

Teacher Education Policies and Systems in Turkey: Why Turkey is More Successful than Iran in English Language Teaching?

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Abstract

Recently there have been tremendous developments and adaptations in Turkish educational system. This study aims at analyzing the system of education in Turkey with respect to teacher education and comparing it with the educational policies in Iran. In this study, the factors that made Turkish EFL learners successful are studied and some recommendations are given for improving the educational system in Iran.

Keywords: *Teacher education, teacher belief, educational system, teacher development*

1. Introduction

The quality of English language learning depends on the quality of language teacher education. Language teacher education programs are likely to be held in departments of applied linguistics, education, or languages and literature according to Crandall (2000). These three departments provide the necessary knowledge and also opportunities for developing skills for would-be and also experienced teachers. Applied linguistics (psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, language testing, . . .) has formed the core of language teacher education since language teaching has always been the primary focus of applied linguistics. However, recently, general educational theory and practice have begun to exert more influence on the education of language teachers and this has resulted in a greater focus on three areas (ibid.):

- 1) Practical experiences such as observations, actual teaching, curriculum development, and materials writing
- 2) Classroom-centered research
- 3) Teacher beliefs and teacher cognition in language teacher education

The aim of this paper is to provide an overview and analysis of the educational system in Turkey with regard to teacher education, especially language teacher education. English is the leading foreign language enjoying a prestigious position in many countries, including Turkey, since the end of World War II. It is neither a national nor an official language in Turkey but it is the most widely taught foreign language at all stages of education system. Many Turkish learners start learning English during high school; some others as early as primary school or even pre-school.

2. Teacher Education: A Review of Literature

The previous decade can be viewed as a decade in search for a theory of language teaching in general and language teacher education in particular. There have been three trends in general teacher education. Crandall (2000) argues that these trends include four major shifts:

- 1) There is a shift from transmission, product-oriented theories to constructivist, process-oriented theories of learning, teaching, and teacher learning. Traditional teacher education views

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teachers as passive recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in the construction of meaning. It does not also take into account teacher's thinking or decision-making. A shift to a constructivist perspective of teaching and teacher learning, on the other hand, makes teachers the primary source of knowledge about teaching by their increased focus on teacher cognition, the role of reflection in teacher development, and the importance of teacher inquiry and research throughout teacher education and development programs.

2) There is a growing awareness that language teacher education programs have failed to prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom. Consequently, efforts have been made to transform teaching by focusing on situated teacher cognition and practice and developing linkages between theory and practice throughout the teacher education programs. Different learners, programs, curricula, materials, policies, and the socio-cultural environments that teachers are likely to encounter in their careers calls into question any idea of best practices appropriate for all contexts or any attempts to directly transfer the knowledge and practice from teacher education programs to actual teaching contexts.

3) There is a growing recognition that teachers' previous learning experiences play a role in shaping their views of effective teaching and learning and their teaching practices. These preconceptions are usually resistant to change unless awareness of that prior learning is developed in the teacher education program and opportunities for practical experiences and reflection upon those experiences are provided. It is also believed that the way teacher educators were taught will be replicated in their teacher education programs unless reflection upon teacher-education practice also takes place. Self-observation and reflection on practice can help teachers move from their philosophy of teaching and learning developed in the years in which they were students to a philosophy of teaching consistent with their new understandings of the language learning and teaching processes.

4) There is a growing concern that teaching be viewed as a profession regarding the role of teachers in developing theory and directing their own professional development through observation, teacher research, and in-service programs, rather than the typical short-term workshop or training program. Candlin and Widdowson (cited in Crandall, 2000, p. 36), for example, in their introduction to each volume of their series, *Language teaching: A scheme for teacher education*, sum up this trend in the following way:

If language teaching is to be a genuinely professional enterprise, it requires continual experimentation and evaluation on the part of practitioners whereby, in seeking to be more effective in their pedagogy, they provide at the same time -and as a corollary- for their own continuing education.

2.1. Language Teacher Training, Education, and Development

Traditional language teacher education focused on striking a balance between education and training. The former refers to the development of language knowledge, language teaching and learning. The latter, on the other hand, emphasizes the development of skills to use this knowledge in the practice of language teaching, with an opportunity to observe and practice that theory in actual classrooms or simulated contexts (Crandall, 1998; cited in Crandall, 2000). Those involved in preparing future language teachers refer to themselves as either teacher trainers or teacher educators. Widdowson (1997; cited in Crandall, 2000, p.36) describes teacher training as solution-oriented, with the "...implication that teachers are to be given specific instruction in practical techniques to cope with predictable events..," while teacher education is problem-oriented, with the implication of "...a broader intellectual awareness of theoretical principles underlying particular practices". In both orientations, the language teacher is viewed as a passive receiver of transmitted knowledge and there is no awareness of the role that language teachers play in their own development while the fact is that teacher development is a life-long process of growth which may involve collaborative and autonomous learning and the important factor is that teachers are engaged in this process and reflect on their practices. According to Wallace (1991; cited in Crandall, 2000), "the distinction is that training or education is something that can be presented or

managed by others; whereas development is something that can be done only by and for oneself" (p.36).

Hockly (2000), referring to the difference between teacher training and teacher development, states that they are "not as opposites but as part of a continuum" (p.124). He believes pre-service teachers mainly need training and once they have mastered basic techniques and skills, we can focus on their development. In other words, student teachers have a "hierarchy of needs, through which they pass on the road from training to development" (p.124). However, he suggests that "a model-based approach to pre-service training input will be better able to develop trainees' abilities to reflect than a more linear syllabus" (p. 124) and provides the following reasons for his proposal. Firstly, in such an approach critical skills are developed while trainees participate in, and then analyze, a model lesson. In other words, they are encouraged to be a student and at the same time observe the event from outside in order to be able to comment on the lesson. They have to focus on various things at the same time which is a valuable skill for teachers. Secondly, student teachers notice different things as they observe a model lesson which means they learn "things which are relevant and useful to their present level of development" (p.124). They also have repeated opportunities to be exposed to various elements of good teaching and, therefore, have higher chance to acquire them. In addition, peer interaction, after observation can further enhance reflection in student teachers.

Richards and Nunan (1990; cited in Jenkins & Murray, 1998, p.248) characterize training as "approaches that view teacher preparation as familiarizing student teachers with techniques and skills to apply in the classroom" while education refers to "approaches that involve teachers in developing theories of teaching, understanding the nature of decision making, and strategies for critical self-awareness and self-evaluation". In recent years, there has been an increased prominence of teacher education over teacher training and this shows a recognition of the need to develop a sound and more unified basis for language teaching.

2.2. Models of Language Teacher Education

Teacher training and education plays a very important role in all societies, in general, and in their educational system, in particular. Education is deeply rooted in the social and political context; it both responds to the changes taking place and also helps to shape the pattern of change. Teacher training, therefore, plays an important role not only in preparing education systems for changes but also in equipping students to respond effectively to them. The main responsibilities of language teachers are (Kelly et al., 2002):

- to develop their students' knowledge and skills in the domain of languages and cultures
- to enable their students to understand the world around them
- to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries
- to play an active role on the lesson. They have to focus on various things at the same time which is a valuable skill for teachers. Secondly, student teachers notice different things as they observe a model lesson which means they learn "things which are relevant and useful to their present level of development" (p.124). They also have repeated opportunities to be exposed to various elements of good teaching and, therefore, have higher chance to acquire them. In addition, peer interaction, after observation can further enhance reflection in student teachers.

Richards and Nunan (1990; cited in Jenkins & Murray, 1998, p.248) characterize training as "approaches that view teacher preparation as familiarizing student teachers with techniques and skills to be used with more experience

- 1) An applied science or theory-to-practice model in which knowledge is learned from experts and then applied in real-world contexts
- 2) A reflective model in which teachers reflect upon, evaluate, and adapt their own practice.

These three models generally correspond to the three views of teaching identified by Freeman (1991, 1996; cited in Crandall, 2000):

- 1) Teaching as doing: a behavioral model emphasizing what teachers do and encouraging a skills or craft model of teacher education

- 2) Teaching as thinking and doing: a cognitive model emphasizing what teachers know and how they do it, encouraging both theory and skills development and craft and applied science models of teacher education
- 3) Teaching as knowing what to do: an interpretivist view emphasizing why teachers do what they do in different contexts, encouraging the addition of reflection and the development of frameworks of interpretation to theory and skill development in teacher education.

The three models of language teacher education are needed in all teacher development, but in different degrees, and this depends on teacher experience and understanding. But, in fact, neither traditional education nor training are sufficient; what is needed is opportunities for teachers to reflect upon their beliefs and practices and to construct and reconstruct their personal theories of language teaching and learning. "Teaching depends upon the application of appropriate theory, the development of careful instructional designs and strategies, and the study of what actually happens in the classroom" (Richards, 1990; cited in Crandall, 2000, p.37). In other words, the context of teaching plays a very important role in any act of teaching.

3. The Importance of Context

The traditional language teacher education mainly focuses on the methods and presents the theoretical rationale and practical implications of language teaching approaches, methods, procedures, and techniques (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Such courses often discuss the rationale for, and instructional practices of "innovative" methods (for example Silent Way, Community Language Learning, Natural Approach) as well as "traditional" methods (like Grammar-Translation, Audio-Lingual). They often combine this discussion with specific attention to techniques for teaching the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Sometimes even specific courses in language skills, assessment, and evaluation are provided. Such courses in language teaching methods are still central to language teacher education, but there is, at the same time, growing concern that they not be taught in a prescriptive way. Instead, they need to investigate the instructional options language teachers have and through case studies, interviews, or introspection, examine the kinds of decisions teachers make in planning and carrying out instruction (Crandall, 2000).

Darling-Hammond (2000) found that teachers who had more preparation for teaching were more confident and successful with their students than those who had little or no preparation. Accordingly, he states that an important contribution of teacher education is its development of teachers' abilities "to examine teaching from the perspective of learners who bring diverse experiences and frames of reference to the classroom" (p.166).

The shift from methods to methodology is consistent with constructivist theories of learning. It is a shift away from a top-down approach to methods as products for teachers to learn and match toward a bottom-up approach to methodology as reflections on experiences. The shift involves future teachers in exploring the nature of effective teaching and learning, and discovering the strategies used by successful teachers and learners in the classroom (Crandall, 2000). Few language teacher educators believe that the role of the traditional methods course is to change future teachers into methods teachers; they mainly believe that teachers should pick and choose from among the techniques described in an eclectic approach. Recent methodology textbook (Brown, 2000), however, are aware of the role of context and the need to engage future language teachers in analyzing their own theories of teaching and learning while they practice, discuss, and reflect on instructional techniques. Even collections of what works or new ways of teaching or educating teachers provide teachers with practical options, and analysis and evaluation of teaching and learning strategies that teachers use in a variety of contexts help bring coherence to this process. Focusing on teachers and their beliefs about teaching, learning, or classroom interaction can help strike a balance between top-down, product-oriented conceptions of language teaching and bottom-up, process-oriented descriptions of language teaching events. Studies of teachers, either done by teachers themselves or in collaboration with researchers, can illuminate the processes by

which language teachers plan and make decisions about their teaching. However, there is a need to examine some factors for these studies to be successful. Crandall (2000) identifies 5 factors:

3.1. Teacher beliefs

Traditional teacher education has largely ignored the important set of beliefs about teaching, learning, teacher-student roles, . . . that teachers bring to their program from their experiences as students and language learners. Teachers do not merely engage in the implementation of teaching procedures but are constantly engaged in thinking, problem-solving, and decision making. Although content knowledge is still an important element of language teacher education, there is also a need for opportunities for future teachers to become aware of their own beliefs about effective teaching and learning; they need opportunities to learn the ways of thinking which characterize them as members of the language teaching community. Case studies, teacher narratives, teaching videos, and teacher journals are some of the means which can help future teachers in this regard. It is also important to consider the effects of context on teacher decision-making and teaching and learning. Traditional language teacher education programs have somehow attempted to cover some of the diversity of language teaching situations in broad terms through, for example, courses and texts which look at learners with common patterns of variation: different ages (teaching young children or adults), different levels of proficiency (teaching beginners or advanced learners), different purposes for learning (academic, professional), and different contexts (second or foreign language). But these attempts are not likely to provide sufficient preparation for the wide variety of learners or learning contexts that teachers actually encounter in their future career. Teachers usually rely on experience and their beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge in decision-making and these need to be made explicit if teachers are to consider new techniques or changes in practices.

3.2. Teacher Narratives and Case Studies

There are many ways to help teachers make explicit their own beliefs about teaching, for example analyses of teacher logs, diaries, or journals, audio or video recordings of teaching, interviews, and teacher narratives or case studies of teacher practice. Most of these techniques were dismissed by scientific positivism but have recently been brought back into teacher education (Crandall, 2000). Teaching case studies, for example, help to make a connection between theory and practice and show the complexity of teaching. They provide a contextualized portrait of many factors which influence teacher decision making and behavior in the classroom. Teacher narratives explicitly show the daily experiences of teachers and the ways in which they try to make sense of these experiences. In working with case studies, future teachers become actively involved in the kinds of decision-making that they may face in their language teaching.

Loughran (2007) elaborates on the nature of self-study of teacher education practices by examining what it is and how it may be conducted and reported. Referring to the benefits of this practice, he mentions Zeichner (2005; cited in Loughran, 2007, p.18) who noted that:

Many teacher educators who conduct research on their own courses and programs argue that they benefit greatly from these inquiries and that this visible commitment to self-inquiry provides a model for their students. They also argue that improvements in their work as teacher educators and their programs result from these self-studies.

3.3. The Role of Practical Experience

The growing importance of contextualized knowledge for language teachers, and the recognition of the important roles that language teachers play in teaching and learning process, materials development, decision-making, problem-solving, and research has led language teacher preparation programs to create opportunities for future teachers to acquire and test their knowledge with actual practice. There is a need for more extensive and intensive practical experiences to be

integrated in teacher education programs in order to provide future language teachers with greater opportunities to link theory with practice, to receive support and learn from experienced teachers, and even to offer experienced teachers an opportunity to learn from their new colleagues. Cooperation between university-based teacher education programs and schools offers a valuable opportunity for language teachers to be engaged in collaborative teaching.

3.4. The Role of Research

Classroom research plays an important role in teacher development. Research on language acquisition and learning has traditionally been conducted by researchers (sometimes in collaboration with language teachers) and reflects their research tradition which is, most of the time, experimental research. Their aim is usually identifying best practices in language teaching or learning. However, studies of teachers attempting to implement these best practices in their classes reveal that teachers change them, sometimes substantially, in order to fit them into their specific teaching contexts. This adaptation process has led to the introduction of action or teacher research which is grounded in the specific language teaching contexts. Such research can be done collaboratively by teacher educators, researchers, and teachers or individually by language teachers themselves within their own classrooms. This process of research undertaken by teachers and focused on observation, analysis, and probable changes of one's teaching is also a means through which teachers can consider and reconsider their assumptions about language teaching and learning and this can help them in their professional development.

3.5. The Role of Reflection

What is absent in traditional language teacher education is recognition of the role that the teacher plays in generating knowledge through teaching experience and reflection. Language teacher education has mainly focused on the question of how to teach and has ignored the questions of what and why, questions which can only be answered by teacher reflection and research. Bartlett (1990; cited in Crandall, 2000) suggests a cycle -similar to action-research cycle- moving from observation, to interpretation, introspection and questioning, to consideration of alternatives, and then to adaptation of instruction. Reflection on experience helps teachers develop informed practice, make tacit beliefs and practical knowledge explicit, articulate what they know and lead to new ways of knowing and teaching. Teacher inquiry and reflection are now viewed as important to the development of language teaching theory and appropriate language teacher education.

4. Kumaravdivelu and His Three Types of Teacher Roles

The goal of teaching, according to Kumaravdivelu (2003), is creating optimal conditions for desired learning to take place in as short a time as possible. It is quite clear from this definition of teaching that teachers play a very important role in this process. Kumaravdivelu (2003) identifies three possible roles for teachers: teachers as passive technicians, teachers as reflective practitioners, and teachers as transformative intellectuals.

4.1. Teachers as Passive Technicians

The underlying idea of the concept of teachers as technicians can be found in the behavioral psychology which emphasizes the importance of empirical verification. In this school of psychology the main focus of teaching and teacher education is content knowledge which consists of a verified and verifiable set of facts and rules. This knowledge is broken into a number of discrete items and then presented to the teacher in "teacher-proof packages" (Kumaravdivelu, 2000, p.8). Teachers and their teaching ideas and beliefs are not very important because their effectiveness cannot be empirically proved. Consequently, teacher education programs concentrate on education. This view is known as "the technician view of teaching and teacher education" (p.8). In this view, professional experts are the agents who create the knowledge base that is taught in

teacher education programs. Classroom teachers are merely passive technicians who learn this content knowledge and then pass it on to their students. They are even viewed "as apprentices whose success is measured in terms of how closely they adhere to the professional knowledge base, and how effectively they transmit that knowledge base to students" (p.8). Such a distinction, in reality, leads to "the disempowerment of teachers" (p.9) since their teaching is confined to what they receive from experts rather than what they actually experience. This approach is passive, unchallenging, and boring because teachers are merely passive agents in the process of teaching and learning.

4.2. Teachers as Reflective Practitioners

The concept of reflective teaching was proposed as a reaction against the technicist view of teaching. The idea of teachers as reflective practitioners is not new; it was originally proposed by the educational philosopher John Dewey in the twentieth century. For him, reflective action refers to "consideration of any belief or practice in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads" (Dewey, 1933, p. 4; cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p.10). Teaching, for Dewey, is a context-sensitive action and teachers are problem- solvers who have critical-thinking ability not passive transmitters of knowledge. Reflective teaching, then, in other words, puts emphasis on "creativity, artistry, and context sensitivity" (p.10).

4.3. Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals

The concept of teachers as transformative intellectuals was originally proposed by "critical pedagogists" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p.13). Following Freire, they put emphasis on democratic education. According to them, ". . . any pedagogy, is embedded in relations of power and dominance, and is employed to create and sustain social inequalities" (p.13), so what is needed is a type of education that empowers teachers and learners. In this kind of education the experiences of teachers and learners are very important.

5. The Post-method Condition and Language Teacher Education

Postmethod condition refers to a contemporary era in English language teaching in which the previously developed, used, and trusted language teaching methods are put into question. It was in the 1970s that teachers began to realize that no single method of language teaching would bring success in teaching a second/foreign language. This was accompanied by the fact that there are always some language learners who are successful regardless of the method or techniques which are used. The main feature of the postmethod condition is that "methods-only arguments" are put aside in order to "find effective strategies to teach in the most appropriate and effective way while considering the practitioner's views and roles in preparing and teaching language materials" (Arikan, 2006, p.2). So, according to the central concern of this era, the language teacher should try to find the most effective language teaching strategies and techniques "instead of looking for which language teaching method is the best to follow" (p.2).

This era and its focus on "the individual journey of the language teacher" (p.2) is in sharp contrast to the mainstream language teacher education programs which are characterized by imposing specific language teaching methods rather than encouraging language teachers to find their own way of teaching.

Post-method teacher education programs, accordingly, focus on language teaching situated in context rather than academic discussions detached from actual classrooms. According to Harmer (2001), it is very difficult to come to conclusions about which approaches and/or methods are best or most appropriate for a teaching situation. However, there is a need for a compromise between the students and the teacher on any teaching methodology is necessary. This compromise, hence, is where pragmatic eclecticism finds aspiration to exist as the only method that serves well in such a post-method condition. Teacher education practices, largely due to this compromise, have included students' voices often in forms of needs analyses which shed light to how teaching

practices should be re-structured in a continuous way. In his review of English language teaching methodology, Salmani-Nodoushan (2006) argues that such a shift of attention signaled an era whose outcome was the construct This was accompanied by the fact that there are always some language learners who are successful regardless of the method or techniques which are used. The main feature of the postmethod condition is that "methods-only arguments" are put aside in order to "find effective strategies to teach in the most appropriate and effective way while considering the practitioner's views and roles in preparing and teaching language materials" (Arikan, 2006, p.2). So, according to the central concern of this era action of teachers' and specialists' pedagogic perceptions" (p.3). Arikan (2006) states that this era was realized in two forms: effective teaching, reflective teaching.

Effective teaching proponents believe that applied linguists should theorize and language teachers should practice those theories. In other words, effective language teaching is the outcome of the cooperation between theorizers and practitioners. The proponents of reflective teaching, on the other hand, state that theorizing or mediating between theory and practice should be among the responsibilities of language teachers not applied linguists. In both of these approaches language teachers have a role in theory discussions and it is unlike the previous methods which treated them only as practitioners and not as theorizers.

Since the main underlying idea of the era is the notion that the best method in teaching is ungraspable and invisible, teacher education programs are conducted while the authority is seriously under question and the best method is not easy to find unless practice shows what works and what does not. Teacher education programs are more and more concerned with the ideas of practitioners and follow, according to Arikan (2006), a 'bottom-up' process in their design which is in sharp contrast to traditional teacher education programs which follow a 'top-down' process of transmitting knowledge and ignoring teachers' creativity.

The mainstream teacher education programs conceptualize professional development "as being for the purpose of advancing institutional training goals in which the goal is the staff's acquisition of knowledge and skills" (p.4). This approach mainly focuses on what teachers need to know and how they can be trained within that particular knowledge. This approach is a narrow view of teacher education which is in contrast to the "limitless" (p.4) view in which, according to Paine (1990; cited in Arikan, 2006, p.4) "a fine teacher is one who combines technical wizardry with heart". Freeman & Johnson (1998; cited in Arikan, 2006, p.5) also argue that new teacher education programs should include "forms of knowledge representation that document teacher learning within social, cultural, and institutional contexts in which they occur".

Richards (1998; cited in Arikan, 2006) identifies three approaches to teacher education within the field of English language teacher education:

- 1) science-research conceptions
- 2) theory-philosophy conceptions
- 3) art-craft conceptions

Arikan (2006, p.5) believes that in the post-method condition we have moved from English language teacher education as science-research conception towards art-craft conception since the most visible feature of art-craft conception is that "commitment to a single method of teaching may impede the teacher's full potential". The field of English language teaching is, in other words, moving towards recognizing the needs and potentials of its individual practitioners. Such changes in second/foreign language teacher education would hopefully result in greater awareness of teacher-centered issues and studies. Kumaravadivelu (2001, p.537) describes these changes in this way:

the 1990s witnessed a rare congruence of refreshingly new ideas that can fundamentally restructure second/foreign language teaching and teacher education. Among them are two mutually informal currents of thought: one emphasizes the need to go beyond the limitations of the concept of method with a call to find an alternative way of designing effective teaching strategies . . . and another emphasizes the need to go beyond the limitations of the transmission

model of teacher education with a call to find an alternative way of creating efficient teaching professionals . . .

Critical voices in language teacher education argue that there is a need, in second/foreign language teacher education, to validate local forms of knowledge about language and teaching in which the context becomes an inseparable part of such a process. Following this line of thought, Kumaravadivelu (2001) states that all pedagogy is local. "To ignore local exigencies is to ignore lived experiences" (Arikan, 2006, p.6) and pedagogies that ignore lived experiences would ultimately be "so disturbing for those affected by them- so threatening to their belief systems- that hostility is aroused and learning becomes impossible" (Arikan, 2006, p.6).

6. Characteristics of Good Language Teachers

Kelly et al. (2002, p.4-5) propose the following criteria used to define good practice and innovation:

- Tailoring of pedagogy to the needs of particular groups of language learners
- Greater emphasis on communicative aspects of language learning
- Introduction of intercultural dimensions
- Bilingual and multilingual education approaches
- Use of new technologies, and of autonomous, open or distance learning approaches in teacher training, as well as training in their use
- Use of mentoring systems in teacher training, and the training of mentors who are not themselves teacher trainers
- Increased focus on school-centered initial teacher training
- Internationalization of teacher training programs
- Improving the competence of teachers in the foreign language and culture they teach

Training language teachers, within universities, is usually done by either faculties/departments of education or faculties/departments of foreign languages (Kelly et al., 2002). But the degree of cooperation between these faculties is variable and this is an area in which improvements are needed according to Kelly et al. (2002). However, there are three exceptions to this pattern. In France training is done by the IUFM (Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres), a national institution affiliated to the Ministry of Education, which collaborates with universities. In the UK, in addition to the traditional teacher training courses, it is possible for teachers to be trained by school clusters or individual schools. And in Liechtenstein, foreign language teachers are trained by institutions in neighboring countries.

Most countries and institutions emphasize on the importance of integrating the theoretical and practical components of training and a variety of techniques are used across Europe in order to facilitate this integration one of which is to organize schools in a way as to ensure that trainees have ample opportunities to reflect on the application of theoretical concepts in practical situations.

7. The History of ELT in Turkey

Kirkgoz (2005), in his paper about the history of ELT in Turkey, mentions that the beginning of ELT in this country dates back to the second half of the 18th century, which was the beginning of the Westernization of the educational system. The first institution that started teaching through the medium of English was Robert College. It was an Anglo-American secondary school founded in Istanbul in 1863 by an American missionary. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, ELT spread rapidly in the country. This led to the establishment of the first secondary school which used English as the medium of instruction in 1955. This school was called an Anadolu (Anatolian) school. In response to growing pressure from parents, the state began to increase the number of these schools. In 1974, there were only

12 *Anadolu* schools; by the 2000-2001 school year, 1,457 of these English-medium

secondary schools were founded. It was in 1997 that English language teaching was introduced at the primary level.

Although the government's policy was to increase the educational opportunities for a large number of students by incorporating English language as the medium of instruction in academic communities, a large number of students remain unable to cope with demands imposed by their academic field of study. Many studies have been conducted to solve this problem, but the English language still is considered as an obstacle to the acquisition of the professional knowledge that universities are expected to provide.

At the level of primary education, despite the current popularity of early foreign-language teaching, there is insufficient empirical research to reveal to what extent children develop proficiency in English. One major problem is the shortage of the English language teachers. Due to the teacher shortage, non-ELT teachers, having received short training on pedagogy and English language, teach English (Kirkgoz, 2005).

7.1. The Need for a Reform Movement in ELT in Turkey

Since 1950, all the governments in Turkey have tried to improve and update the educational system of the country and attempt to solve some of the problems. Because of the low socio-economic status of teachers, highly qualified students do not usually prefer the teaching profession. Problems concerning teachers include lack of professional skills and knowledge to cope with the educational goals of today's society, low salary, low status, heavy demands on time, heavy workload, lack of opportunities to improve professional knowledge and effective performance and, finally, lack of job security. It is clear that these problems negatively affect the quality of education in Turkish elementary and secondary schools. For this reason, Turkey has tried to implement many reforms and innovations in her education system. There were some problems of teacher education program which originate directly from the system of education (Deniz & Sahin, 2006)

Thus, the Turkish Higher Education Council (YOK) has made an effort to reform teacher education program in Turkey which enabled them to enter the process of producing knowledge at universal standards and of training creative teachers required for information societies. This progress led universities to rearrange the programs of various faculties considering some principles such as efficiency and productivity. In this context, Turkey started to implement new teacher training programs based on post-graduate education in order to train qualified and well-equipped teachers.

Traditionally, the teaching of English in Turkey was based on a teacher-centered transmission model. The predominant method employed was grammar translation with a focus on grammar and vocabulary at the expense of communication. In the 1990s, major attempts were made to revise the ELT syllabi to incorporate communicative language teaching into the curriculum. However, despite the fact that the use of the language is advocated by the MEB, many teachers of English, particularly at state schools, where the teacher-student ratio is high (40 to 50 students per class) found it difficult to be communicative in their classroom practices. The response to the shift of emphasis from the traditional teacher-centered approach to communicative language teaching has been more promising in private schools. Due to parental pressure and enthusiasm for having their children use the language, these schools generally claim that their major focus is on promoting students' communication skills (Kirkgoz 2005).

In 1995, the concept of *total quality management* (TQM) in ELT was introduced to the Turkish educational system to create quality awareness among educators, which would eventually lead to quality education. In 1997, a major project called the Ministry of Education Development Project aimed to restructure the teacher-training departments of the faculties of education to enhance the quality of teacher training to meet the needs of the nation in the 21st century. With this project and the updated pre-service teacher training project, Turkey is heading for a major reform in English language education in the new century. Therefore, teacher-training departments were redesigned to increase the number of methodology courses and extend the duration of trainees' teaching

practice time in secondary education. To support these developments, a close partnership between the English language teaching departments and the primary and secondary schools was established in 1998 to give trainees systematic school-based teaching practice before they enter their professional community. This project eventually resulted in the standardization and the establishment of the Turkish system of accreditation for teacher education based on the British model. The revised teacher-training program was piloted in the 1998-1999 academic year in six faculties. The evaluation of the pilot project by scholars showed that the intended learning outcomes were largely achieved (Kirkgoz 2005).

8. Language Teacher Education in Turkey

Teacher training curriculum needs to be as consistent with the prerequisites of the global purposes with an effort to put students in the centre of teaching and learning activities. Such reforms have been developed to foster teaching and learning engagements in education systems by restructuring programs of education institutions and revising the content of courses.

In Turkey, the Council of Higher Education has begun to re-structure the faculties of education since 1998. The first effort in 1998, a reform of the World Bank and the Council of Higher Education was implemented in all faculties of education in Turkey. The recent curriculum, which has been employed since 2006-2007 academic year, offers new courses in addition to the previous ones. The English language teacher training bachelor's degree program takes four years and consists of basic courses and electives. The courses namely are ELT Methodology I, ELT Methodology II, Drama, Classroom management, Teaching English to Young Learners, Teaching English to Young Learners I, Teaching Language Skills I, Turkish-English Translation, Literature and Language Teaching I (short story and novel), Teaching Language Skills II, Literature and Language Teaching II (poetry and drama), Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development, School Experience, Guidance, Special Education, Teaching Technologies and Material Evaluation, English Language Testing and Evaluation, Teaching Practice, Special Education Methods I, Special Education Methods II (Ögeyik, n.d.)

9. Some Features of the Old Teacher Training System in Turkey

Concerning language methodology, before the reform movement in Turkey, Ekmekci (1992) believed that there is not enough emphasis on the methodological aspect of language teaching. For example, at Çukurova University, although the Methodology course has been offered since 1983, there have been several modifications made as to the duration of the course and the distribution of the time allotted for practice teaching. From 1983 to 1988, Methodology course was offered in the first semester of the fourth year and the second semester. The students were sent to public high schools to do practice teaching. Since 1988 the duration of the methodology course has been extended to two semesters and the practice teaching is conducted in the last semester together with the second semester of the Methodology course. However, it should be mentioned that the application of the practice session were difficult because all the public schools do not have English classes on the same day of the week. Thus, the days allotted to the students for practice teaching do not seem to suit the schedule set for English classes at high schools. While some students have plenty of experience in one school, others do not have any at all. In the academic year of 1989-90 students did practice teaching for the duration of a two-week period so that all of them would get sufficient benefit. However, since this time was not distributed to a month or even a semester, students found the two-week period too short to observe classroom teachers teach and find time to teach as well.

Such problems lead to a change the educational system in Turkey. Concerning the teacher training system, there was a rapid development since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, and the most comprehensive change took place in 1998. Here are the general features of the new teacher training system of Turkey, which was put into practice in the 1998-1999 educational term.

9.1. Some General Features of the New Teacher Training System in Turkey

The features of the new teacher training system of Turkey was put into practice in the 1998 to 1999. New approaches to teacher education in Turkey aimed to increase quality in teacher education in Turkey. Thus, both universities and schools play a significant role in teacher training process. In collaboration with each other,

In most education systems, traditional in-service training activities are general rather than specific. It means that there were fixed training program transferred to trainees by lecturers. However, it is important that all teachers in a school attend occasional, full-day in-service sessions on topics selected by administrators and presented by outside experienced experts. In the new educational system, there have been attempts to have in-service teacher training education both nationally and locally. In local in-service teacher training, feedback from teachers, their needs and ideas are taken into account in planning and organizing teacher training activities. (Bayrakçı, 2009).

Teacher training schools and institutions gained an autonomous status, functional structure and common standards, and most important of all, they acquired a legal base. As result duration and levels of teacher education has increased and the quality of the staff was brought up to the accepted standards. Along with these developments, the teacher education systems in the developed countries were examined by the committees responsible for teacher education in Turkey and academics and educators were sent to United States and United Kingdom so that they could observe their teacher education systems in place. The outcomes of these studies have played a great role in training qualified teachers required by the system. In developed countries quality and efficiency regarding teacher training in accordance with pre-determined standards and criteria have been monitored and evaluated. Accordingly, teacher training system in Turkey has been revised with new innovations and approaches to teaching within the framework of faculty-school partnership provided by a protocol signed by MEB and YOK. Today, teacher training faculties have been restructured in accordance with the innovations and changes in the world. Meanwhile, primary education was increased from five to eight years. Considering the increasing demands for more teachers as a result of the practice of eight year-compulsory primary education, new arrangements were made in undergraduate programs of education faculties and pedagogical formation programs of other faculties in order to recruit teachers needed in the short and long term periods through the cooperation between MEB and YOK (Deniz & Sahin, 2006).

In the new teacher training systems, there have been more emphasis on practice required for teaching rather than the theoretical knowledge. Teachers are trained differently according to the needs of the system in different contexts. Therefore, the line of research was shifted to teachers' practical knowledge. This new understanding gave place to courses based on practice by decreasing the amount of theoretical courses in teacher education programs. Today, though it is late, the wrong practices were removed from teacher training programs of the faculties and accreditation studies gained a motion and they were incorporated into the programs of Education Faculties. (Deniz & Sahin, 2006).

The reform of ELT in Turkey, according to Kirkgoz (2005, p.) has had some implications, not only at the level of higher education, but in primary and secondary education as well. ELT has been re-conceptualized to encourage “(a) students' active participation in the learning process, (b) students' use of the target language in communication, and (c) students' application of knowledge through projects”. Concerning the features of the new curriculum, Kirkgoz (2005, p.) maintains that:

The new curriculum promotes student-centered learning and emphasizes the philosophy of total quality in ELT. Teachers are encouraged to promote students' communication skills, address students' different learning styles, and minimize the use of the mother tongue... In Turkey, teaching is a graduate profession; in order to teach English, one is required to have a degree in English. All new teachers at state and private universities are required to complete a *1-year* probation period...In addition, courses were introduced to train non-ELT teachers so that they could teach English, particularly at primary level.... Many ELT departments have established in-service (INSET)teacher training and development programs. INSET courses generally have two levels of

teacher preparation: for novice teachers, an induction program is offered that addresses certain immediate needs of teachers, enhancing their knowledge and skills of ELT... More experienced teachers are encouraged to explore new avenues through such collaborative work as action research and team teaching... To ensure that teachers in all parts of Turkey are kept abreast of new developments in ELT, the INSET office of the MNE regularly organizes local seminars for state primary and secondary school teachers in collaboration with the English Language Researchers' Association in Turkey. In line with the government's reform policy in teacher education, ...a single set of standards [were provided] in pre-service teacher-training programs throughout the country to enhance the quality of English teachers.

The development of standards articulates national expectations for the quality of English language teacher education. It is expected that all new teachers will be required to meet those standards.

10. Why Turkish Educational System Is More Successful than Iran?

The system of education in Iran is not successful. Most of the students finished high schools are not able to use their knowledge of not only English language but also other subject matters. When they are asked about the reasons, they indicate that they forgot what they have learnt. There are also some problems in teacher training or teacher education programs in Iran. From the literature reviewed, it can be implied that Turkish educational system is more successful than Iran's due to some factors which are explained here.

First, it can be said that the effectiveness of Turkish educational system depends on the time allocated for training and on the people involved in it. Therefore, if we want to be successful, the university system should be given enough time to develop alternative teacher training courses. After the course has been developed, tutors and mentors need time to do their jobs effectively. Tutors need time to train mentors, teach student-teachers when they are at the university, go to the school, observe them, provide feedback, and assess them. Mentors should also have an adequate time allocation so that they are able both to work with student-teachers and continue their own professional development. They need time to plan the student-teachers' learning, observe them, provide feedback, assess them, keep records, and pass information to the university. Furthermore, mentors and tutors also need to learn to work together on these tasks and need time to do this. With reference to the student interviews, it is possible to say that students also needed more time throughout the course than they were given. Students need to learn slowly and calmly, with time for reflection and debate. In our schools, a lot of materials is covered during a short time and students do not have enough time for reflection.

Second, it is obvious that the financial problems can hinder the success of the present teacher education system in Iran. There should be enough money and resources for training.

Third, we should provide situations in which university instructors and school teachers can systematically cooperate with each other discussing the problems they confront.

Forth, teachers should be encouraged to do action research. The most important problem that hinders teachers' progress is their lack of knowledge about research. The teachers in Iran do not know how to do a research in practice. They just have studied research theoretically.

Fifth, one of the most critical issues in teacher training is that student-teachers do not know the importance of subject knowledge or what they are studying in the university for teaching. In Turkish educational system, there have been more emphasis on training teachers in practice.

Sixth, there have been attempts to de-centralize the educational system in Turkey, a movement to humanizing education. The educational system in Iran is more centralized and school teachers' ideas, needs, and feedbacks are not taken into account. As Kumaravadivelu (2001, p.11) says:

All pedagogy, like all politics is local. To ignore local exigencies is to ignore lived experiences. Pedagogies that ignore lived experiences will ultimately prove to be "so disturbing for those affected by them- so threatening to their belief systems- that hostility is aroused and learning becomes impossible.

Thus, if we consider these implications we can have a more developed educational system which can result in better learning conditions for Iranian teacher trainees.

11. Conclusion

It was in the late 1980s (Jenkins & Murray, 1998) that the profession of language teacher education began to carefully look at itself and also at the rapid changes that had taken place over previous years, and to ask serious questions which had potentially important implications. Fashionable language teaching methods and practices began to lose their currency, and were, consequently, replaced by more informed, reflective, and contextually-based practices. Recognizing the important fact that blindly following language teaching methods results, without doubt, in failure, language teaching profession began to call for a change of attitude and a more critical approach towards the issue of language teaching. Such a fundamental change was accompanied by a new interest in second language acquisition research, classroom-based research, and also action-based research (ibid.). The most important point is that any change, in general, and such changes in particular, needs to originate within teacher education since it here that fundamental attitudes are shaped. Today, for example, we frequently hear about some popular concepts such as contextually-specific teaching/learning, reflective practitioner, and the teacher as informed decision-maker. These concepts consider language teachers as thinking agents who try to understand learner factors and make informed and appropriate decisions.

Changes in recent times imply that we can no longer depend on a transmission model of teacher training. We have to develop strategies that help teachers and learners to co-participate in the process of learning. We also have to emphasize the importance of starting from one's own experience in educational pedagogy. Those teacher education programs that focus on the practitioner's view are more adequate in finding answers to different questions that arise from teaching experiences. Future teacher training programs should be inclusive, i.e. they should consider all voices, the multiple and contradictory voices of the practitioners. They should also study the particular teaching techniques and strategies of individual teachers in order to see how methods work for teachers rather than how teachers work to attain methods (Arikan, 2006). Turkish educational system is more successful than Iran due to considering the aforementioned principles in the educational system.

Acknowledgments

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