ENGLISH FOR OCCUPATIONAL PURPOSES (EOP) AN ELECTIVE COURSE FOR FRESHMAN STUDENTS AT AN ENGLISH MEDIUM UNIVERSITY (EMU)

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Abstract

According to a Baseline Study conducted by the British Council and TEPAV (Turkey Economic Policy Research Foundation, November 2015), the number and size of universities in Turkey have significantly increased in recent years and quality has improved with a number of universities ranking well in Times Higher Education Supplement. However, hundreds of universities fall outside the world’s top 2000 universities according to Turkey’s own URAP (University Ranking by Academic Performance). Lack of English is a major factor affecting the quality of higher education, and restricting access to academic pursuits, international research publications and mobility of staff and students.

Same study also shows that the current distribution and curriculum of English Language Teaching (ELT) at Turkish universities does not give full support to academic programs or internationalization. Students enter preparatory school with low English proficiency levels and low motivation. Classes do not fully address these problems as the curriculum is perceived to be lacking in relevance and the classes are not delivered at a time in a student’s academic career when they could be most effective. The study thus indicated that a revision in ELT curriculum was essential and urgent.

We made considerable alterations in our preparatory school and freshman curriculum to prepare students for more academic English and noticed the necessity for English for Occupational/Vocational Purposes following the compulsory English 101/102 freshman courses (Advanced Reading and Writing for Academic Purposes).

This course is to familiarise students with primary material used in their industry, offer skills to evaluate relevant issues; help them become competent listeners and presenters in their subjects using the appropriate language. EOP is tailored to:

1- expose students to primary industry-related material in written and oral form.
2- enable students to practise the presentation, discussion and evaluation of issues relevant to their academic study and their industry, in written and oral form.
3- enable students to develop oral skills relevant to their industry, such as negotiation and customer service.

In order to comply with departmental course plans, we placed this course as an elective second-year (or third-year in some faculties) course with four contact hours a week (two hours’ theory and two hours’ practice) and 3 credits (National and ECTS each).

Keywords: Higher Education, Occupational English, Curriculum.