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Article

Internship Program: A Necessity in Language Proficiency

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Abstract: Internship programs are crucial for developing language skills because they provide real-world experience, exposure to different cultures, and chances to network with industry professionals. This continuous exposure facilitates confidence-building, fluency improvement, and language barrier-breaking. As a result, internships offer exceptional experiential learning opportunities for language learning and competency development. This review focuses on how internship programs pave the way for interns to have language proficiency skills that will prepare them for the real-life situations of our competitive world. The real-world situations that internship programs offer allow language learners to practice and apply their skills, making them essential for language proficiency. A stronger emphasis on internships in language instruction will better prepare students for the increasingly international world in which language competence is essential.

Keywords: English; immersion; internship program; language proficiency; OJT program

Rationale

The real-world situations that internship programs offer allow language learners to practice and apply their skills, making them essential for language proficiency. The process of creating knowledge via the transformation of experience is known as experiential learning, and it was first proposed by Kolb in 1984. Engaging in an internship provides students with immersion settings outside of the classroom, exposing them to language usage in real-world situations. As it requires students to navigate and negotiate meaning in dynamic, real-world circumstances, this hands-on experience is essential for improving fluency and understanding.

Through exposure to a variety of social interactions and communication techniques, internships help students enhance their communication abilities. According to Jackson's (2018) research, internships help students develop their intercultural communication and pragmatic competence—two qualities that are critical for efficient language use. Students who work in professional settings participate in discussions, write, and give presentations—all of which help them develop a more sophisticated grasp of the language. Through this exposure, their understanding of idiomatic terms and cultural quirks is enhanced, leading to an overall improvement in their language competence.

The idea that internship programs work as a link between academic understanding and real-world application is backed by the Situated Learning Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to this view, learning happens best in context. Internships help language learners by demonstrating how their classroom knowledge is applied in practical situations. Students studying business English, for example, can use what they learn in professional contexts to reinforce their comprehension of terms and procedures unique to the business world. This real-world application improves language proficiency and retention while reiterating theoretical ideas. However, the first step in education reform is acknowledging that the issues plaguing our schools and education are a result of the structure of our society. Maybe every successful or unsuccessful world of perpetual change has leadership at its core (Genelza, 2022).

In addition to enhancing language skills, internships offer chances to develop professional networks and cross-cultural competency. Research by Coll & Zegwaard (2006) found that internships give students a chance to network with peers and professionals and build relationships that would help them in their future jobs. To further improve proficiency, these exchanges take place in the

language of interest. Additionally, learning in culturally varied environments helps students gain a deeper comprehension of cultural norms and practices—a critical skill for successful communication in today's globalized society.

The input that interns get is crucial to language development. In professional contexts, feedback is rapid and specific, as opposed to classroom settings where it may be more general. According to a study by Bauer & Erdogan (2011), internship supervisors can assist interns identify their areas of strength and growth by providing them with on-the-job feedback. This focused feedback is very helpful for language learners because it covers real-world language usage and offers suggestions for effectively enhancing communication abilities. Therefore, internships provide a disciplined yet adaptable setting for ongoing language acquisition and development. Hence, this study focuses on giving a review report on the status of knowledge on a topic in an objective manner using data from previously published studies.

How Does the Internship Program Work?

An internship program is a supervised, structured work experience that companies usually provide to new graduates or students. The main objective is to supplement academic education with practical experience in a certain profession or industry. Internships often go from a few weeks to several months and can be paid or unpaid. They are made to work both ways, giving companies more support and new ideas while giving interns invaluable exposure and experience. Internships are essential for bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real-world application, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

Similar to a job application, internships frequently start with an application procedure that requires the submission of a CV, cover letter, and occasionally letters of recommendation. Interviews may also be required of candidates. The organization and the particular internship role determine the selection criteria. After being chosen, interns usually go through an orientation procedure that acquaints them with the mission, values, and tasks of the organization. This procedure helps to clarify expectations and gives the intern the tools they need to be successful.

Typically, interns are paired with a mentor or supervisor who offers support, direction, and constructive criticism during the internship. Interns need this mentorship relationship to assist them learn how to navigate their new surroundings and advance their professional development. Interns frequently work on specialized projects or assignments related to their academic program. These projects are intended to be difficult but doable, giving interns a chance to put their academic knowledge to use in a real-world setting and observe the results of their labor. To monitor progress and resolve any problems, evaluations and check-ins are done on a regular basis.

Additionally, internships offer beneficial networking opportunities. Interns attend meetings, network with industry leaders, and occasionally take part in company activities. These exchanges can result in beneficial relationships that could aid interns in finding jobs in the future. According to a report by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, students who complete internships are substantially more likely than non-participating students to obtain a job offer after graduation.

Ultimately, interns frequently go through a final assessment in which they summarize their experiences and show their finished products. This assessment aids in determining program effectiveness and areas for development for both the company and the intern. Internships can be a route to long-term work because many companies use this time to evaluate candidates for full-time roles. All things considered, internship programs are an essential part of professional development because they offer networking opportunities, skill development, and practical experience.

Findings and Discussions on Internship Program as a Necessity in Language Proficiency

This review focuses on the following statements from different reliable articles gathered as the highlight of this study.

The importance of internship programs in improving language proficiency—especially in situations encountered in the real world—is becoming more widely acknowledged. Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2018) assert that internships offer students priceless chances to fully immerse themselves

in settings where the target language is spoken, greatly enhancing their communicative ability. Through this hands-on experience, students may apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations, which improves their fluency and confidence in speaking the language. Internships' interactive format also pushes students to participate in deeper dialogues, which improves their ability to both understand and speak the language.

Furthermore, studies conducted in 2016 by Sadeghi and Richards show that internships aid in the growth of specialized language and industry-specific jargon. This is especially helpful for those who want to work in professions where being able to speak another language is essential. For example, interns in the tourist or global corporate industries frequently have to employ formal, technical vocabulary that they may not come across in a conventional classroom. Students are exposed to professional language use through internships, which improves their communication skills for future employment. Understanding cultural quirks and context-specific language usage—two essential elements of language proficiency—is also aided by this practical experience. Students' academic lives benefit greatly from the significance and utility of the English language. It is imperative for the school to guarantee that the undergraduate program adequately integrates teaching methodologies and authentic activities aimed at enhancing students' English language proficiency. Enhancing student control over what is taught in class and producing positive academic outcomes are the results of teaching the curriculum subject and being proficient in the language used for instruction. These factors increase the learner's exposure to and opportunity to understand the material of instruction (Genelza, 2022).

Additionally, internships help build critical soft skills that are directly related to language competency. Interpersonal communication, problem-solving, and teamwork are among the natural abilities that are cultivated during internships, according to Jackson (2018). To efficiently navigate these skills, a high level of linguistic fluency is required. For instance, effective teamwork necessitates the capacity for cohesive thought and idea expression, as well as clear and succinct communication and active listening. The development of these abilities in interns makes them more effective in professional settings where good communication is critical, supporting the idea that internships are essential for improving language ability.

A forum for getting helpful criticism from peers and mentors is provided by internship programs, which is essential for language development. According to Billett (2014), workplace feedback is frequently quick and context-specific, giving students relevant insights into how they use language. Unlike the delayed feedback common in academic contexts, this feedback approach enables interns to pinpoint areas for growth and work on them in real-time, making it a more dynamic process. Higher levels of proficiency are attained and language abilities are improved through the iterative process of receiving and acting upon feedback.

Because they offer a practical setting in which language abilities can be used and improved, internship programs are essential for enhancing language ability. Internships, according to Kelleher and Fischer (2019), provide immersive settings that are helpful for learning subtle components of a language, like colloquial idioms and business jargon, which are sometimes disregarded in academic contexts. As a result of this exposure, interns' language skills become more fluid and natural as they participate in routine business meetings, discussions, and problem-solving exercises.

A major obstacle is the disconnect between the theoretical language knowledge students learn in the classroom and the actual language they use in the workplace. According to Kachru and Smith (2008), internships work as a bridge that helps students make the seamless transition from theoretical knowledge to real-world application. They stress that internships give language learners the chance to practice and polish their abilities in real-world conversational contexts, which improves their general language proficiency and self-assurance.

Deep cultural immersion is facilitated by internships, especially those undertaken abroad, which is essential for language acquisition. A 2015 study by Jackson indicated that interns who work overseas gain a deeper comprehension of cultural quirks and contextual language use. The development of pragmatic skills and sociolinguistic awareness—two crucial elements of language proficiency—is aided by this cultural immersion. According to the study, working and living abroad

forces interns to adjust to a variety of linguistic and cultural barriers, which speeds up language learning.

The development of professional communication skills and other soft skills required for the job is another important function of internship programs. According to Billett (2011), internships give students a chance to practice formal writing, presentations, and interpersonal interactions in a work environment. These experiences help students become more proficient in the language while also preparing them for the linguistic demands of the workplace. The acquisition of these abilities is essential since they frequently represent the primary distinctions in terms of career success and productive workplace communication.

During internships, feedback from coworkers and supervisors is another important component that greatly influences language proficiency. Dewey and Van Lier (2018) claim that internship programs' structured feedback mechanisms help interns recognize and address their linguistic shortcomings. Interns' learning process is further reinforced by reflective learning, in which they examine how they use and perform language. This ongoing feedback loop promotes self-directed improvement and offers tailored insights to boost language acquisition.

According to Genelza (2022), institutions, stakeholders, and work environments to collaborate closely, putting a strong emphasis on communication and having a direct line to them, emphasizing the development side, and giving them good opportunities to interact with industry professionals and find mentors in the field—all of which the interns found to be positively perceived. For both college and business staff, requiring all students to complete an internship or other work-related experiential course is a major commitment.

Finally, internships reinforce the value of experience learning in language proficiency by bridging the gap between academic knowledge and professional application. This is corroborated by Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which emphasizes that experience is transformed into knowledge. This approach is embodied in internships, which give students practical experiences that are essential to language retention and deep learning. Internships are an essential part of developing language proficiency since they guarantee that students are ready for professional communication as well as academic language proficiency. This is achieved through the incorporation of internships into language programs.

To sum up, internship programs are crucial for developing language skills because they provide hands-on, immersive, and culturally diverse learning contexts. They facilitate proficient communication skills, efficiently close the knowledge gap between theory and practice, and offer insightful criticism for ongoing development. For this reason, these courses are essential to learning a language in a professional setting.

Concluding Remarks

Programs for internships have become essential for improving language fluency among professionals and students. They offer exposure to and hands-on experience in the real world that is frequently lacking in typical classroom settings. Participating in an internship program enables individuals to put their theoretical knowledge into practice, so greatly enhancing their language proficiency. Along with enhancing language proficiency, these programs foster the development of other critical qualities including problem-solving, communication, and cultural competency. In general, internships are essential for language competency since they act as a link between academic learning and professional application.

Also, immersion experiences provided by internships are essential for learning a new language. Learning is accelerated when one is placed in a professional setting where the target language is used as the major means of communication. The language must be used by interns in a variety of settings, from informal discussions with coworkers to formal presentations and written reports. This continuous exposure facilitates confidence-building, fluency improvement, and language barrier-breaking. As a result, internships offer exceptional experiential learning opportunities for language learning and competency development.

Programs for internships also help participants gain a deeper awareness of culture, which is essential for language competency. Since language and culture are intrinsically linked, internships frequently provide people with exposure to the subtle cultural differences that affect language use. The only way to comprehend colloquial language, regional slang, and cultural allusions is to converse with native speakers in their natural setting. The learning process is enhanced by this cultural immersion, which also makes the language more approachable and understandable. As a result, internships are essential for fostering intercultural competency in addition to language proficiency.

For language learners, the professional networks and connections made during internships are also very beneficial. Networking with experts and native speakers offers ongoing chances to practice and get better at a language. Personalized advice and comments from seasoned experts can be obtained through mentoring, which can help improve language proficiency even further. These connections frequently continue long after the internship ends, providing further guidance and opportunity for practice. As a result, internships are an investment in language competency that lasts longer than just a short-term learning opportunity.

In general, internships are crucial for developing language skills because they provide real-world experience, exposure to different cultures, and chances to network with industry professionals. It is advised that corporations and educational institutions include organized internship programs in their curricula to optimize their efficacy. These courses ought to be created to offer a variety of linguistic and cultural encounters, guaranteeing that students acquire a whole range of language abilities. Partnerships with foreign organizations can also improve the caliber and range of internships, giving students more exposure and educational opportunities. A stronger emphasis on internships in language instruction will better prepare students for the increasingly international world in which language competence is essential.

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