

A Study on the Profiles of Arabic Translation-Translator Candidates in Turkish Higher Education

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Abstract

Translation, an ancient activity, has only been acknowledged as an independent discipline since the 1970s. Translation Studies was introduced as a program in Turkish higher education in the 1980s, with English translation and interpreting programs being the first to emerge. It was not until 2011 that the first program for training Arabic translators and interpreters was established at Kırıkkale University. Subsequently, the same program was introduced in nine other universities. In this study, we explore the profiles of prospective Arabic translators and interpreters in ten Turkish universities offering undergraduate-level programs for Arabic translation and interpreting, focusing on various aspects such as gender, geographical location, educational background, high school type, academic ranking, foreign language test scores, program preferences, and post-graduation plans. Our findings indicate that female students show a greater inclination towards the program, with one-third of the students choosing the program in their city. Arabic translator-interpreter candidates mostly originate from the Central Anatolian Region, with one-third being recent graduates and another third being experienced ones. More than half of the students who enrolled in the program graduated from Imam-Hatip High School, and top-performing students are less inclined to select this program. On average, a language test score of forty-six is required for admission to the program. Finally, we found that students who completed the program often preferred programs related to Arabic language teaching and literature.

Keywords: Arabic, Translator-Interpreter, Student Profile, Higher Education.

Introduction

For a long time, the phenomenon of translation, which was handled under fields such as linguistics, literature, and textual linguistics in line with their perspectives, started to operate as an autonomous discipline in the West in the 1970s, as it could not be analyzed solely with the approaches of those disciplines (Şan & Fidan, 2021:128). In Turkey, after the 1980s, awareness of translation studies increased and independent programs began to be offered in higher education institutions. As Akbulut (2016:10) points out, the first department offering translation education in Turkey was Hacettepe University in 1982-1983. Later, translation education programs started to operate at Boğaziçi University in 1983 and Yıldız Technical University in 1993. However, all three of these programs were opened to train English translators and interpreters.

The Arabs have a centuries-old history of translation, so much so that they realized one of the largest translation movements in the world during the Abbasid period, which led to a great transfer of knowledge and culture from East to West (Dağbaşı, 2013:186). The first program to train Arabic translators and interpreters in Turkey was opened at Kırıkkale University in 2011-2012.

However, Arabic has always been a language in demand and taught in schools throughout the history of both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. In addition, Turkey's developing political, economic, commercial, cultural, and social relations with Arab countries require the training of translators and interpreters who are fluent in Arabic. For these reasons, the opening of the first Arabic translation and interpreting program in the 2011-2012 academic year is long overdue. Six years after Kırıkkale University, Arabic translation, and interpreting programs started to admit students at Istanbul Aydın, Istanbul 29 Mayıs, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt, Selçuk, Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey, KTO Karatay, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli, Samsun 19 Mayıs and Istanbul Universities.

Upon examination of the overall goals of these programs, it becomes apparent that they aim not only to educate students capable of devising solutions for tangible needs but also to cultivate their intercultural communication proficiency in the realm of translation. Specifically, these programs strive to equip Arabic translators and interpreters with the necessary terminology and domain-specific knowledge in a range of fields, including medicine, law, social sciences, technical areas, and literature. Ultimately, the objective is to produce professionals who possess the ethical values requisite to the translation profession and who can effectively engage in oral and written translation and interpretation activities across all public and private institutions, both domestically and internationally (Ballı, 2018: 1465).

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to reach conclusions about the profiles of the candidates who are actively enrolled in Arabic translation and interpreting programs in ten universities (seven public and three foundation universities) in Turkey in 2020-2021-2022 and to prepare the ground for future research on the subject.

The questions of the study are as follows:

1. What types of high schools do students who prefer the Arabic translation and interpreting program graduate from?
2. In which provinces and regions do students who prefer the Arabic translation and interpreting programs live?
3. What is the gender distribution of students who prefer the Arabic translation and interpreting program?
4. How many top-performing students are there among those who prefer the Arabic translation and interpreting program and which universities did they choose?
5. What is the graduation status of students who prefer the Arabic translation and interpreting program?
6. Which programs do students who prefer the Arabic translation and interpreting program most commonly choose after completing their studies?
7. What is the success rate of students who prefer the Arabic translation and interpreting program on the YKS exam?
8. What is the difference in success rates between the top-performing and lowest-performing students who prefer the Arabic translation and interpreting program?

Methodology

Method of the Study

Document analysis, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in this study. According to Çepni (2010:32), document analysis is realized by examining various documents to obtain data for research. Within the scope of the research, the information of a total of 1121 Arabic translator-interpreter candidates who were placed in Arabic translation and interpreting programs in universities in Turkey in 2020, 2021, and 2022 was accessed by scanning the Higher Education Program Atlas page of the Council of Higher Education.

Study Group

Of the 1121 candidates, one hundred and twenty-four were placed in Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, one hundred and eighty-six in Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, thirty-one in Istanbul University, one hundred and fifty-six in Kırıkkale University, ninety in Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, one hundred and fifty-six in Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University, eighty-two in Ondokuz Mayıs University, one hundred and eighty-six in

Selçuk University, thirty-seven in Istanbul Aydın University, and seventy-three in KTO Karatay University.

Data Analysis

The data obtained on the profiles of Arabic translator-interpreter candidates were categorized

with the help of a statistical expert, and comments were made on these statistical data. The descriptive analysis method was used to organize the obtained data. In this method, the data are brought together in a logical and meaningful way, organized, and defined in an understandable way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018:26).

Table 1 Gender Distribution of Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department Candidates

UNIVERSITY	2022- FEMALE/MALE	2021 FEMALE/MALE	2020 FEMALE/MALE
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	39/23	41/21	-
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	41/21	33/29	33/29
İSTANBUL	17/14	-	-
KIRIKKALE	31/21	35/17	41/11
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS	19/6	22/13	23/7
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	41/21	22/10	46/16
ONDOKUZ MAYIS	27/14	33/8	-
SELÇUK	40/22	47/15	49/13
İSTANBUL AYDIN	15/5	4/3	8/2
KTO KARATAY	21/9	9/8	10/16
TOTAL FEMALE	291	246	210
TOTAL MALE	156	124	94
TOTAL GENERAL	447	370	304

Findings and Comments

Of the 1121 students who preferred the Arabic translation and interpreting program in 2020, 2021, and 2022, 747 were female and 374 were male. The ratio of girls is 66.64%, while the ratio of boys is 33.36%. These figures show that female students are much more eager to become Arabic translators and interpreters than male students. In recent years, the number of students enrolled in these programs has increased due to the opening of new departments and/or increasing the quotas in existing departments.

In state universities, the proportion of female students is 59.20% and the proportion of male students is 40.80%. The number of students who prefer Arabic translation and interpreting programs at state universities is 921. The number of students who

preferred foundation universities is two hundred. 123 of these 200 are female, which corresponds to 63.3%, while the rate of male students is 36.6% and the number of male students is sixty-seven. In other words, two out of every three candidates who want to study at these universities and become Arabic translators and interpreters are girls.

Looking at the years, the proportion of female candidates is higher than the proportion of male candidates across these three years. There is a steady increase in the proportion of male candidates, which was 30.93% in 2020, 33.52% in 2021, and 34.9% in 2022. For female candidates, this situation regularly decreases to 69.07% in 2020, 66.48% in 2021, and 65.1% in 2022.

Table 2 Cities of Origin of Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department Candidates

UNIVERSITY	2022-SAME/ DIFFERENT CITY	2021-SAME/DIFFERENT CITY	2020-SAME/DIFFERENT CITY
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	41/21	33/28	-
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	14/47	27/34	29/32
İSTANBUL	21/9	-	-

KIRIKKALE	3/49	3/48	4/48
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS	18/7	26/9	24/6
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	5/56	4/28	6/56
ONDOKUZ MAYIS	7/34	5/35	-
SELÇUK	19/42	21/41	20/41
İSTANBUL AYDIN	15/5	3/4	8/2
KTO KARATAY	22/18	13/4	20/6
SAME CITY	165	135	111
DIFFERENT CITY	288	231	191

Between 2020 and 2022, a total of 1,121 candidates expressed their interest in becoming Arabic translators and interpreters. Out of these candidates, 411 (36.67%) opted for the Arabic translation and interpreting program in their city of residence, while 710 (63.33%) chose a program in a different city.

Regarding the type of university, 71.24% (649 out of 911) of students who enrolled in public universities came from a different city, whereas in foundation universities, 70.95% (149 out of 210) of students came from the same city. It is believed that economic factors may have influenced the decision of foundation university students to stay in their home city due to the costs associated with attending

a university in a different city.

Of the universities offering the Arabic translation and interpreting program, Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University had the highest number of students from different cities, followed by Selçuk, Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt, Kırıkkale, and Ondokuz Mayıs Universities. It is worth noting that the percentage of students opting for the program in their home city decreased slightly over the years, with 36.75% in 2020, 36.88% in 2021, and 36.42% in 2022. This trend could be attributed to the rising costs of housing, food, and transportation, among other factors, which may have made attending a university in a different city less attractive to students over time.

Table 3 Regions of Origin of Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department Candidates

UNIVERSITY	SOUTH EASTERN ANATOLIA REGION	EASTERN ANATOLIA REGION	MARMARA REGION	AEGEAN BÖLGESİ	MEDITER RANEAN REGION	CENTRAL ANATOLIA REGION	BLACK SEA REGION
YEARS	2022/21/20	2022/21/20	2022/21/ 20	2022/ 21/20	2022/21/ 20	2022/ 21/20	2022/21/ 20
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	1/1/-	2/4/-	8/5/-	2/3/-	1/6/-	44/40--	4-3--
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	5/8/2	3/1/1	18/12/11	2/2/3	7/5/4	20/29/37	7/5/4
İSTANBUL	1/-/-	0/-/-	25/-/-	0/-/-	2/-/-	0/-/-	3/-/-
KIRIKKALE	8/8/1	3/2/1	6-4/14	3/4/3	3/4/1	28/29/26	1/1/6
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS	0/1/1	0/0/0	21/30/28	1/2/0	0/0/0	2/2/1	1/0/0
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	9/2/11	3/0/3	10/5/13	8/2/3	7/7/5	21/16/25	4/0/2
ONDOKUZ MAYIS	5/0/-	3/2/-	7/8/-	4/2/-	2/6/-	7/10/-	13/13/-
SELÇUK	7/10/5	4/2/3	9/7/5	7/6/7	8/5/4	26/31/33	1/1/5

İSTANBUL AYDIN	1/0/0	0/0/0	17/6/9	1/0/0	0/0/0	1/0/1	0/1/0
KTO KARATAY	0/2/1	0/0/1	3/0/1	2/0/0	3/1/1	22/14/22	0/0/0
TOTAL	90	38	282	67	82	487	75

The distribution of the regions of origin of 1121 students placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program is as follows. The number of students from Central Anatolia is 487, 43.44%; the number of students from the Marmara region is 282, 25.15%; the number of students from South East Anatolia is 90, 8.02%; the number of students from the Mediterranean region is 82, 7.32%; the number of students from Black Sea region is 75, 6.69%; the number of students from the Aegean region is 67, 5.97% and the number of students from Eastern Anatolia region is 38, 3.38%.

The number of students from Central Anatolia and Marmara regions is 769, 68.59%. Accordingly, students from Central Anatolia and Marmara regions make up more than two-thirds of all students who have been placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program. It is thought that the fact that six of the ten universities in question are located in Central Anatolia and three in the Marmara region is

effective in the formation of this situation. According to the results in Table 2, although the majority of students prefer to study in a city other than their city of residence, it can be concluded that even if students choose a city other than their city of residence, the geographical region becomes an important criterion in their decision. Ondokuz Mayıs University is the only university that is not from Central Anatolia and Marmara regions. In this context, Ondokuz Mayıs University students come predominantly from the Black Sea region.

422 students (46.22%) from Central Anatolia, 159 students (17.41%) from Marmara, and 84 students (9.20%) from Southeastern Anatolia, respectively. The students who settled in foundation universities were from Marmara with 59.13% with 123 students, Central Anatolia with 31.24% with 65 students, and Southeastern Anatolia and Aegean regions with 2.88% each.

Table 4 Educational Background of Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department Candidates

UNIVERSITY	NEW GRADUATE	FORMER GRADUATE	UNIVERSITY GRADUATE	UNIVERSITY STUDENT
YEARS	(2022/21/20)	(2022/21/20)	(2022/21/20)	(2022/21/20)
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	16/14/-	20/18/-	17/18/-	8/12/-
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	26/15/25	17/20/21	12/16/9	5/10/7
İSTANBUL	8/-/-	6/-/-	13/-/-	4/-/-
KIRIKKALE	15/18/19	24/25/23	5/3/3	7/6/7
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS	11/13/14	6/13/8	5/5/1	4/5/7
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	28/6/27	22/14/19	5/7/7	7/5/9
ONDOKUZ MAYIS	15/15/-	14/21/-	8/0/-	5/4/-
SELÇUK	23/28/31	27/24/21	2/2/4	9/9/5
İSTANBUL AYDIN	7/3/6	8/4/0	3/2/2	2/0/2
KTO KARATAY	16/8/11	7/5/6	4/3/3	3/3/6
TOTAL	418	393	159	151

New high school graduates who were placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program constitute 37.28% of the total. 35.05% of the students had previously graduated from high school but had not been placed in another higher education program until they were placed in the Arabic translation and

interpreting program. 14.19% of the students who were students at a university took the university exam again and enrolled in the Arabic translation and interpreting program. 13.48% of the students graduated from a higher education program & entered the Arabic translation & interpreting program.

According to these results, it can be concluded that 27.67%, (310 students), are not satisfied with the program they have completed or are currently studying.

New graduates preferred Selçuk University the most; old graduates preferred Kırıkkale University the most; students who graduated from another university preferred Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University; and students who were students at another university preferred Selçuk University the most.

While there is a decrease in the placement of new graduates in the Arabic translation and interpreting program at Kırıkkale, İstanbul 29 Mayıs, and Selçuk

Universities, an increase is observed at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University.

A decrease is observed in Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University and Ondokuz Mayıs University, while an increase is observed in Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli and Selçuk Universities.

While a decrease is observed in Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, an increase is observed in İstanbul Aydın, Kırıkkale, and KTO Karatay Universities.

There is an increase in Ondokuz Mayıs University, while there is a steady decrease in İstanbul 29 Mayıs and Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Universities.

Table 5 Types of High Schools Attended by Candidates for the Arabic Translation-Interpretation Department

UNIVERSITY	İMAM-HATİP HIGH SCHOOLS	ANATOLIAN TRADE-VOCATIONAL-HEALTH	FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANATOLIAN HIGH SCHOOLS	HIGH SCHOOL (GENERAL)	MILITARY HIGH SCHOOL/POLICE COLLEGE	HIGH SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS	(ANATOLIAN)TEACHER HIGH SCHOOL	SCIENCEHIGH SCHOOL	OTHER
YEARS	2022/21/20	2022/21/20	2022/21/20	2022/21/20	2022/21/20	2022/21/20	2022/21/20	2022/21/20	2022/21/20
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	24/30/-	1/0/-	12/18/-	21/16/-	0/0/-	-1/-	2/-	1/-	3/0/0
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	28/29/26	2/1/1	16/17/12	13/10/20	1/1/0	1/0/0	2/0/3	0/0/0	0/0/1
İSTANBUL	18/-	1/-	10/-	5/-	2/-	0/-	0/-	0/-	0/-
KIRIKKALE	29/28/30	3/3/4	15/15/14	6/6/7	0/1/0	0/0/0	1/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS	17/23/23	0/0/0	2/4/2	3/8/4	0/0/1	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	40/17/43	3/1/6	14/12/8	6/5/6	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/1/0	0/0/0	1/0/0
ONDOKUZ MAYIS	16/22/-	2/0/-	14/19/-	7/4/-	0/0/-	0/0/-	2/0/-	0/0/-	0/0/0
SELÇUK	35/35/34	4/3/2	8/8/18	16/17/10	1/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/1	0/0/1
İSTANBUL AYDIN	9/5/7	2/0/0	8/3/2	8/1/2	0/1/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/1/0
KTO KARATAY	8/11/11	2/2/1	1/2/2	9/0/6	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0	0/0/0
TOTAL	597	43	250	201	8	2	11	2	7

More than half of the students placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program (597 people - 53.25%) are graduates of Imam-Hatip and Anatolian Imam-Hatip High Schools. In all years 2020, 2021, and 2022, the interest of Imam-Hatip high school graduates in the Arabic translation and interpreting program is at a high level. The main reason for this interest is the students' interest or familiarity with

Arabic in secondary education.

When we look at the high school types of candidates who were placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program, the number of Arabic translation and interpreting candidates who graduated from Imam Hatip High School is 597, with a rate of 53.25%. The number of Arabic translator-interpreter candidates who graduated

from Anatolian high schools with foreign language education is 250, a rate of 22.30%; the number of Arabic translator-interpreter candidates who graduated from general high schools is 201, a rate of 17.93%; the number of Arabic translator-interpreter candidates who graduated from vocational, trade and health high schools is 43, rate 3.83%; the number of Arabic translator-interpreter candidates graduated from Anatolian teacher high schools is 11, the rate is 0.98%; the number of Arabic translator-interpreter candidates graduated from military/police high schools is 8, the rate is 0.71%; Arabic translator-interpreter candidates graduated from other types of high schools are 7, 0.62%; Arabic translator-interpreter candidates graduated from fine arts high

schools are 2, 0.17%; Arabic translator-interpreter candidates graduated from science high schools are 2, 0.17%.

It is usual for prospective students graduating from Imam Hatip high schools or foreign-language Anatolian high schools to prefer the Arabic translation and interpreting program, which is a foreign language-oriented department, in their university preferences. This preference can be accepted as an indication that students continue to be interested in foreign languages.

According to these data, it can be concluded that the Arabic translation and interpreting program is almost unpopular among fine arts and science high school students.

Table 6 Preference Status of Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department Candidates as the First Student

UNIVERSITY	2022	2021	2020
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	0	0	-
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	0	0	0
İSTANBUL	1	-	-
KIRIKKALE	0	0	1
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS	1	0	0
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	0	0	-
ONDOKUZ MAYIS	0	0	-
SELÇUK	0	0	0
İSTANBUL AYDIN	0	0	0
KTO KARATAY	0	0	0
TOPLAM	2	0	1

In 2020, 2021, and 2022, a total of three students were placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program from the first place quota. Of these three, one, 33.3%, was placed at Istanbul University, one, 33.3%, was placed at Kırıkkale University, and one, 33.3%, was placed at Istanbul 29 Mayıs University.

Although one student in 2020 and two students in 2022 preferred the Arabic translation and interpreting program, considering that there are a total of ten universities, it can be said that school valedictorians do not show much demand for this program.

Table 7 Success Ranking of Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department Candidates

UNIVERSITY	2022	2021	2020
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	54.852	52.713	-
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	52.874	46.144	36.250
İSTANBUL	27.422	-	-
KIRIKKALE	80.873	69.415	55.143
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	5.852	2.418	4.362
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	58.759	58.323	74.478
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	92.163	70.327	68.723

ONDOKUZ MAYIS	69.670	67.134	-
SELÇUK	68.524	60.084	49.583
İSTANBUL AYDIN (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	29.284	18.010	13.857
İSTANBUL AYDIN (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	110.779	70.297	77.085
KTO KARATAY (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	50.869	42.536	45.727
KTO KARATAY (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	108.526	69.938	77.768

The table shows that the full scholarship program of Istanbul 29 Mayıs University is preferred by students with the highest ranking. Over the past three years, students ranked between two and five thousand have opted for the full scholarship program of Istanbul 29 Mayıs University. Conversely, students with similar rankings have shown a preference for programs offered by universities located in the same cities. For instance, students from Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University and Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, both located in Ankara, have rankings between 45,000 and 55,000.

It appears that the success rankings of students who chose these programs have declined over the years. Except for Istanbul 29 Mayıs University’s 50% scholarship program, the success rankings of students who chose programs over the three years have decreased. In general, it seems that the highest-ranking students prefer Istanbul 29 Mayıs University (Full Scholarship), Istanbul University, and Istanbul Aydın University (Full Scholarship), respectively. The availability of full scholarship programs has influenced the formation of this success ranking. For instance, while Istanbul 29 Mayıs University’s full scholarship program was ranked 5,852nd in 2022, the same university’s 50% scholarship program was

ranked 58,759th in the same year. Similar trends can be observed in other foundation universities. In terms of public universities, Istanbul University stands out due to its proximity to many opportunities and possibilities that arise from being located in a metropolitan city, as well as the high student population in Istanbul. It is worth noting that there is a difference of approximately twenty-five thousand students between Istanbul University and the state university with the closest ranking.

The success rankings of the candidates placed in universities in Ankara are very close to each other, with Istanbul Aydın University (50% Scholarship), KTO Karatay University (50% Scholarship), and Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University coming next in order from lowest to highest ranking.

Regarding foundation universities, Istanbul 29 Mayıs University stands out, followed by Istanbul Aydın University and then KTO Karatay University. Finally, it is important to mention that since Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli and Ondokuz Mayıs Universities admitted their first students in 2021, there is no data for 2020. Similarly, Istanbul University only has data for 2022. Thus, it would be appropriate to examine the preference of these universities in the following years.

Table 8 Foreign Language Test Averages of Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department Candidates

UNIVERSITY	2022	2021	2020
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	53,2	42,7	-
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	55,4	51	62,2
İSTANBUL	70,3	-	-
KIRIKKALE	30	21,9	36,7
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	75,5	76,3	78,1
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	53,5	52,2	39,6
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	20,7	22,1	26
ONDOKUZ MAYIS	38,7	24,5	-
SELÇUK	43,2	34,3	44,2

İSTANBUL AYDIN (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	73	73,2	68,8
İSTANBUL AYDIN (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	36,1	17,8	35,6
KTO KARATAY (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	62,6	58,9	55,7
KTO KARATAY (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	22,8	15,3	24,6
AVERAGE	48,8	40,8	47,1

In the 80-question foreign language test, the average score of 47.1 in 2020 decreased to 40.8 in 2021 and increased to 48.8 in 2022. Candidates with the highest language test average preferred Istanbul 29 Mayıs (Full Scholarship), Istanbul Aydın (Full Scholarship), and Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Universities in 2020; Istanbul 29 Mayıs (Full Scholarship), Istanbul Aydın (Full Scholarship), and KTO Karatay (Full Scholarship) Universities in 2021; and Istanbul 29 Mayıs (Full Scholarship), Istanbul Aydın (Full Scholarship), and Istanbul Universities in 2022. In all three years, Istanbul 29 Mayıs University's full scholarship program ranked first, and Istanbul Aydın University's full scholarship program ranked second. It is seen that these two foundation universities are successful in attracting students with the highest foreign language test averages who prefer Arabic translation and interpreting programs.

The three-year average for Turkey is 45.56 out of eighty questions. In this respect, Istanbul 29 Mayıs (Full Scholarship) scored 76.63; Istanbul Aydın (Full Scholarship) scored 71.66; KTO Karatay (Full Scholarship) scored 59; Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt scored 56.2; Istanbul 29 Mayıs (50% Scholarship) scored 48.43 and Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Universities scored above the average of Turkey with 47.95; Selçuk scored 40.56; Ondokuz Mayıs scored 31.6; Istanbul Aydın (50% Scholarship) scored 29.83; Kırıkkale scored 29.53; Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey scored 22.93; KTO Karatay (50% Scholarship) Universities scored below the average with 20.9.

When the scholarship factor is ignored, the average foreign language test score of the candidates placed in public universities is 39.82. Accordingly, it is thought that the scholarships provided by foundation universities affect the preferences of successful students.

Table 9 Placement Rates of Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department Candidates to Arabic Translation and Interpreting Program as 1st Preference

UNIVERSITY	2022 (%)	2021 (%)	2020 (%)
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	33,9	38,7	-
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	33,9	40,3	41,9
İSTANBUL	58,1	-	-
KIRIKKALE	5,8	11,5	5,8
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	100	100	100
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	33,3	36,7	24
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	4,8	25	11,3
ONDOKUZ MAYIS	22	19,5	-
SELÇUK	27,4	30,6	22,6
İSTANBUL AYDIN (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	33,3	33,3	40
İSTANBUL AYDIN (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	11,8	25	0
KTO KARATAY (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	80	80	75
KTO KARATAY (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	46,7	0	0

In 2020, 100% of the candidates who were admitted to Istanbul 29 Mayıs University (Full Scholarship) used their first choice for the Arabic

translation and interpreting program. This university was followed by KTO Karatay University (75%) and Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University (41.9%).

In 2021, 100% of the candidates who were admitted to Istanbul 29 Mayıs University (Full Scholarship) used their first preference for the Arabic Translation and Interpreting program. This was followed by KTO Karatay University (80%). The next most preferred universities were Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt and Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Universities.

In 2022, all of the candidates who were admitted to the Arabic translation and interpreting program at Istanbul 29 Mayıs University preferred this program in the first place. In the Arabic translation and interpreting program of Istanbul University,

which started admitting students in 2022, the first placement rate, with a high preference rate of 58%, can be considered a success for this program. KTO Karatay University’s full and 50% scholarship programs came in third place.

Looking at the three-year preference rates of Arabic translation and interpreting departments, it is evident that scholarships are very effective in influencing students’ preference for the program. When state universities are evaluated within themselves, after Istanbul University, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli and Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Universities stand out.

Table 10 Programs Most Preferred by Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department Candidates After Arabic Translation and Interpreting Department

UNIVERSITY	1. CHOICE	2. CHOICE	3. CHOICE
ANKARA HACI BAYRAM VELI	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ANKARA YILDIRIM BEYAZIT	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
İSTANBUL	ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
KIRIKKALE	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING	ASSOCIATE DEGREE
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING	NURSING	ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
İSTANBUL 29 MAYIS (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING	ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING	ASSOCIATE DEGREE
KARAMANOĞLU MEHMETBEY	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	ASSOCIATE DEGREE	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING
ONDOKUZ MAYIS	ASSOCIATE DEGREE	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
SELÇUK	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
İSTANBUL AYDIN (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	THEOLOGY	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING	ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING
İSTANBUL AYDIN (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	ASSOCIATE DEGREE	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING	ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING
KTO KARATAY (FULL SCHOLARSHIP)	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING	ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING
KTO KARATAY (%50 SCHOLARSHIP)	ASSOCIATE DEGREE	ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING	ARABIC LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Students who were placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program preferred Arabic language teaching and Arabic language and literature programs the most, respectively. This data

can be considered as an indicator that students who prefer Arabic translation and interpreting programs are interested in the Arabic language. After these programs, students preferred associate degree

programs in universities, which are various two-year programs. Since there is no descriptive information about these programs in the YÖK Atlas system, it was not possible to find out which programs they were. Arabic translator-interpreter candidates' next program preferences are theology programs and English translation and interpreting programs.

The second most preferred program of the candidates is the Arabic language teaching program. This is followed by the English translation and interpreting program and then the Arabic language and literature program.

It is noteworthy that students who were placed in Istanbul 29 Mayıs University's full scholarship program ranked the nursing program second after the Arabic translation and interpreting program. Although the nursing program is from a different discipline than the social sciences, which includes language programs, it is interesting that it is included in the students' preference list.

Another striking situation is that associate degree programs are ranked in the top three in terms of student preferences after Arabic translation and interpreting programs. It is noteworthy that candidates who prefer an undergraduate program prefer an associate degree program.

The second and third preferences of Arabic translator-interpreter candidates who were placed in the programs of Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli, Kırıkkale, Selçuk, and KTO Karatay (Full Scholarship) Universities were also Arabic-related departments.

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

The first translation and interpreting programs in Turkish higher education were in English departments, but in the last twelve years, Arabic translation and interpreting programs have been established in ten universities. The number of students placed in these programs has steadily increased by approximately 20% each year. Female students constitute the majority (66%) of Arabic translator-interpreter candidates, which is consistent with the high female student population in foreign language departments.

The majority (36.66%) of Arabic translator-translator candidates were placed in universities located in their cities due to the rising

cost of living and students' reluctance to leave their families. Istanbul University is the most preferred university for students from the same city, while Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University is the most preferred for students from different cities. However, there are currently no translation and interpreting programs in the Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia Regions, and opening a program in one or both of the universities in these regions could benefit students who want to receive higher education in their provinces or a university close to their provinces.

Most candidates who want to become Arabic translators and interpreters come from the Central Anatolia and Marmara Regions, where nine out of ten universities with Arabic translation and interpreting programs are located. The Eastern Anatolia region sends the fewest number of students to these programs.

Overall, the establishment of Arabic translation and interpreting programs in Turkish higher education has been successful in attracting students, particularly female students, and has been expanding geographically. However, efforts should be made to address the uneven distribution of these programs in different regions of Turkey to ensure that all interested students have equal opportunities to pursue their education and careers in this field.

Most of the candidates (37.30%) who were placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program were students who took the university exam for the first time and were placed in the program in the same year. However, the proportion of students who took the university exam for the second time and settled in these programs is close to the first group (35.05%). The proportion of students enrolled in a program or graduated from a program at the university is also high (27.65%). Selcuk University is the most popular university for recent graduates; Kırıkkale University is the most popular university for students in their second year; Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University is the most popular university for those who have graduated from a university; and Selçuk University is the most popular university for those who are currently enrolled in a university.

More than half (53.25%) of the students placed in Arabic translation and interpreting programs are graduates of Imam Hatip or Anatolian Imam-

Hatip high schools. This rate can be accepted as an indication that students who were introduced to Arabic in middle and/or high school are more willing to become Arabic translators and interpreters than students from other high school types. However, from another perspective, this rate is not very high because approximately one hundred and ten thousand students graduate from Imam Hatip and Anatolian Imam-Hatip high schools every year, and only 190 of these students (0.17%) are placed in Arabic translation and interpreting programs (MoNE, 2022: 156-157). Another type of high school that most students who are placed in Arabic translation and interpreting programs graduate from is Anatolian High Schools which offer education in a foreign language. It is also common for students graduating from foreign language-dominated high schools to be placed in a language program. Only four students from science and fine arts high schools have been placed in Arabic translation and interpreting programs in the last three years.

The number of candidates who graduated from any high school as valedictorians and were placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program is three. In 2020, one; in 2021, zero; and in 2022, two school valedictorians were placed in the program. If there had been a preference, approximately thirty school valedictorians could have been placed in ten different universities in three years. Based on these data, it can be said that school valedictorians are not very eager to become Arabic translators and interpreters.

The first choice for candidates placed in Arabic translation and interpreting programs with the highest success ranking was the full scholarship program of Istanbul 29 Mayıs University. It is not surprising that the scholarship program is preferred first. However, it is surprising that there is a difference of 24 thousand to 45 thousand between the full scholarship programs at the other two universities. Considering that two of the three universities with scholarship programs are located in Istanbul, it is possible that students consciously paid attention to issues such as the quality of education, campus facilities, and the district where the university is located. Among public universities, Istanbul University ranks first. Although it is the first year of the Arabic translation

and interpreting program at Istanbul University and it has only three doctoral faculty members, the reasons why it is preferred in the first place are the deep-rooted history of the university dating back centuries and the fact that the university is located in a good area in Istanbul. Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli and Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt Universities, located in the capital Ankara, also stand out as the universities preferred by the most successful students.

To be placed in foreign language programs in Turkish higher education, students must solve an eighty-question foreign language test. According to the results of this test, the averages of the eighty questions were 47.1 in 2020, 40.8 in 2021, and 48.8 in 2022. From this point of view, it was determined that the questions were difficult for students in 2021, but in 2022, they were answered approximately 20% more (8 questions). Students with the highest average scores were placed in programs with full scholarships. The only exception to this is Istanbul University, where students were placed with an average score of 70.3.

Over the past three years, 39.23% of candidates applying to become Arabic translators and interpreters were accepted into the program as their first choice. This means that almost 4 out of every 10 students who enrolled in the program received their top choice. It's worth noting that, in the last three years, every student who received a full scholarship from Istanbul 29 Mayıs University was placed in the Arabic translation and interpreting program as their first choice. On the other hand, only 0.77 out of every 10 students who enrolled in the program at Kırıkkale University were admitted as their first choice, which is the lowest rate among all programs.

After the Arabic translation and interpreting program, the most popular choices for candidates placed in that program were Arabic language teaching, Arabic language and literature, English translation and interpreting, and two-year associate degree programs. These preferences suggest that students prioritize programs related to Arabic language and English, which have more job opportunities than other languages. They don't seem to show much interest in programs focused on other languages like Persian, Chinese, German, or French.

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