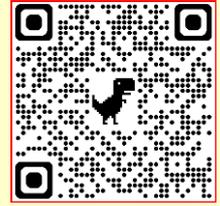


UAI JOURNAL OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

(UAJAHSS)



Abbreviated Key Title: UAI J Arts Humanit Soc Sci
 ISSN: 3048-7692 (Online)
 Journal Homepage: <https://uaipublisher.com/uajahss/>
 Volume- 2 Issue- 11 (November) 2025
 Frequency: Monthly



Analyzing the Educational Architecture of a Country: Historical Traces of the Education System, Teacher Training and Language Policies of Türkiye

Ayşe DAĞ PESTİL, PhD

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu

Corresponding Author: Ayşe DAĞ PESTİL, PhD

ABSTRACT

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of Türkiye's educational architecture, teacher education system, national and international educational projects, and the historical development of teaching Turkish as a foreign language within and beyond the country's borders. Drawing on national policy documents, institutional reports, historical archives, and international frameworks, the research explores how Türkiye's education system has evolved in parallel with its cultural, political, and linguistic objectives. Particular emphasis is placed on the strategic expansion of Turkish language instruction worldwide, the role of state institutions in shaping language policy, and the significance of Türkiye's cultural geography in strengthening its soft power through language dissemination. By integrating educational policy analysis with the history of foreign language pedagogy, this study reveals the multidimensional nature of Türkiye's educational and linguistic vision. The findings highlight how national educational reforms, teacher training models, and international collaborations collectively contribute to the global visibility and cultural transmission capacity of the Turkish language.

KEY WORDS: Türkiye, Historical aspects of education system, language policies, teacher training

Introduction

The educational landscape of Türkiye reflects a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and policy-driven influences that have shaped the nation's approach to education. Since the establishment of the Republic, Türkiye has undergone significant transformations in its educational policies, particularly with the enactment of critical reforms such as the Tevhid-i Tedrisat in 1924, which aimed to unify religious and secular education under a centralized system (Thoricuttayas, 2024). This law marked a pivotal shift, merging traditional Islamic teachings with modern secular education, thus laying the groundwork for a more inclusive educational framework. Despite these reforms, the evolution of the education system has faced challenges in effectively integrating these historical legacies

into contemporary practices, particularly in areas such as curriculum development, teacher training, and the implementation of language policies in schools (Sincer et al., 2024; Eken, 2021).

One of the fundamental aspects of analyzing Türkiye's educational architecture is the critical role of teacher training programs. Studies have highlighted that while teacher education in Türkiye has seen advancements, significant shortcomings remain, particularly in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and pedagogical approaches to meet modern educational challenges (Eken, 2021), Tokcalar, 2025). Research indicates that many pre-service and in-service training programs do not adequately prepare educators for the complexities of today's classrooms, impacting the quality of education delivered (Eken, 2021). Consequently, the ability of

teachers to navigate and implement the curricular demands effectively becomes a significant factor in educational outcomes, pointing to a gap that must be bridged to foster a robust educational system.

Moreover, language policies have historically played a crucial role in shaping the educational context in Türkiye. The emphasis on unifying educational standards has often led to tensions between various linguistic and cultural identities within the country (SOLAK et al., 2024). These policies, which have evolved over time, influence the language used in teaching practices and reflect broader societal values and aspirations towards national cohesion and identity. The integration of diverse languages and dialects within the curriculum is essential for fostering educational equity and ensuring that all students are engaged in a learning environment that respects and acknowledges their linguistic backgrounds (SOLAK et al., 2024). Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of Türkiye's educational architecture necessitates a close examination of these historical traces, teacher training implications, and the overarching language policies that continue to shape the educational outcomes within the nation.

The development of Türkiye's national education system reflects a profound transformation shaped by demographic expansion, political modernization, and evolving conceptions of teacher professionalism. At the establishment of the Republic in 1923, the country faced severe structural limitations: the population was approximately 14.8 million, literacy levels were low, and the educational infrastructure was fragmented and unevenly distributed. Teacher qualifications were particularly insufficient. Of the 10,102 primary school teachers employed in 1923, only 2,734 had received any formal pedagogical training, and a substantial portion of the teaching force consisted of individuals with minimal schooling, medrese backgrounds, or no teaching credentials at all. This early profile illustrates the urgency with which the new Republic approached the task of building a modern, secular, and professionally trained educational workforce.

Over the subsequent decades, Türkiye implemented wide-ranging reforms designed to institutionalize teacher preparation, expand schooling opportunities, and standardize curricula. The establishment of teacher-training academies, the introduction of national education laws, and the transition to university-based teacher education programs gradually replaced the heterogeneous and informal training structures of the early Republic. These institutional reforms coincided with—and were increasingly driven by—rapid demographic growth. By 2012, the national population had risen to 79.6 million, and projections estimated that it would approach 85 million by 2023. This dramatic increase created sustained pressure on the education system, necessitating investments in school construction, classroom expansion, and professional staffing.

The statistical data from 2012–2013 and 2023–2024 reflect the scale of this transformation. In 2012–2013, Türkiye operated 61,552 schools, 538,442 classrooms, and served over 17.2 million students in formal education. By 2023–2024, these numbers had grown to 75,467 schools, 742,829 classrooms, and 18.7 million students. These figures highlight not only the substantial expansion of educational infrastructure but also the state's long-term commitment to increasing access, improving learning environments, and reducing student-to-teacher ratios. More importantly, they contrast sharply with the conditions of 1923, when shortages of trained teachers and limited institutional capacity posed significant barriers to educational development.

In this historical trajectory, Türkiye's education system has evolved from a modest, structurally constrained model into a large-scale, nationally coordinated institution capable of supporting a diverse and growing student population. The movement from a teaching force characterized by inconsistent qualifications to one regulated by standardized training and national certification embodies one of the most significant achievements of the Republic's modernization project. Taken together, the demographic, institutional, and professional transformations across a century reveal the depth of Türkiye's educational reforms and their centrality to broader social and cultural development.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitatively driven methodological framework combining document analysis, historical research, and content analysis to examine Türkiye's education system and the international development of Turkish language teaching.

Research Design

A descriptive qualitative design was adopted to systematically explore educational policies, teacher training structures, national educational initiatives, and Türkiye's international language-teaching activities. The study also incorporates elements of historical method, particularly for tracing the early stages and institutionalization of teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

Data Sources

The study analyzes a wide range of primary and secondary sources, including:

- Türkiye's national curriculum documents and Ministry of National Education (MEB) policy reports
- Higher education and teacher-training regulations
- Archival materials related to the history of Turkish language instruction
- Reports and frameworks from international organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, and the Council of Europe
- Documents from institutions responsible for promoting Turkish abroad (e.g., Yunus Emre Institute, TÖMER centers)
- Scholarly publications on educational policy, foreign language pedagogy, and cultural transmission

These sources provide a multidimensional view of both the national educational context and the global trajectory of Turkish language dissemination.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis, involving:

- Coding of themes such as educational goals, structural reforms, teacher professionalization, language policy, international cooperation, and cultural diplomacy
- Comparative reading of policy documents to identify shifts in educational vision and language-teaching priorities
- Historical layering to construct a chronological narrative of Turkish as a foreign language (TFL) initiatives.

The analysis process aimed to uncover relationships between Türkiye's education system, its teacher education philosophy, and its strategies for positioning Turkish as a globally taught language.

Trustworthiness

Credibility and dependability were ensured through triangulation of diverse document types, cross-checking historical and contemporary data, and using established analytical frameworks from educational policy and applied linguistics research.

The Historical Development of Pedagogical Education

The Imperial Period

There is a strong and parallel relationship between the transformation of society and the evolution of education. The historical trajectory of pedagogical training in Türkiye must naturally be traced back to the Ottoman Empire, for without understanding this foundational stage, it is difficult to appreciate how the system advanced, through which reforms it developed, and what kind of educational philosophy it later adopted. A broad historical lens is therefore essential.

During the Ottoman period, education in *mektebs* and *medreses* was predominantly religious in nature. The system primarily focused on training personnel required by the military and religious institutions (Üstüner, 2004). The earliest organized initiative in the field of pedagogy emerged as early as the 13th century, when a specialized program was designed for teachers working in certain pre-elementary schools. Later, in the 18th and 19th centuries, various reforms and practices marked a transition toward a more structured educational model.

A major milestone in this process was the establishment of the Darülmüallimin-i Rüştî in 1848, the first formal teacher-training school for primary education. This institution trained teachers for the newly developing *rüştiye* (lower secondary) schools, which were introduced to supply the bureaucracy with qualified personnel and to meet the student needs of higher military academies. Following secondary education, the growing network of *sultani* (modern high schools) required their own teaching staff. To meet this demand, a four-year teacher training institute, the Darülmüallimin-i Aliye, was founded in 1870 (Üstüner, 2004).

By the early 20th century, the Ottoman Empire had established an extensive teacher training infrastructure, consisting of 17 teacher-training schools across 13 regions and one teacher-training institute. These schools offered programs with a theoretical and academic orientation. Their number increased rapidly, reaching 31 institutions by 1911.

Significant modernization efforts in education were undertaken during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, a period marked by initiatives to expand access to schooling, construct school buildings both in the capital and in provincial regions, train teachers, and open new higher education institutions. The foundations of modern education in Türkiye were laid during this era. Although the intellectuals educated through these reforms were unable to prevent the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, they played a pivotal role in establishing the new Republic that emerged from its remnants (Deniz, 2001).

The Empire's first experience with higher education also dates to this period. In 1863, the Darülfünun was opened as the first modern university. It continued to operate until 1933, when, in the tenth year of the Republic, it was reorganized and renamed Istanbul University, marking the institutional continuity between Ottoman and Republican higher education.

The Republican Period

Following the transformation of the six-century-old Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923. Since its inception, the issue of teacher training has been addressed through various initiatives aimed at meeting the growing educational needs of the nation. In 1925, the institution known as *Darülmüallimin* was renamed *Muallim Mektebi*, and in 1935, it was further rebranded as *Öğretmen Okulu* (Teacher School). Initially, these schools were numerous but had limited student enrollment; over time, the number of institutions was reduced while student capacity was increased. Nevertheless, the shortage of primary school teachers persisted until the establishment of the Village Institutes (*Köy Enstitüleri*) in 1940 (Kavcar, 2002).

The 1926 Law on the Organization of Education (*Maarif Teşkilatına Dair Kanun*) divided institutions for primary teacher training into two categories: First Teacher Schools (*İlk Muallim Mektepleri*) and Village Teacher Schools (*Köy Muallim Mektepleri*), aimed specifically at staffing the three-grade village schools in rural areas. Two Village Teacher Schools were opened in Denizli and Kayseri; however, this four-year program did not achieve the desired outcomes (Üstüner, 2004).

In 1932, the duration of teacher training programs was extended to six years, comprising three years of general secondary education followed by three years of professional training. In 1937, as a solution to the shortage of village teachers, two Education Homes (*Eğitim Yurtları*) were established in Eskişehir and İzmir. These institutions later evolved into Village Training Courses (*Köy Eğitim Kursları*) and Village Teacher Schools (*Köy Öğretmen Okulları*), eventually culminating in the Village Institutes. By 1948, twenty-one Village Institutes had been established in various regions, and a three-year Higher Village Institute (*Yüksek Köy Enstitüsü*) was created to train headteachers and inspectors for primary schools (Kavcar, 2002).

During the 1950s, the Village Institutes came under politically motivated criticism. In 1953, a law was enacted consolidating teacher training institutions under the title Primary Teacher Schools (*İlköğretmen Okulları*). From 1974 onwards, two-year Education Institutes (*Eğitim Enstitüleri*) were established. Following allegations of irregular admissions and political manipulation, thirty out of fifty such institutions were closed in 1976, and the remaining twenty were transformed into Education Colleges (*Eğitim Yüksekokulları*) under the university system in 1982. Consequently, the responsibility for teacher training was transferred from the Ministry of National Education (*Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı*) to the Higher Education Council (*Yükseköğretim Kurulu*, YÖK). By 1978, the student population in these institutes was reported as 69,313 (Üstüner, 2004).

From 1989 onwards, Education Colleges were converted into four-year Education Faculties, with their number quickly rising to twenty-one and reaching sixty-two by May 2003 (Kavcar, 2002). In parallel, from the early years of the Republic, Istanbul University's Faculties of Literature and Science, Ankara University's Faculty of Language, History, and Geography (from 1936), and its Faculty of Science (from 1943) have trained subject teachers for high schools and equivalent institutions. From 1955 onwards, faculties of other universities also contributed to this effort. Today, including foundation universities, there are sixty-nine Faculties of Literature and Science Education responsible for training subject teachers in Turkey (Kavcar, 2002).

Table 1. Comparative Indicators of Türkiye's Education System Across Three Periods (1923, 2013, 2023)

Category	1923	2013	2023
Population of Türkiye	14,874,387	79,627,384	≈85,000,000 (projection)
Number of Schools (Formal Education)	Limited; primarily primary-level schools, exact national count fragmented	61,552	75,467
Number of Classrooms	Not systematically recorded; highly uneven nationally	538,442	742,829
Number of Students (Formal Education)	No nationwide standardized count; literacy and enrollment extremely low	17,234,452	18,710,265
Total Teachers (Primary Level)	10,102	Professionalized teacher workforce; higher education graduates	Fully institutionalized teacher formation and certification
Female Teachers	1,081	Large-scale gender participation; majority of primary teachers female in many provinces	Sustained gender parity and high female participation
Teachers with Formal Pedagogical Training	2,734 total (378 women, 2,356 men)	Teacher education colleges, universities, and national examinations	Standardized teacher training, accreditation, and KPSS-based recruitment
Teachers Without Any Teaching Qualification	2,107 (plus thousands minimally educated)	—	—

Note: 1923 data reflect primary teachers only and come from Akyüz (2001) and Üstüner (2004). Modern data reflect national totals across all formal education levels.

Full Comparative Table (1923 – 2013 - 2023) displays the data clearly.

Current Situation of Teacher Training in Türkiye

Teacher training has remained a persistent challenge in Türkiye over the years. The Ministry of National Education (MEB) has consistently highlighted issues related to insufficient collaboration with faculties concerning the number of students admitted to Education Faculties, the delivery of professional teacher knowledge courses, and teaching practicum arrangements (Kavcar, 2002).

Following a project concluded in 1997 between the Higher Education Council (*Yükseköğretim Kurulu*, YÖK) and the World Bank, Education Faculties entered a restructuring process in 1998. The rationale for this project included the following:

1. Deviation of Education Faculties from the pursuit of scientific research and fundamental inquiry.
2. Overlap and lack of cooperation between Education Faculty programs and those of Faculties of Science and Letters.
3. Insufficiency of Education Faculties in training primary school and preschool teachers.
4. Disruption of subject teacher training within Education Faculties.
5. Ineffective communication between YÖK and MEB.
6. Transformation of teacher certification (formation) programs into revenue-generating activities.

7. Preferential allocation of MEB scholarship opportunities to science and engineering fields.
8. Use of Education Faculty resources primarily for basic research rather than for producing qualified teachers.
9. Courses in teacher training programs lacked coherence, content, and alignment with teacher preparation objectives (YÖK, 1998: 14–19; Üstüner, 2004).

As a result of the project:

1. Materials developed through project-based work in subject areas were distributed to Education Faculties.
2. Faculty members were sent abroad for graduate-level training.
3. Various educational tools and equipment were procured for faculties.
4. Collaboration between Education Faculties and practice schools was established.
5. A National Committee for Teacher Training was created for supervision.
6. Twenty-one undergraduate teacher training programs were organized.
7. Formation courses were restructured.
8. Alignment between Education Faculty curricula and MEB requirements was achieved.
9. Turkish language courses, both written and oral, were made compulsory in all programs.
10. Minor subject applications were introduced.

11. Computer courses were made mandatory in all programs.
12. Non-thesis master's programs in secondary school subject teaching were implemented.

Currently, Education Faculties offer undergraduate programs in teacher training across 21 branches under preschool, primary, and secondary education divisions. These programs include: Preschool Education, Primary School Teaching, Science Teaching, Mathematics Teaching, Social Studies Teaching, Turkish Language Teaching, English, German, French, Arabic, Japanese Teaching, Music Teaching, Visual Arts, Physical Education and Sports, Special Education for Hearing, Intellectual, and Visual Disabilities, Computer and Instructional Technology Teaching, Gifted Education, and Religious Culture and Ethics Teaching (YÖK, 2007).

Core courses across all programs include: Introduction to Educational Sciences, Principles and Methods of Teaching, Classroom Management, Introduction to the Teaching Profession, School Experience I, Development and Learning, Planning and Assessment in Teaching, Instructional Technologies and Material Development, Classroom Management, Special Teaching Methods I, School Experience II (Internship), Special Teaching Methods II, Guidance, and Teaching Practice Techniques.

The revised Formation Program includes: Introduction to Educational Sciences, Educational Psychology, General Teaching Methods, Measurement and Evaluation, Special Teaching Methods, Educational Sociology, Educational Technology, Curriculum Development, Guidance, Educational Administration and Supervision, and Teaching Practice (Internship). In practice, subject teacher training can be summarized under two main pathways:

1. For certain branches, candidates complete a four-year undergraduate program and receive a bachelor's degree. These include Turkish, foreign languages, fine arts, physical education, special education, computer and educational technology programs, as well as primary education branches related to these fields.
2. For other branches, candidates follow a 3.5 + 1.5 or 4 + 1.5-year track, completing a non-thesis master's program. This applies to secondary education in science, mathematics, and social subjects.

According to MEB data (2013, *Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri*), in the 2012–2013 academic year:

- 538,442 classrooms in 61,552 schools provided formal education.
- The total student population was 17,234,452, comprising 8,883,857 boys and 8,350,595 girls.
- There were 832,726 teachers, including 392,258 males and 440,468 females.

For comparison, in 1923:

- There were 10,102 primary school teachers, of whom 1,081 were female and 9,021 male.
- Only 2,734 had professional training (378 female, 2,356 male), while many were graduates of lower levels of madrasa education or one-to-two-year programs at *Darülmüallimin*, often serving simultaneously as imams or muezzins.

- Of the remaining 7,368 teachers, 1,357 had only primary education, 711 were directly from madrasas, 152 had irregular education, and 2,107 had no formal teaching qualifications (Akyüz, 2001: 344; Üstüner, 2004).

Türkiye's population grew from 14,874,387 in 1923 to 79,627,384 in 2012, with projections by the Turkish Statistical Institute estimating approximately 85 million by 2023.

According to MEB figures, as of 2013, there was a nationwide teacher shortage of approximately 120,000. Official appointments are made each August, with an average of 25,000–30,000 teachers appointed annually, although 2012 saw 36,552 appointments. Over the preceding ten years (up to 2011), a total of 357,048 teachers were appointed. Nevertheless, approximately 295 newly graduated teachers remain awaiting assignment, while an average of 40,000 teachers graduate from Education Faculties each year.

In-Service Teacher Training in Türkiye: Contemporary Perspectives

The necessity for restructuring teacher training institutions in Turkey has been largely driven by evolving global educational trends, which have redefined the professional roles and responsibilities of educators (YÖK, 1998; Karaca, 2008). In alignment with the principles of Lifelong Learning, which have gained increasing prominence internationally (UNESCO, 2015), the Ministry of National Education (MEB) has prioritized continuous professional development for its personnel. These initiatives aim not only to enhance the professional and personal competencies of staff but also to increase institutional efficiency and prepare educators for leadership positions within the educational system (Karaca, 2008). The implementation of these in-service training activities is coordinated by the Professional Development Support Group (*Mesleki Gelişimi Destekleme Grup Başkanlığı*) under the Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development (*Öğretmen Yetiştirme ve Geliştirme Genel Müdürlüğü*), encompassing both central and provincial administrative structures of the MEB.

Major Projects and Initiatives

1. **FATİH Project (Movement to Enhance Opportunities and Improve Technology in Education):** Launched on November 22, 2010, as a collaborative initiative between MEB and the Ministry of Transport, the FATİH Project represents a comprehensive effort to integrate information and communication technologies into the Turkish educational system. The project's primary objective is to equip classrooms in primary and secondary schools with computers, projectors, and reliable internet connectivity. By 2013, the technological infrastructure had been completed in 1,629 secondary schools (MEB, 2013). Concurrently, in-service training and standardized instructional programs were developed to support teachers who lacked proficiency in digital technologies, thereby aligning teacher competencies with the demands of modern educational environments (MEB, 2013; Karaca, 2008).
2. **Professional Development and Curriculum Support Projects:** A series of complementary initiatives, including the MEB Professional Development Project, the Strengthening Preschool Education Project, the Social Activities Support Project (in collaboration with the Genç Hayat Foundation), and the *Renk Çemberi* Project (in

partnership with Habertürk Television), have been implemented to enhance the capacity of teachers and support curriculum delivery (MEB, 2013). These projects reflect a systemic approach to teacher development, focusing on both pedagogical competencies and the effective application of educational programs in diverse school contexts.

3. ÖYGEM Project: Supported by European Union funding and coordinated by the MEB Teacher Training and Development Center, the ÖYGEM Project aims to increase the teacher training capacity of Education Faculties at Dicle and Siirt Universities, particularly in Southeastern Anatolia. This initiative addresses regional disparities in teacher availability and quality, reflecting a targeted approach to human capital development within the national education system (MEB, 2013).
4. School–University Collaboration Project: As an innovative model for teacher education, this project integrates university-based instruction with practical teaching experiences. Candidates spend the initial two years of the program in academic coursework at the university, followed by the subsequent two years embedded in primary, secondary, and high school classrooms. This model exemplifies a practice-oriented approach to teacher preparation, bridging theoretical knowledge with applied pedagogical skills (Karaca, 2008).
5. Project-Based Learning Initiative: In collaboration with Eğitek and Microsoft, this initiative fosters experiential learning among teachers through collaborative, project-oriented tasks. Unlike traditional competitions, the program emphasizes professional growth, knowledge sharing, and reflective practice, promoting the development of innovative teaching strategies. Its guiding principle asserts that “innovative teachers are the leaders of change, active participants in solutions, and dedicated to the teaching profession” (MEB, 2013).
6. Reaad-it Project: Developed in response to OECD reports identifying gaps in European education systems, the Reaad-it Project integrates didactic methodologies with digital skill acquisition. Its goal is to enhance teachers’ competencies in information and communication technologies and to implement innovative instructional methods that reflect contemporary pedagogical research (OECD, 2010; MEB, 2013).
7. European Union Lifelong Learning Program: Under the auspices of the European Commission, programs such as Comenius, Grundtvig, and Erasmus provide financial and structural support for teacher, academic staff, and student mobility, joint research projects, and collaborative program development. These initiatives exemplify transnational partnerships in education, facilitating professional exchange, pedagogical innovation, and cultural learning (European Commission, 2013; MEB, 2013).

Collectively, these projects reflect a multi-dimensional approach to in-service teacher training, emphasizing the integration of technology, collaborative learning, practical experience, and alignment with both national and international educational standards. The initiatives illustrate a strategic shift toward professionalization, lifelong learning, and evidence-based

instructional practice, positioning teachers as central agents in the ongoing transformation of Turkey’s educational landscape (Karaca, 2008; YÖK, 1998).

Scientific Committees, National Education Councils, and National Education Policies in Türkiye

National education councils in Türkiye (*Milli Eğitim Şuraları*) trace their origins to the 1921 Education Congress (*Maarif Kongresi*) held in Ankara, which was inaugurated personally by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who traveled from the front lines to attend the opening ceremony. The early efforts were followed by the Scientific Committees (*Heyet-i İlmiye*) convened in 1923, 1924, and 1925. The first council convened under the contemporary designation of National Education Council was held in 1939.

Decisions made by the Scientific Committees have exerted a significant influence on the Turkish education system. The inaugural committee focused on issues such as national governance, the promotion of the Turkish language, the creation of a national dictionary, the development of national music studies, and the establishment of national history and geography institutes. Discussions also encompassed primary and secondary education policy. The second committee addressed matters including the extension of teacher training schools from four to five years, the development of new textbooks, coeducation, allocation of financial resources for education, and the establishment of the Board of Education (*Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu*) to oversee educational programs. Over time, the meetings of the Scientific Committees became institutionalized, eventually evolving into the National Education Councils with the formation of the modern Turkish state.

Participation in these councils is wide-ranging and includes representatives from professional associations, the Ministry of National Education, members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly’s Education Commission, senior bureaucrats, teachers, educators, and unions, among others. While the councils function primarily in an advisory capacity and do not possess binding authority, approximately 80% of their resolutions are implemented, reflecting their substantial role in shaping national education policies (Kavcar, 2002).

As of December 20, 2010, eighteen National Education Councils have convened. Although council meetings are scheduled to occur triennially, irregularities have led to deviations from this timetable. Chronologically, the first council convened in 1939, the second in 1943 during the single-party period, and the third and fourth in 1946 and 1949, coinciding with the transition to multi-party politics. Subsequent councils during the multi-party era include the fifth (1953) and sixth (1957) councils. Councils held during the planned development period comprise the seventh (1962), eighth (1970), and ninth (1974) councils. Following 1980, councils were convened as follows: the tenth (1981), eleventh (1982), twelfth (1988), thirteenth (1990), fourteenth (1993), fifteenth (1996), sixteenth (1999), seventeenth (2006), and eighteenth (2010) (Kavcar, 2002; MEB, 2010).

In conclusion, Turkey possesses a long-standing and deeply rooted tradition in education, reflecting a wealth of institutional experience. In the contemporary context of a rapidly changing global environment, the country continues to leverage this accumulated knowledge, particularly in the field of teacher training, by seeking context-appropriate solutions to the ongoing challenges faced by its educational system.

Conclusion and Evaluation

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the historical development, structural reforms, and contemporary initiatives in Türkiye's teacher training system, situating these developments within the broader framework of national educational policy and international pedagogical standards. The historical analysis reveals that Türkiye's teacher training architecture has evolved through a continuous interplay between sociopolitical transformations, state-led educational reforms, and emerging pedagogical paradigms. From the Ottoman period to the contemporary Republic, the establishment of formal teacher training institutions, such as Darülmüallimin-i Rüşti and the Village Institutes, exemplifies Türkiye's commitment to aligning educational provision with societal needs and nation-building objectives (Üstüner, 2004; Kavcar, 2002).

In the Republican era, the systematic expansion and professionalization of teacher training programs, coupled with the integration of subject-specific faculties and formation courses, underscore the state's strategic focus on both pedagogical quality and the cultivation of subject matter expertise. Current policies and projects, including the FATİH Project, ÖYGEM, and School–University Collaboration initiatives, reflect a holistic approach to in-service teacher development, integrating technological competencies, experiential learning, and lifelong learning principles (Karaca, 2008; MEB, 2013). Moreover, these interventions highlight the central role of teachers as agents of change and as mediators of educational reform, thereby positioning professional development as a critical lever for achieving broader educational objectives.

National Education Councils and Scientific Committees have further reinforced the institutional continuity and policy coherence necessary for systemic educational reform. Despite their advisory nature, the high implementation rate of council resolutions demonstrates the significant influence of these bodies in shaping curricula, teacher training standards, and pedagogical practices (Kavcar, 2002). This institutionalized consultative mechanism has allowed Turkey to maintain stability and adaptability in educational policy while responding to evolving sociocultural and economic demands.

This study concludes that Türkiye's education system, teacher education structure, and international language-teaching initiatives form an interconnected framework shaped by cultural heritage, national priorities, and global ambitions. The historical and policy-based analysis demonstrates that Türkiye has strategically positioned its education and language policies to serve both domestic development and international cultural diplomacy.

The expansion of teaching Turkish as a foreign language—supported by national institutions, cultural diplomacy mechanisms, and the country's geopolitical significance—has enhanced Türkiye's global linguistic presence. However, the sustainability of these advancements depends on addressing challenges in teacher training, policy coordination, and consistent project implementation.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that Türkiye's educational and linguistic strategies hold significant potential for strengthening its role in global cultural geography. To maximize this potential, future efforts should focus on:

- Enhancing teacher preparation for both domestic and international contexts
- Increasing standardization across TFL programs

- Improving institutional collaboration among national and international stakeholders
- Expanding evidence-based policies that support long-term educational innovation

The study contributes to the fields of comparative education, language policy, and cultural studies by offering an integrated view of how a country's education system and linguistic vision intersect to shape its global cultural and educational footprint.

Collectively, the historical trajectory and contemporary strategies underscore that Türkiye's educational system is characterized by a dynamic equilibrium between tradition and innovation. The integration of historical insights, national policy analysis, and contemporary international collaborations illustrates the multidimensional nature of teacher education, emphasizing the intersection of pedagogical expertise, policy alignment, and cultural transmission. This holistic approach not only addresses the persistent challenges in teacher preparation but also enhances the global positioning of Turkish language instruction and educational practices.

Future research should explore longitudinal outcomes of these initiatives, particularly in terms of teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and the international expansion of Turkish language pedagogy. Such studies will provide empirical grounding for the refinement of teacher education policies and further elucidate the mechanisms through which national educational objectives intersect with global educational trends. In sum, Türkiye's experience offers a robust model for the integration of historical insight, policy innovation, and international collaboration in the ongoing pursuit of high-quality teacher education.

References

1. Deniz, M., 2001. Milli Eğitim Şularının Tarihi ve Eğitim Politikalarına Etkileri, Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2001, Isparta.
2. Eken, D. (2021). English education in turkey: why are we 'very low level'?. *Rumelide Dil Ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (23), 804-822. <https://doi.org/10.29000/rumelide.949700>
3. Karaca, E., 2008. 'Eğitimde Kalite Arayışları ve Eğitim Fakültelerinin Yeniden Yapılandırılması'. *Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Sayı 21, Sayfa 61-77, Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, Kütahya.
4. Kavcar Cahit, 2002. 'Cumhuriyet Döneminde Dal Öğretmeni Yetiştirme', *Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences*, Pages; 1-15, 2002, Vol.35, Issue 1-2. Ankara University
5. Solak, Ö., Sudaryat, Y., & Nurhadi, J. (2024). Comparative pedagogies in mother tongue education: Türkiye and Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(3), 547-561. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v13i3.66941>
6. Sincer, S., Özek, B., & Selçuk, E. (2024). Türkiye's educational journey: evaluating the skills of mathematics, science, reading, and foreign language in the light of international competition. *Participatory Educational Research*, 11(2), 135-157. <https://doi.org/10.17275/per.24.23.11.2>

7. Thoriquttyas, T. (2024). Tevhid-i tedrisat and the policy of islamic teacher's development in türkiye (1924-1948). j.of religious policy, 3(2), 218-242. <https://doi.org/10.31330/repo.v3i2.92>
8. Tokcalar, F. (2025). Foreign language teaching and teacher training policies from the ottoman period to the present. Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 9(1), 91-100. <https://doi.org/10.34056/aujef.1489386>
9. Üstüner, Meç, 2004. 'Geçmişten Günümüze Türk Eğitim Sisteminde Öğretmen Yetiştirme ve Günümüz Sorunları', Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 2004, Cilt: 5, Sayı: 7. İnönü Üniversitesi, Malatya. <http://web.inonu.edu.tr/~efdergi/arsiv/Ustuner.htm>

Internet Sources

1. <http://hedb.meb.gov.tr>
2. http://hedb.meb.gov.tr/net/standart_program/
3. www.osym.gov.tr/araştırma/yuksekgrist/index
4. <http://jtee.org/document/issue1/3mak.pdf>
5. http://www.turkishstudies.net/Makaleler/83022632_2_g%C3%B6mleksizmn-fidanek.pdf
6. <http://sosyalbilimler.cukurova.edu.tr/dergi/download/266.pdf?sc=>