Motivation and Student Perception of Studying in an English-medium University

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Abstract

Many Turkish universities provide undergraduate degree courses through the medium of English. Despite a growing popularity of English medium universities, very little actual information is available about what attracts students to an English-medium education. The present study aims to identify the primary sources of motivation underlying students' decision for selecting an English-medium education, students' assessment of their English language skills, and their perceptions of difficulties they may have studying through the medium of English. With regard to motivational patterns, it was found that students prioritized a mix of integrative and instrumental motivations, and had a fairly positive self-assessment of their English. Problems identified by the students centered on the detrimental effects of learning subjects through another language such as a feeling of being distanced from their native language and culture. It is argued that more studies are needed in this area to assist universities in policy making.

Key words: English medium education, motivation, language skills, problems.

Özet:

Turkiye`deki pek çok üniversitede eğitim dili İngilizce`dir. Eğitim dili İngilizce olan üniversitelere karşı talep gitgide artmakla birlikte, bu tür üniversitelerin öğrencilere çekici gelmesinin nedenlerine ilişkin çok veri bulunmamaktadır. Bu çalışma, öğrencilerin eğitim dili İngilizce olan üniversiteleri seçmelerindeki temel güdüleyici faktörleri, öğrencilerin İngilizce dil becerilerini değerlendirmelerini ve derslerini İngilizce olarak takip etmelerinde karşılaşabilecekleri sorunlarla ilgili algılarını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma bulguları öğrencilerin hem kişisel hem de dışsal faktörler tarafından güdülendiklerine ve kendi dil yeterlik düzeylerine ilişkin oldukça olumlu bir bakış açısına sahip olduklarına işaret etmektedir. Öğrencilerin ortaya koymuş oldukları sorunlar büyük ölçüde başka bir dil öğrenmenin kişinin kendi anadili ve kültüründen uzaklaşması ile sonuçlanacak etkileri üzerinde odaklanmaktadır. Üniversitelere politika oluşturma konusunda yardımcı olmak amacıyla bu konuda daha fazla çalışmaya ihtiyaç duyulduğu tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eğitim dili İngilizce olan üniversiteler, güdüleme,dil becerileri, sorunlar.

English Medium Higher Education in Turkey

The English language has a crucial role in Turkish education, politics and economics.

The strategic and geopolitical status of Turkey as a geographical crossroads between

Asia and Europe has made the nation the cradle of many great civilizations throughout

history. The major motivating forces for the nation to introduce English language education in its schools were Turkey's desire to operate with other countries beyond national boundaries to foster closer relations (Demirel, 1990), and the fact that English language is the language of business, technology, science, and even the Internet (Swales, 1987; Crystal, 2000; Graddol, 1997).

Jones & Davies highlighted the main objective of learning foreign languages as follows:

"For as long as human beings have learned the languages of nations other than their own, that learning has been purposive: that is to say, foreign languages have been learned not for their own sake but as vehicles for social and economic contacts and for the transmission of ideas" (1983:1).

In the Turkish context, the purposeful learning of English is particularly true in the context of academia, to access scientific and technological information, mainly available in English. The national language policy concerning the purpose of English in the universities is stated as: "To enable students who are registered at an English medium department to access scientific and technological information published in English in their related disciplines" (Official Gazette 1984).

The first university to offer English-medium Education (EME), in Turkey, was Boğaziçi University, which began the program in 1912. This was followed by the Middle East Technical University, established as an English medium university in 1954 in Ankara. Subsequently, several other universities all over Turkey opted for EME in some or all of their departments. Currently there are 26 universities in Turkey that offer EME in some of their departments.

Çukorova University, where the present survey was conducted, occupies a prominent place among Turkish universities. It is a state university where three out of the six faculties offer instruction through the medium of English. In 1983, the university senate decided for 40% of the courses to be taught in English in the Department of Economics and Business Administration. In the following years, two more departments of the Engineering Faculty; the Departments of Mechanical Engineering and Electric-Electronics Engineering embarked upon teaching all their courses in English, following the official decision made by the Higher Education Council.

Despite a rising popularity, very little is known about what pulls students towards EME. For example, what motivates the students to choose an EME in the first place, and whether the students themselves perceive their skills to be inefficient to cope with the heavy demand imposed on them in following their subject courses through the medium of the English language.

A very limited amount of research has been concerned with identifying the types of problems that students in Turkey experience when studying subjects in higher education through the medium of English. Hergüner (1990) in a study of postgraduates in Çukurova University found that 86% felt that their level of English was insufficient. Kırkgöz (1999) reports that undergraduate students of economics have difficulty understanding main concepts in their subject area. A survey of first and second year students in a technical institute in Southern Turkey (Çiğdem, 1994) found that overall only one third of the students perceived their English to be 'very good' or 'fairly good' and that there was no statistically significant difference between the self-evaluations of the first and second year students of their general English proficiency level. The latter would suggest that students do not perceive the difficulties to become less over time.

Motivation

It is generally recognized that the perspectives of the learners play a major role in the process of language learning (Ellis, 1985:12). Tarone and Yule argue that:

"The recognition of the fact that learners have needs in what may be termed the 'affective domain', which are at least as important as their needs in the 'knowledge domain', has resulted in the identification of a number of factors which are claimed to influence the learning process. Concepts, such as attitude, motivation, self confidence, and anxiety are frequently invoked in discussions of what makes a successful language learner" (Tarone & Yule, 1989:133).

The importance of the social environment's effects on learners' motivation has been analyzed in the work of Gardner and Lambert (1972). They hypothesize that in acquiring an L2, the learner adopts behavioral patterns characteristic of the target cultural group and that the learner's attitude towards the target group partially determines the learner's level of success in learning the L2. Motivation is defined as "the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" Gardner (1985:1). A distinction is

made between integrative and instrumental types of motivation. The former refers to learner wishes to identify with the culture of the L2 group. It reflects the sincere and personal interest of the learner in the people represented by the L2. The latter refers to learner wishes to acquire the language for pragmatic, or functional needs, for example, for job or study related purposes. Noels (2001) argues that instrumental motivation is stimulated by the learner's awareness of the practical value and advantages which are expected to accrue from acquiring the L2. Any particular learner may have both kinds of motivation in some degree. Motivation is not static, the intensity and type of motivation can change as the learners' experience of language learning develops.

Two related concepts are those of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to behaving in certain ways to achieve rewards while intrinsic motivation refers to internal rewards such as joy and satisfaction at carrying out certain actions. Smit and Dalton state that:

"Much in the same way as instrumental motivation has often been constructed as detrimental to or at least opposed to "good" integrative motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic motives are frequently perceived as being in antagonistic opposition. Research has shown, however, that the two can interact positively when combined with sufficient amounts of self-determination on the part of the individual" (Smit & Dalton, 2000: 233).

Smit and Dalton hypothesize that intrinsic motives are likely to be stable over periods of time; external motives are more likely to be variable over time in relation to the importance the learner gives to external benefits at any point in time (better pay, get along in a foreign country).

A number of studies have attempted to identify the sources of motivation for learning English of primarily university-oriented learners in various educational settings. Cooper and Fishman (1977) investigated the type of motivation of high school students in Jerusalem. They found that instrumental sources of motivation (to read textbooks assigned in universities, to get along abroad, to become broadly educated, etc.) were strong in this group but that integrative sources of motivation (e.g. to know tourists better, to learn foreign points of view on Israel, to know English speaking immigrants better, etc.) were weak. Similar findings were found by Shaw (1983) in a study of final-year art students in three Asian locations (Singapore, Hyderabad and Bangkok). However, in a study of freshmen students in Japan, Benson (1991) found

that integrative and personal reasons for learning English were preferred over instrumental ones.

Self assessment

Self assessment refers to the attempt to elicit students' subjective evaluations of either their general language abilities or abilities to function in specific situations. Brown and Hudson (1998) argue that the accuracy of self-assessment varies according to the linguistic skills and materials involved in the assessment. A study by Yamashita (1996, cited in Benson, 1991) found that the more proficient students were, the more they tended to underestimate their language abilities. According to Brown and Hudson (1998) self assessment is more likely to be quite successful when used for research purposes, but not 'higher stakes' settings where the students are asked to assess their placement into levels of study in a language program.

Argument and Aims

Given the fact that Turkey is currently expanding its provision of English-medium higher education facilities, and that increasing numbers of students opt for undergraduate degrees in English rather than their own native language, it is important to identify their sources of motivation, in other words, what attracts students to this. It is also important to help the English language teaching centers in the universities design their curricula. If, for example, these centers can identify that a group of students are very much instrumentally motivated towards learning the L2 and that the particular pragmatic advantages the learners perceive are work and career related, they can then design English language instruction around work related skills as opposed to teaching general language skills and literature content.

In the Turkish context, the general belief is that students are motivated by instrumental causes rather than integrative causes. Aksungur reports on her experiences as an English language teacher in a technical institute - 'students constantly expressed the wish for their teacher to select real-life reading materials, real-life writing and speaking topics, which could more closely match their needs as economists and engineers in training (Aksungur, 1994: 20). Akünal, (1992), in her study in another prominent English medium university, found that students' attitudes towards EME are guided predominantly by career or academic purposes.

It is also necessary to investigate how students feel about their English language skills once they are in their departments and to explore the nature of the problems they face because of their decision to study through the medium of English. Do students see their English as 'poor' suggesting serious language deficiencies? Do final year students perceive their language skills are better than the first year students do, suggesting that confidence improves over time? Do the problems, as the first and final year students, see them change during the course of study? This leads us to the present research that sets out to answer the following research questions:

1. Which type of motivation, instrumental or integrative, attracts students towards English medium education?
2. How do first and final year students in an English medium university appraise their general English and specific purpose language skills?
3. What problems do first and final year students perceive in studying through the medium of English?

The term 'students' here refers to undergraduates at Çukurova University. The medium of instruction in the departments surveyed is English, which is a foreign language to the students who come from Turkish educational backgrounds. General English skills refer to abilities to use English in a wide variety of social settings (reading everyday texts) whereas specific purpose skills refer to abilities to function in settings related to the discipline the students are studying, e.g., reading texts about economics or electrical engineering. First and final year students are compared in order to examine whether and to what extent students' perceptions of their English language skills and difficulties change over time, whether any problems of new students can be remedied by exposure to the target language.

Method
The study was based on a survey of undergraduates at Çukurova University, Adana, which is located in the South of the country. Çukurova University was selected as the site for the present research for a number of reasons. It was founded in 1973 and is thus an established university.

Subjects

Table 1 provides a profile of the 203 students who participated in the survey. The students were in their first and final years of study in their departments. They were in three different departments teaching in the medium of English: Mechanical Engineering, Electric and Electronics Engineering, and Economics and Business Administration. The students' ages ranged from 18 to 24. 160 were male and 43 were female, roughly reflecting the general predominance of males to females in these departments. This group's contact with English had been primarily restricted to educational settings because few students (16.3%) had parents who speak English and very few (3.9%) had visited English-speaking countries. All students came from the Turkish education system, having received six or seven years of English in the secondary school. In order to gain entry into the departments teaching in the medium of English at the University, students must have either a TOEFL score of 510, an IELTS score of level 5, or pass the English Proficiency Examination administered by the Center for Foreign Languages of the university.

Table 1   Demographic Profile of Students

Students (N = 203)

Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Male 160		78.8%
Female 43		21.2%
Year		
First year 102		50.2%
Final year101		49.8%
Department		
Mechanics		
First year 34		16.7%
Final year 32		15.7%
Electrics-Electronics		
First Year 30		14.8%
Final year 24		11.8%
Economics and Business		
First Year 39		19.2%
Final year 44		21.7%
English speaking parent(s)		
Yes 33		16.3%
No 170		83.7%
Visits to English speaking countries		
Yes 8		3.9%
No 195		96.1%
Other languages spoken		
None 132		65.0%
German 52		26.6%
Arabic 11		5.4%
French 1		0.5%
Russian 1		0.5%
Bosnian 1		0.5%
Age Range		
First year 18- 23		
Final year 21- 24		

Questionnaire Design

The design of the questionnaire was based on the instrument designed by Benson (1991) to identify the primary motivation of students in Japan to study English and the role of social factors in their motivation. Benson's study was itself based on the theoretical distinction of integrative and instrumental sources of motivation of Gardner and Lambert (1972). The present study was an attempt to adapt the Japanese study to the Turkish situation and the specific foci of the research questions. Instrumental and integrative motivations were operationalized into items for section IV of the Questionnaire (see Appendix for the English version of the questionnaire).

The questionnaire was designed in line with two pragmatic principles: 1. the students would be able to complete it relatively quickly in class, and 2. all data, except handwritten responses to the one open-ended item, would be coded and entered into a database for statistical analysis.

Section I of the questionnaire required students to provide demographic information about themselves. Sections II and III required students to assess their general English language skills and specific purpose language skills (e.g. writing, reading, etc. in their specific discipline) respectively. These sections of the questionnaire were 'structured' (Oppenheim, 1996:23), that is, they comprised items requiring respondents to select from a number of alternatives. Section IV required students to rank items from a list of integrative and instrumental sources of motivations. Section V was an open-ended item aiming to elicit the students' perceptions of any difficulties they had studying through the medium of English. A draft of the questionnaire was piloted with classes of students from the Electronics and Economics departments. Minor changes suggested by the students were taken into account for the final version. Both pilot and final versions of the questionnaire were translated into Turkish and were administered as such for full comprehension.

Data Collection

The questionnaires were administered in class time towards the end of the first semester in the teaching year. The first year students were mid-way through year one and the final year students were mid- way through year four of study in their EME departments. 295 questionnaires were collected. 92 were very partially completed and

these were therefore excluded from the study, leaving 203 mainly completed questionnaires for analysis.

Data Analysis

With the exception of responses to item in Section 5, all information from the remaining 203 questionnaires was coded and entered into a computer database. Statistical procedures employed included descriptive statistics, Pearson chi square and independent samples t-test. The statistical software package SPSS for Windows (Version 9.0) was used for all data entry and analysis.

Responses given to the open-ended item in Section V (Does studying your academic subject through English have any disadvantages for you?) were analyzed in the following way. Firstly, responses were reviewed by the researcher of the present study and a research assistant familiar with the coding system, working independently to identify recurrent themes. The aim of this was 'data reduction' defined as "a process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data" (Miles and Huberman, 1984:10). Nine themes were identified and were used as categories for coding the responses (see Figure 1).

Figure 1   Problems Experienced Through Studying in the Medium of English

1. reduced ability to understand general concepts
    Bazı kavramları anlayamıyorum
I cannot understand some concepts
    2. reduced ability to understand specific details
Dersler konusunda daha derin bilgi düzeyine ulaşabilmemizi güçleştiriyor
It makes it difficult to acquire a detailed level of knowledge about my subject
3. time consuming nature of the task
Dersleri anlamak için zaman kaybına neden oluyor.
It increases the amount of time I spend on understanding the lessons.
4. difficulty in expressing ideas
Kendimi Ingilizce olarak ifade etmekte çok zorlandığımdan dolayı derste bir soru karşısında şaşırıyorum.
I get confused when answering a question in the lesson as I find it difficult to express myself in English.
5. hinders development of thinking ability
Düşünme sisteminizi bozuyor.
It mixes up my ability to think clearly.
6. results in superficial learning rather than deep learning
Ingilizce eğitim insanı ezberciliğe itmekte.
Education through English makes me memorize things.
7. feelings of alienation and separation from native language/culture
    Turkçenin yozlasmasına neden oluyor.
It makes my own language look unimportant
8. low level of English in the academic environment
Yeterli derece Ingilizce konuşan hocamız çok az.

We have few lecturers with good enough English.
9. Generalised sense of regret at choosing English medium university
Kendimi dördüncü sınıfa gelmiş olsam bile birşey bilmiyormuşum gibi hissetmeme neden oluyor
Even though I am in the fourth year, I feel that I have learnt almost nothing.

Some students mentioned more than one type of problem. Their responses were thus coded into two or more categories. Data was re-coded two weeks after the initial coding, and a reliability score (percentage agreement) of .946 was achieved.

Results

- Which type of motivation, instrumental or integrative, attracts students towards English medium education?

Table 2 shows the reasons the students chose an English medium university. It is arranged in order of the most through the least popular sources of motivation.

Table 2 Sources of Motivation for Choosing English-medium Education

Source of motivation	Type	M	SD
Get a well paid job	instrumental	4.1823	4.3273
Become broadly educated	instrumental	5.4635	4.4462
Discuss subjects in my field	instrumental	5.9323	4.1289
Get on well with English speaking people	integrative	6.1615	3.5181
Be involved in research in my field	instrumental	6.6823	4.2805
Read written texts in my field	instrumental	7.3333	4.0987
Learn about English speaking cultures	integrative	7.8646	4.4454
Allow me to work with computers	instrumental	7.8646	3.8141
Gives personal self satisfaction	integrative	8.2760	4.3944
Enjoy entertainment (internet games)	instrumental	9.2187	3.7240
Understand English speaking people	integrative	9.4844	3.6106
Make English speaking friends	integrative	9.9740	3.2943
Understand foreign points of view	integrative	10.5885	3.6240
Get to know tourists	integrative	11.1885	4.620
Be involved in international affaires	integrative	11.8594	4.4175
Get to live in a big city	instrumental	12.4844	3.6294

The results show that this group primarily selected instrumental sources of motivation. This is illustrated by the fact that instrumental motivations are in the top three places. It is interesting to note that the two most popular sources of motivation for these students are related to long-term objectives (better paid jobs and being broadly educated). Thus it can be surmised that these students are most strongly attracted to

EME because of long-term life goals. Instrumental sources of motivation related to study purposes (e.g., being able to read about, discuss and research subjects in English) are in a secondary position with regard to motivation. However, the results also show that among popular reasons for selecting English medium higher education (i.e., ranked in the first half) are also two integrative sources of motivation (Get on well with English speaking people and learn about English speaking cultures). It can be noted that this group was more drawn by integrative motivations concerned with the culture and people of English speaking countries in general (Getting on well with English speaking people and Learning about English speaking cultures) than getting to know English speaking people as individuals (Getting to know tourists or Making English speaking friends). The analysis of each questionnaire in isolation showed that most individual students ranked a mix of both instrumental and integrative sources of motivation as the main sources of motivation. It may be deduced that although attracted mainly by instrumental motivations, the typical student is also drawn by integrative reasons.

- *How do first and final year students in the University appraise their general English and specific purpose language skills?*

General English Language Skills

The students perceived differences in their abilities in the four language skills. Overall students felt they were stronger ('good' or 'fair') in the receptive skills of reading and listening and weaker ('poor') in the productive skills of speaking and writing, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3 Students' Rating of Their General Language Skills

good	1st year	Final year	Total	fair	1st year	Final	Total	poor?	1st	Final	Total
R	57 55.9%)	73 (72.3%	130 (64%)	S	63 (61.8%)	46 (45.5%)	109 (53.7%)	S	21 20.6%)	21 (28.8%)	42 (20.7%
L	39 38.2%)	63 (62.4%	102 (50.2%	W	58 (56.9%)	46 (39.6%)	98 (48.3%)	W	11 (16.8%	9 (8.9%)	20 (9.9%)
W	33 (32,4%	51 (50.5%	84 (41.4%	L	56 (54.9%)	33 (32.7%)	89 (43.8%)	L	7 (6.9%)	5 (5%)	12 (5.9%)
S	18 17.6%)	34 (33.7%	52 (25.6%	R	43 (42.2%)	26 (25.7%)	69 (34%)	R	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (2%)
T			368				365				78

R = Reading, L = Listening, W = Writing and S = Speaking

The results show a positive self-evaluation by the students of their skills. This is illustrated by the higher numbers in the 'good' category than in the 'poor' category. Even ability in speaking (perceived by the students as their weakest skill area) was seen as being 'poor' by only 42 (20.7%) of the students. These findings about Turkish students contrast with findings about Japanese students (Benson, 1991). Using a similar self-assessment technique, Benson found that freshmen students in Japan had very low regard of their language skills.

Specific Purposes Language Skills

Again the students perceived differences in their abilities in different skill areas. Overall, the students felt they were good at the two receptive skills of reading and listening and 'poor' in the productive skills of speaking and writing, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4   Students' Rating of Their Specific Purposes Language Skills

'good'	1st year	Final year	Total	'fair'	1st year	Final year	Total	poor'	1st year	Final year	Total
R	45 (44.1%)	64 (63.4%)	109 (53.7%)	W	53 (52%)	42 (41.6%)	95 (46.8%)	S	42 (41.2%)	33 (32.7%)	75 (36.9%)
L	48 (47.1%)	59 (58.4%	107 (52.7%)	S	45 (44.1%)	43 (42.6%)	88 (43.3%)	W	17 (16.7%)	6 (6.9%)	24 (11.8%)
W	32 (31.4%)	52 (51.5%)	84 (41.4%)	R	52 (51%)	33 (42.7%)	85 (41.9%)	L	9 (8.8%)	5 (5%)	14 (6.9%)
S	15 (14.7%)	25 (24.8%)	40 (19.7)	L	45 (44.1%)	36 (35.6%)	81 (39.9%)	R	5 (4.9%)	4 (4%)	9 (4.4)
			340				349				122

R = Reading, L = Listening, W = Writing and S = Speaking

The results show a somewhat positive self-evaluation illustrated by the higher numbers in the 'good' category than in the 'poor' category. Over half of the students rated themselves as 'good' at reading and listening for specific purposes. Speaking was again perceived by the students as their weakest skill area, with 75 (36.9%) students perceiving themselves as 'poor'.

Comparison of general and specific purposes skills

With the exception of listening skills, the students perceived themselves to be marginally better at English for general rather than specific disciplinary purposes, as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5 Students' Perceptions of Their General and Specific Purposes Language Skills

Skill	Mean	Std. Deviation
General reading	1.3663	.5130
Specific purpose reading	1.5050	.5838
Specific purpose listening	1.5396	..6237
General listening	1.5545	.6064
General writing	1.6931	.6653
Specific purposes writing	1.7030	.6698
General speaking	1.9505	.6821
Specific purposes speaking	2.1733	.7362

In this question, 1 = good, 2 = fair or 3 = poor

Another pair of questionnaire items (questions 12 and 14) required students to evaluate their listening ability with regard to extensive, specified aural genres ('listening to a film' and 'following a lecture'). It has been found that students evaluated their ability to 'follow a lecture' (specific purpose) higher than their ability to 'understand a film' (general purpose). 134 students rated their ability at the 100% or 75% for the lecture whereas only 70 students rated their ability at the 100% or 75% level for the film. Table 5 also shows that students assessed themselves as being stronger at reading and listening and weaker at writing and especially speaking.

Comparison of First and Final Year Students

Both first and final year students perceived that they were strongest in reading then listening, but weaker in writing, and especially weak in speaking. However, there were statistically significant differences between the perceptions of first and final year students with the final year students perceiving greater strengths in their language skills. See Table 6.

Table 6 First and Final Year Students' Perceptions of Their General and Specific Purpose Language Skills

Skill	year	mean	std dev	t	df	sig (2 tailed)
General listening	first	1.6832	..5988	3.080	200	.002*
	final	1.4257	.5890			
General speaking	first	2.0297	.6238	1.658	200	.099
	final	1.8713	.7303			
General reading	first	1.4356	.5180	1.933	200	.055
	final	1.2970	.5009			
General writing	first	1.7822	.6262	1.916	200	.057
	final	1.6040	.6940			
Specific listening	first	1.6139	..6476	1.700	200	.091
	final	1.4653	.5927			
Specific speaking	first	2.2673	..7056	1.826	200	.069
	final	2.0792	.7574			
Specific reading	first	1.6040	.5845	2.440	200	.016*
	final	1.4059	.5688			
Specific writing	first	1.8515	.6839	3.224	200	.001*
	final	1.5545	.6241			

significant differences are marked with an asterisk - *.001 level, ** .05 level

The differences between the two groups were more significant for specific purposes writing then specific purpose reading and general listening. These results indicate that in these areas, student's confidence improves significantly over time during the course of education in the EME departments. Although the levels of difference between the two groups did not reach statistical significance for the other general and specific purpose skill areas, there was still some improvement as the levels of difference approached statistical significance. The level of difference was least for general

speaking, indicating that students' confidence in this area did not improve over time and during the course of education in their EME departments.

From the results it may be surmised that during the course of EME study, students feel they develop competence in being able to read and write in their disciplines.

- What problems do first and final year students perceive in studying through the medium of English?

Students acknowledged that studying in an English medium university created a real challenge for them. A total of 136 students stated problems they experienced because of studying through the medium of English (See Table 7). 19 first year and 21 final year students did not state any problems and 13 first year and 14 final year students did not specify problems but made suggestions for improvements which were not used in the analysis.

Table 7 Problems Experienced by Students Through EME

Problem	First Year N = 102	Final Year N = 101	Total N = 203
1. Reduced ability to understand specific details	29	33	62
2. Reduced ability to understand general concepts	15	5	20
3. Results in superficial learning rather than deep learning	10	14	24
4. Distance from native language and/or culture	5	12	17
5. General regret about choice of English-medium university	6	10	16
6. time consuming nature of the task	6	9	15
7. hinders development of thinking ability	4	6	10
8. difficulty in expressing ideas	4	7	11
9. Low level of English in the academic environment	3	10	13
Total	82	106	188

It has been found that first year and final year students perceived the same types of problems. The three major problems (items 1, 2 and 3) all concerned learning. Both groups mentioned most the problem of 'reduced ability to understand specific details'. More final than first year students stated problems in all categories. One exception to this was 'reduced ability to understand general concepts' which was seen as a problem mostly by first year students, a problem noted in previous research (Kirkgoz, 1999). In particular, final year students were more concerned than first year students about the low level of English in the educational environment and the distancing effect they felt

concerning their own language and culture because of studying through the medium of English.

Generally, the students were able to articulate well the precise nature of the problems they experienced. Some examples (translated) are given below to illustrate their ways of thinking.

- This (EME) leads to erosion of our culture. Every day it leads to young people becoming distanced from their own roots. (distance from own culture and language).

- It (EME) leads us to loose time in understanding and studying the lessons. I cannot understand lessons in detail. I realize that to be more successful in my education, education in one's native language is essential. (time consuming, inability to understand details and general regret).

- We cannot understand some subjects in enough depth. We memorize and move on. Later on we cannot remember anything. It (EME) is not very productive at all. (superficial learning).

- It would be difficult enough to understand the concepts in Turkish let alone understanding it in another language. (reduced ability to understand general concepts).

- Trying to understand forces my brain. That's why what I learn turns out to be temporary. I do not master really the subject and then wrongly connect the ideas. (superficial learning).

- Our Turkish becomes fossilized as we get little chance to practice it. (distance from own language/culture).

- It (EME) hinders my ability to comment on what is going on. (expressing ideas).

Discussion

The overall impression of the students based on the findings from the survey is of a group with a mixed but mainly instrumental orientation towards long-term (post study) goals, and with a fairly positive assessment about their English, both in respect to their specific purposes and especially their general English language skills. In spite of this, the process of EME is seen as problematic for them, and they are especially concerned about the impact EME has on their learning academic subject matter.

With regard to the first research question, it was surprising to find a mix of integrative and instrumental motivations prioritized by the students. It has been 'taken for granted' in the Turkish higher educational context that students in this situation are simply drawn towards EME mainly by study-oriented instrumental motivations. However, the findings suggest that to some extent the source of motivation is also integrative and that students were primarily motivated to instrumental reasons focused

on long-term goals, (rather than study related goals) such as gaining a job with a better salary.

With regard to the second research question, the results indicated that the students had a fairly high regard for their English language skills. In some areas the final year students assessed their language skills more positively than the first year students indicating that the students develop confidence in their abilities. Given the literature indicating some degree of reliability in self-assessment in low stake situations such as research, it can be tentatively suggested that 1. the students' actual abilities improve during the course of their EME studies, and 2. students do not see much of an actual language deficiency problem here.

The results showed that the vast majority of students assessed themselves as fair and good in all general and specific skill areas with the exception of speaking. It can be concluded that students' greatest deficiency (or at least perception of deficiency) is the speaking skills, both speaking for general and especially for specific purposes. In other words, students have particularly low perception about their ability to speak about their discipline. If students feel that speaking is their weak spot, there is clearly a need for the English language teaching centre of the University to put more emphasis on teaching speaking skills.

Finally, with regard to the third research question, the results show that first and final year students perceived the same types of problems. This suggests that the nature of the problems does not change over time in the university. The fact that more final year students identified and articulated problems than the first year students can be related to the greater awareness of problems by the more mature final year students. Predictably, the problems identified by the students were concerned with the detrimental effects of learning subjects through another language. One exception to this however was identification by a number of students of a feeling of being distanced from their language, culture and subject matter. Less predictable, was the finding that there was little correspondence between the stating of problems and how students perceived their English language level. No patterns emerged here and both students who assessed themselves as having good skills and those who did not proffered similar statements about what EME had entailed for them.

Conclusion

The students in the present study are motivated primarily by the long term benefits and opportunities knowing English may bring in a country that is experiencing economic development. Not surprisingly, owing to EME, the students experience a number of difficulties. Thus, there is a tension between the long-term advantages and short-term difficulties. Given that EME inevitably makes subject learning more difficult, do the benefits of acquiring English outweigh the costs, that is, additional strain caused? Some of the problems students identified in EME can be overcome. For example, some elective courses in the native language could be offered to redress the feeling of alienation some students mentioned.

Does EME open 'a window of opportunity' or not? Indications from the present study -higher self assessments of final year students of their language abilities combined with articulation of problems - suggests that EME is a 'no pain no gain', that is, although EME puts additional strain on the students, the benefits are significant. Turkey's desire to promote closer relations with the outside world, and the nation's ambition to increase its competitiveness in academic and business environments make the learning and teaching of English inevitable. This study, therefore, gives insights into the nature of motivational factors influencing students' decision, and the problems they experience.

The present study has but scratched the surface of the issue of EME in a specific Turkish university. Two directions will be suggested that future research could fruitfully follow:

1. Does EME disadvantage students in terms of acquisition of academic and professional knowledge? Comparative study can be made of the academic and profession knowledge of graduates from EME and Turkish medium education.

2. Does EME lead to long-term benefits? Research can be made following up (after 5 years, 10 years, etc.). EME graduates and Turkish medium graduates of like degree course to investigate salary, workplace position, promotion possibilities and language demands of work (e.g. is English required for workplace needs).

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Appendix
Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to ask your opinions and experiences of English medium education. Please fill in the blanks with the most appropriate responses.

Section 1 Background Information

First of all, some questions about yourself.

1. Are you male ___ or female ___
2. Age __
3. Your department in the University _____
4. Which level are you in your department _____
5. Have you ever visited an English speaking country? Yes ___ No ___
If **yes**, where was it and how long did you stay there?
6. Do your parents speak English?
Mother Yes ___ No ___
Father Yes ___ No ___
   If **yes**, where do they speak English (at home, work, with friends, etc.)
   Mother _____   Father _____
7. Do you use English outside class? Yes ___ No ____
If **yes**, where and with whom?
8. Apart from Turkish and English what other languages do you know?

Language	Reading Good/fair/poor	Writing Good/fair/poor	Listening Good/fair/poor	Speaking Good/fair/poor

Section 2 General English
This section asks you to rate your own level of general English.

9. How well can you do the following?

	Good	Fair	Poor
Understand spoken English			
Speak English			
Read English			
Write English			

Could you write a reasonably correct letter in English? Yes __ No __
10. When you watch a movie how much can you follow?
100% __   75%__   50% __   25% __

Section 3 English for Studying your Subject
This section asks you to rate your own level of English in relation to studying in your subject area (mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, economics and business).
11. How well can you do the following?

	Good	Fair	Poor
Understand people speaking about my subject of study			
Speak about my subject of study			

Read texts on my subject of study in English			
Write about my subject of study in English			

12. Could you write a reasonably correct project or report about your subject in English? Yes __ No __
13. When you attend a lecture in your subject area how much can you follow?
   100% __   75% __   50% __   25% __

Section 4 Reason for choosing to study in English

This section asks you about why you think English is important for you.
14. You are studying your subject through English. What were some of your considerations when you decided to study through English?

Please rate the following items in order of importance. For example, use 1 for the most important for you, 2 for the next important and continue until 16 which is the least important for you.

___ Knowing English helps me to get a well paid job
___ Knowing English enables me to understand foreign points of view
___ Knowing English enables me to join in discussions about my subject
___ Knowing English enables me to enjoy entertainment, such as internet games
___ Knowing English enables me to read texts in my subject area
___ Knowing English lets me to get on well with people in English speaking countries
___ Knowing English enables me to become involved in research
___ Knowing English enables me to make English speaking friends
___ Knowing English gives me personal satisfaction
___ Knowing English allows me to live in a big city
___ Knowing English enables me to learn about English speaking cultures
___ Knowing English enables me to become broadly educated
___ Knowing English allows me to work with computers
___ Knowing English enables me to understand how English people think and behave
___ Knowing English enables me to get to know tourists better
___ Knowing English enables me to get involved in international affaires

Section 5. Disadvantages

15. What disadvantages, if any, does studying your subject through English have for you?

16. Do you have any further comments?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!