



## How Does Internship Enhance Translation Skills of English Translation and Interpreting Students?

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine how English-Turkish translation and interpreting students improve their translation skills through the internship program. Internships serve as a crucial bridge between academic theory and real-world practice, preparing students for the demands of the translation industry. This research was conducted through an open-ended questionnaire administered to 3rd and 4th-year translation students who completed their internships at various workplaces. The findings showed that the internship was beneficial in improving students' translation competencies. Additionally, it was found that the reasons for participation in compulsory internship programs ranged from lifelong passions for language learning and language use to incidental shifts in career objectives, and that individual insights stemmed from self-perceived success and critical views on translation skills. Furthermore, the study revealed that the duration of the internship also plays a crucial role in the overall enhancement of translation skills. Mentorship and feedback during the internship were identified as key factors contributing to the students' professional development. The results shed light on the importance of participating in an internship program and securing a suitable workplace for students who intend or are required to undertake an internship as these experiences can significantly influence their future career paths.

**Keywords** Internship Translation and Interpreting English-Turkish Language Pair Open-Ended Questionnaire

## Staj Deneyimi İngilizce Mütercim ve Tercümanlık Öğrencilerinin Çeviri Becerilerini Nasıl Etkiler?

### Özet

Bu çalışma, İngilizce-Türkçe mütercim-tercümanlık öğrencilerinin staj programı aracılığıyla çeviri becerilerini nasıl geliştirdiklerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Stajlar, akademik teori ile gerçek dünya pratiği arasında önemli bir köprü oluşturarak öğrencileri çeviri sektörünün taleplerine hazırlar. Araştırma, çeşitli iş yerlerinde stajlarını tamamlayan 3. ve 4. sınıf çeviri öğrencileriyle açık uçlu bir anket kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, stajın öğrencilerin çeviri yetkinliklerini geliştirmede faydalı olduğunu göstermiştir. Buna ek olarak, zorunlu staj programlarına katılım nedenlerinin, dil öğrenimi ve dil kullanımına yönelik yaşam boyu süren tutkularından kariyer hedeflerindeki tesadüfi değişikliklere kadar çeşitlilik gösterdiği ve bireysel içgörüler, kendi algılanan başarı ve çeviri becerilerine ilişkin eleştirel görüşler tarafından sağlandığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca çalışma, staj süresinin de çeviri becerilerinin genel olarak geliştirilmesinde önemli bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymuştur. Staj sırasında mentorluk ve geri bildirim, öğrencilerin mesleki gelişimine katkıda bulunan kilit faktörler olarak bulunmuştur. Sonuçlar, bir staj programına katılmanın ve staj yapmak isteyen/zorunda olan öğrenciler için uygun bir işyeri ayarlamasının önemine ışık tutmaktadır, çünkü bu deneyimler gelecekteki kariyer yollarını önemli ölçüde etkileyebilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler** Staj Mütercim ve Tercümanlık İngilizce-Türkçe Dil Çifti Açık-Uçlu Anket

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## Introduction

Internship is an integral component of education for English translation and interpreting students, offering them a unique opportunity to bridge theory with practical skills and to adapt to real-world communication contexts (Xu, 2019). Understanding how these experiences enhance language skills and cultural insights for students is crucial for improving relevant education programs in the field. Internships help students develop their skills and become more adaptable to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of professional environments. Students can test their skills, improve their competencies, and assess their readiness for professional challenges.

Translation and interpreting are pivotal in cross-cultural communication, requiring more than just vocabulary expansion. They encompass quick thinking, cultural sensitivity, oral communication, and the ability to connect texts. Internships are essential for translation and interpreting students, bridging the gap between theory and practice by providing real-world experience. Research shows how beneficial internships are for developing skills, preparing for careers, and advancing one's career in a variety of fields (Beard, 1998; Canım Alkan, 2015; Robinson et al., 2016). Diverse settings, including ministries, embassies, and private organizations, provide customized learning opportunities for translation students that improve their ability to communicate across cultural boundaries and interpret under pressure (Yenkimaleki & Van Heuven, 2016; Risku et al., 2017). However, research on English-Turkish translation learners in Türkiye is limited, which emphasizes the need for more studies in this field.

Within this framework, the present study aims to explore the impact of internships on students' language and professional skills as well as their self-assessment. To this end, the research question is as follows: What do translation students think about the impact of their internship experience on their professional development? This study has the potential to enhance the effectiveness of translation and interpreting education while also offering prospects for future research and practical applications. Thus, it represents a crucial step in understanding the role of internships in developing translation skills.

## Review of Literature

Translation and interpreting skills are best developed through practical application and real-world experience. Thus, internships are essential to the education of English translation and interpreting students. The significance of internships, their effect on student development, possible internship placements, and the benefits these experiences offer to students will all be covered in this literature review.

Academic internships give students real-world experience and develop skills outside the classroom, bridging the knowledge gap between theory and practice. Through hands-on experience with the challenges and complexities of translation and interpreting, students are better equipped to develop transferable skills outside the classroom. The internship experiences of university students from various departments have been widely discussed in the literature (Şan & Koçlu, 2021). No study on the internship experiences of English-Turkish translation and interpreting students has been found in the literature, except for Canım Alkan's book chapter entitled "The Process of Getting Acquainted with Translation: Translation Internship" (Canım Alkan, 2015). Beyond this study, Research has been conducted in a different language pair: Yenkimaleki and Van Heuven (2016) focused on the effect of explicit teaching of prosody on developing speaking skills for Farsi-English interpreter trainees. It highlights the importance of prosody in language interpretation, which could be relevant to the enhancement of translation skills (Yenkimaleki & Van Heuven, 2016).

More research has been conducted on internships completed by students in various departments such as accounting, tourism, architecture, and insurance. For example, internships in accounting have been shown to enhance students' knowledge and skills, providing practical experience that bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application (Beard, 1998). Similarly, internships in tourism have been shown to influence students' career aspirations, often leading to shifts within the industry rather than discouraging entry into it (Robinson et al., 2016). The main interests of studies have included the expectations of interns, internship problems, the issues and complaints encountered during the internship process, the perspectives of business managers and employees on internships and intern students, the contribution of internships to professional development and career planning, and the effect of internships on professional commitment and the intention to continue in the profession. Interpreting students gain real-world experience in high-stress settings such as conferences, where they practice simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. This helps them become more proficient at thinking quickly and mediating cultural differences (Marchut et al., 2019). These internships prepare students for the demands of the working world by bridging the gap between academic learning and practical experience (Liu, 2017). For instance, in the field of accounting, Özdemir (2019) conducted interviews with ten interns, asking them nine open-ended questions. Pelit et al. (2016), in a study conducted with 401 students doing internship at Afyon Kocatepe University Faculty of Tourism, revealed students' attitudes towards the tourism sector and their desire to pursue a career in this sector. Kalaycı et al. (2014) and Sezen et al. (2019) argued that the success of landscape architecture depends on the extent to which that the theoretical knowledge acquired during university education can be applied in practice.

When the studies worldwide are examined, it is evident that there are various studies conducted in translation programs. Yuan (2018) characterized internship programs within translation education as dedicated periods offering students hands-on engagement in professional environments, aimed at cultivating relevant skills across diverse settings within a specific field. Khasawneh (2024) noted the recognition garnered by numerous universities and organizations, including the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS), the University of Bath, Glendon College, and York University, for their incorporation of internships or work placements into translation curricula. According to Kiraly (2012), translation internships often provide students with valuable support and career guidance. Kiraly (2012) further emphasized the crucial role of academic institutions in integrating internship programs into translation education.

Students studying translation and interpreting have the opportunity to bridge the knowledge gap between the classroom and practical application through academic internships. Academic internships, in the opinion of Gault et al. (2010), form a link between theory and practice through the completion of supervised, timed work. Internships play a pivotal role in shaping students' skills and competencies, providing them with the practical experience necessary to excel in the field. Participants gain direct exposure to the challenges and intricacies of translation and interpreting, facilitating the development of transferable skills beyond the confines of the classroom. Student translators benefit greatly from internships in several ways. They first allow students to apply theoretical information knowledge acquired in the classroom to practical situations. The development of problem-solving techniques, flexibility, and cross-cultural communication abilities—all crucial for translators and interpreters—is aided by this hands-on experience.

There are numerous internship options available to students, each with its own special challenges and insights. Because of this diversity, they are able to customize their internship experiences to fit their unique interests and professional goals. There are various settings in which student

translators can gain experiences such as ministries, embassies, private translation agencies, etc. The advantages of internships can vary widely and be customized to the particular setting that students specializing in translation and interpreting select. As Canım Alkan (2015) emphasized, "The important thing is that he can observe and experience this intermediary role" (p. 94). The unique benefits provided by various internship environments are explored below:

Firstly, students have the opportunity to work on diplomatic and administrative documents by interning in government ministries. Students learn about the complexities of government communication, which is important knowledge for anyone interested in translating and interpreting for the public sector or in diplomacy. Students can gain firsthand experience with formal and administrative documentation by interning at government ministries. Their proficiency in translating and interpreting legal documents, official reports, and diplomatic correspondence is enhanced by this experience. Their exposure to high-stakes communication at the federal level improves their language skills and gives them a comprehensive understanding of diplomacy and public administration. As a result, students who intern in ministries often gain a competitive advantage when it comes to pursuing careers in translation and interpreting for the public sector or in diplomacy.

Likewise, student internships at embassies provide a distinctive viewpoint on global diplomacy and cross-cultural dialogue. They improve their conference and diplomatic interpreting abilities by working on a variety of documents, including official correspondence and diplomatic negotiations. Internships at embassies provide access to the fields of intercultural dialogue and international diplomacy. Students who work in embassies frequently get the chance to interact with diplomats, take part in negotiations, and handle official paperwork. Their proficiency in diplomatic and conference interpreting, where accuracy and cultural awareness are critical, is enhanced by this exposure. Students acquire the skill of bridging cultural gaps in high-stakes diplomatic interactions within the context of embassies, where they are taught the nuances of diplomatic language.

Similarly, students get exposure to a variety of translation tasks, client expectations, and project management through their internships at private translation agencies. They gain experience managing several projects at once, adhering to strict deadlines, and working with various subject areas and languages. According to Risku, Rogl, and Milosevic (2017), a translation agency's varied task portfolio can serve as a great foundation for developing a broad range of skills. These companies offer a variety of settings in which students can work on a wide range of assignments. They become skilled at handling several projects at once, becoming proficient with time management, and adjusting to different client demands. Students who have worked with a variety of subjects and languages are better prepared for the unpredictable.

Furthermore, students get the chance to participate in translation and interpreting related to hospitality and tourism through internships in hotels. They learn the specialized language used in the hospitality industry and how to assist foreign visitors, ensuring a more pleasurable and comfortable stay. Students get the rare chance to work in translation and interpreting related to hospitality and tourism through internships in hotels. They learn all of the industry jargon, including that used for restaurant menus, guest services, and room descriptions. Additionally, they learn how to help foreign visitors have a more pleasurable stay by giving them clear and culturally appropriate information. Their capacity to deliver first-rate customer service is fostered by this experience, which is a crucial competency for people hoping to work as interpreters and translators in the travel and hospitality industries.

Additionally, students can acquire hands-on experience translating and interpreting for tourists by working as interns at tourism and travel agencies. They enhance their expertise of tourism and travel-related translation and interpreting by working on itineraries, brochures, and tourist interactions. Students can gain practical experience translating materials for the travel industry by doing internships at travel and tourism organizations. Working on brochures, promotional materials, and travel itineraries, they improve their language skills to meet the demands of tourists. Their ability to interpret and translate for tourists, market travel destinations, and make sure that customers have a positive and educational experience is improved by this placement. A key skill they develop is capturing the essence of a destination in a way that is sensitive to local culture.

The advantages and skills that students studying translation and interpreting gain are greatly influenced by their choice of internship placement. Students' career goals and interests are in line with the skills and knowledge they acquire from internships in hotels, tourism and travel agencies, embassies, ministries, and private translation services. These experiences broaden their knowledge of their field of study and equip them for success in their future careers, whether they be in public service, diplomacy, or other translation and interpreting-related fields. Although several studies have examined the impact of internship and fieldwork on professional development in different fields, no study has yet explored how student translators benefit from their experiences in Türkiye. This study was conducted with third and fourth-year students from the English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting department, investigating the impact of internship on enhancing their translation skills.

## Materials and Methods

### Participants

This study involved 10 volunteer participants, 3 males, and 7 females, aged between 21-25, who were randomly selected and had completed their internship. Participants were in the third-year (n=5) and fourth-year students (n=5) at a state university in the Mediterranean region in Türkiye. They arranged their internship places themselves. At the beginning of the study, participants were informed about the purpose and content of the survey, and they were informed that their data and names would be kept confidential. The data obtained was processed in accordance with ethical rules.

### Data Collection Instruments/Tools

In this study, data were collected using an open-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to capture participants' various thoughts and experiences regarding their completed internships. It was sent to the participants via the online survey tool (Google Forms), and they were given the opportunity to respond within one week. At the beginning of the questionnaire, participants were given a brief explanation of the purpose of the study and brief information about privacy policies and consent processes; in addition, they were assured that the information they provided would be kept completely confidential and would be used only for research purposes. This data collection method was chosen to allow participants to express their thoughts and experiences in depth. Open-ended questionnaires allow participants to express their thoughts more freely and provide the opportunity to collect rich and in-depth data. The questionnaire comprises 14 questions, excluding demographic questions (4 questions). It includes 4 general questions and 10 questions that focus on the internship experience. The questions about internships address how to locate one, how long it will last, what it entails, expectations, benefits, work environment, mentorship, the connection between school and work, obstacles encountered, and future plans.

## Data analysis and Results

### The Analysis of General Questions

The participants' answers to the question "Did you choose to enroll in this department voluntarily?" reveal a wide range of motivations. Seven of the ten respondents, or the majority, clearly stated that they enrolled in the English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting program voluntarily. A few individuals expounded upon their reasons for participating, with one mentioning a childhood interest in languages. It's interesting to note that another respondent stated that, owing to academic limitations, they changed their original plan to pursue English teaching and instead opted for a career in translation. Notably, two individuals reported enrolling not by choice. This range of answers helps in understanding the participants' early interests in the topic and may have an impact on how they view and interact with internships as they pursue their academic goals.

Diverse viewpoints among the participants are evident in the responses to the questions about self-perceived success as a student translator and the assessment of translating skills. While some participants are self-assured and emphasize hard work and ongoing development, others take a more critical approach. One participant emphasizes the ongoing learning process that is inherent in translation by acknowledging personal improvement and competence without declaring perfect achievement. While acknowledging that there is room for development in certain areas, such as vocabulary and listening comprehension, one respondent believes that he or she are doing well. The participant assesses their own performance as average, noting areas for improvement in areas such as speed and practicality. On the other hand, one respondent rates his or her perceived success quantitatively, giving it a score of 3 out of 5. Remarkably, two individuals voice their discontent with their translation efforts; one explicitly declares that they strongly dislike their own translations, while the other states that they have no interest in translating at all. These diverse self-evaluations highlight the subjective and intricate process of assessing one's translation abilities, highlighting both the student translator community's strong points and potential areas for improvement.

When asked about their future ambitions for their careers, the participants' answers reveal a wide spectrum of goals in the field of translation and interpreting. Two participants make it apparent that they would like to become professional translators; one of them stated that they would rather translate written documents than spoken ones. One participant, however, chooses to teach English as a foreign language at the university level after realizing the difficulties in the translation industry. One indicated that they are interested in both translation and interpretation, but s/he would rather translate since they find it more enjoyable. An interesting reply implies a hesitancy to reveal future intentions, but it does indicate a wish to work abroad. While one participant expressed a desire to develop and pursue a profession in interpretation despite acknowledging their current weaknesses, another had a goal of working as an interpreter in the sports business. On the other hand, a single responder or respondent expressly declines a career in translation, preferring to become a teacher due to the simplicity of teaching English. These diverse goals highlight the complexity of career decisions made by English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting students, as they represent a range of interests, obstacles they have faced, and views from around the world on their professional paths.

The participants' varied experiences are shown through the participants' experiences of their very first translation or interpreting assignments. One respondent states a significant and unforgettable event while interpreting for earthquake aid efforts, demonstrating the impactful and humanitarian character of crisis translation work. Another person talks about their first experience translating in high school, when they translated a little passage and received feedback and paid, which helped them get

started in the profession. A participant highlights the useful uses of translation in a variety of professional contexts by sharing a specific example of translating warranty documentation in a quality control department at their uncle's ceramic factory. Additional experiences include working as an interpreter for a construction project, translating subtitles, and getting some first-hand knowledge through an internship. On the other hand, some participants express a lack of connection with or remembering of their initial translation or interpreting assignment. These unique narratives highlight the multiple nature of the participants' introduction to the area of translation and interpreting by illuminating the various entry points into it, which range from humanitarian endeavors to personal projects, internships, and professional engagements.

### **The Analysis of Internship Questions**

The comments related to the internship settings of the participants demonstrate a range of environments in which students specializing in English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting obtained hands-on experience. The engagement of translation services in the context of local government was highlighted by two participants completing internships at the Municipality. An additional person worked as an intern in the quality control department of a ceramics industry, demonstrating the various uses of translation abilities in professional environments. Additionally, translation services are a popular option for internships. Participants' practical grasp of the field was probably enhanced by exposure to a variety of translation tasks, industries, and professional settings during their internships. The many internship sites highlight how adaptable English-Turkish translation and interpreting abilities are to a variety of industries and establishments.

The replies from the participants about the internship applications they made offer insight into their selection criteria and the variety of industries they considered for hands-on training. A few people choose to apply to specific agencies; one went only to the municipality, while another applied to the quality control division of a ceramics company. A number of individuals expressed a preference for the professional translation environment by selecting translation agencies. It's interesting to note that eight participants applied to just one location and were accepted there for their internship, demonstrating a clearer approach. The participants' distinctive techniques, interests, and considerations when pursuing real-world experience in the field of English-Turkish translation and interpreting are reflected in these varied approaches to internship applications.

The responses to the question of whether participants completed their internship because it was required of them or because it was something they wanted to do show a variety of reasons and situations. Four respondents claim to have made intentional selections, stating they chose their internship site willingly in order to align it with their professional objectives. However, six participants acknowledge completing required tasks, stating that they completed their internship only because it was demanded of them. These varied experiences highlight the complex process of selecting an internship for English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting students. It involves making deliberate judgments based on professional objectives as well as satisfying requirements to differing degrees.

The participants used a variety of strategies to find internship placements. A few made use of personal ties; one mentioned an offer from a neighbor to intern at the municipality, while another mentioned a friend who helped arrange their placement. One participant secured an internship at the company where their uncle worked, and another at the residence of their father's cousin, indicating that family ties also played a significance. Another method was digital communication; one participant used email to effectively secure an internship placement. As an alternative, individuals used web tools; one person recounted looking through maps and images to find an internship. Interestingly, one participant

discovered their internship by chance—a testament to the variety and occasionally fortunate ways in which people discover internship opportunities. The range of approaches used emphasizes how important internet platforms, personal contacts, and networking are for students studying English-Turkish translation and interpreting when looking for internship placements.

Participants have different ideas regarding the length of the internship. Seven participants believe that the internship duration is sufficient, citing its value for assisting people in exploring careers, gaining a deeper grasp of the industry, and finding their own areas of passion. They express positive experiences, including exposure to various professions, learning from colleagues, and constant activity throughout the internship. However, three participants express a desire for a longer duration, with one participant suggesting that the current timeframe is inadequate for meaningful learning opportunities and advocating for a longer internship period to adequately acquire translation abilities. These differing viewpoints demonstrate the subjectivity in assessing the length of an internship; while some value the current duration, others advocate for longer durations to enhance skill development.

During their placements, interns worked on a range of projects. Out of the ten participants surveyed, three of them worked on translating resumes and various publications, including a book for their municipality. One participant was responsible for immediate translations between the company and customers, while another focused on quality control and translated warranty documents. Although some found it challenging to adapt to specific styles and terminology, they welcomed the learning process. Notably, none of them mentioned being pushed into unfavorable assignments, highlighting an overall positive experience. This wide range of duties demonstrates how varied the work that English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting students do during their time as interns is.

Before starting their internships, participants' expectations varied. Out of the ten respondents, three participants expressed hope for significant personal growth and change, which was realized by one of them. While two concentrated on developing their vocabulary and translation abilities, one approached the experience with excitement. The experience not only met but surpassed the expectations of one participant who hoped to gain exposure to a department outside of their field. Meanwhile, four went into the internship with an open mind and no prior concepts, and two wanted flexible work schedules and finished translations. One individual expressed recognition of unfulfilled anticipations, specifically concerning noteworthy advancements in their translation abilities. On the other hand, four found that the internship met their expectations and improved their skills, helping them understand English translation better. In one instance, positive expectations and voluntary participation were influenced by familiarity with the internship provider, including a connection made through the university. These varied expectations highlight the various viewpoints and goals that English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting students have as they begin their internships.

Participants' post-internship reflections offer a variety of perspectives. Some thank them for the worthwhile experience, emphasizing the relationships they built with people who are knowledgeable about their line of work. Two of them experience contentment and a sense of readiness for the future while working with notable individuals during their internship in a municipality. Benefits include expanding vocabulary related to the field, learning new information about a previously unknown subject, and feeling fulfilled and successful overall in the translation process. There are, however, differing experiences; one participant noted both good and bad things that happened, like learning about tough clients and workplace obstacles like mobbing. Another emphasizes exposure to various fields, an office setting, and the addition of valuable experience in general. On the other hand, a participant who felt the internship was insufficient criticized it for not making a substantial contribution



to their translation abilities, especially when it comes to legal translation. There are clearly differing opinions about the value of internships; three of them highlight how they help prepare students for future careers, while others are disappointed by the impression that they barely gain anything. The complexity of internship experiences for English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting students is highlighted by these nuanced reflections.

Participants' assessments of the internship environment and mentors/colleagues differed. Positive experiences included a supervisor who assigned work that matched the intern's skills, kind and encouraging coworkers, and a calm setting next to a garden with a supportive mentor and helpful coworkers. A different participant emphasized the mentor's and other department staff members' sincere interest and useful contributions. Nonetheless, difficulties were observed when mentors assigned tasks unrelated to the internship or were thought to be impolite, lacking basic departmental terminology knowledge. It was frequently mentioned that cooperativeness, kindness, and helpfulness foster a family-like environment and make work enjoyable. One participant had to deal with practical issues like outdated computers. These varied assessments emphasize how important workplace dynamics, the quality of mentorship, and the general atmosphere are in determining how English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting students perceive their internship experience.

Diverse opinions exist among participants about how well their education prepared them for a career in the workforce. Three participants are certain that their education played a major role in their success, attributing their achievements to their schooling. However, four participants categorically claim that their education did not adequately prepare them for the realities of the job market. One participant highlights the need for practical skills beyond terminological improvement, feeling as though they are not adequately prepared for real work life. Another perspective emphasizes the importance of practical work experience to gain a comprehensive understanding alongside formal education. Additionally, one participant expresses discontent with the translation classes and a sense of being lost in the fourth year. Despite these differing viewpoints, some participants feel that their formal education has sufficiently prepared them for a professional work life, especially in terms of enhancing their English language proficiency and learning translation techniques. While acknowledging both strengths and limitations in the educational preparation of English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting students, the responses highlight the complex relationship between academic education and its alignment with the demands of the professional world.

The difficulties that participants faced during their mandated internships were quite various. Working in a municipality with prominent individuals, one intern found it difficult to keep up a professional appearance and demeanor because of the spotlight. The 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. work schedule and the requirement for formality proved to be difficult for another intern, especially in a municipality. A participant struggling with unfamiliar terms faced difficulties in maintaining a consistent style when working on templated texts. One particularly memorable challenge involved a boss who broke agreements to pay for meals and travel expenses, which led to a challenging discussion. Another intern faced difficulties due to long computer use, strict deadlines, and stress from office policies. Five participants, however, did not mention any difficulties, which is indicative of a range of internship experiences in the field of English-Turkish translation and interpreting.

The responses regarding post-undergraduate plans for working as interpreters or translators in the industries where they finished their internships reveal a variety of factors. Two participants show interest in pursuing work in the same sector, citing reasons such as consistent pay, flexible schedules, and potential skill development. However, three participants express bigger career plans outside the

industry, citing aspirations for travel, preferences for alternative work environments, or perceptions of a lack of professionalism. Additionally, two participants express intentions to become lecturers, while one participant voices a specific preference for working as an interpreter in medical environments. These varying responses demonstrate the careful consideration that English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting students give to their career paths after graduation, leading to complex decisions.

In general, participants recommend that others undertake the same internship experience. One participant highlights how transformational the experience was, noting personal growth and the development of meaningful relationships with relevant individuals. Two of them endorse it as a unique and worthwhile experience, underlining the warmth, wisdom, and intellectual contributions of the individuals in the internship environment. Five of them cite their personal development and sense of fulfilment as the foundation for their recommendation. On the other hand, one participant highlights how special their entry was because they found it through a friend, implying that others might not be able to replicate the intern opportunity. A handful of participants endorse the concept of interning at a translation agency because of the educational opportunities it offers. The advantages emphasized include the enhancement of language skills, hands-on experience translating legal documents, and an uplifting work atmosphere. Based on their internship experiences, these diverse recommendations offer insights into the perceived benefits and satisfaction levels of students studying English-Turkish translation and interpreting.

## Discussion

The summary of the studied literature highlights the critical significance that internships play in determining the course of students' academic and professional careers in translating and interpreting. Scholars such as Yuan (2018), Khasawneh (2024), and Kiraly (2012) have noted that academic internships bridge classroom theory and real-world practice. Students receive essential practical experience through supervised and scheduled labor, which improves their skills and competences and ultimately positions them for success in their chosen industry. With the exception of Canım Alkan's (2015) insightful work, there is no specific study that specifically focuses on internships in English-Turkish translation and interpreting. This highlights the need for more studies in this field. Although the extant literature provides significant insights from several disciplines, there is still a knowledge gap about the distinct obstacles and opportunities that students in this specific language pair experience. Subsequent investigations may go more deeply into the internship experiences of English-Turkish translation and interpreting students, examining things like preferred internship placements, perceived advantages and difficulties, and the influence on career paths.

The findings from this study shed light on the multifaceted nature of internship experiences for English-Turkish translation and interpreting students. A complicated interplay between personal aspirations and professional aims is reflected in the different motivations of participants for taking internships, which range from a passion for language to career exploration. Furthermore, the post-internship reflections highlight the significance of workplace dynamics and mentorship in influencing students' experiences by revealing various degrees of pleasure and preparedness for the workforce. A key point emphasized in the conclusion is the nuanced evaluation of internship experiences, encompassing both positive and challenging elements. Some participants express discontent with their internship experiences and believe that academic preparation is inadequate, but overall, many participants are positive about their internship experiences and support the usefulness of such opportunities. This emphasizes how important it is for educational establishments to continuously

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review and improve their translating and interpreting curricula in order to better meet the needs of business and better educate students for the challenges of the profession.

In order to create internship programs that successfully close the gap between academia and industry, educators, practitioners, and legislators must work together going ahead. Institutions can better prepare future translators and interpreters with the skills and competences required to flourish in a fast-changing global landscape by offering students a variety of unique and enriching internship opportunities that are suited to their interests and career ambitions. In summary, while this study offers valuable insights into the impact of internships on students pursuing English-Turkish translation and interpreting, additional research is required to have a comprehensive understanding of this developing field.

### **Ethics Committee Permission**

This study was carried out in accordance with the ethics committee permission dated 18.12.2023 and document number 226179 obtained from Kırıkkale University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

### **Conclusion**

The primary aim of this study was to examine the impact of internships on students. Expected results include seeing the positive or negative effects of the internship on students, how important it is to choose the institution to do the internship, and how much the internship can affect the future. General questions were expected to have a great impact on the evaluation of students' responses to internship questions. The reasons for the participants' voluntary participation in the department are diverse and range from enduring passions for language to coincidental changes in their original professional goals. A range of confidence and critical comments are shown in self-perceived success and evaluation of translation abilities, offering complex insights into the subjective nature of assessing competence in translation. After graduation, participants' aspirations for their professional lives vary; some clearly want to work in translation, while others are thinking about teaching or other options.

The participants' first experiences introduce them to a variety of experiences, ranging from humanitarian activities to personal projects, internships, and professional engagements. The replies pertaining to internships emphasize the adaptability of English-Turkish translation and interpreting abilities across various industries, with a focus on real-world applications. The participants' selective hiring practices when applying for internships and their reasons for selecting specific locations highlight the unique approaches and factors they take into account while seeking hands-on experience. It becomes clear that choosing an internship placement is a complex process, with options ranging from purposeful decisions based on career objectives to satisfying requirements to varied degrees of satisfaction.

A thorough understanding of the participants' changing perspectives is possible through insights into their pre- and post-internship expectations and thoughts. The range of expectations highlights the varied goals and mindsets of English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting students when they enter working life. Evaluations of internships take into account the environments, mentors, coworkers, and overall experiences. Both positive and difficult elements are emphasized, demonstrating how workplace dynamics and the quality of mentorship have an impact on the internship experiences of the participants. There is a complex interaction between academic education and readiness for the working world; some participants attribute their preparedness to their education, while others express dissatisfaction with perceived inadequacies in their education. Managing formality requirements and remaining professional in high-profile settings are just two of the difficulties encountered during

compulsory internships. A range of factors are taken into account in the post-undergraduate intentions of the participants; some indicate interest in the fields in which they are interning, while others are pursuing other career routes. In the end, recommendations for other people to go through a similar internship experience are mainly favorable and highlight things that are beneficial and transforming. However, the diverse opportunities and personalized experiences underscore how unequal and unpredictable the benefits of internship can be. Overall, the collective narratives provide a rich and nuanced tapestry of the English-Turkish Translation and Interpreting program's experiences, perceptions, and objectives.

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## Genişletilmiş Özet

### Giriş

Bu çalışma, İngilizce-Türkçe mütercim-tercümanlık öğrencilerinin staj deneyimlerinin çeviri becerileri üzerindeki etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Stajlar, öğrencilerin akademik teorik bilgilerini gerçek dünya pratikleriyle birleştirmelerine olanak tanıyarak, çeviri sektörünün taleplerine hazırlanmalarını sağlayan önemli bir köprü görevi görmektedir. Araştırma, çeşitli iş yerlerinde stajlarını tamamlayan 3. ve 4. sınıf çeviri öğrencileriyle açık uçlu bir anket kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, stajların öğrencilerin çeviri yetkinliklerini geliştirmede faydalı olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, zorunlu staj programlarına katılım nedenlerinin, dil öğrenimi ve dil kullanımına yönelik yaşam boyu süren tutkularından kariyer hedeflerindeki tesadüfi değişikliklere kadar çeşitlilik gösterdiği ve bireysel içgörülerin, öğrencilerin kendi algılanan başarıları ve çeviri becerilerine ilişkin eleştirel görüşleri tarafından şekillendiği görülmüştür.

Çalışma, staj süresinin de çeviri becerilerinin genel olarak geliştirilmesinde önemli bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymuştur. Staj sırasında mentorluk ve geri bildirim, öğrencilerin mesleki gelişimine katkıda bulunan kilit faktörler olarak bulunmuştur. Sonuçlar, bir staj programına katılmanın ve staj yapmak isteyen veya zorunda olan öğrenciler için uygun bir işyeri ayarlamasının önemine ışık tutmaktadır, çünkü bu deneyimler gelecekteki kariyer yollarını önemli ölçüde etkileyebilmektedir.

Mütercim tercümanlık öğrencileri için staj deneyimi, akademik bilginin gerçek dünya pratiği ile birleşmesini sağlayan kritik bir bileşendir. Bu çalışma, İngilizce-Türkçe mütercim tercümanlık öğrencilerinin staj süreci boyunca edindikleri deneyimleri ve bu deneyimlerin profesyonel gelişimlerine etkisini incelemektedir. Staj, öğrencilerin teori ve pratiği birleştirmelerine, mesleki yeterliliklerini artırmalarına ve sektördeki dinamiklere uyum sağlamalarına yardımcı olmaktadır.

Mütercim tercümanlık alanında teorik bilginin tek başına yeterli olmadığı ve öğrencilerin gerçek dünya deneyimi kazanarak mesleğe daha iyi hazırlanabilecekleri bilinmektedir. Staj süreci, öğrencilerin çeviri süreçlerini anlama, terminoloji bilgilerini geliştirme ve müşteri beklentilerini yönetme konularında pratik yapmalarını sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, öğrenciler profesyonel ortamlarda çalışma kültürünü deneyimleyerek iş disiplinlerini geliştirme şansı bulmaktadırlar. Çeviri sektöründe yer almak isteyen bireyler için stajlar, yalnızca teknik becerileri geliştirmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda çeviri sürecinin etik boyutlarını, kültürel adaptasyonu ve müşteri ile etkili iletişim kurma becerisini de kazandırır. Bu çalışma, çeviri eğitimi alan öğrencilerin mesleki becerilerini geliştirme sürecinde stajın kritik bir rol oynadığını vurgulamaktadır. Şimdiye kadar yapılan akademik çalışmalar, staj deneyiminin genel olarak öğrencilerin mesleki başarılarına olumlu katkı sağladığını ortaya koymaktadır. Ancak, İngilizce-Türkçe dil çifti özelinde yapılan araştırmaların sınırlı olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, ilgili akademik alanın geliştirilmesine katkı sağlamaktadır.

Staj deneyimi, öğrencilerin yalnızca çeviri becerilerini geliştirmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda iş etiği, ekip çalışması ve zaman yönetimi gibi profesyonel beceriler kazanmalarına da yardımcı olur. Öğrenciler, staj sırasında karşılaştıkları gerçek projeler aracılığıyla, akademik ortamda edindikleri bilgileri nasıl uygulayacaklarını öğrenirler. Staj süresince elde edilen kazanımlar, öğrencilerin mezuniyet sonrası iş bulma sürecinde avantaj sağlamalarına da katkıda bulunur. Ayrıca, öğrenciler staj sırasında çeşitli yazılım araçlarını kullanarak dijital becerilerini de geliştirme fırsatı yakalamaktadır. Günümüz çeviri sektörü, teknolojik araçların yoğun kullanımını gerektirdiğinden, bu tür pratik deneyimler mezuniyet sonrası istihdam sürecinde büyük önem taşımaktadır. Staj programları, çeviri öğrencilerinin akademik ortamlarda öğrendikleri bilgileri mesleki uygulamalarla birleştirmelerine

olanak tanır. Bu sayede, öğrenciler hem teorik bilgilerini pratiğe döker hem de mesleki bağlamda karşılaşabilecekleri çeşitli zorluklara daha hazırlıklı hale gelirler. Çeviri sürecinde karşılaşılan problemlerin çözümü, çevirinin bağlamsal ve kültürel yönleri gibi birçok kritik unsur, ancak gerçek dünya deneyimiyle tam anlamıyla kavranabilir. Bu nedenle, staj programlarının içeriğinin öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarına göre şekillendirilmesi büyük önem taşımaktadır. Ayrıca, stajın yalnızca teknik beceri kazandırmakla sınırlı olmadığı, öğrencilerin kişisel gelişimine de katkıda bulunduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Zaman yönetimi, stresle başa çıkma, ekip içi iletişim gibi yetkinlikler, profesyonel hayatta başarı için kritik unsurlar arasında yer almaktadır. Staj deneyimi, öğrencilerin yalnızca çeviri becerilerini değil, aynı zamanda iş hayatında karşılaşabilecekleri zorlukları aşma becerilerini de geliştirmelerine yardımcı olur.

### Yöntem

Araştırma, bir devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce-Türkçe Mütercim Tercümanlık Bölümü'nde öğrenim gören 3. ve 4. sınıf öğrencileriyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Toplamda 10 kişiyle yapılan çalışma, katılımcıların gönüllülük esasına göre belirlenmesiyle oluşturulmuştur. Veriler, 14 sorudan oluşan açık uçlu bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Sorular, staj deneyimi, motivasyon, zorluklar, edindikleri beceriler ve gelecekteki kariyer planları üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır.

Araştırma sürecinde kullanılan anket soruları, öğrencilerin stajlarını nasıl buldukları, staj sürelerini nasıl değerlendirdikleri, çalışma ortamlarında karşılaştıkları zorluklar ve elde ettikleri kazanımlar hakkında detaylı bilgiler toplamayı amaçlamaktadır. Açık uçlu sorular, katılımcıların deneyimlerini daha ayrıntılı ifade etmelerine olanak tanımış ve niteliksel veri elde edilmesini sağlamıştır. Katılımcıların staj deneyimleri, çeşitli sektörlerde gerçekleştirilen stajların öğrencilerin çeviri becerilerini geliştirmede ne kadar etkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Katılımcılar, stajlar sırasında edindikleri pratik deneyimlerin, teorik bilgilerini pekiştirdiğini ve mesleki becerilerini geliştirdiğini belirtmişlerdir. Özellikle, staj süresinin yeterliliği, mentorluk ve geri bildirim süreçleri, öğrencilerin mesleki gelişimlerine önemli katkılar sağlamıştır. Ancak, bazı katılımcılar staj süresinin yetersiz olduğunu ve daha uzun bir staj süresinin becerilerini daha iyi geliştirebileceğini ifade etmişlerdir. Katılımcıların staj öncesi ve sonrası beklentileri, staj deneyimlerinin öğrencilerin mesleki hazırlıkları üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymuştur. Stajlar, öğrencilerin çeviri sektörüne dair gerçekçi bir bakış açısı kazanmalarını sağlamış ve kariyer hedeflerini şekillendirmelerine yardımcı olmuştur. Ancak, bazı katılımcılar stajların beklentilerini tam olarak karşılamadığını ve özellikle hukuki çeviri gibi alanlarda yetersiz kaldığını belirtmişlerdir.

### Sonuç ve Tartışma

Elde edilen bulgular, staj deneyiminin genel olarak öğrencilerin mesleki becerilerini geliştirdiğini ve sektörde daha güvenli hissetmelerini sağladığını göstermiştir. Katılımcılar, stajları boyunca gerçek çeviri projeleri üzerinde çalışma fırsatı bulmuş, terminoloji bilgilerini geliştirmiş ve profesyonel geri bildirim alma fırsatı elde etmişlerdir. Katılımcıların büyük bir kısmı, staj deneyimleri sırasında akademik bilgilerini pratiğe dökmeye fırsatı bulduklarını ifade etmiştir. Terminolojiye aşinalık kazanma, müşteri beklentilerini anlama ve zaman yönetimi becerilerini geliştirme gibi kazanımlar ön plana çıkmıştır. Bununla birlikte, bazı katılımcılar stajlarının yetersiz sürede olduğunu ve daha uzun süreli deneyimlerin mesleki becerilerin kazanımında daha etkili olabileceğini belirtmiştir. Özellikle kısa süreli stajlarda öğrencilerin projelerin tamamını görme şansı bulamadıkları ve yeterince sorumluluk alamadıkları dile getirilmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra, bazı kurumlarda yeterli rehberlik sunulmaması ve çeviri dışı görevlerle meşgul edilmeleri gibi olumsuzluklar da dile getirilmiştir. Staj yapılan kurumlarda mentorluk mekanizmasının eksikliği, öğrencilerin mesleki beceri kazanımlarını sınırlayabilmektedir.

Katılımcılar, geri bildirim süreçlerinin daha sistematik ve yönlendirici olmasının staj deneyimlerini daha verimli hale getireceğini belirtmiştir.

Sonuç olarak, staj deneyimi çeviri ve tercümanlık öğrencileri için vazgeçilmez bir öğrenme aracı olup, bu deneyimlerin daha yapılandırılmış ve verimli hale getirilmesi gerekmektedir. Staj programlarının içeriğinin iyileştirilmesi, öğrencilerin gerçek dünya uygulamalarıyla daha etkili bir şekilde tanışmasını sağlayabilir. Elde edilen bulgular, stajların öğrencilerin mesleki becerilerini geliştirmede önemli bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymuştur. Ancak, stajların etkinliği; staj süresinin yeterliliği, mentorluk ve geri bildirim süreçleri, öğrencilerin beklentileri ve staj yerlerinin uygunluğu gibi faktörlere bağlı olarak değişkenlik göstermektedir. Çeviri eğitimi veren kurumların, sektörde aktif olarak çalışan profesyonellerle iş birliği yaparak öğrenciler için daha iyi rehberlik mekanizmaları oluşturması gerektiği önerilmektedir. Ayrıca, gelecekte yapılacak araştırmaların daha geniş örneklem gruplarıyla tekrarlanarak, staj süreçlerinin öğrenciler üzerindeki etkisini daha kapsamlı şekilde ortaya koyması yararlı olacaktır.

## Appendix

### Demographic Information

Full Name:

Age:

Class:

Gender:

### General Questions

1. Did you choose to enroll in this department voluntarily?
2. Do you define yourself as a successful student translator? How do you evaluate your translation skills?
3. What are your future plans for your professional life? Do you want to work as a translator or interpreter?
4. What is your very first translation or interpreting job?

### Internship Questions

- a) How did you find your internship place?
- b) Do you find the duration of the internship sufficient?
- c) What type of duties or tasks were you responsible for? Did you ever have any tasks or were you forced to do any tasks that you did not want to do?
- d) What were your expectations before you began your internship?
- e) And what are your insights about your internship after you completed it?
- f) Can you evaluate the internship setting and your mentor and/or colleagues at the place?
- g) Do you believe that the education you received at school has prepared you for professional work life?
- h) Did you encounter any challenges during your mandatory internship? If so, what were these challenges, and could you please elaborate on them?
- i) After completing your undergraduate education, do you plan to work as a translator or interpreter in the sector where you completed your internship? Could you explain your reasons for this decision?
- j) Do you recommend others to have the same internship?