



New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences



Volume 4, Issue 1 (2017) 194-201

ISSN 2421-8030

www.prosoc.eu

Selected Papers of 9th World Conference on Educational Sciences (WCES-2017) 01-04 February 2017 Hotel Aston La Scala Convention Center, Nice, France

A review on the English language teacher education program in Turkey

Nuriye Degirmenci Uysal^{a *}, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Balıkesir University, 10300, Balıkesir, Turkey.

Ece Zehir Topkaya^b, Department of Foreign Language Teaching, Faculty of Education, Canakkale 18 Mart University, 17000, Canakkale, Turkey.

Suggested Citation:

Uysal, D. N. & Topkaya, Z. E. (2017). A review on the English language teacher education program in Turkey. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 4(1), pp 194-201. Available from: www.prosoc.eu

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Jesus Garcia Laborda, University of Alcala, Spain.

©2017 SciencePark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

Abstract

The study is an integrative evaluative review that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes the existing literature on the English language teacher education program in Turkey and it compares the current program with the preceding EFL teacher education. Thus, the study focuses mainly on the strengths and weaknesses of the 1998 ELTEP program and the 2006 ELTEP program. It was found that the 2006 Reform fulfills the needs and expectations in general. Yet, there are a number of problems such as the insufficient 'microteaching' activities and teaching practice opportunities. In addition, the English language teacher education should be revised and updated systematically, and a well-defined philosophy should be developed as well.

Keywords: Program evaluation; English language teacher education; language teaching.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Nuriye Degirmenci Uysal**, Graduate School of Social Sciences, Balıkesir University, 10300, Balıkesir, Turkey.

E-mail address: nuriye.degirmenci.uysal@balikesir.edu.tr / Tel.: +90 266 612 14 00

1. Introduction

English teachers assigned by the Ministry of National Education have provided English training, which is essential and important without dispute, at all schools as one of the required courses of the program (Can, 2005). It is certain that the achievement in education system is considerably dependent on the teacher's quality. Consequently, teacher candidates must adequately take the necessary qualifications in teacher training programs. In accordance with advancements in technology, science, art, culture, finance and politics, quality foreign language education programs should be designed to satisfy the nation's needs. In order to achieve success, there should be updates in foreign language programs by following changes in the world carefully (Coskun, 2009). As it can be inferred from the above-referred points, the achievement of English is in line with the good and appropriate professional education of EFL teachers in Turkey. In parallel with this purpose, it is intended in this exclusive study to represent the historical process of EFL teachers in Turkey progressively (Ulum, 2015).

2. The Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to enlighten the historical process of the EFL teacher education program and to provide detailed information about research in the literature regarding changes in the English Language Teacher Education Program in Turkey. Hence, this study undertakes a mission to investigate the following research questions:

1. What historical development processes have the EFL Teacher Education Program gone through so far?
2. What resulted in a need for the revisions on the English Language Teacher Education Program?
3. What are the findings of the evaluation studies done on English Language Teacher Education Program?
4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of 1998 and 2006 Reforms?
5. What are the implications of the studies?
6. Has the 2006 Reform taken the new research into account?

3. Methodology

This particular study is an integrative literature review that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes the existing literature on the EFL teacher education program in Turkey in an integrated way, such that new frameworks and perspectives on that issue are generated. As Cooper (1984) states that "Integrative reviews summarize past research by drawing overall conclusions from many separate studies that are believed to address related or identical hypotheses" (p.11) Therefore, to execute the integrative review and gather data, a document analysis technique has been used to investigate and summarize the existing records (Karasar, 2012).

4. Data Collection Tools

The study attempts to form a coherent whole through comprehensive and systematic research within the literature. Thus, document analysis has been applied to understand how previous studies on the foreign language education program have shaped the outcomes, to define the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and to review what kind of steps the teacher education program, in particular the foreign language teacher education program, has undergone so far. That is, it critically evaluates the studies on the program that have already been issued (Tavaglia, 1974; APA, 2003).

5. Findings

5.1. Brief Historical Perspective of Educational Change in EFL Teacher Education in Turkey

After the foundation of the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923, a new age began for all fields in social life as well as foreign language education. Western countries were taken as an example by Turkey and after its foundation was announced, Turkey showed a tendency to behold and track the progress in those countries. Accordingly, it was chosen to teach western languages at schools but this choice was made in alignment with political relations with those countries. Turkey chose French at first, and English began to be taught after Turkey's acceptance to the membership of international institutions (Oguz, 1999). Despite German's being a well-liked language in 1960s, English turned out to be the most chosen language not only in our country but also throughout the world, due to improvements in social and political relations with the USA and its growth in science and technology. Therefore, educational policies were required in foreign language teaching, due to the rising desire for foreign language. The quality of the language teacher has strongly been associated with the quality of the education provided to the pupils (Demirel, 1991). In 1924, John Dewey was called by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to learn his thoughts about the best way of teacher training in a democratic social system. (Ata, 2001) A teacher training foundation was established based on his recommendations in Konya, with 16 students. In spite of having no foreign language teaching content at this school, foreign language in the secondary schools was taught by the graduates of this school, which was carried into Ankara as the Gazi Institution of Education in 1927 (Incecay, 2011).

In addition, the graduates of the philology department of Istanbul University and Language, History and Geography Faculty could teach foreign language as soon as they took the required pedagogical lessons and the essential teaching certificate. Nonetheless, there weren't any particular lessons about foreign language teaching; that means that the graduates were unaware of the recent techniques and modern approaches in foreign language education (Demircan, 1988). At the same time, the Gazi Institution of Education began training foreign language teachers in 1941-42 academic year (Incecay, 2011).

After 1941, when the graduates of philology and foreign language departments of higher education schools were inadequate to fulfill the need for language teachers, "assistant teacher" exams were suggested by Ministry of Education in 1941 and 1962 (Tebliğler Dergisi, 1941), which encapsulated the methodology, phonetics, grammar, materials, lexicon and reading-writing in language teaching (Tebliğler Dergisi, 1962). In the 3rd National Council in 1946, as a consequence of rising number of schools and students, there was an offer about opening language education departments in some Institutions of Education to supply teachers for secondary schools and in Diyarbakır, Eskisehir, Konya, Bursa, Erzurum and Izmir-Buca (1968) departments of foreign language teacher education were established within the Institutions of Education. The 4th National Education Council in 1949 accepted the offer about extending the duration of education in these institutions to three years, to educate more effective language teachers, although the agreement was not put into practice until the 1962-63 academic year (Tebliğler Dergisi, 1961). The Institutions of education's three-year education period was terminated after it was extended to four years in 1978-1979 academic year (Incecay, 2011).

5.2. The 1998 English Language Teacher Education Program

The 1998 reform essentially emerged as the result of changes in compulsory education. According to the change in compulsory education, the education period increased from 5 to 8 years, and English language teaching started at the 4th year of education. The 1998 English Language Teacher Education Program (ELTEP) was a real reform in the sense that it standardized pre-service teacher education regarding the social, economic, communication, and technological developments (YOK, 1998). It

offered a wide range of courses including 'Teaching English to Young Learners', 'Introduction to English Literature I, II', and 'Approaches in ELT'.

5.3. The 2006 English Language Teacher Education Program

In 2006, the second reform in ELTEP was introduced and the Turkish Higher Education Council (HEC) presented the idea behind the need for this new reform in HEC Teacher education and education faculties (YOK, 2007). Accordingly, the rationale of the reform was to scrutinize teacher education programs in consideration of scientific research studies, to describe the learning outcomes of the educational programs in relation with the European Higher Education Area, and to reflect the aspects of the Constructivist Approach introduced in 2003. Consequently, there were some changes made in 2006 ELTEP that resulted in the addition, removal, and modification of certain courses (see Appendix 1).

There were considerable changes in the 2006 English Language Teacher Education Program. The courses like 'School Experience I' and 'Turkish Phonetics and Stylistics' were removed while some courses such as 'Drama', 'Public Service' and 'Special Needs Education' were added to the program. Moreover, the terms of some courses such as 'Language Acquisition' and 'Research Skills' were changed. While the teaching hours of 'Teaching English to Young Learners' were increased, the hours allocated to 'Research Skills' were decreased. Furthermore, the courses related to learning of content and pedagogical knowledge in theory were introduced within the first two years of the program while the teaching practicum were only available in the last year of the education.

5.4. Studies on the 1998 English Language Teacher Education Program

There were fairly a small number of studies on the 1998 ELTEP before the 2006 reform was carried out. Furthermore, these studies only explored certain components of the 1998 program instead of the program content in general. In her study, Erozan (2005) evaluated the English Language Teacher Education Program in terms of the language improvement courses. These courses were found as effective by the majority of the students, while they drew attention to the significance of language practice, the authentic materials and different teaching techniques. Similarly, Seferoglu (2006) conducted a study on the methodology and practice constituents of the program. The participants, who were at the 4th grade as in the previous study, stressed the importance of practicing teaching both in the form of the real school experience and 'microteachings' from the very beginning of their education.

5.5. Studies on the 2006 English Language Teacher Education Program

There were a few studies conducted on the 2006 English Language Teacher Education Program. A study was carried out by Ogeyik (2009), aiming to find out the pre-service teachers' opinions concerning the content of the program, the contents and the course characteristics. A total of 53 third year student teachers participated in the study. It was found that they were satisfied with the practical components of the program, and the development of the teaching and linguistic competences. However, they suggested that there was a problem in the culture specific courses. In another study, the perceptions of student teachers and instructors were elicited. The pre-service teachers found the pedagogic encounters problematic while the lecturers were not pleased with the linguistic aspects of the 2006 ELTEP program.

On the other hand, Kiziltan (2011) explored the beliefs and opinions of pre-service teachers regarding the 'Language Acquisition' course. Although having a positive attitude towards the related course, they called for certain prerequisite courses before this course was offered. In addition, Hismanoglu (2012) carried out a study to obtain pre-service teachers' perceptions on the main components of the program. The participants were surveyed about their opinions on the implementations of teaching techniques, evaluation and assessment. The new program met their needs and expectations to a great extent, but it was considered insufficient in engraining in them higher thinking skills such as creative and critical

thinking. Moreover, Karakas (2012) reviewed the evaluation studies and displayed the weaknesses and strengths of the 2006 program.

Salihoglu (2012) conducted a study to find out the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers and their instructors about the educational program using the evaluation framework by Peacock (2009). 200 senior students and 21 instructors participated in this study. Two questionnaires, a focus group discussion, and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The findings revealed that the student teachers were generally content with the program, but some problems were reported about the practice, needs and language proficiency. The similar results were retrieved from the instructors' and students' answers to the questionnaires. The strengths of the program were the courses that successfully combined theory with practice, and they agreed that the courses were interconnected. As for the weaknesses of the program, it was indicated that there were not clearly stated aims for the courses and there were limited possibilities for promoting teaching language skills. It was suggested that the scarcity of information on the program definitions accounted for the lack of clear aims and that the lecturers who participated in the semi-structured interviews were not well-informed about the program philosophy.

In their study, Yavuz and Topkaya-Zehir (2013) examined the lecturers' feelings and attitudes towards the changes in the English Language Teacher Education Program introduced by HEC in 2006. In this qualitative study, 18 teacher educators from different state universities were administered open-ended questionnaires to explore their perceptions. According to the findings, positive and negative issues have arisen within the teacher educators. They were satisfied with some of the changes, such as the addition of a public speaking course, as they perceived it as a chance to have more time and space for self-expression and oral presentations. In addition, Approaches I & II were responded positively as these courses allowed pre-service teachers for more time for microteaching. However, they had some concerns about the sequence, content, structure, procedure and removal of some courses. For instance, the content and procedure of the Public Service course were not addressed properly and there was no framework supplied on how to implement the course. Furthermore, the convergence of reading and writing skills in one course attracted many participants' attention negatively as they stated that more time and space should be allocated to basic skills courses. Lastly, teacher educators made a point on the communication gap between education faculties and the HEC, and stated that the English Language Education Program should be bottom-up and include teachers as end-users.

In his study, Erten (2015) aimed to explore the opinions and feelings of graduates towards the education they received within the English Language Teaching Education Program. An online survey form was administered to 49 practicing EFL teachers to learn about their observation on inefficient components; and their suggestions to better the teacher training in Turkey. They were mostly satisfied with the program, but they complained about the discrepancy between the actual and ideal teaching experience. They stated that they were not prepared for the challenges waiting for them in real life and offered that pre-service teachers should be trained to handle the challenges accordingly.

6. Conclusions and Implications

These studies offered some conclusions and implications as to the English Language Teacher Education Program. In her study, Seferoglu (2006) concluded that there was a mismatch between how the pre-service teachers were trained and what awaited them in real life. It seems that it was not merely the pedagogic reasons that were responsible for the lack of link but also the administrative and social requisitions imposed upon them also might have a role in such challenges. On the other hand, Karakas (2012), offered that there should be a well-defined philosophy behind the program and the teacher education should be revised and updated accordingly. He also stressed the importance of

'microteaching' activities, culture-specific courses and reflective teaching. Moreover, the competences, which cover the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that English teachers should have, are defined by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), and these competences help teachers to boost their professional development. However, Karakas (2012) asserted that these competences address to in-service teachers rather than pre-service teachers.

In addition, Erten (2015) drew attention to the practicing problems that the lecturers and student teachers faced. He stated that understaffed ELT departments caused problems in EFL teacher education, such as having a large number of students per instructors. Besides, overpopulated ELT departments mostly resulted in problems in observing and accommodating students at practice schools. In addition, the severity of this issue got worse with the teaching certificate programs that are given to the related departments, such as English/American Language and Literature and Translation and Interpretation. The situation, then, has become critical and needs to be handled immediately. According to Erten (2015), it is better to focus on the quality rather than the quantity to offer student teachers decent and proper supervision in English Language Education Departments. The solution lies in decreasing the number of students who attend these certificate programs.

Furthermore, teachers are to establish new identities as researchers for professional development and teacher autonomy (Dikilitas, 2015). For this reason, a Research Skills course can contribute much to find ways to attain such knowledge. However, the resequencing of a Research Skills course might not be efficient in the sense that some teacher knowledge may be a prerequisite for applying research skills (Ogeyik, 2009). Besides, the two hours allocated to Research Skills may not be sufficient to apply their skills to form and conduct research (Erten, 2015).

Lastly, the studies on the 1998 ELTEP suggested that there was a need for more opportunities in language practice and microteachings. The 2006 ELTEP seems to meet these demands according to the Yavuz and ZehirTopkaya's (2013) study. The participants in that study stated that they were satisfied with the extension of 'Approaches and Methods in ELT', asserting that these courses allowed for more time for microteaching. Moreover, another participant considered the addition of 'Public Speaking' course beneficial because students had more chances for self-expression and oral presentations. However, although the importance of teaching practicum was stressed out in previous studies, the 2006 program did not seem to take that issue into consideration. As a matter of fact, 'School Experience I' was removed although there was a great demand in teaching practice. Seeing that there has still been an immediate need for teaching practice and related courses, it is not possible to provide a general conclusion that the 2006 Reform has taken the new research into account.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Ata, B. (2001). An American educator, John Dewey's journey to Turkey under the light of 1924 Turkish press. *Gazi Egitim Fakultesi Dergisi*, 21(3), 193-207.
- Can, A. (2005). *İngilizce öğretmeni yetistirme programının kazandırdığı konu alanı öğretmen yeterliklerinin standartlara göre değerlendirilmesi* (Unpublished Doctorate Thesis) Ankara: Ankara University.

- Uysal, D. N. & Topkaya, Z. E. (2017). A review on the English language teacher education program in Turkey. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 4(1), pp 194-201. Available from: www.prosoc.eu
- Cosgun O. M. (2009). Evaluation of English language teaching education curriculum by student teachers. *Bilim, Egitim ve Dusunce Dergisi*, 9(1), 1-10.
- Coskun, A. & Daloglu, A. (2010). Evaluating an English language teacher education program through peacock's model. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(6), 24-42.
- Coskun, H. (2009). Türkiye ve Almanya'da yabancı dil öğretmen yetistirme programlarının karsilastrilmesi *Cumhuriyet Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*. 33(1), 61-73.
- Demircan, O. (1988a). *Dunden bugune Turkiye'de yabancı dil*. Ankara: Remzi Kitabevi.
- Demirel, O. (1991). Türkiye'de yabancı dil ogretmeni yetistirmede karsilasilan guçlukler. *Hacettepe Universitesi Egitim Fakultesi Dergisi*. 6, 25-39.
- Dikiltas, K. (2015) Professional development through teacher-research In Dikiltas, K., Smith, R., & Trotman, W. (eds.) *Teacher-researchers inaction*. Kent: IATEFL (pp. 47-55).
- Erozan, F. (2005). *Evaluating the language improvement courses in the undergraduate ELT curriculum at Eastern Mediterranean University: A case study* (Unpublished Doctorate thesis). Ankara: Middle East Technical University.
- Erten, I. H. (2015). Listening to practising teachers: Implications for teacher Training Programs. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 199, 581-588.
- Hismanoglu, S. (2012). İngilizce ogretmeni adaylarının İngilizce ogretmeni yetistirme program ile ilgili gorusleri. *Journal of Research in Education and Teaching*, 1(2), 330-341.
- Incecay, G. (2011). A critical overview of language teacher education in Turkish education system: From 2nd constitutional period onwards (1908-2010). *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 186-190.
- Karakas, A. (2012). Evaluation of the English Language Teacher Education Program in Turkey. *ELT Weekly*, 4(15), 1-16.
- Karasar, N. (2012). *Bilimsel arastırma yontemi*. Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık.
- Kiziltan, N. (2011). Pre-Service EFL teachers' attitudes towards 'Language Acquisition Courses'. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 7(1), 72-86.
- Oguz, E. (1999). *İlkogretimde yabancı dil* (Unpublished master's thesis). Kocaeli: Kocaeli Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu.
- Peacock, M. (2009). The evaluation of foreign-language-teacher education programmes. *Language Teaching Research*, 13(3), 259-78.
- Salihoglu, U. M. (2012). Pre-service teachers' and their instructors' beliefs on the effectiveness of an English language teacher education program. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 3440-3444.
- Seferoglu, G. (2006). Teacher candidates' reflections on some components of a pre-service English teacher education programme in Turkey. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 32(4), 369-378.
- Taveggia, T. (1974). Resolving research controversy through empirical cumulation. *Sociological Methods and Research*, 2, 395 -407.
- Ulum, O. G. (2015). History of EFL teacher education programs in Turkey. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 3(7), 42-45.
- Yavuz, A. & Topkaya-Zehir, E. (2013). Teacher educators' evaluation of the English language teaching program: a Turkish case, *Novitas-ROYAL (Research on Youth and Language)*, 7(1), 64-83.
- YOK. (1998). *Restructuring of teacher education*. Ankara: YOK publications.
- YOK (2007). *Teacher education and education faculties*. Ankara: YOK Publications.

Appendix 1

Changes in the 2006 ELTEP

Removed Courses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Turkish Phonetics and Stylistics 2. Turkish Sentence Structure and Semantics 3. Reading Skills I, II 4. Writing Skills I,II 5. School Experience I 	
Added Courses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listening and Phonetics I, II 2. Effective Communication 3. Lexicology 4. Turkish Educational History 5. Teaching Language Skills I, II 6. Second Foreign Language 7. Drama 8. Public Service 9. Special Needs Education 10. Comparative Education 11. Turkish Educational System and School Management 	
Resequenced Courses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advanced Reading and Writing (Reading and writing skill courses are merged placed in the 1st and 2nd terms) 2. Research Skills (from 6th to 4th term) 3. Linguistics I (from 6th to 4th term) 4. Linguistics II (from 5th to 4th term) 5. Language Acquisition (from 3rd to 4th term) 6. Approaches to Language Teaching I (from 4th to 3rd term) 	
Class hour changes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research Skills (from 3 class hours from 6th term to 2 class hours to 4th term) 2. Teaching English to Young Learners (from 3 class hours from 6th term to 4 class hours to 5th and 6th terms) 	
Modified Courses	1998 ELTEP	2006 ELTEP
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English Grammar I, II 2. Advanced Reading Skills 3. Advanced Writing Skills 4. Speaking Skills I, II 5. Introduction to Teaching 6. Introduction to English Literature I, II 7. Development and Learning 8. Introduction to Linguistics I, II 9. Approaches in ELT 10. Planning and Evaluation 11. Teaching English to Young Learners 12. Short Story Analysis and Teaching Novel Analysis and Teaching Drama Analysis and Teaching Poetry Analysis and Teaching 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contextual Grammar I, II 2. Advanced Reading and Writing I, II 3. Oral Communication Skills I, II Public Speech 4. Introduction to Educational Sciences 5. English Literature I,II 6. Educational Psychology 7. Linguistics I, II 8. Approaches in ELT I, II 9. Testing and Evaluation 10. Teaching English to Young learners I,II 11. Literature and Language Teaching I,II