Final Report


Originally, I was planning to do my internship in England, but since I am not the member of EU, the process of getting my visa was long and daunting and resulted in me being rejected. I received the letter of rejection about ten days before my internship was supposed to start, so I was on the verge of panic when it happened. I knew that Malta would be my last resort, as this little sunny island does not require a visa for people like me – those who study or work in EU.

My search for a workplace appeared to be unusually fast. I simply googled “Jobs for Russian people in Malta” and clicked the first link which popped up. It was the link to a company employed in content writing for various websites. I sent them my application letter and, as surprisingly as it is, I received the answer nearly instantly, with my future supervisor asking me to do a test assignment to check my skills. The assignment was to write a short text (about 450 words) about the War of the Roses in England. Since at that moment I was preparing for my Writing Skills exam at the university, the text was created in no time. He was astonished, as he told me later, to receive such a coherent piece of writing in such a short time and offered me the position in their company.

My responsibilities were made very clear to me in the employment contract I received from my company. Since I had done some translation and proofreading before, I had quite a good understanding of what I will be doing during my internship, so there were no false expectations from my side. Besides, considering the short time frame and a substantial amount of paperwork I had to do before my departure, I had literally no time to read up on the culture of my host country. However, I had taken a course in intercultural competence and an intercultural workshop in the previous semesters of my studies.

My responsibilities consisted primarily of proofreading the content in English. I was working with a very big project on proofreading the text for a new quiz application. The texts consisted of questions on various general knowledge topics and multiple choice answers for them. My task was to find grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes, as well as check the style and accuracy of the information. In my second month, I was switched from proofreading to translation, as I was the only one in the office capable of translating from English to Russian. The texts I was working on were the names of the trophies for an online casino. As simple as it may sound, this task happened to be quite challenging as it required not only the knowledge of the language (that was the easiest part), but also the understanding of the context, style and the
flow of the text. Surprisingly, that kind of translation did not require linguistic accuracy, but rather creativity – the phrases which sounded good in English were supposed to sound as good and smooth in Russian; therefore, I had to be creative with the language.

My knowledge of the language and, more importantly, linguistics appeared to be a great contribution to the project, as I was not only able to correct the mistakes, but also explain why it was wrong. However, certain things were not possible to explain scientifically, so the language skills and intuition had to come into play. This job allowed me to learn a lot about the vague aspects of the language, such as punctuation, capitalization, subtle differences between British and American English, stylistic peculiarities of different types of texts and many other aspects which helped me to improve and polish my written English.

All in all, the internship was quite enjoyable, except the sedentary style of work which I had no experience with before (I have been working primarily as a teacher of English, so my job always involved a lot of movement and communication with people). Nevertheless, it was really interesting to work in an international team. Since the company is Scandinavian, my colleagues came from different Nordic countries, including Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Russia and UK. Interestingly, there was not a single Maltese employee in the office. Most of my colleagues were much younger than me, in their early twenties, so we had very little in common and didn’t socialize much. However, during lunch or coffee breaks I had a chance to talk to some of them and even make a few friends. It should be noted, though, that the working environment of the company did not facilitate communication. Since everyone was busy writing texts, it was not allowed to talk in the office. We could communicate via Slack or email only, which is understandable considering the nature of our work. Therefore, there were not many opportunities to really get to know someone.

Since there were not many opportunities to socialize at work, I took every chance to do it in my free time. Thanks to one of my friends who was in Malta a few months before, I met some local people who became my really good friends after a while. They took me to different events which happened all around the island, such as movies, exhibitions, lectures by local scientist and concerts of Maltese bands. What was particularly interesting is that Maltese people really like spending time outdoors on Sunday afternoons, so we used to go hiking every Sunday. I was really lucky with my new friends as they seemed to be interested in the same kind of things – nature, culture, history and art, so we had a lot of fun going places together. Meeting those people was definitely the beginning of great friendship, so we have been keeping in touch even after I left.
Malta appeared to be a very interesting country with long and rich history and active cultural life. Having lived there for two months I learned a lot about the lifestyle of the people there, so here are some tips for those who are planning their stay:

- **Get connected:** I bought a local Vodafone SIM from an office near my home and was quite happy with it, even though many people told me that 30 euros per month was quite a lot and the connection wasn’t up to the standard, I never had any problems with it. However, as I was told later, many locals use Melita – it’s a local mobile provider which has Wi-Fi spots all over the island which you can connect to without spending your traffic. Sounds like a good idea, but I’ve never tried it.

- **Get food supply:** for those living in Germany it will not be a big surprise that all shops and supermarkets are closed on Sunday. However, as I discovered after a few weeks, it is not necessarily true since some supermarkets are open on Sundays until 2 p.m., so you have to be quick.

- **Food:** supermarkets are more expensive than in Germany, so cooking can cost quite a lot. On the contrary, eating out is more affordable in Malta. There are tons of nice ambient restaurants where a delicious dinner for two with a bottle of nice local wine will cost you about 35 euros.

- **Pastizzi:** don’t miss the opportunity to try street food. It’s called ‘pastizzi’ and looks like pastry pockets stuffed with chicken, green peas or Mozzarella cheese. They are really delicious and one pastizzi costs from 40 to 60 cents which makes it a perfect and affordable snack. Check out Maxim’s Pastizzeria (it was my favourite) or any other in the town where you are staying. Those places are also open until very late, which makes it a great alternative to restaurants.

- **Shop til you drop:** shopping for clothes in shoes in Malta is fantastic! Apart from Italian designer outlets where you can find famous brands with a huge discount, there are a lot of tiny no-name shops offering a variety of beautiful, stylish, quality and surprisingly affordable clothes, shoes or accessories for really low prices. My favourite shopping destination was the town of Sliema. You need to take a bus which stops at “Sliema Ferries”. The area around is full of those little shops and is a real paradise for a shopaholic like me! When leaving the island I could hardly close my suitcase because it was full of beautiful feminine dresses, elegant shoes, woolen cardigans, funky jeans, not to mention hand-made jewelry, scarfs and accessories.
• **Cultural life:** for a small country, Malta abounds in cultural events, such as exhibitions, concerts, festivals, guided tours to secret historical places, public lectures and readings. I was really enjoying being part of it after Germany where everything runs in German and leaves me outside the cultural life. On the contrary, in Malta all those events are provided in English, which can be an additional opportunity for those who want to improve their English. In order to get informed, subscribe to one of the local groups on Facebook and get invitations to those events.

• **Public transport:** the only way to get around the island is the bus, unless you want to rent a car (in case you do, get ready for total chaos on the roads as nobody follows the rules here!). Buses are quite comfortable and really cheap. A ticket costs 1.60 euros and it is valid for 2 hours, which is great information if you need to take connecting buses – you can do two or more trips with the same ticket. You can buy tickets from the drivers. However, be prepared that the routes of the buses are sophisticated and not always clear. Besides, the drivers quite often have no idea which route they are driving, so it might be useless to ask them to help you to get to this or that place. Better ask local people on the bus. Moreover, forget about the schedule! Because of the heavy traffic, especially in rush hours, buses are often late and can be quite unreliable if you need to be at a certain place in a certain time. My advice: give yourself an hour wherever you go. In that case there is a smaller chance to be late.

• **Accommodation:** before going to Malta, you will have to find a place to stay. My employer recommended joining some local groups on Facebook and look for an affordable room there, which I did. It also makes sense to look at airbnb.com, expat.com or roomster.com. If you go in low season, there is a chance to get a discount on your room. However, mind that if you go in the winter, it might get really chilly in Malta, and since there is no heating and nearly no insulation in the houses, the temperature outside and inside can easily be the same, so getting some warm clothes and thick slippers might be a good idea. I eventually found quite a nice room in a sort of a ‘host family’. My hosts were a middle-aged couple who appeared to be very friendly and helpful.

To sum it all up, I find my Malta experience quite interesting and professionally enriching. As I have mentioned before, I have been working as a teacher of English for about ten years now, and obviously there were moments in my life when I was thinking about changing my job and doing something less demanding, like translation or office
work. I was very happy to get exactly this kind of experience in the past two months because it made me realise that teaching English is in fact my true vocation, that there is nothing I enjoy more than working with other people, helping them to acquire the language and watching their progress. I tried something different now – regular hours, office work, lack of human conversations – and it made me appreciate my real job even more! Nevertheless, I can’t call my internship a negative experience because I acquired some great skills and I became certain of my future professional path, which is partly the purpose of any internship.

My position in Malta required a lot of creativity, excellent command in both languages I was operating, attention to detail and skills of independent worker. I could definitely recommend this kind of job to people involved with languages or linguistics because it can allow them to improve their writing skills. The company I was employed in is called SideKick and they are in constant search of new text writers and proofreaders for different European languages. The information about job openings can be found on their website. However, since my employer did not make it clear to me whether they are interested in more interns, I cannot explicitly recommend them to other students, even though it might be worth checking out their website.

In the end, I would like to thank Mr. Johannes Hoch from Career Service of LMU for his enormous patience explaining all the minor details of my paperwork and his invaluable help with organizing my internship. He and his wonderful colleagues were always ready to help with all my questions and were always corresponding to me in English, which was a great help! So I can only give positive references about their work and my experience in Malta in general.