

Teaching and Learning English in Turkey *Par Excellence*

Ogunyemi Christopher Babatunde

Department of English, College of Humanities

Joseph Ayo Babalola University

PMB 5006 Ilesa 233001 Osun State, Nigeria.

bbocguns2@yahoo.se

Abstract

Turkey plays major role in the development of science and technology in the world. This has created a dynamic landmark in the recognition that the country enjoys. To further substantiate strong international appraisal in learning and teaching, it is expedient to redefine teaching and learning in English. First, this will break the barriers of lack of communication which may arise when a foreigner that cannot speak the Turkish language arrives in the country and second, it will showcase the English curriculum which could give the Turk ability to move to any Anglo-American enclave in search for developmental strides which could enable him indulge in any manner of research that could facilitate the development of Turkey. This study demonstrates that English has at least become of age as a global language. It is a phenomenon which lies at the heart of globalisation. English is now redefining national and individual identities worldwide; shifting political fault lines: creating new global patterns of wealth and social exclusion; and suggesting new notions of rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Graddol, 2006).

Keywords: Teaching, Learning, English, Turkey, Education and Communication

1.1 Introduction

The importance of language cannot be underestimated because it is the vehicle of thought and communication. English language is a national and international medium of oral communication (Chukumah Helen et al 2007). By so doing, it has led to the exchange of feelings and effects which has contributed tremendously to the socio-economical and political development of any state. Turkey as a country of high repute in science and technology is growing with each day that passes. The need to inculcate the use of English in teaching and learning is what this study attempts to demonstrate. The need for this is to broaden the horizon of knowledge and the spectrum of development which would cut across all the levels of economies. In Turkey, many native languages exist which bring about mutually concrete body of thoughts as well though they do not enjoy the same international reception that English does. According to the Turizm research, "The Turkish language is not an Indo-European language. It belongs to the Altay branch of the Ural-Altay linguistic family. The languages of this family are called Altaic because they are believed to have originated in the high lands around the Altay Mountains of Central Asia. More than 90 percent of all contemporary speakers of Altaic languages speak a Turkish language. The peoples of this region led a nomadic life. Turks, too, for centuries being nomads, took their language along wherever they moved. The Turkish language now stretches from the Mongolian lands and China to the present day Turkey. The far eastern border of the language now is where once the Turkish people have originated from.

The Turkish language at present is being heavily spoken in the following countries and regions: Turkey, Northern Cyprus, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Ozbekistan, Turkistan, Kazakistan, Kirgizistan, Tajikistan and so on. The language being spoken in Turkey now is accepted to be the standard Turkish and it is the descendant of Ottoman Turkish and its predecessor, so-called Old Anatolian Turkish, which was introduced into Anatolia by the Seljuk Turks in the late 11th century AD. It basically differs from that of other Turkic origin groups in dialects and accents". (<http://www.turizm.net/turkey/info/language.html>). With these languages in vogue, English will not only act as complementary code but a global language that will unite all factors and cultures. This study that examines teaching and learning English in Turkey is divided into six parts: (a) visualizes English use and its pedagogical application in Turkey, (b) stresses the methodological implications of English in Turkey, (c) concerns itself with the learning of English in Turkey, (d) looks at the teaching of English, (e) discusses cultural innovations and diversity that arise in the use of English for the Turkish people and (f) finalizes the discussion by suggesting some recommendations which are both analytical and theoretical.

2.1 English Use and its Pedagogical Application in Turkey

Cambridge dictionary probes into the etymology of pedagogy as “the study of being a teacher or the process of teaching. The term generally refers to strategies of instruction, or a style of instruction as pedagogy is also occasionally referred to as the correct use of instructive strategies. For example, Paulo Freire referred to his method of teaching adult humans as critical pedagogy. In correlation with those instructive strategies the instructor's own philosophical beliefs of instruction are harbored and governed by the pupil's background knowledge and experience, situation, and environment, as well as learning goals set by the student and teacher” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedagogy>). Consequently upon that, a teacher who uses English as the language of instruction is likely to introduce cultural knowledge of the English people and this will introduce new strategies different from the teaching methods known in Turkey. Three classes of people exist in Turkey: They are beginner's category, intermediate category and advanced category. Teaching of English for these people could require a very simplistic application of lesson notes-the type constantly being used by the British Council. Traditional lesson notes were written to address the problems of the particular student and to solve problems.

For beginner's class usually within the ages of 2-7 the teacher may start by introducing

Alphabetical Order of Setting Words and its Classification

Christmas Adverbs of Frequency

Christmas Past Tense Mime

Classroom Treasure Hunt

Color Word Puzzle

Conjunctions

Countries and Nationalities

Driving Rules

Formal Letter Writing

Use of Present Tense/Simple Past Tense etc. Among others. (<http://www.usingenglish.com/teachers/lesson-plans/>).

However, English pedagogy in Turkey would go a long way to stimulate cultural and social balance. However, ‘the impulse is to attach oneself to great traditions or to serve oneself from them, there is general agreement in all these instances about one thing: English Language affirms a set of social patterns and reflects a particular cultural taste. Writers who imitate the language of another culture, therefore, allow themselves to be defined by it. The best of the commonwealth writers who use English, however, have done more than just use language; they have also modified it, in the process of generating alternative literary and linguistic possibilities which make English language a world language’ (Chukwumah et al, 2007).

The Turkish Intermediary Level learners (usually between 8-15 years old) would need to undergo these English lesson plans:

Agreeing and Disagreeing Game

Although and Even Though

Business English Going to Game

Cambridge PEF Sentence Completion

Business Writing Comparative Game

Coversation-Smiling on the Outside

E-mail and Telephoning

History Vocabulary for ESL Students

How British is your English

Spelling and Punctuation among others

And the Advanced Level (usually between 18 -) would have to take these English pedagogies:.

IELTS Speaking Tasks

3.1 Methodological Implications for Turkey

Individuals have different and peculiar learning habits and attitudes; a student organizes his study more effectively because learning is a process that deals with the mind set (*Chukwumah et al*, 2007). English methodology is an addition to the understanding of knowledge trends in Turkey. The applications of different methodologies and at times English theories would make room for diversity and purpose. Graddol shed more light on this scenario when he explores some aspects of English which shows that it is a global language with unique methodology in these areas which include: social, economical, political, and cultural values because these aspects tend to satisfy the yearnings of globalisation. Language methodology categorises language based on the number of speakers not necessarily examining the strength of the language and its linguistic implications. 'We can douse his fears that English language cannot go into extinction based on its wider coverage in schools, commerce and industry. (Landy, 1982) His idea of "lesser-used language is to be taken seriously because no natural language in the world is "lesser-used" demography is not a basis for the understanding of thought and development. The example of Nigeria, Singapore, India, Malaysia and other L2 users are veritable proof that English language will remain undaunted. Rather, it will carry new metaphors, ironies with regards the locale where the code is applicable and this brings new imagery, paradox and development to English Language (Graddol, 2006). In Turkey, English has unilaterally assumed a new metaphorical role. That is the methodological implication when some Turks use English as second language or additional language by code mixing, *switch coding*, transliterating their local codes to the English language hereby giving it a new linguistic and literary impressions about what the word means in its real state. Domestication of English language in Turkey would take many shapes. When we take a look at Tuzim's research, we found out that 'the Turkish alphabet is designed for the easiest phonetic description: For instance, to describe the sound of "ch" as in "chalk", in Turkish alphabet there is the letter of "c" with a cedilla, a dot under the letter "c". The same applies for "sh" sound as in "shore". In Turkish you simply put a cedilla under the letter "s" and that new letter is one of the 29 letters of the Turkish alphabet. The reason why we do not put these letters right here on this section is that your browser might not support Turkish characters and you may find totally irrelevant letters if not signs instead.

There is one other interesting letter in Turkish and it is the so-called "the soft g". This symbol is created by adding a cedilla this time to the top of the letter "g". The reason why it is called "the soft g" is the fact that you prolong the preceding vowel when there is a "soft g", in a way softening the utterance. To give you an example and let's kill two words, (ooppss) birds with one stone here; every foreigner, at least at the beginning, find it very difficult to say "thank you" in Turkish, "tesekkür ederim". Instead, there is a more friendly and easier way, that is, by saying "sagol", and the "g" here is a "soft g" and it is described with a cedilla dot on its top. So, you read it as "saaol" by prolonging the "a" sound, making it as if it were double. "Saaol", "Thanks". Turkish is an agglutinative language, meaning a fairly large number of affixes in Turkish may be added to the root; each affix has one meaning or grammatical function and retains its form more or less unaffected by the morphemes surrounding it. This term is traditionally used in the typological classification of languages. Turkish, Finnish, and Japanese are among the languages that form words by agglutination. To put it more simply, there are suffixes added to the stem of the words to generate new words or even sentences. Take the example "Cekoslavyalilastiramadiklarimizdanmisiniz?." If we should translate this one word sentence (43 letters) into English, it means " Are you one of those that we could not

have possibly turned into a Checkoslavakian?" Learners should have a closer look at the suffixes forming the sentence' (<http://www.turizm.net/turkey/info/language.html>).

4.1 Learning English in Turkey

To learn English, a Turk can begin to look at the suffixes and prefixes, and then determine their English equivalent placement. This is called learning by association; the type structurally expressed by Vladimir Prop in his popular *Morphology of the Folktales*. 'From the individual's perspective, a learner finds himself going through different stages of the learning process. Learning as a process is an interactive act which varies according to different learners or individuals. It is peculiar in Turkey that people have different learning habits. While there are individuals who can sit for several hours reading and studying, there are others who punctuate their reading hours with breaks' (Chukwumah et al, 2007). Learning of English in Turkey is a process that if properly harnessed could develop all three aspects of the individual, namely: the individual or cognitive aspect that deals with the mind's development

the affective aspect that deals with the development of the emotion, attitude, interests, values etc the psycho-motor aspect that deals with the development of the body or physical movement of an individual. Based on the development of these three aspects on the individual, the student learner, in studying English and learning process, would have attained formal operational level where he conceptualizes information or knowledge both on abstract and concrete forms. In other words, a student-learner is working towards becoming a mature learner, who, although finds it easier to conceptualize concrete information more than abstract information, is in a position to do both. To effectively learn English in Turkey, learners cut across all the three groups I have mentioned would need to take note of these issues to enhance effective learning and study as stated below: Learners to jot down the points while considering what materials to select. They are to compare their points with those at the beginning of their learning sessions. They should briefly summarize in their own words, the various points to be considered in surveying materials to be included in their learning sessions.

4.1.1 Surveying materials

For proper English learning require the following considerations:

The purpose of study: Some learners in Turkey decide to learn English for academic purposes, social or economic reasons and a lot host of other reasons. The amount of Time the learner has at his disposal: Some learners have limited time while some have enough time. They choose to strategize their time for acquiring new knowledge.

Material that are available to the learner on the subject. The relevance of such available materials to the aspect of English (ibid).

4.1.2 Allocation of Time

Allocation of time for learning is a very integral aspect that a learner of English in Turkey should take into cognizance. Time factor dictates the pace of learning. The reason for this is that many learners are already advanced in age or in other aspects of life, however, they are into one kind of profession or the other. There is a strong and dire need to allot good time for the learning of English. In addition 'Having determined the purpose of *learning English*, the next vital point to consider is what time is at the learner's disposal. Student-Learners are very often faced with the dilemma of sharing their time equitably to the various activities that require their attention. It is imperative and expedient to state that the most brilliant student is probably the one who spends the longest hours studying (Banjo, 1990). As a result, the student-learner organizes his time accordingly but devoting time to the new knowledge he wants to acquire (ibid). For example, if a learner wants to learn how English words are formed and their functions, such person would know that he/she has dabbled into English grammar and this aspect is called *grammatical structures*. According to Ahaotu in *A Guide on English*, to identify grammatical structures and to state their functions are test items under comprehension in most public examinations. If you understand the eight classes of words and their functions, then, you will have no difficulty understanding this part. Identifying a grammatical structure means stating its name as used in grammar, examples: noun phrase, adverbial clause, a sentence, etc. The function of a word group is the same as that of the word class in which place the word group is found. For instance, a verb phrase represents an actual verb. Therefore, it can only function as verb- as indicators of the action or the condition of the subject. A sound knowledge of sentence elements is needed (Ahaotu, 2001). To cap it up, word formation encapsulates phrases and clauses could make a Turkish English learner understands the instrumentality of English sentence and how they are used to create meanings and effects. A sentence is a group of words that express complete thought. It may be divided into *subject* and *predicate* as in "Turkey is having series of beautiful cities". For

analysis, *Turkey* stands for the Subject and *is having a series of beautiful cities* is the predicate. ‘Subject’ refers to the thing(s) or person about which the utterance is made while ‘predicate’ is what is said about them (verb +object or complement). To clarify the definition of a sentence above, it is important to note that not all sentences are, indeed, a group of words. There are instances of one word standing as a sentence. The lone word is usually an action verb used in a dialogue. The circumstances of the conversation enables the lone action verb to express complete thought which the discussants understand the meaning. An example is [you] Come [here](ibid). For the English language learner in Turkey many new experiences would occur. These experiences are not only tasking but enjoying.

5.1 Teaching of English in Turkey

Teaching follows systematic methodologies which teachers conform to in order to be able to pass across the message. Many scholars have defined various teaching methodologies in their own ways; these methodologies are either theoretical or analytical. Our intention is not to be bogged by different teaching methodologies because these methods may not be ideal for a Turkish beginner but may be relevant for an African who is already established in the use of English. To start teaching English, the English teacher may not necessary be an English native speaker but must be aware of the tonal usage in English. However, the teacher should be ready to help the Turkish speaker handling the problem of transferring Turkish native tonal tongue to English. The speech and its formation should constitute the major aspect which the teacher should be able to handle so that the effort of teaching English in Turkey would not be fruitless. Let us just say that “intonation is the tone or melody of speech utterance. It is the pitch pattern in a sentence realized through the vibration of the vocal cords in the larynx. The variation in pitch is called intonation and this gives melodies to speech. With regard to a language *like Turkish* that has different tonal pronunciation from English, there is need to differentiate among its *tonality*, its *tonicity* and its *tone*” (Floy, 1975). *Tonality* means tone group or tone unit with their boundaries, *tonicity* depicts the placing of the tonic syllabic and establishing of the focus of the information pre-tonic section while *tone* is the pitch contour pattern in speech. Understanding these variables first would enable both the English teacher and his/her Turkish audience know the terrain of English usage and application. It would enable the construction of speech effective in day to day application. Teaching of English however would be achieved by the classifications I had earlier mentioned in the beginning of this essay: The classification of students into the beginner’s class; intermediate class and the advanced class. Writing of curriculum, as well, could conform to the early mentioned variables as well. Huebsch, (1986). To make teaching of English enjoyable and interesting for Turkish people who already enjoy their native language in arts and culture, in music and literature, there is need to introduce new innovations. These innovations would enhance the knowledge of English. Too much concentration on only one aspect of English should be discouraged and totally avoided to prevent boring atmosphere.

6.1 Cultural Innovations and Diversity

The act of learning, speaking and writing in English could help the Turkish speaker in the development of new initiatives. Personal practice and learning could complement what the teacher has taught. It is expedient to know that English people have a well systematic history like the Turkish people. This history is unique in breaking the cultural barriers or cultural limitations. Cultural limitations do not enhance diversity. For a proper diversity of knowledge based on intercultural linkage, there is a strong desire to establish concrete interest in the application of English artifacts to Turkish idiosyncrasies.

7.1 Recommendations and Conclusion

Proficiency in English could be achieved when a Turkish learner and English teacher put into cognizance most of the ideas that this essay conceives. The dictionary could form a good guide and word play intervals as well. Learners are strongly advises to create new vistas for learning things- new words. The creation of time for accumulating new ideas is paramount. Turkey as a country could enjoy mutual relationships in art and culture in Europe and in the world. Finally, the study has demonstrated the benefits of learning English vis-à-vis its implications in the global unification efforts which could enhance global peace and tranquility.

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