



## History of EFL Teacher Education Programs in Turkey

Ömer Gökhan ULUM

University of Hakkari, TURKEY

Received 17 July, 2015; Accepted 30 July, 2015 © The author(s) 2015. Published with open access at [www.questjournals.org](http://www.questjournals.org)

**ABSTRACT:** English as a foreign language gains importance in a highly ascending order day by day. Almost all countries empower their EFL teachers according to what they need in terms of employment goals in the long run. In this article the case of educating EFL teachers in Turkey is viewed in its historical process. English is now the most popular foreign language in Turkey, yet it is still far from being properly acquired. Though English has received much attention in our century, it is employed only in education, foreign affairs and private sector in Turkey. Compared to the case in other nations, the history of EFL teacher education programs in Turkey represents the fact that Turkey needs more empowerments regarding the issue. Consequently, the study presents a number of suggestions to improve EFL teacher education in Turkey.

**Keywords:** English Language Teacher Education, History of EFL Teacher Education.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The significance of foreign language teaching is continuously and globally enhancing in our century. Almost all nations educate their foreign language teachers based on their employment requirements as well as arranging education programs on this way. Especially, sending their foreign language teachers abroad or paying much more attention on teaching foreign languages are the basic methods those nations employ. Besides, teachers' foreign language education is tried to develop personally, by offering them various opportunities such as sending them abroad for conducting language projects (Aydoğın and Çilsal, 2007). English language, the necessity and significance of which are beyond any controversy, and which is a global communication tool in many fields, has been taught at all schools as one of the compulsory courses of the program by the English teachers appointed by Ministry of National Education (Can, 2005). Doubtlessly, the success in education system highly depends on teachers' quality. This success is achieved by teachers who plan, apply and evaluate educational activities, and reconstruct their works upon receiving the related feedback. As a result, these characteristics should properly be given to candidate teachers in teacher training programs. The interest in foreign language teaching is increasing day by day caused by economical, social, educational and scientific developments (Aydoğın and Çilsal, 2007). In our daily world in which communication has gained great significance, knowing one or more than one language, meeting and comprehending different cultures have been unavoidable requirements for each society (İşsağ and Demirel, 2010). Foreign language teaching in Turkey has a vital role both in order to follow the developments in science, technology, culture, art, economy and politics in European and global scales and in order to share the developments in Turkey with the world out. In lieu of this, foreign language teacher education programs should have the quality to respond to the nations' needs. To achieve this, foreign language teacher education programs should be updated by following the global innovations attentively (Coşkun, 2009). The expectances of the state and the private sector from the foreign language teachers are increasing highly nowadays. The getting conscious society asks foreign language teachers to have specific features (Aydoğın and Çilsal, 2007). The profile of an ideal language teacher according to Cross (1995) consists of four basic backgrounds as being well educated, having related pedagogical knowledge, affecting students by positive approaches and views, and being a good model for the students. Kuyumcu (2003) describes the characteristics of a good language teacher as s/he is the model of the learned information about that particular foreign language. S/he can use the advantage of once being a student having problems with the new language input. S/he must be knowledgeable about the language elements such as linguistics, phonetics, grammar and vocabulary. S/he must be conscious of the methodology of the field. As a result of the society's wishes and the provisions of the era, the job of foreign language teaching in Turkey has been a highly popular occupation and the universities' foreign language teaching departments have asked the students for high

examination grades to enter their departments. As it can be concluded from the mentioned points, the success of English in a country goes parallel with EFL teachers' well and proper occupational education. With this in mind, this particular study aims to represent the historical process of EFL teacher education programs in Turkey in a progressive manner.

### **The Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to present detailed information about the historical process of EFL teacher education programs in Turkey, by means of document analysis technique. With this in mind, this study tries to enlighten the historical development process of EFL teacher education programs in Turkey.

### **Research Method**

This particular study is a qualitative research having resource to document analysis technique. That's to say, document analysis was employed as the method of analysis in this study. When employing document analysis technique, the researcher investigates the existing records or documents (Karasar, 2012). The document analysis is a kind of qualitative research in which documents are displayed by the researcher to give a word about the topic (Peute, 2013).

## **II. CURRENT EDUCATION PROCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

Though teacher education programs have existed for a very long time, the concept of foreign language teacher education is a new term. Traditionally, foreign language teachers are either the native speakers of the target language or the non-native but expert teachers of that particular target language (Day, 1993). Today, EFL teachers in Turkey are mainly supplied by the English Language Teaching Departments of Education Faculties (Can, 2005). The training normally takes four years unless the program entails one-year intensive English preparatory, in this case 1+4 years. All ELT departments follow a standard and obligatory program while educating candidate English teachers. Optional courses, materials, course-books and exams employed may vary from one university to another, though (Karakas, 2012). Teacher education in Turkey consists of a historical account of English Language Teacher Education in which there are two parts on policy making in pre-service English Language Teacher Education and the results and discussions of various empirical studies based on English Language Teacher Education (Bayyurt and Bektaş-Çetinkaya, n.d.).

## **III. THE HISTORY OF TEACHER EDUCATION IN TURKEY**

The history of teacher education in Turkey dates back to *Darulmuallimin* (School of Teacher Training), which was established on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 1848 (Bilir, 2011; Işık, 2008). Foreign language in Ottoman era was mainly taught for religious aims. Arabic and Persian, particularly their morphological and syntactical structures, were taught so that learners were able to read and understand religious texts completely. However, when Ottoman Empire met big defeats at battles against western countries and when it had enhancing difficulty in formal correspondences with other countries, some necessary innovations fitting to those of western countries took start. Founded to teach languages rather than Arabic and Persian, language schools were just some of these innovations. The growth in learning French was only a piece of a larger trend. Either native speakers or minority teachers taught these languages. Teacher education, particularly for foreign languages, was not seen as a serious need during that period (Soruc and Cepik, 2013).

The establishers of the Republic not only modernised the teacher education schools that they took over from the Ottoman Empire according to the basic values of the Republic, but also endeavoured to found new schools that train teachers. Teacher education which was arranged by the Ministry of National Education according to a hiring based policy all along was left to universities in 1982. Turkish Council of Higher Education began re-establishing the faculties of education in the academic year of 1998 – 1999. Until the year of 2000, teachers who were educated stayed poor to respond to the country's need for teachers since education and employment policies were not shaped according to educational planning. Employment of the teachers has been made according to the results of KPSS (State Personnel Selection Exam) since 2000 (Bilir, 2011).

### **3.1. The History of EFL Teacher Education in Turkey**

The more the relationships rise among the societies and the communication tools develop, the more the need of learning a foreign language is piling up and consequently knowing a language is accepted as a criteria of modernization. Like those in all over the world, many people in Turkey are also aware of the importance of knowing a foreign language and they want to learn a foreign language as well as wishing their children to learn it (Doğan, 2009). The history of language teacher education in Turkey, mainly pre-service teacher education has been the centre of admiration in the last decades. Though language teacher education in Turkey has a long extraordinary history and though it has endeavoured to make its education system better, particularly containing a set of same applications to those of European countries, language teacher education in Turkey has not advanced as much as it is desired (Demirel, 1991).

Middle scaled schools' need of teachers was compensated from the institution founded in Konya in 1926 for a long while, and then this institution was moved to "Gazi Orta Muallim Mektebi" afterwards. This institution which took the name Gazi Education Institute in 1946 started with only educational sciences or pedagogy and founded science and literature faculties later. With the aim of educating foreign language teachers, French in 1941, English in 1944, German in 1947 were added to the mentioned departments afterwards (Demircan,1988). Initially the existing sources such as Galatasaray High School, Foreign Schools and Philology Departments of Universities were used to compensate for the teacher need at the beginning of Turkish Republic. With this aim, those finishing the philology departments of Ankara University and İstanbul University - Language, History and Geography Faculties got pedagogical formation and were appointed as foreign language teachers (Demircan, 1988). On arriving the year 1938, as a result of an increase in the number of students, there was a great need for English, French and German teachers. Regarding this issue, the application of foreign language teacher education started in 1938-1939 education year with the establishment of Foreign Languages High School comprising of two education years aiming to educate language teachers for Lyses (Demircan, 1988). With the suggestion of the famous educator John Dewey who came to Turkey, two yeared Orta Muallim Mektebi had started education with its 16 students in Konya and then was renamed as Gazi Education Institute upon moving to Ankara, and an English department was established in Gazi Education Institute in 1944-1945.

In order to keep the foreign language teachers more qualified, the 4<sup>th</sup> National Education Council was arranged in 1949 and the education period of foreign language departments of Educational Institutes was increased to three years from two years. However, this decision was not able to be achieved till 1962-1963 education year. In 1978-1979 education year, the period of three year was risen up to four years. After 1982, teaching departments were replaced by education faculties and this caused rooted innovations in the models and systems of these institutions (Demircan, 1988). The 2547 numbered High Education Law going in effect in 1981 in which high schools, institutions and academies had trained teachers under the rule of the Ministry of National Education and universities previously got into the rule of the universities under the roof of High Education Institution on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, 1982. At this point, the four yeared High Education Schools were turned into Education Faculties while the two yeared Education Institutes were turned into Educational High Schools. Foreign Languages High Schools and Sports Academies were covered by the Education Faculties. After the transmission of the authority of educating teachers to universities on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, 1982, the greatest arrangement about the Teacher Education Programs conducted in Education Faculties was realized by the reconstruction of the Education Faculties in 1997. Among the arrangements made by the Ministry of National Education and High Education Institute together there was the cooperation between Education Faculties and Application Schools conducted by the credit the World Bank supplied for Turkey (Hismanoglu, 2012). The second arrangement about the Education faculties was realized in 2006-2007. With this arrangement, the insufficiencies of the 1997 regulations were tried to be ameliorated. In this direction, some arrangements were made in the vocational courses of the English Language Teaching Programs. To sum up, the English Language Teaching License Program which was arranged in 2006-2007 is a four yeared program composing of compulsory and selectable courses.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Educating English language teachers is a hard and crucial issue and it is, after all, conceived to be more than a necessity nowadays. Hence, the proper road to success in language teacher education is based on owning a comprehensive program. In spite of the positive alterations and modifications existing in the history of EFL teacher education in Turkey, the changes are inadequate to meet the needs of the candidate teachers in many aspects, especially compared to the programs employed in the developed countries. Despite its teacher education experience and tradition for a long time, Turkey has mostly dealt with quantitative problems like the duration of teacher education programs as the transmissions of 2 years, 3 years and 4 years, or like the number of teachers employed etc. Education of foreign language teachers is a difficult expensive process. Compared to the situation in other countries, the history of EFL teacher education programs in Turkey represents the fact that our country needs more empowerments in this respect. Pre-service language teacher education is a dynamic phase that should be attentively planned, orderly assessed and efficiently evaluated. In spite of its limitations, the new pre-service teacher education program in Turkey is clearly better than the previous programs as it has been developed progressively in the history. Besides, critical approach and examination of prior successes and failures are of great significance to pave the way for more developments in EFL teacher education programs.

## REFERENCES

### Journal Papers:

- [1]. Aydođan, İ. &Çilsal, Z. (2007). Yabancı dil öğretmenlerinin yetiştirilme süreci. (Türkiye ve diğer ülkeler). Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi. 22(1), 179-197.
- [2]. Bayyurt, Y. & Bektaş-Çetinkaya, Y. (n.d.). Research Perspectives on Teaching and Learning English in Turkey. *Policies and Practices*. Peter Lang.
- [3]. Bilir, A. (2011). The historical evolution of teacher training and employment policies in Turkey. Ankara University, Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences. 44(2), 223-246.
- [4]. Can, A. (2015). İngilizce Öğretmeni Yetiştirme Programının Kazandırdığı Konu Alanı Öğretmen Yeterliklerinin Standartlara Göre Değerlendirilmesi. Doctorate Thesis. Ankara.
- [5]. Coşkun, H. (2009). Türkiye ve Almanya'da yabancı dil öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının karşılaştırılması. C.Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi. 33(1), 61-73.
- [6]. Cross, D. (1995). Language Teacher Preparation in Developing Countries: Structuring Pre-Service Teacher Training Programmes, English Teaching Forum. 33(4), 34-35.
- [7]. Day, R. (1993). Models and The Knowledge Base of Second Language Teacher Education. Second Language Studies. 11(2), 1-13.
- [8]. Demirel, Ö. (1991). Türkiye'de Yabancı Dil Öğretmeni Yetiştirmede Karşılaşılan Güçlükler. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi. 6, 25-39.
- [9]. Demircan, O. (1988). Düünden bugüne Türkiye'de Yabancı Dil. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.
- [10]. Dođan, İ. (2009). İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Mesleki Yeterlilik Algıları ve İngilizce Öğretiminde Karşılaştıkları Sorunlar. Published Master Thesis. Marmara University. İstanbul.
- [11]. Hismanoglu, S. (2012). İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının İngilizce öğretmen yetiştirme programı ile ilgili görüşleri. Journal of Research in Education and Teaching. 1(2), 330-341.
- [12]. Işık, A. (2008). Yabancı dil eğitimimizdeki yanlışlar nereden kaynaklanıyor?. Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies. 4(2), 15-26.
- [13]. İşisađ, K. & Demirel, O. (2010). Diller için Ortak Başvuru Metninin Konuşma Becerisinin Gelişiminde Kullanılması. *Eđitim ve Bilim*. 35(156), 190-204.
- [14]. Karakaş, A. (2012). Evaluation of the English Language Teacher Education Program in Turkey. *ELT Weekly*, 4(15).
- [15]. Karasar, N. (2012). Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemi. Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık.
- [16]. Kuyumcu, A. (2003). Foreign Language Teacher Education and Teaching Practice in Turkey. Master Thesis. İstanbul.
- [17]. Peute, L.W.P. (2013). Human factors methods in health information systems' design and evaluation: The road to success?. Doctorate Thesis. University of Amsterdam.
- [18]. Soruc, A. & Cepik, S. (2013). A Critical Analysis of Foreign Language Pre-service Teacher Education in Turkey. *Kamla-Raj*. 16(1-2), 319-324.