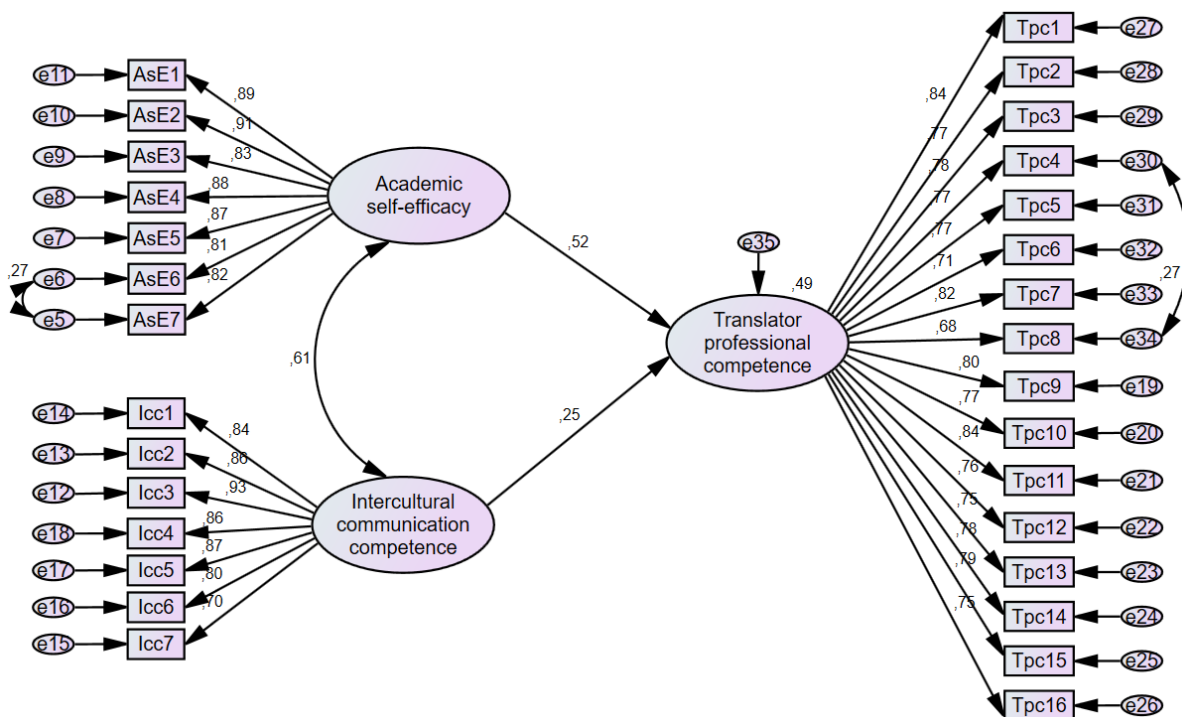


Figure 1. Structural Model

Table 4 shows that the predictive power of academic self-efficacy variable on translator professional competence variable was 0.52 (95% CI [0.29; 0.76], $p<0.01$). As academic self-efficacy rises, so does translator professional competence. This result indicates that hypothesis H1 is accepted. Intercultural communication competence predicted translator professional competence by 0.25 (95% CI [0.03; 0.48], $p<0.05$). As intercultural communication competence increases so does their professional competence. Based on these results, hypothesis H2 is accepted.

The combination of academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication competence accounts for 49% of the variation in translator professional competence.

Table 4
Standardised Path Coefficients and Significance Levels

Hypothesis	Paths		β	SE	P	%95 CI		Result	
						Bottom	Top		
H1	AsE	--->	Tpc	0.52	0.11	0.002	0.29	0.76	Accepted
H2	Icc	--->	Tpc	0.25	0.12	0.026	0.03	0.48	Accepted

AsE= Academic self-efficacy, Icc= Intercultural communication competence, Tpc= Translator professional competence

Discussion

In this study, the professional, academic, and intercultural communication competences of future interpreters studying interpreting in Kazakhstan were relationally analyzed. The study sought answers to a sub-problem and two hypotheses. According to the study's preliminary findings, the participating student translators had medium levels of professional and academic self-efficacy, as well as intercultural communication competence. Based on the above findings, it could be argued that the prospective translators have partial problems in terms of meeting the professional criteria and competences. According to Hlavac (2013) and Kelly (2008), a translator acquires foreign language skills as well as academic and professional self-efficacy over a lengthy training process. Because translation is a dynamic process, translators must build and continually renew their lifelong competencies in intercultural communication and academics, which aligns with the professional competence requirement. Despite the importance of translation, it can hardly be said that translation as a profession is equally valued in the employment market. In the case of Kazakhstan, the number of studies focusing on the professional competences of translators is almost negligible within the research on professional occupations. As stated by Schäffner (2012) and Anderman & Rogers (2000), translation is an activity that requires very complex cognitive mechanisms and therefore requires translators to have academic, cultural, and multifaceted competences as professionals.

The analysis revealed that the participants' academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication skills, individually as well as together, had a significant effect on the translators' professional competence. As translators' academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication competence

increased, so did their professional competence. The findings on the relationship between academic self-efficacy and translators' professional competences are similar to those of Albin (2011), Araghian et al. (2018), Haro-Soler (2021), Haro Soler (2019) and Shaw (2019). To activate the metacognitive strategies required to solve problems and reduce uncertainty, translator candidates need to be more aware of their needs and actual skill levels (Haro Soler, 2019). This can be achieved through increased academic self-efficacy and mindfulness (Araghian et al., 2018). When academic self-efficacy is not aligned with the performance of translator candidates, it negatively affects their information processing and strategy selection. Therefore, the academic self-efficacy of translator candidates should be developed, and they should be aware of it (Ayllón et al., 2019; Bontempo & Napier, 2011; Kontinen, 2022).

Another remarkable result of the modelling conducted in the study was the effect of translators' intercultural communication competences on their professional competences. It was found that academic self-efficacy, both alone and in conjunction with intercultural communication, had a strong and significant predictive power for translator candidates' professional efficacy. In fact, research by Robin (2015), Sturge (2009), Kramersch (2018), Beseghi (2018), Fois (2020), González Fernández (2022), González Davies (2020), Bassnett (2011), and others demonstrated the significance of intercultural communication in the translation process and translator competence. All these studies indicate that intercultural communication and cultural competences improve translation quality and have a positive impact on translators' skills as professionals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the results of the study showed that academic self-efficacy and intercultural communication competence are important factors in the professional skills and competences of prospective translators. While the academic self-efficacy of translator candidates develops, the increase of their intercultural communication competences has a very high level and positive effect on their professional skills. Therefore, it is advised to create certification programs that meet professional standards, provide extensive training programs that include language instruction, cultural studies, translation theory, and terminology in addition to language training, and set up advanced vocational training for translators. In particular, intercultural communication is becoming an important parameter in the translation profession in the context of globalization. In

intercultural communication, translation should be seen not only as a linguistic transfer, but also as a transfer of personal and social relationships and interests. In order for the translation to be accurate, the target audience (the receiver) should have a common denominator for the information exchanged, and their knowledge of the world and general knowledge should be sufficient and at the same level. In intercultural communication, the translator's skills are essential. Therefore, translators are expected to possess 'intercultural competence' in addition to academic translation competences. These two competences will strengthen the communicative role of translator candidates. These findings suggest that efforts should be made to develop intercultural competence in translation and interpreting education. An integrative curriculum design that aims to develop intercultural competence while strengthening academic self-efficacy is recommended. Future research should be conducted with larger samples and different research models to further explore this topic. It is also recommended to conduct multidisciplinary research on how linguistics, cultural studies, and cognitive sciences intersect with translator competencies.

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