

The State of English in Higher Education in Turkey

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REPORT

(One of the largest ever carried out into tertiary-level ELT in a country)

- The British Council funded and conducted a baseline study into tertiary-level English language provision in the higher education sector in Turkey in 2015.
- 38 universities in 15 cities across Turkey are surveyed in terms of leadership teams, academic staff and students.
- Survey results are supported by classroom observations.

Contents

(The areas of strength and the challenges faced)

1. University league tables
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University League Tables

- Several Turkish universities in the top 200 in the world according to the THES (Times Higher Educational Supplement) and URAP (University Ranking by Academic Performance) league tables
- 100 universities, which are outside the top 2000 in the world according to the URAP ratings (The majority of these are Turkish-medium universities, the English proficiency levels of their staff will need to be improved)

Some Recommendations

- Academic English language provision should be improved at all levels (prep, undergrad, grad and staff)
- The setting of English-language standards for students, English teachers and academics
- More targeted professional training for English as the medium of instruction for academics and English teachers
- More relevant curricula at prep, undergrad and grad levels

Research

- Lower-ranking universities will continue to produce little or no research but the academics will still need good levels of English proficiency to access research to support their teaching.

Recommendation

- English for academics courses should be offered to academic staff to raise their proficiency levels so that they can carry out international collaborative research and disseminate their findings.

Bologna Process

- The use of English has been encouraged as it makes it easier for students to carry out all or part of their studies in other countries under various exchange programmes.
- The use of English as a lingua franca for university documentation and communication.

Some Recommendations

- All English departments should be fully compliant with the requirements of the Bologna process
- An ESP course for administrative staff should be available.

Quality Assurance

- In order to encourage a culture of quality teaching and research in Turkish universities, quality assurance schemes that are compliant with Bologna requirements will need to be introduced or extended.
- Such schemes, including schemes that are specific to ELT, are already in use in half of the Turkish universities.

Recommendation

- All English departments and Schools of Foreign Languages should aim to qualify for national and international accreditation specialising in language teaching.

Student-Mobility Inward

- More than doubled numbers of international students but mostly come from the Turkic region. It can be expected that they can follow Turkish-medium classes.
- International students will have to come from a wider area outside the Turkic countries. (Develop promotion and marketing strategies)
- Not only will more English-medium programmes have to be offered, but English will be required to support a range of other measures needed to promote internationalisation and academic mobility.

Some Recommendations

- Recruiting high-quality international students from the wider world.
- Providing the necessary English as the medium of instruction programmes and resources at both undergrad and especially grad levels.
- More international students might reduce Turkish students' passiveness, lack of motivation and increase their need to learn English for a communicative purpose.

Student-Mobility Outward

- English language limitations of Turkish students influence mobility
- Those wishing to take a full degree overseas will usually have to undertake an English course in order to meet the necessary entry requirements.

Recommendations

- English language provision at Turkish universities should be raised to international standards so that Turkish students can access international degree programmes and compete equally in the world market for academic courses and jobs.

Staff Mobility

- Many of Turkey's academics lack PhD degrees
- They want to study for their doctorates overseas (USA and UK)
- They need good scores of IELTS, TOEFL.
- Very low levels of international academic staff and joint research programmes.
- More English-medium graduate programmes will be necessary if more international academics are to be attracted to Turkish universities.

Some Recommendations

- Academic staff should be offered ESP courses so that they can travel overseas for academic programmes, events, courses and employment.
- International staff are more likely to be able to contribute to English medium instructed grad programmes
- International research is greatly facilitated by having a common language for work and publication.

THANK YOU 😊
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Reference:

British Council Report. 2015. *The state of English in higher education in Turkey.*

www.britishcouncil.org.tr