



VNU Journal of Foreign Studies

Journal homepage: <https://jfs.ulis.vnu.edu.vn/>

## ENHANCING STUDENT MOTIVATION IN AN INTERPRETING COURSE THROUGH MOCK CONFERENCES: AN ACTION RESEARCH

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Received 13 May 2025

Revised 13 June 2025; Accepted 19 June 2025

**Abstract:** Student motivation plays a crucial role in interpreter education. While extensive research has explored ways to enhance learner motivation, there remains a notable gap in studies specifically addressing the motivation of student interpreters. Social scientists widely acknowledge the effectiveness of the situated learning approach, particularly through mock conferences, in fostering students' motivation. However, research on the application of this approach in interpreter training, especially within the Vietnamese context, is still limited. To examine strategies for enhancing student motivation in interpreting courses, this study employed action research, with the researcher also serving as the instructor. A total of 26 senior students participated in the investigation, which aimed to assess the impact of mock conferences as a form of situated learning on their academic motivation. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collected data through pre- and post-intervention surveys and a teaching journal. The findings suggest that mock conferences contributed to a significant increase in students' academic motivation.

**Keywords:** motivation, interpreting, interpreting training, mock conference, situated learning

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<https://doi.org/10.63023/2525-2445/jfs.ulis.5515>

# NÂNG CAO ĐỘNG LỰC HỌC TẬP CỦA SINH VIÊN TRONG MÔN HỌC PHIÊN DỊCH THÔNG QUA HỘI THẢO MÔ PHỎNG: MỘT NGHIÊN CỨU HÀNH ĐỘNG

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Nhận bài ngày 13 tháng 5 năm 2025

Chỉnh sửa ngày 13 tháng 6 năm 2025; Chấp nhận đăng ngày 19 tháng 6 năm 2025

**Tóm tắt:** Động lực học tập đóng vai trò quan trọng trong đào tạo phiên dịch nhưng các nghiên cứu chuyên sâu về động lực của sinh viên trong lớp học phiên dịch vẫn còn hạn chế. Phương pháp học tập theo ngữ cảnh, đặc biệt thông qua hội thảo mô phỏng, được đánh giá là hiệu quả trong việc thúc đẩy động lực học tập. Tuy nhiên, ứng dụng phương pháp này trong đào tạo phiên dịch tại Việt Nam chưa được nghiên cứu đầy đủ. Nghiên cứu này áp dụng phương pháp nghiên cứu hành động nhằm đánh giá tác động của hội thảo mô phỏng đối với động lực học tập của sinh viên. Với sự tham gia của 26 sinh viên năm thứ tư, nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp hỗn hợp, thu thập dữ liệu qua khảo sát và nhật ký giảng dạy. Kết quả cho thấy hội thảo mô phỏng có tác động tích cực đến động lực học tập của sinh viên, và mức độ ảnh hưởng khá lớn.

**Từ khóa:** động lực học tập, phiên dịch, đào tạo phiên dịch, hội thảo mô phỏng, học tập theo ngữ cảnh

## 1. Introduction

In interpreter education, a persistent challenge that requires attention is maintaining and enhancing students' motivation throughout their training. Student interpreters often face a demanding academic curriculum that requires them to develop both linguistic proficiency and the complex cognitive skills necessary for effective interpretation. Sustaining high levels of motivation is essential for success in this rigorous process. Dornyei (1998) argues that having the right level of motivation is fundamental to students' success in training, as it plays a crucial role in the learning process. However, as an instructor in interpreter training, I have observed a decline in motivation among my students, which can hinder their progress and ultimately affect their future careers.

Research suggests that employing a situated learning approach positively influences students' motivation, particularly when they engage in real-world scenarios (Bos & Shami, 2006; Wishart et al., 2007). Additionally, Jerez (2006, as cited in Li, 2015) and Prieto et al. (2010) agree that exposure to professional experiences in a relevant setting leads to improved learning outcomes and heightened motivation, especially given that interpreting is a highly situated profession.

Mock conferences serve as an example of a situated learning approach and provide benefits that go beyond traditional teaching methods in interpreter training. Kurz (1989) notes that standard educational programs often rely on multimedia resources, which may limit students' opportunities to engage in oral communication and experience diverse linguistic settings. By contrast, mock conferences offer a structured environment where students gain hands-on experience, fostering both enthusiasm and autonomy (Lin, Davis, & Liao, 2004). Lim

(2003) further highlights that this method supports skill development, boosts motivation, and enhances students' readiness for the job market by reducing linguistic barriers often present in conventional classroom settings. Overall, mock conferences provide a more authentic and effective learning experience for interpreter students, potentially increasing their motivation.

This study focuses on examining the effectiveness of mock conferences as a situated learning method in improving the academic motivation of student interpreters. The situated learning theory suggests that learning is most effective when it takes place in a relevant context, making it a promising approach to addressing this issue.

## **2. Overarching Aim of the Study**

Interpreter education programs have conventionally depended on instructional methods and practical training conducted within a classroom setting. However, these approaches sometimes fall short in accurately simulating the intricate nature of actual interpreting scenarios. The absence of genuineness might result in less involvement and diminishing motivation among students. Using mock conferences as a situated learning activity aims to address this gap and provide students with a more immersive and relevant learning experience.

The overarching aim of this research is to investigate the effect of mock conferences as a means of situated learning on the learning motivation of student interpreters.

## **3. Literature Review**

### **3.1. Motivation**

#### **3.1.1. Definition of Motivation**

Academic motivation (hereafter referred to as motivation) is a widely used overarching concept that helps explain the success or failure of various complex tasks. It is often argued that an individual's level of motivation is a key determinant of their success in any given endeavor. Dornyei (1998) emphasizes that students' academic achievement can be enhanced by appropriate motivation, as it plays a vital role in the learning process. Over the years, extensive research has proposed multiple conceptualizations of motivation.

The behaviorist, cognitive, and constructivist perspectives on motivation offer distinct yet overlapping insights into human drive and action. Behaviorism frames motivation as a pragmatic response to external reinforcement, emphasizing how past rewards condition future behaviors through cognitive expectations of positive outcomes. In contrast, the cognitive approach centers on internal decision-making processes, where motivation arises from conscious choices to fulfill intrinsic needs such as exploration, knowledge acquisition, or ego enhancement (Ausubel, 1968; Keller, 1993). Constructivism bridges external and internal factors, positing that motivation operates within sociocultural contexts, where hierarchical needs, from physiological to self-actualization (Maslow, 1970), guide behavior, yet remain inseparable from communal and societal influences (Williams & Burden, 1997). While all three theories acknowledge "needs" as central to motivation, behaviorism prioritizes external reinforcement, cognitive theory focuses on individual agency in need satisfaction, and constructivism integrates social frameworks into the motivational hierarchy. This synthesis highlights motivation as a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by reinforcement history, cognitive choice, and sociocultural context, offering a comprehensive foundation for research into how these dynamics interact in diverse settings.

### 3.1.2. Classification of Motivation

The instrumental-integrative and intrinsic-extrinsic frameworks offer complementary yet distinct lenses for understanding motivation in academic and language-learning contexts. Gardner & Lambert (1972) distinguish instrumental motivation, which is driven by pragmatic goals such as career advancement or technical skill acquisition, from integrative motivation, which reflects a desire for cultural assimilation and social engagement within a target community. Concurrently, Deci's (1975) intrinsic-extrinsic dichotomy emphasizes internal versus external drivers: intrinsic motivation arises from inherent satisfaction (e.g., competence, self-determination), while extrinsic motivation involves external rewards or punishment avoidance, though extrinsic actions may paradoxically foster intrinsic rewards if perceived as challenges enhancing autonomy. Crucially, these frameworks are not mutually exclusive but address different dimensions. While intrinsic motivation may overlap with integrative goals (e.g., learning a language for personal enrichment), it can also align with instrumental aims (e.g., mastering interpreting skills for self-fulfillment). Conversely, extrinsic factors (e.g., parental praise) might superficially resemble integrative or instrumental drivers but remain rooted in external validation. This differentiation underscores the complexity of motivation as a multifaceted construct, where goals (instrumental/integrative) and reward sources (intrinsic/extrinsic) interact dynamically within sociocultural and individual contexts. For research, this highlights the need to disentangle these dimensions to better predict how diverse motivational profiles influence learning outcomes, persistence, and engagement in educational settings.

#### *Classification of Motivation as Proposed by Deci and Ryan (1992)*

This study adheres to Deci and Ryan's (1992) classification of motivation because building on earlier self-determination theory (Deci, 1975), it offers a nuanced framework for analyzing motivation in situated learning contexts. According to this theory, motivation includes intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation.

Intrinsic motivation is divided into three subtypes: intrinsic motivation to know (IMK), driven by curiosity and the inherent satisfaction of learning (e.g., students exploring new vocabulary for intellectual enjoyment); intrinsic motivation to accomplish (IMA), centered on the pleasure of mastery and achievement (e.g., exceeding academic requirements for personal challenge); and intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation (IMS), which emphasizes sensory or cognitive engagement (e.g., participating in dynamic discussions for exhilaration).

Extrinsic motivation, framed as a continuum of self-determination, progresses from external regulation (EME) (behavior driven by rewards/punishments, e.g., parental pressure to study), through introjected regulation (EMIN) (internalized but externally rooted norms, e.g., conforming to "ideal student" expectations), to identification (EMID) (personally valued goals, e.g., studying for self-aligned aspirations).

Amotivation (AM), the absence of motivation, reflects a disconnection between actions and outcomes, often leading to disengagement due to perceived incompetence or uncontrollability (e.g., abandoning studies from futility).

This tripartite model, encompassing intrinsic, extrinsic, and amotivation, provides a comprehensive lens for understanding how diverse motivational drivers interact within educational settings, particularly in situated learning where autonomy, competence, and social context shape engagement. By delineating motivational subtypes and their behavioral implications, the framework aids in predicting persistence, performance, and adaptive learning strategies in research contexts.

### 3.1.3. Established Scales to Measure the Level of Motivation

The selection of the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) (Vallerand et al., 1992) for this study reflects a deliberate effort to address the limitations of existing psychometric tools while aligning with the theoretical framework of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1992). While the Situated Motivation Scale (Guay et al., 2000) focuses narrowly on intrinsic motivation, identified regulation, and external regulation, it omits critical subtypes of intrinsic motivation (e.g., stimulation-seeking) and broader extrinsic dimensions. Similarly, the Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery (Gardner et al., 1979), though robust for assessing integrative/ instrumental orientations in second language acquisition, lacks specificity for interpreting courses and fails to integrate Deci & Ryan's hierarchical model. The Motivation and Engagement Scale (Martin, 2007) conflates motivation and engagement, complicating independent assessment of these constructs. In contrast, the AMS comprehensively operationalizes Deci & Ryan's taxonomy, measuring intrinsic motivation (to know, accomplish, and experience stimulation), extrinsic motivation (external regulation, introjection, identification), and amotivation across 28 items. This granularity not only aligns with the study's focus on situated learning in interpreting courses but also ensures fidelity to the tripartite intrinsic-extrinsic-amotivation framework.

### 3.2. Mock Conference as a Situated Learning Activity in Interpreter Training

The situated approach to interpreter training, as advocated by scholars such as Hatim and Mason (1997), and Roy (2000), aligns closely with the inherently contextual nature of interpreting as a profession. By integrating mock conferences, a key situated teaching method, this approach addresses critical limitations of traditional pedagogy, which often relies on artificial scenarios (e.g., audiovisual materials or same-language role-plays) that lack the pragmatic complexity and linguistic diversity of real-world settings (Kurz, 1989; Lee, 2005). Mock conferences simulate authentic interlinguistic communication, requiring interpreter students to navigate varied speech acts, cultural nuances, and unscripted interactions, thereby bridging the classroom-reality gap (Ardito, 1999; Sergio, 1998). This method fosters non-linguistic competencies (e.g., problem-solving, adaptability) and enhances motivation by immersing students in dynamic, autonomous practice (Prieto & Linares, 2010; Li, 2015). While initial anxiety may arise, the experiential nature of mock conferences cultivates excitement, self-efficacy, and market readiness (Lin et al., 2004; Lee, 2005). By contextualizing learning, this approach resonates with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1992), as it supports intrinsic motivation (e.g., stimulation-seeking, accomplishment) and mitigates amotivation through meaningful, competence-building tasks. Such alignment makes the situated method particularly suitable for studies employing the AMS, which measures nuanced motivational drivers (e.g., intrinsic motivation subtypes) critical to interpreting trainees' engagement and skill mastery.

This structured approach to mock conferences in interpreting training, as outlined by Li (2015), consists of six key stages:

- a) Briefing: Participants receive essential information regarding the purpose of the event, relevant background details, speaker biographies, the schedule (including date, time, and location), available resources, and preparation strategies.
- b) Preparation: Students conduct background research, compare relevant documents, compile a glossary, share and discuss information, and allocate roles (e.g., interpreters, speakers, audience members, organizing committee).

- c) **Instruction for Participants:** This stage offers a final opportunity for students to ask questions before the event. It also includes checklists of evaluation rubrics (jointly developed by students and instructors) and guidelines for self- and peer-assessment.
- d) **Mock Conference Day:** Participants take turns interpreting in a simulated professional setting.
- e) **Debriefing:** Instructors or experts provide feedback, and students engage in self- and peer-evaluations. Feedback from the client and audience is also considered.
- f) **Integration of Assessment Results:** The evaluation outcomes are used to refine teaching and learning practices, enhancing future training.

During the mock conference, students take on various roles, including chairman, speakers, interpreters, and participants.

### **3.3. Related Studies**

The existing body of research underscores the efficacy of mock conferences as a situated learning method in interpreter training, demonstrating their capacity to enhance both linguistic and non-linguistic competencies (Duong, 2021; Li, 2015; Mirzoyeva, 2023). Internationally, studies highlight their role in bridging classroom-reality gaps and fostering skills such as strategic competence, professionalism, and adaptability, with trainees reporting increased engagement and confidence despite initial anxiety (Lin et al., 2004; Lee, 2005). In Vietnam, Duong's (2021) case study further validates these benefits, showing that graduate interpreting trainees associate repeated participation in mock conferences with improved psychological readiness, concentration, and professionalism.

### **3.4. Research Gap**

While these studies emphasize competence development, there remains a critical gap in understanding how mock conferences influence motivational dynamics, particularly in Vietnamese contexts, where research on their impact on intrinsic/extrinsic motivation subtypes (e.g., stimulation-seeking, accomplishment, or identified regulation) and trainee perceptions is sparse. This study addresses this gap by employing the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) (Vallerand et al., 1992), which operationalizes Deci and Ryan's (1992) self-determination framework to measure how mock conferences, as situated learning activities, may enhance specific motivational drivers (e.g., intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation, accomplishment) or mitigate amotivation through authentic, competence-building practice. By investigating both skill development and motivational outcomes, this research aims to provide a holistic understanding of mock conferences' pedagogical value, contributing empirical insights to interpreter education in understudied contexts like Vietnam.

## **4. Research Methodology**

### **4.1. Research Question**

This study aims to collect data to address the following research question:

*How does the integration of Mock Conferences as a situated learning activity affect the motivation of student interpreters?*

### **4.2. Research Design**

This study employs a mixed-method action research approach to systematically examine the impact of mock conferences on students' learning motivation in an interpreting class.

The action research study spanned 15 weeks, aligning with the typical duration of an academic semester, with research commencing after the first week to allow for initial acclimatization. Two well-known models of action research are employed. The first is Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) cyclical model, which consists of four phases: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This model emphasizes repeating these cycles until the desired results are achieved. The second is Nunan's (1992) seven-step model, which takes a more detailed approach with the stages of initiation, preliminary investigation, hypothesis, intervention, evaluation, dissemination, and follow-up. Although some critics find Kemmis and McTaggart's model somewhat rigid, it remains a fundamental framework in the field of action research. This study adopted Nunan's model for its comprehensiveness and structured progression, while still maintaining the iterative nature emphasized by Kemmis and McTaggart, ensuring that multiple cycles could be conducted to refine and improve outcomes.

To mitigate potential limitations associated with action research, several strategies were systematically implemented. First, to address the inherent subjectivity and enhance the reliability of the findings, method triangulation was prioritized. This involved the integration of different data collection instruments to capture diverse perspectives and ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomena. Specifically, a combination of pre- and post-intervention surveys alongside teaching journals was employed to gather multi-faceted data.

Second, to compensate for the initial absence of a theoretical framework, the researcher undertook an extensive and critical review of relevant literature. This review encompassed key aspects of mock conferences (particularly their nature as situated learning activities and established principles for their design) as well as various dimensions of motivation (including definitions from multiple perspectives, orientations and classifications of motivation), and validated scales for measuring academic motivation. In addition, empirical studies examining mock conferences and the motivation of student interpreters were also consulted to inform the conceptual foundation of the study.

Third, in response to concerns regarding limited generalizability, careful attention was given to the selection criteria for participants, and a detailed account of the specific educational context was provided. The participants in this study were representative of students majoring in English Language with a specialization in Translation and Interpreting at the university under investigation. Consequently, while the findings may not be universally generalizable, they hold potential applicability to similar student populations in comparable educational settings.

#### **4.3. Research Site**

This research was carried out at a public university in Hanoi, and the course in question is a core component of the Bachelor of Arts program in English Language, with a specialization in English Translation and Interpretation. Specifically, it is designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of interpreting, including the nature of the profession and the dynamics of the interpretation market. Additionally, it aims to equip students with essential non-linguistic competencies crucial for professional interpreting practice. The instructional approach integrates practical case studies supported by audio-visual materials. Students also participate in real-world simulations and observe practicing interpreters in action. Given the course's focus, the incorporation of mock conferences as a situated learning activity is highly appropriate. It complements the curriculum's emphasis on experiential learning by offering authentic interpreting experiences, which are considered fundamental to achieving the intended learning outcomes.

#### ***4.4. Research Participants***

The study was conducted with a cohort of 26 senior students from a university in Hanoi, who were pursuing a bachelor's degree in English Language with a specialization in English Translation and Interpreting. Prior to the study, they had completed a training program in interpreting practice, which provided them with essential skills for performing various interpreting tasks. During the designated academic semester, the participants were enrolled in an advanced course that aimed to effectively foster the cultivation of refined abilities and a heightened level of professionalism within the field of interpreting.

#### ***4.5. Research Instruments***

The primary instruments employed for data collection encompassed pre-intervention surveys, post-intervention surveys and teaching journals.

The surveys utilized in this study were adapted from the Academic Motivation Scale developed by Vallerand et al. (1992), a well-established instrument designed to assess motivation within academic settings. The original scale consists of 28 items distributed across seven subscales, reflecting three types of intrinsic motivation, three types of extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. Centered around the core question of why individuals pursue higher education, the original items aim to capture a broad spectrum of motivational orientations by representing possible responses to this inquiry. For the purposes of the present study, the researcher modified the original items to specifically investigate the underlying motivations behind participants' engagement with both the course and the mock conferences. This adaptation was necessary to ensure alignment with the study's specific research aims. The revised questionnaires retained the original structure, comprising 28 items measured on a 4-point Likert scale, and assessed the following key dimensions of student motivation: intrinsic motivation to know, intrinsic motivation to accomplish tasks, intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation, external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and amotivation.

In addition, teaching journals were employed as the principal tool for recording instructional practices and the teacher's ongoing reflections throughout the research process. Burns (2010) highlights the value of journals as a vital mechanism for consistently capturing significant reflections and events over time. This instrument is widely recognized as a core element in action research, as it allows educators to document not only observable occurrences within the teaching context but also their introspective analyses, beliefs, and perceptions related to their pedagogical approaches. Similarly, Wallace (2001) emphasizes the role of journals in promoting reflective teaching and supporting the development of reflective practice. Among the various journal formats proposed by Burns (2010), this study adopted both descriptive and reflective teaching journals. These formats were selected for their dual capacity to record objective accounts of classroom events and to convey subjective dimensions, including personal reflections, insights, emotional responses, and reactions to instructional content.

#### ***4.6. Data Collection***

The surveys were administered online through Google Forms. To enhance the validity of the responses, students were not required to disclose their names or provide handwritten answers. This approach aimed to ensure anonymity and reduce potential discomfort or bias, thereby encouraging more honest and accurate responses. With regard to the teaching journals, the researcher made ongoing entries throughout the research process to document classroom events, personal perceptions and attitudes toward those events, as well as reflective responses to what had occurred. This approach allowed for a comprehensive record that captured both



objective observations and subjective interpretations.

#### 4.7. Data Analysis

##### 4.7.1. Surveys

The study employed online surveys via Google Forms, followed by data cleaning to manage outliers before re-coding the responses. Specifically, one outlier was identified where a respondent rated all items as "1." As a result, this response was excluded from the dataset to avoid potential distortion of the statistical analysis.

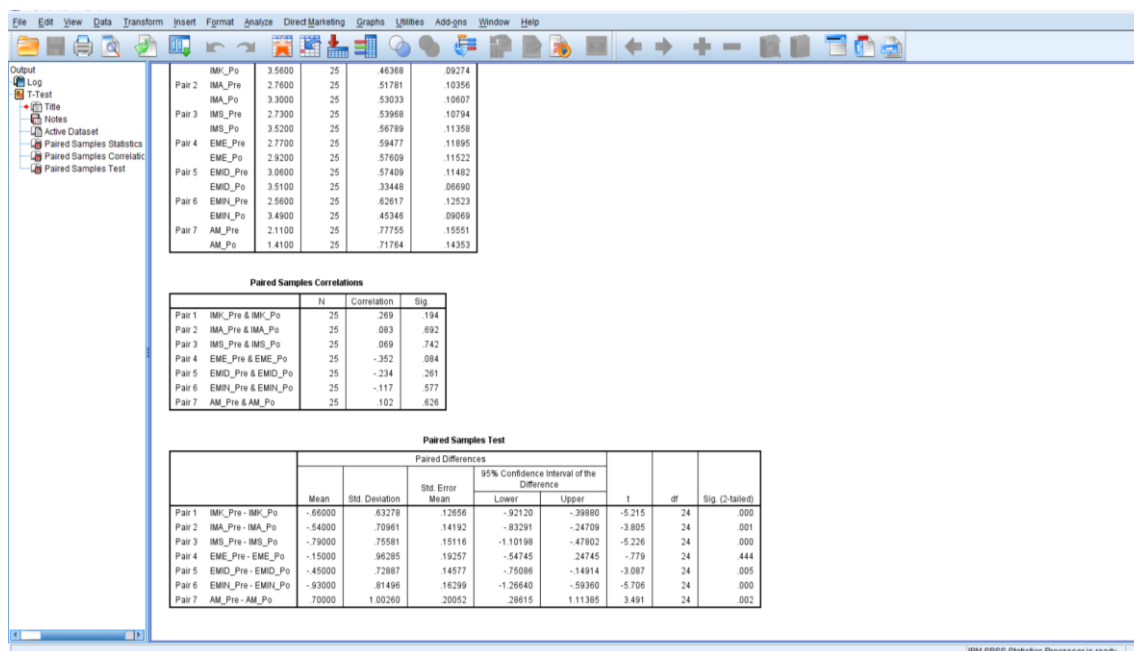
After the completion of the data cleaning process, motivational states were quantified into scores according to predefined guidelines, and the data was imported into SPSS 20 for statistical analysis.

**Figure 1**

*Example of Pre-and Post-Intervention Data Pertaining to Students' Motivational Level Imported Into the SPSS 20 Software*

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
40	IMS25_Po	Numeric	12	0	IM-S-25_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
41	EME1_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-E-1_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
42	EME8_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-E-8_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
43	EME15_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-E-15_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
44	EME22_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-E-22_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
45	EMID3_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-ID-3_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
46	EMID10_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-ID-10_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
47	EMID17_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-ID-17_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
48	EMID24_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-ID-24_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
49	EMIN7_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-IN-7_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
50	EMIN14_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-IN-14_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
51	EMIN21_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-IN-21_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
52	EMIN28_Po	Numeric	12	0	EM-IN-28_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
53	AM5_Po	Numeric	12	0	AM-5_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
54	AM12_Po	Numeric	12	0	AM-12_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
55	AM19_Po	Numeric	12	0	AM-19_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
56	AM26_Po	Numeric	12	0	AM-26_Po	None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
57	IMK_Pre	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
58	IMK_Po	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
59	IMA_Pre	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
60	IMA_Po	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
61	IMS_Pre	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
62	IMS_Po	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
63	EME_Pre	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
64	EME_Po	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
65	EMID_Pre	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
66	EMID_Po	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
67	EMIN_Pre	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
68	EMIN_Po	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
69	AM_Pre	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
70	AM_Po	Numeric	8	2		None	None	10	Right	Scale	Input
71											
72											

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency across the seven motivational subscales, while descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) provided an overview of each subscale's distribution. Additionally, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare subscale means before and after the intervention, determining whether significant changes occurred. The test's p-value (sig.) was critical in assessing statistical significance, aligning with established methodologies for comparing paired data across different time points (Ross & Willson, 2017).

**Figure 2***Example of Paired T-Test Outcomes From the SPSS 20 Software*

#### 4.7.2. Teaching Journal

During the analysis of qualitative data derived from the teaching journals, the researcher adopted an approach known as end-use strategizing, which involved aligning the analytical process with the overarching aims of the study from the outset. Initially, the researcher conducted a thorough reading of the journals to gain a holistic understanding of the data. This preliminary step enabled the construction of a coherent narrative that reflected the central interpretations and evaluations emerging from the dataset. Subsequently, a coding scheme was developed to categorize the data. Example codes included “student uncertainty”, “student ignorance” and “cheating on the mock conference day”. Color coding was primarily used to manage these emergent codes, with each code assigned a specific color to visually organize related information. These codes were then clustered into broader thematic categories such as “ambiguity in instructional delivery”, “low level of motivation”.

### 5. Findings

#### 5.1. Surveys

**Table 1***Descriptive Statistics for the Students' Motivational Subscales*

	<i>Pre-intervention</i>				<i>Post-intervention</i>			
	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
IMK	2.00	4.00	2.90	0.57282	2.50	4.00	3.5577	0.45447
IMA	2.00	4.00	2.76	0.51781	2.25	4.00	3.2981	0.51971
IMS	1.75	4.00	2.73	0.53968	2.50	4.00	3.5385	0.56432

EMID	1.75	4.00	2.77	0.59477	2.00	4.00	2.9327	0.56814
EMIN	1.75	4.00	3.06	0.57409	3.00	4.00	3.5192	0.33108
EME	1.50	4.00	2.56	0.62617	2.75	4.00	3.5000	0.44721
AM	1.00	3.75	2.11	0.77755	1.00	3.50	1.3942	0.70772

The descriptive statistics of the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) revealed a shift in student motivation levels before and after the intervention. Initially, students exhibited low to moderate motivation, with mean values ranging from 2.11 to 3.06 and standard deviations between 0.51781 and 0.77755. Extrinsic - introjected recorded the highest motivation ( $M = 3.06$ ), followed by Intrinsic - to know ( $M = 2.90$ ). After the intervention, motivation levels increased to moderate-high, with mean values spanning from 1.3942 to 3.5577. Intrinsic - to know ( $M = 3.5577$ ) and Intrinsic - to experience stimulation ( $M = 3.5385$ ) emerged as the highest motivators, surpassing Extrinsic - introjected. Notably, Amotivation had the lowest post-intervention mean ( $M = 1.3942$ ), indicating a substantial reduction in lack of motivation. The results suggest a positive impact of the intervention, with a shift toward intrinsic motivation over extrinsic forms.

**Table 2**

*Paired T-Test for Pre- and Post-Intervention Results*

		Paired Differences			t	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		
Pair 1	IMK_Pre - IMK_Post	-0.66000	0.63278	0.12656	-5.215	0.000
Pair 2	IMA_Pre - IMA_Post	-0.54000	0.70961	0.14192	-3.805	0.001
Pair 3	IMS_Pre - IMS_Post	-0.79000	0.75581	0.15116	-5.226	0.000
Pair 4	EME_Pre - EME_Post	-0.15000	0.96285	0.19257	-0.779	0.444
Pair 5	EMID_Pre - EMID_Post	-0.45000	0.72887	0.14577	-3.087	0.005
Pair 6	EMIN_Pre - EMIN_Post	-0.93000	0.81496	0.16299	-5.706	0.000
Pair 7	AM_Pre - AM_Post	0.70000	1.00260	0.20052	3.491	0.002

The analysis of pre- and post-intervention data revealed statistically significant improvements ( $p < 0.05$ ) across most motivation subscales following mock conference interventions.

Intrinsic motivation to know (mean paired difference: -0.66,  $p = 0.000$ ), intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment (-0.54,  $p = 0.001$ ), and intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation (-0.79,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed considerable increases, with the latter demonstrating the largest intrinsic improvement.

Extrinsic motivation subscales also improved, particularly extrinsic-introjected regulation (-0.93,  $p = 0.000$ ), the most pronounced change overall, and extrinsic-identified regulation (-0.45,  $p = 0.005$ ). Conversely, extrinsic-external regulation showed only a minor

increase ( $-0.15$ ,  $p = 0.444$ ). However, the  $p = 0.444$ , which was higher than  $0.05$ , suggests that the mean difference between the mean values of pre-intervention Extrinsic - external regulation and post-intervention Extrinsic - external regulation was not statistically significant. This suggests that the observed increase may have occurred by chance and cannot be confidently attributed to the mock conference intervention.

Amotivation decreased significantly ( $+0.70$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ), indicating a significant increase in motivation level.

## **5.2. Teaching Journal**

The findings derived from the pre- and post-intervention surveys were validated through insights recorded in the teaching journal. Prior to the intervention, students demonstrated a low to moderate level of motivation, which experienced a considerable improvement following the intervention.

During the initial three weeks of the course, students exhibited limited motivation, as evidenced by frequent engagement in private conversations and the use of smartphones during lectures. Their lack of enthusiasm persisted even during practice sessions, with two students falling asleep in class.

In step 5 of the first cycle of the intervention (Observation), students exerted minimal effort in organizing the mock conference. Among the four students assuming the role of speakers, two demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm and delivered well-prepared speeches supported by visual aids, while the remaining two relied primarily on their scripts. Regarding the nine students assigned as interpreters, six depended on pre-prepared scripts, which may have been provided by the speakers. The audience also displayed limited engagement, with seven out of twelve students engaging in private conversations and three using their smartphones during the event. The first mock conference, therefore, failed to enhance student motivation. A key issue identified was the absence of a structured protocol for organizing the conference, compounded by the teacher's ambiguous guidance.

In the second cycle of the intervention, a significant improvement in motivation was observed. To address previous challenges, I adopted the role of a facilitator to support students in organizing the event, granting them greater autonomy and enhancing their preparedness for the second mock conference. Additionally, a Question & Answer session was introduced after the Presentation session to promote more dynamic interactions among audience members, speakers, and interpreters. As a result, the number of students participating in interpreting tasks during the Q&A session increased by four. Furthermore, the guest speaker and three student speakers demonstrated heightened enthusiasm, delivering well-prepared speeches with effective use of visual aids, without relying on their scripts.

With regard to the interpreters, all students assigned this role exhibited a higher level of preparedness, as evidenced by their submission of glossaries prior to the mock conference. They also improved their note-taking skills, maintained strong eye contact throughout the task, and refrained from relying on written scripts or prompts. Among the nine audience members, five engaged in private conversations, yet none used their smartphones during the event.

## **6. Discussions**

The present study's findings align with and extend prior research on the role of mock conferences as a situated learning tool in interpreter education. While earlier international studies, such as those by Li (2015) and Mirzoyeva (2023), emphasized the pedagogical value

of mock conferences in fostering non-linguistic competences (e.g., strategic skills, professionalism) and language proficiency, this research contributes novel insights into their impact on motivation - a dimension less explored in existing literature. The notable improvement in students' extrinsic motivation - introjected aligns with situated learning theory, which posits that authentic, contextually embedded activities enhance learners' internalization of goals and self-imposed standards (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This outcome mirrors Duong's (2021) observations in a Vietnamese context, where trainees associated frequent participation in mock conferences with heightened engagement and perceived competence, though her study focused on skill development rather than motivational dynamics.

The absence of statistically significant improvements in extrinsic motivation - external regulation (e.g., reliance on rewards or external validation) may reflect the inherent nature of situated learning. Unlike traditional classroom activities that often emphasize grades or instructor feedback, mock conferences prioritize experiential, collaborative learning, which may reduce students' dependency on external incentives. This distinction underscores the unique motivational profile of situated learning environments, where internal drivers (e.g., self-efficacy, relevance to professional goals) take precedence. This finding also resonates with Duong's (2021) emphasis on mock conferences fostering psychological competence, a non-linguistic skill tied to intrinsic resilience rather than external validation.

## **7. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **7.1. Implications**

#### **7.1.1. Theoretical Implications**

The study addresses a critical gap highlighted in related works: the limited exploration of mock conferences' impact on motivation, particularly within Vietnamese interpreter training. By validating mock conferences as a tool for enhancing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational sub-types (with introjected regulation showing the most growth), the research bridges situated learning theory with motivational frameworks such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This integration enriches theoretical discourse by demonstrating how contextually authentic activities can nurture multifaceted motivation, supporting Li's (2015) assertion that situated learning fosters "diverse dimensions of competence."

#### **7.1.2. Practical Implications**

The findings reinforce the practical utility of mock conferences, as advocated by Mirzoyeva (2023) and Duong (2021), while offering actionable strategies for interpreter trainers. The documented procedure for organizing mock conferences, a key output of this study, provides a replicable model for educators aiming to balance skill acquisition with motivational engagement. For instance, the emphasis on role-playing real-world scenarios may amplify introjected motivation by aligning classroom tasks with students' professional aspirations. Additionally, the lack of improvement in external regulation suggests that instructors should consciously design mock conferences to minimize over-reliance on extrinsic rewards, instead fostering reflection on personal growth and skill mastery.

### **7.2. Limitations of the Study**

As the researcher, I acknowledge several limitations impacting the study's scope and outcomes:

- **Limited Generalizability:** As an action research study within a specific 26-student

classroom, findings are context-specific and not broadly applicable, serving instead as preliminary insights for similar educational settings.

- **Time Constraints:** A tight 15-week schedule allowed only 11 weeks for mock conferences, restricting students to two interpreting opportunities, which limited motivation improvements.
- **Lack of Standardized Instructions:** Despite clear procedures, inconsistent guidance during mock conferences may have hindered student comprehension and performance.
- **Insufficient Reflection:** Optional post-conference reflection (vs. mandatory assignments) reduced student diligence, potentially curbing motivation growth.
- **Narrow Focus:** The study prioritized consecutive interpreting via mock conferences, excluding simultaneous interpreting due to resource and time limitations.

These constraints highlight challenges in generalizability, implementation, and methodological design while underscoring the exploratory nature of the research.

### **7.3. Recommendations for Future Research**

This study has highlighted several areas that necessitate additional inquiry. First, subsequent studies could employ a larger sample size to evaluate the influence of mock conferences on student motivation. Furthermore, longitudinal research could be conducted, enabling participants to engage in repeated mock conferences while assuming diverse roles, thereby offering deeper insights into their sustained effects. Finally, further investigation might examine the effects of mock conferences on motivation within the context of simultaneous interpreting courses, broadening the scope of current findings. These avenues would enhance the empirical understanding of how such pedagogical tools shape learner motivation over time and across disciplines.

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## APPENDIX 1: POST-INTERVENTION SURVEY

### The motivation state of student interpreters after the mock conferences

*Dear students,*

*I am conducting a research study on the motivation of student interpreters. I would like to hear from you about your responses to the mock conferences. This will help me gain deeper insights on students' motivation, contributing to more effective classes in the future. There is no good or bad answer, and I would be truly grateful if you answer ALL the questions HONESTLY and ACCURATELY. The survey should only take 7 minutes, and your responses are completely anonymous. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact me via email: .....*

What are your responses to the mock conferences?

Using the scale below, please tick the option that best describes the reason why you are currently engaged in this course.

1: Definitely NOT true

2: NOT true

3: True

4: Definitely true

Item	1	2	3	4
1. Without the experience in the mock conference, I think I would not find a high-paying job later on.				
2. I experienced more pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things in the mock conference.				
3. I think the mock conference helped me better prepare for the career I have chosen.				
4. I enjoyed more intense feelings when I could communicate my own ideas to others.				
5. Honestly, I don't know; I really feel that I did waste my time in that activity.				
6. I enjoyed more pleasure while surpassing myself in my studies during the mock conference.				
7. Participating in the mock conference helped me to prove to myself that I was capable of completing this assignment.				
8. The mock conference might help me find a more prestigious job later on.				
9. I enjoyed the pleasure when I discovered new things never seen before the mock conference.				
10. Eventually the mock conference will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like.				
11. The mock conference brought me the pleasure that I experienced when I read and listened to interesting ideas.				
12. I once had good reasons for participating in the mock conference; however, now I wonder what the point of this activity is.				
13. During the mock conference, I experienced the pleasure while I was surpassing myself in one of my personal accomplishments.				
14. I enjoyed this activity because when I succeeded in this assignment, I felt important.				



15. Experience in the mock conference will help me have "the good life" later on.				
16. Thanks to the mock conference, I enjoyed the pleasure in broadening my knowledge about the knowledge and skills which did appeal to me.				
17. The mock conference will help me make a better choice regarding my career orientation.				
18. I experienced the pleasure when I felt completely absorbed by the new knowledge and skills.				
19. I couldn't see why I participated in this activity and frankly, I couldn't care less.				
20. I enjoyed the mock conference because of the satisfaction I felt when I was in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities.				
21. I enjoyed participating in the mock conference because I could show myself that I was a competent and professional interpreter.				
22. The mock conference might help me have a better salary later on.				
23. I engaged in this activity and it allowed me to continue to learn about many things that interested me.				
24. I believe that this activity improved my competence as a professional.				
25. I enjoyed the "high" feeling that I experienced while reading or listening to various interesting subjects.				
26. I don't know; I can't understand what is going on in the mock conference.				
27. This activity allowed me to experience personal satisfaction in my quest for excellence in my studies.				
28. I enjoyed the mock conference because I wanted to show myself that I could succeed in my studies.				

# 2, 9, 16, 23: Intrinsic motivation - to know

# 6, 13, 20, 27: Intrinsic motivation - toward accomplishment

# 4, 11, 18, 25: Intrinsic motivation - to experience stimulation

# 3, 10, 17, 24: Extrinsic motivation - identified

# 7, 14, 21, 28: Extrinsic motivation - introjected

# 1, 8, 15, 22: Extrinsic motivation - external regulation

# 5, 12, 19, 26: Amotivation

**APPENDIX 2: AN EXTRACT OF THE TEACHING JOURNAL****- adopted from Burns (2010)**

<b>Week</b>	<b>What is happening?</b>	<b>What are my perceptions/ attitudes about what is happening?</b>	<b>What are my responses/ interpretations of what has happened?</b>
4	<p>Lecture 4 in the course syllabus</p> <p>Cycle 1 - Step 2 (Preliminary investigation): I surveyed the students for their current level of motivation using the Academic Motivation Scale by Vallerand et al. (1992). I conducted an additional survey to gather further insights into students' evaluation of practical activities in their previous interpreting class(es).</p> <p>Cycle 1 - Step 3 (Hypothesis): I had two hypotheses</p> <p><u>Hypothesis 1:</u> Mock conferences might be perceived by the students as an effective situated activity.</p> <p><u>Hypothesis 2:</u> Mock conferences in interpreting training might improve the students' motivation.</p>	<p>The students had a low level of motivation based on the AMS framework.</p> <p>They had had insignificant exposure to situated learning activities in the previous interpreting course.</p>	<p>I decided to conduct an action research study with the hope to motivate my students in the interpreting course.</p>