

**ANATOLIAN HIGH SCHOOLS
AND
THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
TURKISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

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This paper aims at presenting in broad lines English-medium schools, the so-called «Anatolian High Schools», run by both the state and the private sector in Turkey.

To this end, after stating the purpose of the paper in the introduction, the paper investigates the historical background of foreign language teaching in Turkey and the place of private institutions in the educational system. Curriculum changes and activities in foreign language education are mentioned briefly, and students' achievements on English language instruction are supplemented by the findings of a comparative study.

Finally, in the conclusion, the paper lists the contributions of English-medium highschools to the Turkish educational system.

Introduction

In recent years, the rapid progress in science and technology, widely-used mass media, the importance of international tourism mobility have gradually increased cultural and commercial inter-relations among the countries which are progressively obliged to use a couple of languages as a means of international communication. It is estimated that there are about four thousand languages all over the world. Each society has its own native language, but only a few of the languages are learned as a foreign or second language.

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The most important criterion for a language to be learned by other nations is the economic and political power of that nation. The other criteria are historical, commercial and cultural relations and also military agreements and continental treaties among the nations.

At present, Turkey is a member of a lot of international organizations such United Nations, NATO, Council of Europe, OECD, etc. Only a few languages such as English, French, Spanish are officially used in these international organizations.

Today, like it or curse it, English is the closest thing to a 'lingua franca' around the globe. Roughly 700 million people speak it with an increase of 40 percent in the last twenty years and a total that represents more than one-seventh of the world's population. It has replaced French in the world of diplomacy and German in the field of science. (Newsweek, 1982). It is said that more than 80 percent of all scientific papers are published first in English.

For the above-mentioned reasons, teaching other countries' languages at schools has become an important objective and some important languages such as English, French, German, Italian and Spanish have found their way in school curricula. In Turkish educational system English, French and German have been taught as foreign languages in school since the proclamation of the Republic. It will be helpful to review the past in order to understand the present situation of foreign language teaching in Turkey.

Historical Background of Foreign Language Teaching in Turkey

It is customary to divide the history of education into two periods: the Ottoman Period and the Republican Period.

A. The Ottoman Period

This period covers 624 years between 1299, in which the Ottoman Empire was founded by Ottoman Bey and 1923, in which the Turkish Republic was founded by Mustapha Kemal Atatürk.

In early Ottoman Empire period, primary schools «Sıbyan Okulları» and secondary schools «Medreseler» were religion-based schools. Arabic was the only foreign language taught at Medrese in addition to religious subjects. The higher educational institutions

«Enderunlar» were known as «Palace Schools» (Saray Okulları). The overall objective of Enderun was to train well-educated statesmen for the Ottoman Empire. Arabic and Persian were taught as foreign languages. The amazing point for the institution, Medrese, was that Turkish was taught as a second language to non-Turks and devshirmes, those who are converted into Turks from other nations in the Ottoman Empire.

Westernization and civilization in the Ottoman Empire started with the declaration of Reorganization Movement, known as «Tanzimat». The first technical school, Ship-Building College, «Mühendis Hane-i Bahri-i Hümayun» in which lectures were given in French was founded in 1773. Thus, French, as a modern foreign language, was placed in school curricula for the first time in Turkish educational system. A medical and a political science college followed this school in 1863.

At secondary education level, public schools, «Sultaniler» were opened. Galatasaray Sultanisi, known as the first French medium high school, run by the state was opened on the 1st of September, 1868. Galatasaray is accepted as the turning point in the Turkish educational system because it was the first state institution that led to Anatolian High Schools in Turkey. Incidentally, Galatasaray High School has trained many well-educated statesmen, politicians and diplomats for Turkey.

The whole educational system of the Ottoman Empire was reorganized by the well-known (prominent) Minister of Education, Saffet Pasha in 1869. During his period, Junior High Schools «İdadiler» and Senior High Schools «Sultaniler» were officially opened and French became a compulsory school subject, English and German were offered as additional optional subjects; thus the teaching of French, English and German was embodied in the curricula.

The first English-medium private high school was opened by the Americans in 1863. It was called «Robert College.» It is said that Robert College was opened to help the Turks during the Crimean War by a very rich businessman from New York, named Robert. He had offered to pay for all the expenses of the college until the year he died, 1878, and also donated his wealth to the college foundation.

Before the Republican Period, many private high schools run by foreigners such as the French, the German, the Italian were

opened in Turkey. At present, there are five American, seven French, two German and two Italian private high schools in Turkey.

B. The Republican Period

This period covers 63 years between 1923, in which the Republic was proclaimed and 1986, the present.

The most important event in this period was the 1924 Education Act. According to the Act, all the educational institutions were unified and centralized. Religious schools such as Medreseler, İdadiler and Sultaniler were closed down; private high schools run by the foreigners were not closed down, but they were not given permission to open new ones. On the contrary, the permission was given to Turkish private high schools. Thus privately run schools by Turkish entrepreneurs were opened and increased throughout the country. Also, the Ministry of Education has decided to increase the number of schools like «Galatasaray High School» afterwards named «Anatolian High Schools» in order to make teaching of foreign languages more efficient. The characteristic of Anatolian high schools is to teach some subjects such as mathematics and science through a modern language - English, French or German. These schools offer a one-year intensive foreign language teaching program to the pupils so that they will be able to follow courses offered in a foreign language. After graduating from high school, the graduates are able to use the language effectively, find a good job in business life and are able to make good progress in their academic life. For this reason, most parents would like to send their children to these schools. For instance, in the 1980-81 academic year 44315 primary school graduates applied to these schools, but only 4860 out of them were accepted through the entrance exam. In the 1984-85 academic year 121.020 primary school graduates applied, and only 13480 were accepted. As shown above, the number of these schools. In 1974-75 there were only 12 Anatolian High Schools and 43 Turkish and foreign private high schools in Turkey. In 1984-85 the number reached 137 schools altogether. In order to encourage learning foreign languages in Turkey, privately run Turkish schools have been founded since 1925. The private high schools are similar to the Anatolian High Schools and authorized by the Ministry of Education.

Table : 1
Distribution of Foreign Language-Medium High Schools
in Turkey

Types of Schools	Foreign Languages			
	English	French	German	Italian
Anatolian High Schools	64	6	2	—
Turkish Private H. Schools	43	4	2	—
Foreign Private H. Schools	5	2	7	2
Total	112	12	11	2

Source : Ministry of Education Statistics

As shown in Table : 1, most of the foreign language high schools in Turkey are English-medium. Nowadays German-medium schools are increasing because of the Turkish workers in Germany. Most of the workers in Germany are planning to come back to Turkey and wish to send their children to German-medium schools.

There are approximately 4 million pupils in secondary schools in Turkey, but only 85 or 90 thousand out of them have the chance to attend these schools. The rest of them have to attend public, technical or vocational schools. They learn foreign languages there but they have only three teaching hours for a foreign language course a week. Unfortunately, they are not able to communicate in the target language effectively. For this reason, parents prefer Anatolian High Schools to public schools.

Curriculum Development in Foreign Language Education in Turkey

The concept, curriculum, is very new in Turkey. The first curriculum preparation in foreign language education started in 1962 in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education.

Recent contemporary developments and trends in foreign language teaching forced authorities to reconsider curricula, textbooks, teaching methods, techniques and materials. The Ministry of Edu-

cation decided to establish «The Center for Developing Foreign Language Education» (Yabancı Dil Öğretimini Geliştirme Merkezi) in cooperation with the experts from the Council of Europe.

The Center prepared a new curriculum, textbooks and audio-visual materials. They were all prepared for public schools. Nothing was done for Anatolian High Schools. Finally, in 1983, the Ministry of Education decided to prepare a new curriculum for Anatolian High Schools and appointed a commission including the author of this paper. The curriculum was prepared for only English-medium high schools and published in the Official Gazette of the Ministry of Education (Tebliğler Dergisi) in Number, 2170, on August 13, 1984.

Pupils' Achievement in Foreign Language in Schools

Pupils' achievement in foreign language in Anatolian High Schools is significantly different when compared to the other schools. The findings through research conducted by the author of this paper show that there is significant difference between the Anatolian High Schools and the public schools. And also there are differences among Turkish and foreign private schools and Anatolian High Schools. These differences are shown in Table : 2 below.

Table : 2
Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation of
Pupils' Performance in English in Schools

Types of schools	Dept. of Literature			Dept of Science		
	(n)	\bar{X}	(S)	(n)	\bar{X}	(S)
Public Schools	278	14.84	6.25	325	15.78	5.77
Anatolian High Schools	79	32.19	8.03	155	36.45	6.57
Turkish Private H. Schools	56	32.82	5.85	47	33.60	10.42
Foreign Private H. Schools	101	41.13	4.06	144	42.73	4.38

x = Arithmetic mean is calculated out of 50 points.

Source : Ö. Demirel (1979)

As shown in Table : 2, foreign private schools have the highest score of all. It can be said that foreign private schools employ **native speakers**, use **audiovisual aids** effectively in the EFL/ESL classrooms. School foundation is supported both by the parents and the government of the country of the target language and these schools are located in big cities such as İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara where it is possible to find well-qualified part-time teachers. The other point is the number of the pupils in each class is limited. Some schools offer a two-year preparation for developing the basic language skills instead of one year.

Pupils in Anatolian High Schools are more successful than public schools. It was an expected finding, because pupils at these schools are able to use the foreign language intensively, they do their homework, take oral and written exams in that language and spend most of their time by reading books written in that language. They are also in close contact with the western culture and are able to get the first-hand knowledge by means of the target language.

Conclusion

In conclusion, foreign language - medium high schools have great importance in the Turkish Educational System. The graduates command the language, use it effectively, get first-hand knowledge, think and speak perfectly and also are able to publish abroad. The graduates of these schools will be able to work cooperatively and establish personal relations effectively with the people who speak the target language as his/her native language.

In the near future, Common Market countries in Europe are planning to establish the United States of Europe similar to the United States of America. Most probably, English and/or French will be the official language for the new state. In order to educate the new generation for the future, this type of schools will help the learners to learn one or more than one foreign language effectively and perfectly.

It is hoped that Anatolian typed schools will continue to train well educated scholars, statesmen and politicians as Galatasaray High School has been doing for centuries for Turkey.

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