EXAMINING PERCEPTIONS AND PROCESSES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

IN PREPARATORY ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN TURKISH

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ABSTRACT

EXAMINING PERCEPTIONS AND PROCESSES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PREPARATORY ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS IN TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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The purpose of this study is twofold: firstly, it aims to explore the perceptions of quality and quality assurance of key stakeholders in intensive English programs in higher education and examine how these perceptions reflect in what is being done to achieve and assure quality in their programs. Secondly, the study intends to survey and describe the existing quality assurance processes and explore the impact of these processes on establishing a quality culture within the institution. Furthermore, the study aims to find out if and how these quality assurance processes contribute to the improvement of language education and to what extent they meet the expectations of managers, teachers and students.

The research study employed qualitative and descriptive methods of data collection and analysis. Managers, teachers and students of intensive English language programs in higher education institutions were the target informant groups in the study.

It is hoped that the conclusions drawn from the findings of the research will allow the design of a quality assurance framework which will serve as a guide to intensive English programs in Turkish higher education institutions to develop their own quality assurance processes. The suggested framework aims to provide guidelines for individual institutions to develop processes that are in congruent with the perceptions and expectations of the key stakeholders in their institutions and reflect the realities of their unique contexts.

Key words: Quality, Quality Assurance, English Language Teaching

ÖZ

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ YÜKSEK ÖĞRETİM HAZIRLIK İNGİLİZCE DİL PROGRAMLARINDA KALİTE GÜVENCE SÜREÇLERİNİN VE ALGILARININ İNCELENMESİ

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Bu tez çalışması iki temel hedefe ulaşmayı amaçlamıştır. Bunlardan birincisi, Türkiye'deki yüksek öğretim kurumlarının hazırlık İngilizce programlarında çalışan yönetici, okutman/öğretim görevlileri ve öğrencilerin kaliteyi ve kalite güvence süreçlerini nasıl algıladıklarını ve ne olmasını beklediklerini saptamaktır. İkinci hedef ise, bu programlarda halihazırda uygulanan kurumsal kalite güvence süreçlerini ve uygulamalarını anlamak ve tanımlamaktır. Çalışma, kurumsal süreç ve uygulamaların dil eğitiminin iyileşitirmesine ne gibi katkıları olduğunu ve bu katkıların beklenti ve algıları nasıl etkilediğini anlayarak, bu programlara uygun kalite güvence süreçlerinin neler olması gerektiği konusunda önermelerde bulunmaktadır.

Araştırmada, nitel veri toplama ve analiz metotları kullanılmıştır. Hazırlık İngilizce programlarında görev yapan yöneticiler, okutman/öğretim görevlileri ve öğrenciler araştırmanın denek gruplarını oluşturmuş ve araştırma bilgisayar üzerinden yapılan bir anket çalışması, teke tek ve grup görüşmeleri ve döküman incelenmesine dayandırılarak yürütülmüştür. Çalışmada toplanan verilerin değerlendirmesi sonucunda, Türkiye'deki yüksek öğretim kurumlarında sunulan dil programlarının eğitim kalitesini sürekli iyileştirmeye katkıda bulunacağı düşünülen bir "kalite denetim çerçevesi" önerilmektedir.

Bu öneri ve değerlendirmelerin, Türkiye'deki yüksek öğretim kurumu hazırlık İngilizce programlarında olduğu kadar, diğer programların eğitim süreçlerinin sürekli iyileştirilmesinde de yol gösterici olması umulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kalite, Kalite Güvencesi, İngilizce Dil Eğitimi

to my father, whom I hope is proudly smiling up there somewhere in the sky,

my mother, who still worries about me in front of the window,

my brother, who has the biggest heart of all but never said "I love you".

This is a belated PhD because I never had a passion to pursue an academic career, always thought I wanted to be a dancer!

After many years, I finally realized that I do not need to be a dancer in order to dance to the rhythm of life and hence, be able to complete what I have long started. I have learned to hear the tunes of the unique music composed for me every moment by the people who touch my life and dance to it. I am grateful to my family, my friends, my teachers, my colleagues, my students who made the dancer I am today and to my dearest son who plays the music to keep me dancing…

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACELS	Accreditaiton and Coordination of English Language, National Qualificaitons Authority, Ireland
ADEK	Commision on Academic Assessment and Quality
BC	British Council
CC	Turcquale Comission Core
CEA	Commission on English Language Program Accreditaiton
CoHE	Coucil of Higher Education
EAQUALS	European Association for Quality Langauge Services
ECML	European Center for Modern Langauges
ELT	English Language Teaching
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAF	European Quality Assurance Forum
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education
EUA	European University Association
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
MAQS	Macadonian Association for Quality Langauge Services
NEAS	Quality Assurance of English Langauge Training, Australia
OPTIMA	Bulgarian Association of Quality Language Services, Bulgaria
Q	Quality
QA	Quality Assurance
QLS	Quality Language Services, Greece
PASE	Polish Association for the Study of English, Poland
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of ther Langauges
UNESCO	United Nations Educatonal Scientific and Cultural Organization
USIA	United States Information Agency

YDYO-TR   Foreign Langauge Schools Directors Forum, Turkey

YÖDEK   Comission on Quality Enhancement in Higher Education

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the reasons why quality and quality related concepts which prevailed business industries in the twentieth century, have gained much attention in the education sector, especially in higher education. It explores how these concepts are defined and applied in higher education with a specific focus to the European context.

Quality monitoring has become an obligation in the European higher education arena as an essential requirement of the Bologna process. Being one of the signatory countries, quality and quality assurance inevitably entered into the discourse of higher education institutions and also into English education in Turkey. This study intends to find out how these concepts are perceived by the participants of English language programs in higher education institutions, as well as the existing processes and systems that are applied by these programs in order to assure the quality of their education.

In this chapter, the existing definitions of quality and quality assurance in the higher education context are explored, how these concepts exist specifically in

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the English language education area are explained and the aims of the study are stated.

1.1. Background to the Study

Quality has become the number one concern of educational institutions and programs with an increasing variety of definitions, policies and schemes to assure and maintain quality and respond to the demands of the sector. Globalization has turned higher education institutions into business enterprises, making them highly competitive. Thus, quality enhancement and assurance are major challenges of educational organizations who claim to equip students with the knowledge and skills to survive in the global business arena. (Morley, 2003)

In language education, the concept of quality is most basically used to refer to a desired condition in the services to students which makes one institution better than others and mostly involves standards as proof of attainment of the so called "quality". If quality is concerned, systems are needed to assure its existence, a culture of quality is required to ensure its maintenance and proof and documentation needed to declare the attainment of quality to the outside world. That is how quality, quality culture, quality assurance and quality accreditation entered into the world of language education and become a

business in itself, converting quality from a desirable attribute to a profitable commodity.

 Despite its existence and popularity, there still seems to be much work needed to assure the quality of English language teaching especially in higher education. The motivation behind this study is based on this need and hopes to find out the existing quality assurance (QA) practices, their strengths and weaknesses, and the perceptions and expectations of major stakeholders. Based on the findings, the study hopes to make suggestions which will reflect the perceptions of key stakeholders in English language teaching in Turkey, specifically addressing the needs and expectations in each institution and empower them to create their own quality culture.

In the process of examining the QA processes, it is important to bear in mind the elusiveness of the concept of quality and complicated nature of its assurance. Although the study intends to suggest a framework that will be a gate to QA rather than a yardstick, there is also a possibility that the findings will prove the unfeasibility and impracticality of such an undertaking. After all, "reaching the conclusion that we might all have different understanding of quality in higher education and none of us is necessarily wrong or right does not

mean, however, that we are absolved of the responsibility of maintaining and enhancing quality" (Harvey & Green, 1993, p.24).

This study primarily focuses on English language teaching in preparatory English programs in the context of higher education institutions in Turkey. References will be made to general Higher Education practices in European and national contexts only in cases where the requirements and processes directly or indirectly affect and apply to preparatory English language programs.

1.2. Definitions of Quality (Q) and Quality Assurance (QA) in Higher Education (HE)

1.2.1. Definitions of Quality

What is quality? How can we define this most commonly used and yet highly elusive and fuzzy concept? "We all have an intuitive understanding of what quality means but it is often hard to articulate. Quality, like 'liberty', 'equality', 'freedom', or 'justice', is a slippery concept" (Harley & Green, 1993, p. 3).

Hardly a day passes without hearing or uttering the word quality at least once in almost every segment of life, in the form of an adjective: "I need quality time for myself this afternoon to work on my dissertation"; or in the form of a noun: "we

aim at high quality in all our services". Quality is the gift of capitalism that human kind is bestowed with, either as a blessing or a curse but certainly an offspring of the system to take care of and live with. The presence of quality, we are taught to believe, brings satisfaction and happiness and the absence of it, failure and poverty. The human being is doomed to continuously seek quality which keeps getting further away, every time one thinks one gets closer to it.

In his book *Zen and the Motorcycle Maintenance*, Pirsig (1974) talks about the time when he asks his students at Montana State University to define quality and says that it is one of those things that exists but cannot be defined. What he put on the board after lengthy discussion with his students was: "Quality is a characteristic of thought and statement that is recognized by a non- thinking process. Because definitions are a product of rigid, formal thinking, quality cannot be defined." He then wrote: "But even though quality cannot be defined, you know what quality is!" (1974, p.207)

Do we really know what it is? It certainly is the buzz word of our times, spread like an epidemic to all segments of life from industry to education. With competition becoming the unprecedented reality of survival for any kind of business, it seems like the concept of quality will continue holding its importance in our lives for many years to come.

1.2.2. Quality in Higher Education

There have been many studies and publications on the concept of quality in higher education since early 1980s. However, it is still misinterpreted and misunderstood, or both, by academics in higher education (Doherty, 2008).

Although there are numerous attempts to define what it is, a clear definition of quality still does not exist. It is one of those concepts that has numerous uses and definitions, varying according to the context it exists and the purpose of its existence. Regardless of this wide array of usage, it is still difficult to find an agreed upon definition which will clarify the conceptual confusion caused by the term "quality" (Van Damme, 2001).

"Quality"—and what is meant is "good" quality, an attribute not necessarily included in the term "quality"—is "everyone's favorite". The same also holds true so far as quality of study programs is concerned. All institutions of higher education obviously want to strive for quality, or at least they would not admit the opposite" (Kohler, 2003, p.317). This growing focus on quality resulted in attempts to formulate definitions of quality according to the different perspectives of the stakeholders in the higher education sector.

In the *Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions of Quality and Quality Assurance*, printed by UNESCO in 2007, the concept, as used in higher education, is defined as follows:

Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multilevel, and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an educational model, to the institutional mission and objectives, as well as to specific standards within a given system, institution, programme, or discipline. Quality may thus take different, sometimes conflicting, meanings depending on (i) the understanding of various interests of different constituencies or stakeholders in higher education (*e.g.* students; universities; disciplines; the labor market; society; a government); (ii) its references: inputs, processes, outputs, missions, objectives, etc.; (iii) the attributes or characteristics of the academic world worth evaluating; and (iv) the historical period in the development of higher education. A wide spectrum of definitions of academic quality has been used:

— *Quality as excellence*: a traditional, elitist academic view, according to which only the best standards of excellence (usually meaning a high level of difficulty and of complexity of a programme, the seriousness of the student testing procedures, etc.) are understood as revealing true academic quality.

— *Quality as fitness for purpose*: a concept that stresses the need to meet generally accepted standards such as those defined by an accreditation or quality assurance body, the focus being on the effectiveness of the processes at work in the institution or programme in

fulfilling its objectives and mission. Sometimes quality in this sense is also labeled as: (i) *a value for money approach* owing to the (implicit) focus on how the inputs are effectively and efficiently used by the processes and mechanisms involved or (ii) the *value‑added approach* when results are evaluated in terms of changes obtained through various educational processes (*e.g.* teaching and learning processes). A variation of the latter is the *quality as transformation* approach, which is strongly student-centered. It considers quality as a process of change, adding value to students through their learning experience.

— *Quality as fitness of purpose*: a concept that focuses on the defined objectives and mission of the institution or programme with no check of the fitness of the processes themselves in regard to any external objectives or expectations. *Fitness of purpose* evaluates whether the quality-related intention of an organization are adequate. Within this approach, one may distinguish alternative approaches developed in the 1990s: (i) *quality as threshold* whereby certain norms and criteria are set, which any programme or institution has to reach to be considered to be of quality. In many European higher education systems, a variant defining quality as a basic standard, closely linked to accreditation, is used. In this case, the starting point is the specification of a set of minimum standards to be met by an institution or programme and to generate the basis for the development of quality improvement mechanisms; (ii) *quality as consumer satisfaction*: quality perceived as closely linked to the growing importance of market forces in higher education, that focuses on the importance of the external expectations of consumers (students, families, society at large) and other stakeholders.

— *Quality as enhancement or improvement*: focusing on the continuous search for permanent improvement, stressing the responsibility of the higher education institution to make the best use of its institutional autonomy and freedom. Achieving quality is central to the academic ethos and to the idea that academics themselves know best what quality is. (pp: 70-73)

"Education services are often intangible and difficult to measure, since the outcome is reflected in the transformation of individuals in their knowledge, their characteristics, and their behavior. Therefore, there is no commonly accepted definition of quality that applies specifically to the higher education sector" (Michael, 1998, p. 377).

1.2.3. Quality Assurance in Higher Education

As there is not a "one-serves-all" definition for quality, a definition and recipe for QA is not by all means realistic. The complexity of the educational operations and the variety of factors effecting institutions in different ways make it necessary to examine the concept of quality and its determinants from the perspectives of stakeholders in individual institutions. Rather than adopting a definition and applying a set of predefined standards for QA, higher education institutions need to define and design their own QA systems with regards to their own principles and purposes.

According to Harvey and Green (1993) "QA is about ensuring that there are mechanisms, procedures and processes in place to ensure that the desired quality, however defined and measured, is delivered". In other words; "QA is not about specifying the standards and specifications against which to measure and control quality" but establishing systems that will help institutions to achieve their goals and objectives. In the same paper (1993), citing from Sallis and Hingley (1991), they conclude that QA "is a systematic approach to doing the right things in the right way, and getting them right. It is about making certain there are systems in place so that the organization continues to deliver the right things every time to meet customers' requirements (p. 14).

As a result of the rapidly increasing mobility and the change of value systems in education sector due to advancements and innovations in a global world, higher education institutions are faced with the challenge of continuous competition if they want to stay intact. It is not easy for universities to compete with this demand unless they are engaged in some form of quality assurance scheme to both continually assess and improve their own performance and to meet the standards that prevail in the international and national arena.

What has been happening in higher education sector, as in others, is a reliance on standardized definitions and internationally accepted recipes for the sake of

increasing cooperation and mobility. Globalization spreads competition beyond boarders and demands institutions and programs to meet the challenges beyond their walls. Thus, higher education programs are obligated to strive for quality to make their school attractive and competitive in a global scale even for their national market. "…whatever the extent and nature of the market, there will be a need for higher education to have quality monitoring processes in place, at the very least accreditation, because the market is neither self-regulating nor will pure competition ensure the retention of integrity of higher education" (Harley, 2002, p. 12).

In 1990s and 2000s, all higher education institutions around the world have been faced with this challenge and required to establish internal and external systems to assure quality of their provisions. As a result, rigorous systems of monitoring, inspection and assessment of quality are designed and dictated to higher education institutions by national and international Treaties (e.g: The Bologna Treaty, 1999) and Councils (e.g: Higher Education Quality Council in Britain, 1992, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2003).

In his introductory paper for the UNESCO Expert Meeting in 2001, Van Damme talks about the effects of globalization and market economy on higher education

and draws attention to the importance of recognizing and respecting the differences, "balancing the global with the local" while meeting these demands and assuring quality. "The impact of the various trends and challenges related to globalisation on higher education institutions and policies is profound, but also diverse, depending on the specific location in the global arena. There is a danger of generalisation and oversimplification when dealing with globalisation; diversity has to be recognised but also to a certain extent promoted" (Van Damme, 2001).

QA initiatives and practices in higher education institutions are beyond the scope of this study; however, Turkey is one of the countries which signed the Bologna Treaty (2001) and abides with all the requirements and regulations. The main concern of the Bologna Process has been standardization and quality assurance in the European higher education arena in order to increase the attractiveness of the European Universities in the worldwide education market. "Europe, post-Bologna Declaration, is moving towards a structure in which second-tier accreditation, on a voluntary basis, will serve to 'top-up' national quality systems" (Harvey, 2002, p. 15).

What is happening in European higher education has direct relevance to higher education institutions in Turkey as one of the signatory countries. Lessons

learned from the implementation of QA procedures in the European context bears utmost importance in the quality monitoring initiatives and practices of both Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and individual HE institutions.

European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) has been one of the key organizations under European Universities Association (EUA), mainly concerned with quality provisions and projects. In 2005, "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) was published by ENQA in order to provide "an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance" and "to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies and bodies" (Executive Summary of the Report, 2005).

Concern for quality and quality assurance also led to the foundation of European Quality Assurance Forum which annually brings together students and staff from higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies, and national policy makers since 2006. These forums allow all these parties to come together for three days and share ideas and experiences around a topic for the purposes of improving QA practices in higher education institutions.

These topics have been:

"Embedding Quality Culture in Higher Education" (2006)

"Implementing and Using Quality Assurance" (2007)

"Trends in Quality Assurance" (2008)

"Creativity and Diversity: Challenges for Quality Assurance Beyond 2010" (2009)

"Building Bridges: Making Sense of Quality Assurance in European, national and Institutional Contexts" (2010)

As these topics suggest, the discussions and the following reports determine the direction of QA initiatives in European higher education, allowing the participants to discuss existing practices with their weaknesses and strengths and make decisions for future directions (EQAF Report, 2011).

The most recent direction identified in 2010 has been "the search for and development of a genuine quality culture within higher education". It has been agreed that QA "needs to take more strongly into consideration the working conditions and the perspectives of those (directly) involved in teaching and learning, including students as active partners in those processes and that successful QA is an integrated part of our daily routines and behavior" (ibid).

The report clearly suggests that QA will remain as a continuous challenge in the European higher education arena, without changing its objective but certainly changing its use in different contexts. The top down quality initiatives and mandates are bound to produce much paper work but not the desired results unless the diversity and individuality of institutions are respected and incorporated into the QA systems.

In his keynote address at the 2010 Forum, the UK former chief executive of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and former president of ENQA, Peter Williams, stresses the importance of recognizing local and institutional cultures and says that ESG "was not a book of rules governing the way universities and quality assurance agencies must behave, but a text intended to provide the starting point for an exploration of the common values and practices relating to quality assurance that could be found across the (then) 40 signatory states". He draws attention to the danger of such standards and guidelines becoming out of date if their fitness for purpose is not clearly defined according to local needs (Williams, 2010).

Although establishment of "holistic institutional systems" is in the heart of the recent QA discussions in European Quality Assurance Forum meetings, ESG has been treated as a yardstick and implemented without creating an

institutional quality culture in many universities. In their paper, Vettori and Lueger (2010) talk about this weakness of externally imported formal QA systems and stress the importance of engaging the key stakeholders in an institution in the creation of a quality culture. "What is often neglected in the relevant quality assurance discourse is the dynamics and self-referential character of organizational developments and the interpretive autonomy of the actors involved". They conclude their discussion of the difficulties in designing and implementing institutional QA systems by suggesting a critical reflection on "some of our underlying assumptions of how QA systems should be developed and what role different actors might/could play in such endeavors" (p.1).

Meanwhile, this move towards the design of institutional QA systems led to the promotion of projects that support institutional initiatives in the European context. "EUA has supported its members in promoting an institutional quality culture that is fit for purpose and that takes into account of the significant institutional diversity which exists in Europe" (Loukkkola & Zhang, 2010, foreword). In order to analyze the progress made in this respect, "Examining Quality Culture in European Higher Education Institutions" project was launched in 2009, to be carried out in two phases. The first phase was based on a survey to collect quantitative evidence in order to map the existing quality assurance processes. The survey was responded by 222 institutions from 36 countries

across Europe, six of them being from Turkey (Loukkola & Zhang, 2010). The second phase of this project intended to hold interviews with representatives of participating institutions in order to help interpret the quantitative data compiled in the first phase. The second phase of the study was completed and its report was published in 2011 followed by a third phase, a workshop day to discuss findings and suggestions.

1.2.4. Quality and Quality Assurance in Language Education

The concern with quality and quality assurance has been the number one issue in the agenda of Higher Education institutions either by choice or by mandates from governments and English language teaching departments are no exception. The increase in the demand for learning English in the globalized world has obviously made English Language Teaching programs highly competitive, presenting them with the challenge of attaining and assuring quality in their provisions. The rapidly growing number of schools, private and public, engaged in this endeavor, increased the importance of internal and external program evaluations for QA purposes.

European Association for Quality Language Education (EAQUALS) which was founded by the initiation of an English Language School in Trieste, Italy, in 1991, is the first organization aiming to contribute to the development of quality

language education in Europe and beyond. The standards and criteria for quality was specified in the charters produced by the association and language teaching institutions need to go through an inspection scheme in order to become a member and awarded by a quality certification, if they have the motive to invest in this costly process and increase their revenues. The language teaching market is so competitive that it has not taken long for EAQUALS to become a recognized body by the Council of Europe for external quality assurance in language education with 112 accredited members in 25 countries (http://www.eaquals.org).

There are also national organizations that are specifically concerned with quality assurance of language education in their national contexts. PASE in Poland, QLS in Greece, OPTIMA in Bulgaria, ACELS in Ireland, QUEST in Romania, MAQS in Macedonia, British Council in UK, NEAS in Australia and TESOL in USA are nationally recognized organizations that assess the quality of language education within the parameters of their own national standards and criteria.

Another quality initiative specifically in the area of language education is the "Qualitraining" project that is funded by European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML), the division of the Council of Europe which is established

in 1995 in order to promote "linguistic and cultural diversity and foster plurilinguaism and pluriculturalism among citizens living in Europe". In order to promote language teaching and learning, ECML runs research and activities that are led by international team of experts and publishes the reports and results of these projects (http://www.ecml.at).

> The ECML is a Council of Europe institution based in Graz, Austria. In cooperation with the Language Policy Division of the Council the Centre functions as a catalyst for reform in the teaching and learning of languages. It assists its stakeholders in member states in bringing language education policies and practices together." In order to promote language education in Europe, the mission of the centre is stated as: "to encourage excellence and innovation in language teaching and to help Europeans learn languages more efficiently (www.ecml.com).

ECML which increases its member states from eight to 31 since its foundation, organizes programs and funds projects on language education. "Qualitraining" is one of these projects initiated as the centre's second mid-term program (2004-2007), with the intention to provide guidance and training for quality enhancement and assurance of language programs.

> Addressing quality assurance in a coherent way across fields of language education, across languages and regions, can contribute to better social cohesion, so that all citizens can expect to receive services

of equal quality standards, irrespective of the language they are aiming to learn. Aiming towards achieving better standardisation of approaches to quality assurance training would also contribute to creating equal opportunities for trainers representing different languages (including less widely taught languages) to have access to information, to familiarisation with best practice and to training in quality assurance matters (ECML, medium-term programme, 2006).

The quality training project was initiated and carried out by a group of experts with the cooperation of EAQUALS, QUEST, OPTIMA and the International Learning and Research Centre, UK. The project ended with the publication of a quality training guide for language education providers in the 33 member states of ECML in 2007. The aims of the project, as stated in the guide, were: "to develop a training guide for quality assurance, to train multipliers/trainers to set off a cascading process, to work towards consolidating a quality assurance culture in language education across Europe and beyond". The intended cascading process was started by an initial meeting of the project team and invited school directors interested in the project in May, 2007. Following this first meeting, the invited educators were expected to use the guide in training the staff in their respective institutions to implement QA processes and provide feedback to project partners. However, any information on the use of the quality training guide was not circulated to the researcher up to date.

Another European project related to language education in European HEIs is the preparation of reports by 18 European countries on quality enhancement in higher education language studies, the reports of which are prepared within the framework of *Thematic Network Project 2,* organized by the European Language Council. A discussion of the strategies and practices in higher education language studies in relation to these reports are compiled in a paper (Tudor, 2006) which highlights the importance language education has gained as a result of the Bologna process. The paper also points out the need to provide special training to language teachers in higher education which requires specific pedagogical skills and competencies that are different from other educational contexts.

According to Tudor (2006) "…while the demands being made on language teachers are increasing in response to the growth in demand for language teaching in HE, at the current point in time the necessary support structures are not sufficiently well established, not in all countries or all institutions, at least (pp. 522-523).

1.2.5. Quality and Quality Assurance in Preparatory English Language Programs in Higher Education in Turkey

In Turkey, a commission within CoHE works on the policy and principles of academic assessment and quality enhancement "Yüksek Öğretimde Akademik Değerlendirme ve Kalite Geliştirme Kurulu, YÖDEK" (Academic Assessment and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education Commission) which determines, publishes and revises the guidelines and standards for academic assessment and quality assurance in higher education. The commission published the "Yükseköğretim Kurumlarında Akademik Değerlendirme ve Kalite Rehberi" (Academic Assessment and Quality Guidelines for Higher Education Institutions) in 2006 and accordingly, the universities are asked to appoint their institutional steering committees in order to implement and develop quality assurance processes in their institutions in congruent with national standards and EU requirements.

In terms of English language education, although almost all higher education institutions have intensive English teaching programs, national QA provisions specifically for this area and internal or external evaluation and accreditation schemes do not exist. Existence of a quality culture and QA processes are a result of institutional consciousness, resources and initiatives, if they exist at all.

At present, It is possible to observe that more and more English language programs voluntarily engage in quality monitoring activities and seek accreditation with the rapid increase in the number of HEIs and the competition among them to attract students.

CoHE specifies the threshold standards in terms of the qualifications of staff and methods of recruitment of both the staff and students for language programs in higher education. The programs go through regular CoHE audits as part of the annual University reviews. However, these audits are only concerned with accurate reporting and documentation of the activities and expenditures of the language programs. The implementation of systems and procedures for quality enhancement and assurance of its provisions and the procedures for program evaluation specific to HE language programs do not exist (YÖDEK rehberi, 2006).

During the time of this study, internal or external program evaluations of English preparatory programs are not a requirement of CoHE and a national organization or agency specifically concerned with the QA of ELT programs has not been founded and/or appointed as yet. Thus, the processes currently exist in the field outside of Turkey are promoted in Turkey, and imported from a European and an American accreditation body. The quality standards and QA

processes presented by these organizations reflect the dominant values and policies of the "center" (Canagarajah,1999), as has been the case in the field of ELT for many years.

Faced with the increasing demand to improve English language education and the challenge to assure and maintain the quality in their provisions, Preparatory School Directors initiated a Forum in 2009, (YDYO-TR), including all directors in higher education institutions in Turkey and in Northern Cyprus. The aim of the forum is to meet annually in order to share good practices, discuss problems and challenges, and seek ways to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning in higher education institutions (Prof. Hüsnü Enginarlar, chairperson, personal conversation).

During the time of this study, two external agencies have been involved in the evaluation and accreditation of four language schools with large (more than 1000 students per annum) preparatory English language programs. Three of these language programs are part of foundation universities and one, a public university. The accreditation agencies operating are European Association for Quality Language Services (EAQUALS) and Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA). The first one being recognized by European Commission as an accrediting agency in the European Higher Education Arena

but not limited to EU countries, the second one recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a national accrediting agency for English language programs and institutions, but also receptive to international demands.

1.3. Aims of the Study and the Research Questions

This research study is designed to seek answers to the following questions, with the intention to understand how QA and its processes are perceived by the participants of English language programs in higher education institutions in Turkey. It also intends to identify the expectations of the managers and instructors from QA and be able to make suggestions which will meet these expectations.

1. What QA processes currently exist in preparatory English language programs in Turkish Higher Education Institutions?

   a). What written policy statements currently exist for QA in Universities for preparatory English programs?

   b). What written policy statements currently exist for QA in preparatory English programs' curriculum documents?

2. How do the managers and instructors perceive the effectiveness and impact of existing QA processes on the improvement of teaching and learning?

3. What QA processes are most desirable in preparatory English language programs in Higher Education Institutions as perceived by managers, instructors and students?

4. What are the QA processes that currently exist in the field of ELT outside Turkey? To what extent are they relevant and applicable in preparatory English language programs in Turkish HEIs?

a). Are there any preparatory English language programs in HE which implemented QA processes and received accreditation?

b). What do the managers, instructors and students expect from QA processes and accreditation?

c). What are the researcher's insights and impressions gained through being an insider in program evaluation for QA and accreditation in manager and inspector roles?

5. What processes are suggested for inclusion in an effective QA scheme for preparatory English language programs in Turkish HEIs?

1.4.   Definition of Key Terms in the Study

Quality (Q) and **quality assurance (QA)** are the key terms used throughout this study. Although the various definitions of these concepts are discussed in the previous sections of this chapter, clear cut definitions have not been made as one of the research questions in this study aims to find out how these

concepts are perceived and defined by the stakeholders of English language programs in Turkey, namely managers, instructors and students.

Accreditation refers to a quality certificate awarded to an institution as a result of program evaluations performed by an external agent in order to verify the status, legitimacy or appropriateness of an institution, program or module of study (Harley, 2004). In this study two external accreditation agencies, involved specifically with the accreditation of language programs, are mentioned: European Association for Quality Language Services (EAQUALS) and Commission for Educational Accreditation (CEA).

Higher Education Institution (HEI) is used in the study to cover all types of institutions that provide tertiary level education, namely universities and higher vocational schools. The government funded universities are referred to as public or state universities, the foundation universities are named as private universities in the questionnaire but in fact all private universities are "non-profit" foundation universities in Turkey.

Preparatory English language program is used to refer to the intensive ELT programs that are offered by HEIs. Students, who do not have a required level of English proficiency, study in these programs, at least for one academic term,

depending on their entry level, before they start their undergraduate studies. In some universities these programs are named as "Preparatory School" or "English Preparatory Program", in others, they are part of "Foreign Languages School" or "Language School", which also offers freshman English courses and other languages. Language School or only preparatory English program are also used throughout this study to refer to the intensive ELT programs within the university.

Manager is used to include the directors of the language schools, their assistants and instructors who are holding managerial responsibilities, such as curriculum and testing coordinators, teacher trainers and alike.

Coordinator is used only to refer to the managers in different capacities who also assumed a coordinator role while preparing their programs for accreditation.

Instructor refers to English language teachers who are working in the Higher Education context. No distinction has been made between native and non-native speakers of the language. Instead, especially in the focus group meetings and interviews, attention is given to the adequate representation of native English speaking instructors in the study.

1.5. Significance of the Study

As discussed above, "The Bologna process, with its emphasis on academic mobility and employability across national borders, highlights the importance of the language skills of students, academics and administrative staff in HE. Indeed, both the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the goal of flexible employability across borders are heavily dependent upon the extensive learning of languages" (Tudor, 2006, p. 521).

This growing importance of language education in the European HE area also stipulates the HE institutions in Turkey to provide language education and equip their graduates not only with vocational know-how and skills but also competencies in primarily English language.

As a result, enhancing the effectiveness of their preparatory ELT programs has become one of the major concerns of the universities, especially the ones offering English medium education in all or part of their programs. This attention on the preparatory language programs has also increased the ever-existing pressure on preparatory English language managers to improve the proficiency level of their students. Preparatory English programs have always been the "scapegoats" of universities, receiving all the blame for poor language skills of students in their respective study programs. Preparatory English

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programs are expected to bring students with varying backgrounds and aptitudes, to a uniform level of language proficiency to be able to cope with their academic studies in not more than one academic year (insider information, personal conversations in ELT conferences and meetings).

The preparatory English language programs faced with such a challenging task have been striving not only to improve the teaching and learning but also to prove their credibility and accountability to both the insiders and outsiders of their universities. Thus, Q and QA has entered into the agenda of these programs more so, especially after quality provisions become a requirement from universities by CoHE in 2002 (www. yok.gov). The rapidly growing number of foundation universities has contributed to this demand and more and more programs have started to search for external evaluation of their programs in order to enhance and assure the quality of their provisions.

Although, quality enhancement and QA have been in the agenda of higher education and of preparatory language programs for years, these concepts maintain their distant status for the stakeholders of ELT programs. The major reason for this is the fact that existing definitions and applications of these concepts are industry-driven and imported and imposed without being understood and internalized thoroughly in the education sector.

As Houston (2008) points out:

> Industry- and customer- based definitions of quality assume a given and agreed upon utilitarian objective in a particular environment –success in the market. They force debate on improvement in particular directions and pre-empt deeper consideration of the questions of "who benefits?" and "whose values are served? (p. 64).

These considerations formed the basis of this study which explores the perceptions and expectations of preparatory ELT program stakeholders and observes the existing quality cultures in these programs in order to shed light on the problem of QA and offer suggestions for QA processes that will make an impact on the enhancement of teaching and learning together with satisfying the requirements of the external bodies and the market.

The study also draws conclusions from the insights and experience of the researcher as an insider in the external program evaluation processes of language programs in order to obtain accreditation. Harley (2004) draws attention to the rapidly increasing demand for accreditation in European HE arena which he claims "is based on naïve views of what accreditation is and what it can achieve." He further states that "accreditation is neither neutral, nor benign; it is not apolitical….the accreditation route is highly political and is fundamentally about a shift of power but a shift concealed behind new public management ideology cloaked in consumerist demand and European

conformity" (pp.207-208). In this respect, the study expects to help decision-makers in HE language education more critically review the purposes and cost-effectiveness of accreditation from external agencies.

While the study is limited to English language education, it is hoped that it may also provide insights and ideas to the persons involved in quality monitoring in other domains of HE.

1.6.   Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this study is the number of participants who responded to the questionnaire and volunteered to be interviewed. Nevertheless, even though the number of participants can be considered very low as compared to the number of managers and instructors currently working in preparatory English programs, the participation is representative in terms of its characteristics and demographic qualifications.

A second limitation of the study is that it does not cover all the available literature and research on quality issues in international and national HE context since they do not bear direct relevance to language education. References are only made in cases when implications can be drawn for English language education.

Another limitation of the study was the reliance of the researcher on her insights and observations of many years of experience working on QA in language education. Such an undertaking required high level of self-discipline and repeated peer-reviews to maintain objectivity and refrain from making judgmental comments.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents an overview of program evaluation purposes and methods as part of QA and accreditation processes. The chapter also looks at some of the research studies that are concerned with quality and quality assurance issues in higher education in the European context.

2.1. Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance

Program evaluation is an integral part of QA and accreditation process which is why exploring the components of program evaluation is of vital importance in any discussion of QA processes. "In recent decades language program evaluation has evolved from focused studies of teaching methods inspired by language learning theories to curriculum management enterprise with a focus on quality assurance and enhancement" (Kiely, 2009, p.99).

Consequently, understanding the evaluation theory and practice is key to thoroughly discuss how purposes of program evaluation and QA intersect and how QA entail evaluation of programs both internally and externally, one or the other or both.

Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1993) specify three purposes for general program evaluations: "accountability, curriculum development and betterment, self development: teachers and other language teaching professionals" (p.23). They describe evaluation for purposes of accountability as "mainly concerned with determining whether there has been value for money, in other words, whether something has been both effective and efficient" (p.24).

According to them, this form of evaluation is carried out as a demand of policy makers and sponsors, that is the outsiders who have a vested interest in the program and interested in the products of the program, rather than the processes involved. These kinds of evaluations are summative in nature and concerned with the "statistical significance" of testing and measurement and ignore the "evaluative comments" of teachers and how learning takes place in the classrooms (p.25). Teachers, as stated in Rea-Dickens and Germaine (1993), only have a critical role in the evaluation process, if the evaluation is done for curriculum renewal and development purposes.

This clear-cut division between different purposes and methodologies of evaluations might have been valid in 1990s, when accountability was regarded as the accomplishment and value for money generated from the program and concerned only with the difference between the income and the outcome. In

other words, the quality of the product produced by the program was important, not the processes within it. This was mostly due to the powerful influence of the market economy thinking on education and the direct application of business concepts and paradigms in education which was becoming more and more industrialized in the global world.

In the last decade, however, extensive research on the quality and effectiveness of educational programs proved how inadequate and ineffective such direct applications of product oriented business concepts and procedures can be if the distinctive nature of education programs is undermined or ignored. Hence, it didn't take long for the practitioners involved in the assessment of educational programs to realize that such a narrow focus on program evaluation does not fit the educational contexts and jeopardizes their liability in terms of attaining long term and on-going improvement of quality. Summative, quantitative data can show the accomplishment of the program at a specific point of time only superficially but cannot lead to a meaningful and realistic judgment of the program effectiveness, since it will lack any information on the variability of parties and processes that lead to those results. When this information is disregarded, instead of striving to improve their operations which directly affect teaching and learning, programs inevitably take a value-for money approach and direct all their efforts to increasing the numbers in student

in-take and assessment, which may not represent quality enhancement of educational provisions but make them accountable on paper.

This kind of product oriented approach to evaluation might be adequate to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of a business initiative but surely unfit for educational programs. The incomparable nature of educational programs demands a much wider perspective to accountability, encompassing the effects and relationships of all the vital elements within a program and a formative stance that the other two purposes of evaluation yield for. Without the inclusion of information from teachers, students and all the other relevant parties and observation of the processes, it is impossible to draw conclusions on the accountability of an educational program.

Weir (1994) also draws attention to the criticisms made against this narrow approach to program accountability which only takes into consideration the achievement and value added to students at the end of the program. One of the arguments was the fact that this kind of evaluation "excludes such parameters as social, personal and motivational aspects of learning and ignores the high degree of variability between learners in what they bring to the educational program at the outset, both individually and from school to school" (p: 53).

As aforementioned, education is inescapably becoming a very competitive industry and being influenced by the market economy paradigms more and more so every day. Thus, institutions and programs are under a lot of pressure to meet the demands and expectations of the stake-holders, the national organizations, the public, the teachers and even the students themselves. The programs are accountable to all these parties and evaluation needs to be embedded as an indispensable part of their processes to be able to meet the demands both for quality enhancement and value for money. It is almost an unavoidable necessity for their existence. The evaluation process not only needs to be in place, but also have a longitudinal and multifaceted dimension in order to ensure sustainable accountability and quality enhancement.

It is a fact that, all these stake-holders first and foremost expect from the educational programs to add a value which is worth their investment and produce knowledgeable and competent graduates. However, measuring simply the success of its graduates can in no way be the only criteria for accountability. Statistical data on the students' entrance and exit levels of performance are neither sufficient nor valid as constructs to measure and make inferences on the accountability of a program. On the contrary, such simplifications may have adverse backwash effects on the overall curriculum, reducing the impact of teaching and learning processes and ignoring the individual differences

affecting the outcomes. As such, this approach diminishes any possibility for innovation and improvement, deteriorating the accountability of the program in a short time. As Murray (2009) rightfully points out "the exclusive focus on students achievement and value-added can be blind to how each is accomplished and opens possibilities that they are accomplished through exploitation of insensitive and unethical administration of the program and institution" (p.61). The possibility of such unprincipled manipulations will eventually damage the accountability of the program and endanger its continuation (Murray 2009).

These considerations have necessitated a different approach to accountability in education. The evaluation of the programs for accountability should not only look at the grades of students and compare them with their entrance grades, but also include information on all other aspects of the program and look for evidence of continuous improvement of curriculum and human resources within a program.

In order to make reliable judgments about the accountability of educational programs, evaluation needs to include information on all variables that ensure the continuity and sustainability of the program. As Weir (1994) points out: "For evaluation to be comprehensive, data need to be generated which not only

provide a full account of what has taken place but which also contribute to the understanding of reasons behind the practices that affect success" (p.15).

Especially when quality enhancement and assurance are in question, it is impossible to reduce the evaluation to summative numerical data and limit its scope by eliminating other factors in effect in a program. A comprehensive program evaluation for QA needs to include all aspects of a language program in account and establish an interactive relationship with the program stake-holders in order to understand and respond to their local realities. This entails much commitment and makes program evaluations a costly and time-consuming undertaking for institutions.

Institutions who can afford to invest in external and/or internal program evaluations need to clearly identify the purposes of the evaluation. If they are sincerely concerned with quality enhancement and assurance, it is pivotal to have shared definitions and purposes in initiating the process and involving all the participants. The design needs to be based on a shared understanding of purposes and definitions and incorporate all aspects of the program to make judgment on its efficacy and accountability meaningful and realistic.

The current research studies and literature reviewed for the purposes of this study, related with program evaluation also focus on the learning and improvement function of program evaluations and stress the importance of both summative and formative assessments of all aspects of a program in a comprehensible evaluation (Kiely, 2009). He discusses three contexts for learning from language program evaluations, namely: "theory building", "policy development", "curriculum development".

Inspections by an authority, such as a national organization or an accreditation body is stated as a source of policy making where the learning comes from the expertise of the authority who establishes a threshold of quality that "can shape the teaching and learning activities within a program" (Kelly, 2009, p. 13). He further draws attention to the limitations of solely depending on evaluations within "the inspection tradition as a means of understanding and improving language programs." One major limitation of such traditions is the fact that, "the monitoring and inspection processes focus on the stated criteria and documentary evidence, thus emphasizing compliance rather than situated on creative aspects and teaching quality" (p.13).

Even when the inspection processes involve observations of teaching (EAQUALS and CEA inspections), they focus on the evidence of the application

of a right way of teaching within a very short time (usually not more than 10 minutes in each class), not enough to engage and interact with teachers and learners. Thus, such external evaluations have the effect of alienating the individual teachers and their vital role in the improvement of the programs. They focus more on method than on how different students in different contexts learn (Harley, 2002).

2.2. External Program Evaluation and Accreditation

External program evaluations can be carried for accreditation purposes in order to provide a quality label and recognition to an institution or a program if it meets the standards and criteria defined by a formal authority. This authority might be a national organization, a professional association authorized by the governments, individual organizations integrating their own awards and private organizations which accredit programs according to standards and threshold levels which themselves define. "Such accreditation may enhance an institutions reputation, but it does not alter its formal status inside a nation's higher education system" (Haakstad, 2001, p. 78).

Both of the following accreditation agencies who also operate in the language teaching domain in Turkey fall into the third category.

2.2.1. The Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA)

CEA is a private agency which was founded for the purposes of providing program evaluation and accreditation to language programs which offer English as a second language in United States of America.

On its web site, the agency introduces itself as:

> "The Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) was founded in 1999 by English language professionals as a specialized accrediting agency. The purpose was to provide a means for improving the quality of English language teaching and administration through accepted standards. CEA conducts accreditation reviews in the U.S. and internationally". Its mission as being: "to promote excellence in the field of English language teaching and administration through accreditation of English language programs and institutions worldwide. CEA achieves its mission by using widely-held standards to foster continuous program development through a rigorous process of regular self-assessment and peer evaluation" (http://www.cea-accredit.org).

The CEA standards for quality language education are grouped under the following categories:

Mission
Curriculum
Faculty
Facilities, equipment and supplies
Administrative and Fiscal Capacity
Student Services
Recruiting
Length and structure of program of study

Student Achievement and Student Complaints

Program Development, Planning and Review

Under these areas the standards that are required for accreditation are specified. Information about requirements for application for accreditation, fees, policy and procedures are provided.

For international applications, the requirements are listed as:

Policies and procedures for accreditation of non-U.S. sites parallel those developed for the U.S., with a consideration for cultural differences in the international setting. Briefly, to be accredited by CEA, a program must

1. Meet eligibility requirements
2. Submit an application form
3. Host a preliminary visit (only if required based on review of submitted materials)
4. Attend a self-study workshop
5. Develop and submit a plan for how it will conduct its self-study
6. Submit a comprehensive self-study that addresses CEA's 52 standards
7. Have a site visit by a team of peer reviewers who verify the contents of the self-study
8. Be reviewed by the 13 commissioners who make the final accreditation decision

The web page also contains a directory with a list of schools and programs that are accredited by CEA. The name of a Turkish University appears on this list as the only international institution, apart from the American University branches in United Arab Emirates, listed so far, having received a 5 year accreditation.

2.2.2. European Association for Quality Language Services (EAQUALS)

EAQUALS is the largest private agency which provides program evaluations and accreditation in language education internationally, not limited to English but covering all other languages. Since the services of the agency keeps expanding beyond the European countries, the name of the association is changed on its web page as "Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality Language Services Association" in 2012.

On its comprehensive web page the aims of this organization are specified as:

> Evaluation and Accreditation of Quality in Language Services Association (EAQUALS) is an international association of institutions and organizations involved in language education. Its aim is to promote and guarantee high quality in language teaching and learning. To achieve this aim, EAQUALS has created and published a demanding set of criteria to verify the quality offered by its Accredited Members-schools offering courses in a wide variety of languages in 25 countries. These criteria are based on four charters: a General Charter, a Course Participant's Charter, a Staff Charter and an Information Charters.

It is stated that EAQUALS awards accreditation as an independent accreditation body and "contributes to the Council of Europe projects, and is sometimes consulted by the European Commission on matters related to language education. EAQUALS has been granted Participatory Status by the Council of Europe".

Further information about its status on its web page is as follows:

How does EAQUALS relate to the International Standards Organisation (ISO) and the Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN)?

ISO is a general system of quality assurance, which emphasizes quality assurance procedures; EAQUALS is (a) an association with professional activities and (b) specifically concerned with language education, assessing the quality of teaching and academic management as well as procedures. A number of EAQUALS members have also obtained ISO or other quality certifications and consider them to be complementary. CEN has set up minimum standards for language travel, which were drafted with EAQUALS participation in the Working Group. EAQUALS accreditation is directed to identifying and certifying excellence. EAQUALS has also observer status on two ISO technical committees.

Who recognises EAQUALS accreditation?

EAQUALS has an increasingly important profile in Europe. For example, EAQUALS schools are recognized by CSN - the Swedish Board of Higher Education for the allocation of study abroad loans and grants. In Italy, the Progetto Lingue 2000 gives credit to EAQUALS courses as additions to school and higher education. In Switzerland, a number of companies require EAQUALS certification for in-company language teaching.

What are an institution's responsibilities in relation to EAQUALS?

Institutions have to undergo an initial inspection, repeated every three years, and demonstrate that all the requirements of the EAQUALS Charters are respected. Any significant change within the three-year period should be reported to EAQUALS. They are expected to take part in the activities of the Association, to participate in meetings, to promote EAQUALS internationally and at a local level (www.eaquals.org).

Information about standards, policies and procedures for accreditation are not made public on the web page but can be received from EAQUALS secretariat

upon request. The four charters that are publicly available specifying the threshold level of services in accredited institutions are: the general charter, the charter for course participants, the staff charter and the information charter (Appendix Aa, Ab, Ac, Ad).

The EAQUALS standards are grouped under the following main categories:

Teaching
Academic management
Curriculum and Syllabus
Progress Assessment and Certification
Quality Assurance
Academic Resources
Other Services to Course Participants
Staff Contracts, Terms and Conditions
Qualifications, Experience and Training
Communications
Information
Premises
Management and Administration

The "Inspection Scheme Manual" which has detailed specifications of all standards, the step by step description of procedures for inspectors and the school, is not available on line but sent to the institutions upon application for membership and accreditation.

A glance at the categories of standards in the accreditation schemes of these agencies clearly indicates the differences in the wording and the ordering of categories.

In CEA standards the first category is "mission" which is explained as: "The program or language institution has a written statement of its mission and goals, which guides activities, policies, and allocation of resources. This statement is communicated to faculty, students, and staff, as well as to prospective students, student sponsors, and the public, and is evaluated periodically" (www.cea-accredit.org).

In EAQUALS standards, the first category is "teaching" under which "approach and content, teaching methods and course participants' needs and learning" are listed. Under "what the inspectors will look for" it says that: "Inspectors aim to get evidence that effective learning is taking place in classes, and to form an overall picture of the performance of individual teachers" (Inspection Scheme Manual, p.13)

In CEA standards, the priority is the statement of a mission which is also a priority requirement of accreditation schemes existing in other sectors such as

ISO and EFQM, where as in EAQUALS standards, the priority is given to teaching which bears more suitability to educational services.

2.3. Research Studies with relevance to QA Language Education

While research projects initiated by the European organizations such as European Quality Association (EAU), European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQUA), European Council of Modern Languages (ECML), advocate shared standards and principles of QA for academic mobility and employability in line with the Bologna process, a number of research studies demonstrate how a narrow focus on prescribed standards at a managerial level impacts the organizational culture and recommend a more flexible approach to QA provisions which recognizes the local differences and interacts with them rather than a fixed scheme that fits for all that interferes (Houston 1008, Harley 2010, Vettori, 2012).

One such major research study on quality in HEIs is; "Examining the quality culture in higher education institutions" (EQC) which was a project initiated in 2009 by the European University Association (EUA) and its partners. It was completed in 2012 with a final workshop gathering 30 participants of the project from EU member countries for a final discussion of outcomes (Laukkola & Zang, 2010, Sursock, 2011, Vettori, 2012). References to the outcomes and

insights gained from this project were made at different sections of this research study.

In the report entailing the summary of the insights and discussions of the participants in the third phase, Vettori (2012) briefly describes the three phases of the project as follows:

- In the first phase, a survey questionnaire was used to gather quantitative evidence on the development of internal quality assurance processes as envisioned by the seven areas in part 1 of the ESG. Based on the answers of 222 institutions from 36 countries across Europe, it was shown that remarkable progress had been made in QA in recent years (Loukkola and Zhang, 2010): European HEIs had implemented – mostly tailor-made – QA frameworks that were covering a variety of different areas and activities, from curriculum design to staff development and institutional information systems. From the open questions, however, it also became apparent that, although the processes themselves looked very similar, they were embedded in rather different organisational, structural and interpretative contexts: even an instrument as 'universal' as student questionnaires had a wide range of meanings and functions.
- These findings were confirmed and elaborated on in phase two: in this phase, 59 telephone interviews were conducted with 10 universities in 10 different countries from the survey response sample. The resulting report

(Sursock, 2011) did not only come up with suggestions of how an effective quality culture could be fostered, but also emphasised the role of power, ideology and different perceptions: even within the institutions there are usually different subcultures – disciplinary or organisational ones – that have to be considered when devising quality assurance policies and procedures.

- Phase three, finally, was about taking stock – and about discussing how to make use of the previous findings and insights. Thirty quality assurance professionals from EUA member institutions from all over Europe were assembled for a two-day workshop in Edinburgh, Scotland, in order to explore further the practical applicability of the conclusions that have come out of the project, as well as to discuss challenges and good practices in developing quality cultures in their institutions (p.2).

As a result of the emphasis on the importance of language education for academic mobility and project partnerships, a study directly related to language education in European HEIs entails; "a discussion of strategies and options in the field of the training of language teachers which emerged from reports on quality enhancement in higher education language studies prepared in 18 European countries. The reports were prepared within the framework of *Thematic Network project 2,* organized by the European Language Council" (Tudor, 2006, p. 519). Studying these reports, Tudor draws attention to the crucial importance of teacher training and professional development in

language education. After the analysis of prevailing requirements and practices in different countries he attests that: "Quality enhancement initiatives generally reflect the traditions and organizational culture of different countries, so it is unlikely that any one strategy would be seen as the ideal" (p. 526). His study clearly demonstrates the importance of taking action at national and institutional levels for the training of teachers in order to improve the quality of language education.

Another research study bearing direct relevance to this one was carried out as part of an EAQUALS special interest group project initiated in 2007 (Appendix B). The study aimed to explore the perceptions of quality in language education of the learners and their expectations from a quality language program. The survey carried out for this study was responded by 462 language learners in different age groups from 12 different countries studying primarily English in EAQUALS accredited language schools (Appendix C).

Results of this study confirm the conclusions made by Tudor (2006) about the importance of teacher qualifications and competencies in the attainment of quality. Regardless of country or age, the number one choice of all respondents as the most important feature of quality was "teachers", followed by "methods of teaching" (Basaran & Kurtoglu, 2008).

In this regard, various projects have been carried out in the European context to determine standards for language teachers and teaching such as "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (www.coe.int), the "European profile for language teacher education- a frame of reference" (www.lang.soton.ac.uk) and "A profiling grid for language teaching professionals (portfolio for language teachers)" (www.eaquals.org). All these initiatives are important in establishing a common ground and understanding in the pursuit of quality in language teaching. However, they bear a dominant assumption that these standards can be applicable to all teaching contexts in all countries which this and other studies prove otherwise.

A recent quality related study (Muresan, 2011) in relation to language education explored how the generic quality principles are integrated and operationalised in the charters and the inspection scheme of EAQUALS and the national quality assurance systems in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the QA organizations of which are also members of EAQUALS. This qualitative study first looks at the quality principles, namely "customer satisfaction, process orientation, results orientation, personal development focus and values-driven dimension" (Muresan, 2011, p.3) and explores how these principles are embedded in the charters and inspections scheme of EAQUALS by analyzing excerpts from these documents. She

concludes that these principles, together with "core values such as fairness, truthfulness, reliability, transparency of procedures" are embedded in these documents without being "prescriptive" (p.8).

The evaluation of the charters and codes of practices of participating national QA organizations "has revealed the preoccupation for standardizing the understanding of what quality means in language education and of operationalising quality principles, so that they become meaningful in concrete educational context" (Muresan, 2011, p. 13).

The study also incorporates a survey involving the language education professionals actively engaged in the development of QA procedures in these countries in order to explore their perceptions related to language learning trends and quality. From the analysis of responses, Muresan (2011) concludes that the existence of similar quality principles and QA procedures "can be seen as a reflection of the workings of both globalization and localization" (p. 26). Through the analysis of the rhetoric in the charters and inspection scheme of EAQUALS and several other member national quality organizations, this study confirms and favors compliance to common standards and principles of quality in their QA provisions in language education beyond borders and the dominant role of EAQUALS in this vein.

The researcher of this study, Muresan, has been an insider in EAQUALS for over 15 years, actively involved in several of its projects in different roles. She is also one of the key actors of the OualiTraining project (Muresan et al., 2007) and the Romanian national QA organization. Consequentially, she is active in the promotion of EAQUALS standards and criteria, favoring uniformity and compliance to common European standards in order to improve language education in national contexts.

As these studies suggest, especially after the Bologna treaty, there is growing interest in QA in higher education and also in language education. This interest makes internal and external program evaluations pivotal for the accountability and improvement efforts of language programs. More programs seeking external evaluations will lead to the foundation of government-led and/or private accreditation agencies which might soon become a business enterprise in education as is the case in other sectors. The growing concern with QA will also lead to a search for most efficient and effective QA processes which might increase research interest in this area.

This research study is the first one in Turkey that is specifically concerned with QA in English language education in the context of higher education.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD OF RESEARCH

This chapter presents the research method used in this study. The first section introduces the description of the research design and the second section introduces the participants of the study. Finally, the data collection instruments and procedures are explained.

3.1. Research Design

This research study is a qualitative and descriptive one, "where a phenomenon is studied within a natural context, data are often collected by means of a number of procedures used simultaneously, with one piece of data leading to the next" (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989, p.158). It is designed to seek answers to questions which are derived from the experience and interest of the researcher in the study of QA in ELT contexts. A pragmatist approach is taken in determining the data collection procedures which allowed the use of a variety of techniques depending on convenience and availability. The study is also inductive in that it evolved around the data collected, rather than theory and hypothesis on QA in language education.

The growing demand for quality enhancement and assurance in higher education has its ramifications for preparatory English programs which are constantly under pressure to enhance their educational provisions in order to improve students' language proficiency levels. This study is inspired from the emergent interest in QA in the field of ELT in the HE context in Turkey and asks the following questions in order to understand how QA is perceived by the participants of these programs. It also intends to identify the expectations of the managers and instructors from QA and be able to make suggestions which will meet these expectations.

1. What QA processes currently exist in preparatory English language programs in Turkish Higher Education Institutions?

a). What written policy statements currently exist for QA in universities for preparatory English programs?

b). What written policy statements currently exist for QA in preparatory English language programs' curriculum documents?

2. How do managers and instructors perceive the effectiveness and impact of existing QA processes on the improvement of teaching and learning?

3. What QA processes are most desirable in preparatory English   language programs in HEIs as perceived by managers, instructors and students?

4. What are the QA processes that currently exist in the field of ELT outside

Turkey? To what extent are they relevant and applicable in preparatory

English language programs in Turkish HEIs?

a). Are there any preparatory English language programs in HE which

implemented QA processes and received accreditation?

b). What do managers, instructors and students expect from QA

processes and accreditation?

c). What are the researcher's insights and impressions gained through

being an insider in program evaluation for QA and accreditation in

manager and inspector roles?

5. What processes are suggested for inclusion in an effective QA

scheme for preparatory English programs in Turkish HEIs?

The qualitative inquiry methods chosen for this research are congruent with the

purpose of the study, which is to explore and find out individual perspectives

and existing practices of quality assurance. It aims to describe what already

exists and how they are perceived by managers, instructors and students. It

also aims to identify expectations of program participants from QA. It seeks to

develop insights by thoroughly and accurately analyzing the data obtained

through active inquiry, passive observation, careful listening, note-taking and

study of documentation.

"Qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understanding and perceptions of others and to explore how people learn about and make sense of themselves and others" (Berg, 1989). Perceptions of the informants play a key role in exploring the concept of QA and need to be displayed and analyzed thoroughly in order to understand what QA is and make suggestions as to what it should be.

Qualitative methodology also allows for a detailed description of insights and impressions from a program evaluation process for accreditation and of the perceptions of program participants which is what this research study aims to do rather than to prove a hypothesis or a claim. Qualitative researchers "do not reduce the pages upon pages of narration and other data to numerical symbols", but "try to analyze the data with all its richness as closely as possible to the form in which they were recorded and transcribed" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.30-31). The qualitative research approach thus demands that "the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied" (ibid).

This research study is also descriptive in nature, relying on the insights and experiences of the researcher as baseline data to make inferences and draw

conclusions on what is naturally occurring without any interference. Direct quotations are given in cases when they help to better capture the respondents' understanding of and experiences with quality assurance.

The data which are collected through open-ended and likert-scale questions, as well as through interviews and personal narratives allow for rich exploration and detailed descriptions of insights and experiences. "Both qualitative and descriptive research is concerned with providing descriptions of phenomena that occur naturally, without the intervention of an experiment or an artificially contrived treatment" (Selinger & Shohamy, 1989, p.116). Thus, even when the researcher was an insider as an inspector during the inspection process, she remained as a passive observer and note-taker and refrained from making any judgments and recommendations which might affect the interpretation of the compiled data.

The types of data that are compiled for the purposes of answering these research questions and the sources are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Data types and sources compiled to answer the research questions

Research Question	Data Source	Data type
QA processes currently existing in preparatory English language programs and their effectiveness	Managers Instructors Curriculum documents Inspection field notes	Questionnaire Interview Study of documentation
Perceptions of impact of existing QA processes on the improvement of language teaching and learning	Managers Instructors Students	Questionnaire Focus group meetings Personal conversations
Most desired QA processes in preparatory English language programs	Managers Instructors Students	Questionnaire Interview Focus group meetings Personal conversations
Perceptions of quality and QA in language education	Managers Instructors Students	Questionnaire Interview Focus Group meetings Personal conversations
QA processes suggested to be included in an effective QA scheme	Managers Instructors	Questionnaire
Expectations from QA and accreditation	EAQUALS inspection visit Coordinators of QA	Focus group meetings with students/instructors e-mail communication
QA processes currently exist in ELT outside Turkey and their application in Turkish institutions	sample cases: English preparatory programs with accreditation	Inspection visit e-mail communication study of documentation interviews
Insights & impressions gained through being an insider evaluator/inspector	EAQUALS inspection visit EAQUALS inspectors Managers Colleagues	Field notes Observations Personal conversations e-mail communication

3.2. Participants of the Study

Primarily, three groups of participants are involved in this study. The directors

of School of Foreign Languages that offer intensive English programs,

instructors who have managerial responsibilities, instructors teaching general English and academic English at preparatory and freshman programs and students who are studying English at the preparatory programs of two English-medium universities which will allow a "purposeful sampling" (Patton, 1987, p.57), and provide a thorough account of the existing practices, as well as an in depth understanding of different perspectives and experiences.

The scope of the research study was intended to include all the English language programs in higher education institutions in Turkey. However, the dearth of participation obliged the researcher to limit the scale of data collection. Even though the questionnaire was sent to all preparatory English programs, not all of them have chosen to respond. "Some forms of qualitative research narrow the focus of the research scope as the research progresses, but this is viewed as an organic development dictated by the research *in progress* and not by a predetermined focus or hypothesis" (ibid).

For the sake of convenience, only the directors, instructors and students who volunteered to participate in the study were included as the sample group. Although the number of participation is low considering the large number of people involved in teaching and learning English in higher education context, the participants of the study are representative of the populations in other

language schools since the requirements, the procedures and criteria for recruitment and appointment of directors, instructors and students are the same in both private and state universities as specified by CoHE (www.yok.gov).

3.2.1. Directors of School of Foreign Languages

The directors of schools of foreign languages of 135 higher education institutions have established a forum (YDYO) which meets annually in order to share practices and discuss prevalent issues about their programs. The members of this forum were the key group in the study. All of these directors were sent the survey questionnaire to which 64 of them responded. Two directors, who are also coordinators of quality provisions for accreditation, were also interviewed.

3.2.2. English Language Instructors in Higher Education

The directors of the 135 higher education institutions were requested to distribute the questionnaire to their teaching staff who were expected to participate on a voluntary basis as well. However, only 30 responses were received, all coming from private university programs. Instructors working in three English medium universities' language schools were invited for the interview and chosen among the volunteers. The choice was made to make sure that interviewees were representative of the instructors working in ELT

programs in higher education. They were both native and non-native speakers of English with minimum BA degrees, had more than ten years of teaching experience and also holding national and/or international teaching certificates. In the case of the accredited schools, only the volunteering instructors participated in the focus group meeting held during the inspection visit of the school which applied for EAQUALS accreditation. Although a couple of instructors were contacted by e-mail from the CEA accredited school, they politely declined participation due to their work load.

3.2.3. Students Studying English at Preparatory English Language Programs

20 volunteering students who were studying English in the language school which applied for accreditation in 2011-2012 academic year participated in the focus group meeting during the EAQUALS visit as part of the inspection process. The second focus group meeting was held with 16 volunteering students who were studying in the preparatory program of a foundation university during the same academic year. The students were invited on only one condition that they were studying English at the preparatory programs; their gender, level and duration of study were not taken into account.

3. 3. Data Collection Instruments and procedures

The method chosen for data collection and analysis is basically qualitative in this research study. Qualitative data were collected through the on-line survey, the follow up interviews held by English language instructors, focus group meetings with students and field notes from personal conversations and passive observations. All data collection tools, i.e. the survey and the interview, were piloted and relevant revisions to the questions made before they were fully administered.

3.3.1. The Questionnaire

On-line "Survey Monkey" program was used to distribute the questionnaire to 135 intensive English Language programs in higher education institutions. This program was chosen for the ease of disseminating the questionnaire to large audiences most effectively. It was also the hope that more responses could be received through the use of an on-line questionnaire since it was easier and required less time to fill out the questionnaire with survey-monkey.

The questionnaire consists of 18 questions in total; with nine structured ones asking for generic information, five asking respondents to choose relevant items, two asking for rank ordering of preferences on a likert-scale and two

unstructured open ended questions, last one asking respondents for other comments they may wish to write. (Appendix D)

The questionnaire took three months to prepare and went through five revisions through consultations with two managers of language schools. When the questions were found satisfactory, they were answered by the researcher and two colleagues in order to estimate a time for completion. The estimated time to complete the survey was 10 minutes which was written in the introductory information to the questionnaire in order to encourage and increase participation. After this initial piloting, the questions were transferred to the survey-monkey program and piloted with three other colleagues who completed the survey in 10 – 15 minutes and did not make any suggestions for change.

Most of the respondents to the questionnaire were working in private foundation universities (%53.1), with %31.9 English medium and %46.9 both English and Turkish medium departments. In %62.5 English is compulsory for English medium department students and for %34.4 it is compulsory study for all students. Figure 1 shows the frequency of responses from public and private universities, Figure 2 the medium of language in the universities of the respondents and Figure 3 whether the preparatory English program is compulsory for all entering students or not respectively.

MANAGERS	%	INSTRUCTORS	%
Public	43.8	Public	0.0
Private	53.1	Private	100.0
Other	3.1	Other	0.0
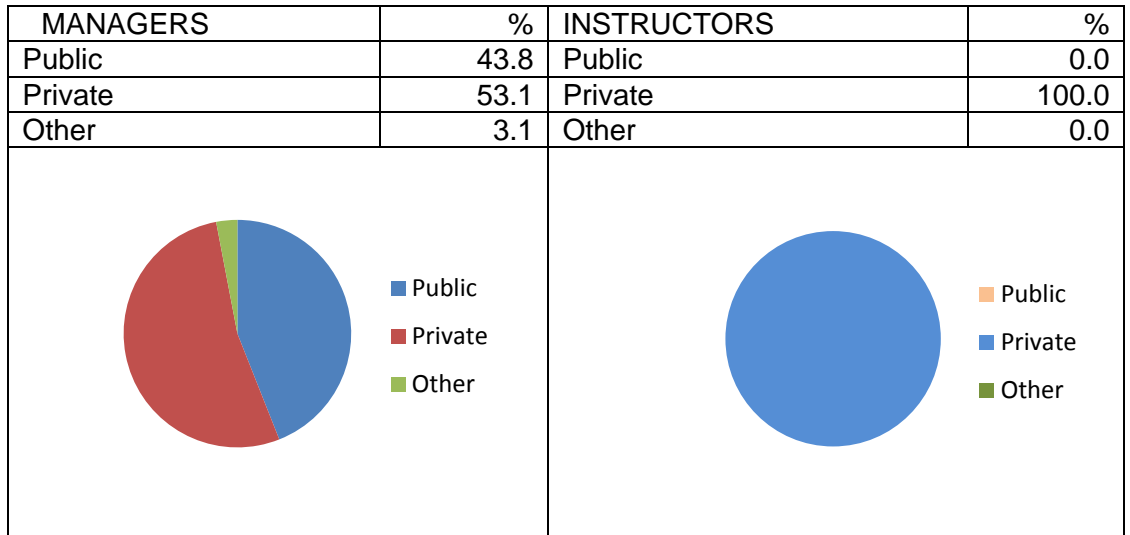
Figure 1 Status of the University

MANAGERS	%	INSTRUCTORS	%
Turkish	14.1	Turkish	0.0
English	39.1	English	86.7
English/Turkish	46.9	English/Turkish	13.3
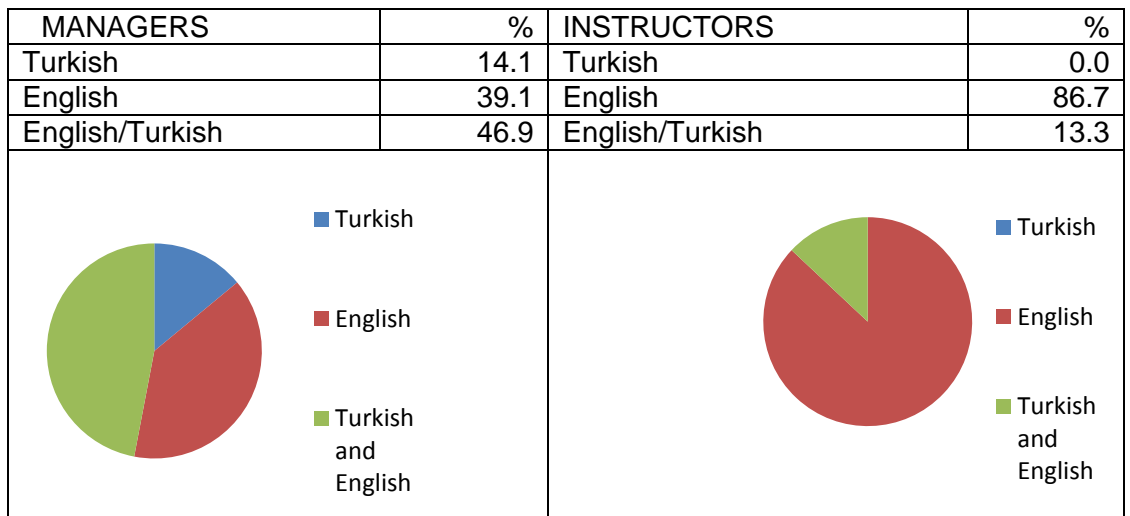
Figure 2 Language Medium of the University

MANAGERS	%	INSTRUCTORS	%
Compalsory for all programs	34.4	Compalsory for all programs	80.0
Compalsory for English Medium Departments	62.5	Compalsory for English Medium Departments	16.7
Optıonal	3.1	Optıonal	3.3
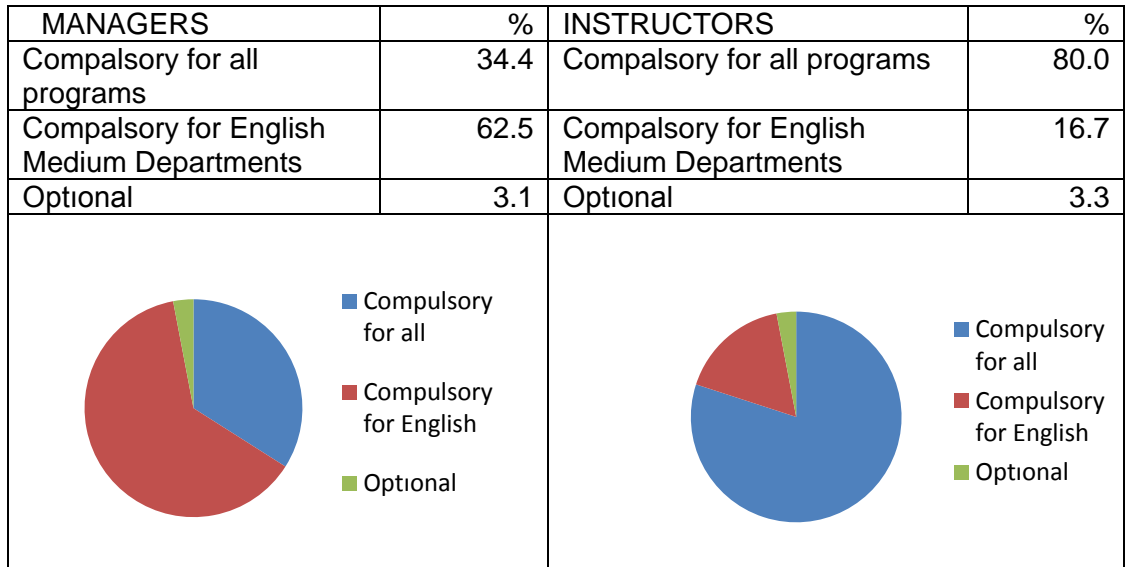
Figure 3 Preparatory English Language Program

A considerable number of the programs of respondents are fairly large with up to 1000 students per year (%45.3) and up to 50 language instructors working as shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5 below. It is possible to interpret the participation of managers and instructors of considerably larger preparatory English programs in the survey as their higher concern and involvement with quality provisions in their programs.

MANAGERS	%	INSTRUCTORS	%
Up to 500	26.6	Up to 500	23.3
Up to 1000	45.3	Up to 1000	26.7
Up to 2000	15.6	Up to 2000	33.3
Over 2000	7.8	Over 2000	13.3
Over 3000	4.7	Over 3000	3.3
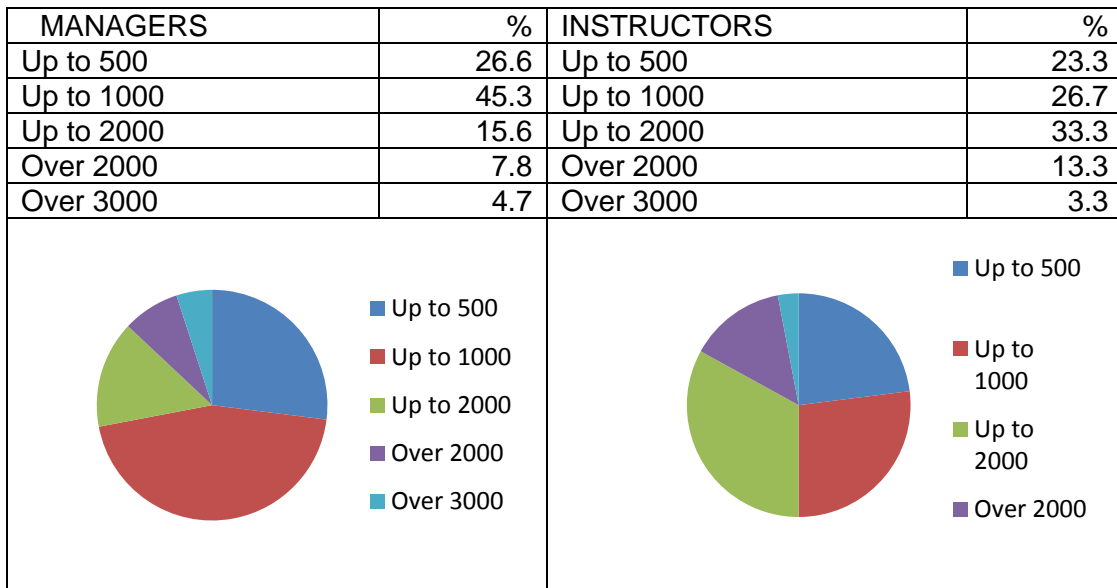
Figure 4 Approximate Number of Students per Year

MANAGERS	%	INSTRUCTORS	%
Up to 25	14.1	Up to 25	0.0
Up to 50	40.6	Up to 50	20.0
Up to 100	31.3	Up to 100	73.3
Over 100	10.9	Over 100	6.7
Other	3.1	Other	0.0
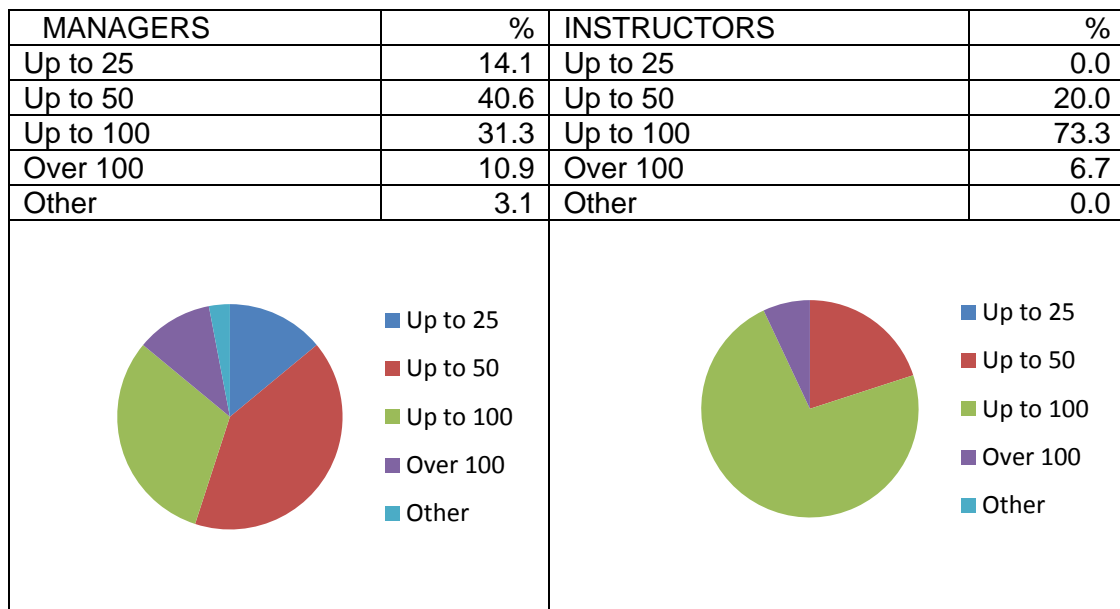
Figure 5 Number of Instructors Working on the Program

3.3.2. Interviews

Instructors were asked three questions (Appendix E) and their answers were recorded and transcribed verbatim without using a specific convention. (Appendix Fa, Fb, Fc). The questions were given to the instructors just before the interviews and they only had a couple of minutes to gather up their thoughts. It was important to convince the instructors that the data would be presented with total respect to confidentiality of information, without mention of any names and institutions. Even if they were assured, it was observed that instructors were still hesitant to make any critical remarks.

The aims of the interviews were twofold: first, to triangulate the survey questions and second, to find out if the reluctance of instructors to participate in the study was a result of the uncertainty caused by the concepts of quality and QA processes in language education.

The interview questions were piloted with one colleague in order to test the voice quality of the I-pad used for recording and estimate the time needed to answer the questions.

The interview questions asked to the coordinators of QA initiatives were intended to validate the survey questions and also to find out if going through

an external review process had any impact on their perception and definition of quality and QA in language education that differ from the results received through the survey data (Appendix G).

3.3.3. Focus Group Meetings

Two focus group meetings were held with the students, one during the EAQUALS inspection visit, the other with a group of volunteering students who were studying English at the preparatory program of an English medium university. The former one was done as part of the inspection process and held exactly as suggested in the inspection manual, asking the suggested questions. One question asked for the purposes of this study was "Sizce İngilizce eğitiminde kalite nedir?" (What does quality in language education mean for you?). When students required further clarification to this question, the inspector clarified as: "Yani, dil eğitiminde kalitelinin sağlanması için ne olması gerekir, neler beklersiniz?" (That is, what kinds of things will assure the quality of the program? What will you expect to find?)

In the second focus group meeting, only the above question is asked. In both meetings, the answers given by the students were written down. The researcher refrained from recording the meetings in order to assure the

students that their answers were completely anonymous and not be shared with their instructors or the school management.

3.3.4. Field Notes

The appointment of the researcher for an inspection visit of a language school of one of the prestigious private universities in İzmir, as one of the three inspectors, provided an opportunity to use the case as a data source for the study. Taking detailed and accurate notes of meetings, observations and the study of the documentation during an inspection visit is of vital importance in providing a clear picture of the school in relation to the quality standards required for accreditation. The field notes which supply information related to the purposes of this study were selected carefully following repeated readings for analysis.

3.3.5. Personal Conversations and E-mail Communication

During the course of this study in general and during the process of EAQUALS inspection, the researcher was engaged in numerous personal conversations and e-mail communication with EAQUALS secretariat, other inspectors, the QA coordinators of the two accredited schools, her colleagues in the university she worked before and at present and her own students who are studying English at the university. These conversations and communications were used as data

since they provided invaluable information and insight to the researcher for the purposes of this study.

3. 4. Data Collection Process

The study was first introduced to the directors of preparatory English programs and/or school of languages directors (YDYO) at their annual meeting in October 2012, at Eskişehir Anadolu University (http://ydyotr.wordpress.com) orally and all the directors were requested to both respond and encourage their instructor staff to respond to the questionnaire. The study was relevant to one of the primary aims of the foundation of this group and their annual meetings, which is to ensure standardization and quality assurance in their respective programs, in order to improve teaching and learning of languages, primarily English, in Turkish higher education.

The questionnaire was then sent to all the participants of the meeting and kept open for three months (November to February). The Director of the School of Languages, where the researcher is currently employed, was actively involved in the promotion and dissemination of the questionnaire and sent out request reminders at different times to all these directors to increase participation. Regardless of all her efforts, in the first three months, there were only 64 returns from directors with only 30 total completions.

In February, the questionnaire was released again for another month with a request to directors to disseminate the questionnaire to their instructor staff and encourage participation. To this request, there were only 30 returns from different institutions with 13 total completions.

The reluctance of the both managers and instructors to fill out the questionnaire, which takes approximately ten minutes to complete and asks for comments only on a voluntary basis, cannot only be attributed to time constraints or general dislike towards such extra demands on top of their heavy workloads. The responses from the number of directors could be considered sufficient data to represent the English preparatory programs in Turkey. However, the number of returns from the instructors was much lower than expected. This issue definitely needed further enquiry through follow-up interviews with instructors since it could well be an indication of the fact that "quality" and "quality assurance" are still alien concepts even though they are widely overused in the teaching and learning contexts. Although HE institutions and their staff claim to strive for quality in their services, what it is that they are seeking to achieve is still not very clear.

The first round of questionnaires and the second round was reported separately (Appendix H) since the first was responded by 45 directors and 19 instructors

who have positions in between the management and instructors, as curriculum coordinators, teacher trainers, testing coordinators and alike (according to information obtained from the directors who were contacted by telephone to thank for their participation). The second round was responded only by teachers (with only one respondent holding a position) (Appendix I).

The researcher was appointed as one of the inspectors by EAQUALS for an inspection visit to the language school of a private university which applied for accreditation. The visit which took place in March 2012 provided a good opportunity for the researcher to include this case in the study as an example of a program which has all the required QA processes and systems in place, and meets the standards and criteria of an internationally recognized accreditation body in language teaching. Besides the detailed field notes kept by the researcher in her inspector's role, she also kept a journal of the inspection visit for the purposes of this study (Appendix J).

For the interviews, first a request e-mail giving brief information about the purpose of the study was sent to the instructors working in the language schools of two private universities in İstanbul. The scarce number of returns to the questionnaire and obvious reluctance of instructors to answer questions on the issue of QA had led the researcher to limit the scope of the follow up data to

these two institutions, with the hope that more instructors might volunteer to help her. Among the volunteers, 10 of them were chosen both because of their representational qualifications and availability. Two of them didn't want to be recorded and wrote their answers, three others preferred to be alone in the room and recorded themselves.

For the focus group meeting during the inspection, the date and time was specified before the visit with the inspectors and the management. The management informed the instructors to announce the time of the meeting in their classes and ask volunteering students to participate. At the time of the meeting most of the students had classes, 20 students who did not have any lessons during that time came to the meeting. They were first told that they can use Turkish in order to express themselves better if they feel nervous about using English. The conversation naturally turned to Turkish and lasted about an hour.

The second focus group meeting again involved the volunteering students in one of the language schools of a private university in İstanbul. The instructors with whom the researcher had personal contacts were requested to announce the meeting in their classes and sent volunteering students to a very short meeting saying that "a colleague would like to ask a question to find out what

the students think about quality in language education for her research, the meeting will not take more than 10-15 minutes. I will appreciate if you can help her, it will be in Turkish". The researcher was assigned to an empty classroom and held the meeting with 16 students who volunteered to come. The meeting lasted fifteen minutes and the researcher preferred to take notes to put students at ease and say what they really think without getting anxious about their answers somehow affecting their grades.

3. 5. Data Analysis

All the compiled data were read thoroughly several times by the researcher in order to find common and contrasting features, draw themes and concepts that allow interpretations to answer the evaluation questions. Unlike deductive analysis of data which aims to test a hypothesis made prior to the study, the inductive design of this study allowed the researcher to make conclusions from the insights gained through multiple readings of raw data and conversations with colleagues and students. "The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies" (Taylor, 2006, p. 238).

Some of the analytic strategies or principles underlying the use of a general inductive approach as Taylor describes are as follows:

1. Data analysis is guided by the evaluation objectives, which identify domains and topics to be investigated. The analysis is carried out through multiple readings and interpretations of the raw data, the inductive component. Although, the findings are influenced by the evaluation objectives or questions outlined by the researcher, they arise directly from the analysis of the raw data, not from apriori expectations or models. The evaluation objectives provide a focus or domain of relevance for conducting the analysis, not a set of expectations about specific findings.

2. The primary mode of analysis is the development of categories from the raw data into a model or framework. This model contains key themes and processes identified and constructed by the evaluator during the coding process.

3. The findings result from multiple interpretations made from the raw data by the evaluators who code the data. Inevitably, the findings are shaped by the assumptions and experiences of the evaluators conducting the study and carrying out the data analyses. For the findings to be usable, the evaluator must make decisions about what is more important and less important in the data.

4. Different evaluators may produce findings that are not identical and that have non overlapping components.

5. The trustworthiness of findings derived from inductive analysis can be assessed using similar techniques to those that are used with other types of qualitative analysis (2006, p.329-240).

The likert-scale data were analyzed through presenting the percentages obtained for each item in the question. The data obtained through the unstructured question in the questionnaire were analyzed inductively by multiple readings in order to identify common themes that emerged from the answers and put into categories accordingly.

The interviews were transcribed word for word and inductive analysis was also used to analyze the transcribed data. The transcripts were read several times and recurring themes and concepts were underlined. These themes and concepts were listed to clearly link them with the objectives of the study.

Field notes were condensed into summaries and these summaries were thoroughly read in order to identify the prevailing patterns that were important for the purposes of this study.

As a result of the data analysis, it was possible to group the emerging themes into six categories as:

- Teaching and Professional development
- Learners and learning
- Curriculum and syllabus
- Assessment and evaluation
- Facilities and resources
- Management and administration

3.6. Trustworthiness

The design of this study lends itself to a naturalistic inquiry paradigm and therefore uses Guba and Lincoln's (1982) trustworthiness criteria to assure the quality of the data, its collection and analysis procedures.

Guba and Lincoln (1982) propose naturalistic inquiry as the most suitable research model for social and behavioral sciences, "conducted in a naturalistic setting and uses a case study format relying on qualitative methods" (p.233). They believe that a model, what they called a paradigm, "that can tolerate real world conditions surely makes more sense than manipulating those conditions to meet arbitrary design requirements of a paradigm" (p.234). In this realm, they conceptualize the trustworthiness criteria as an alternative to the criteria conventional and quantitative research apply to assure the quality of data and procedures used. Those criteria being: reliability, internal, external validity and objectivity. Guba and Lincoln (1989) use: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability instead.

> "Among the procedures they described, those most applicable to performing data analyses include conducting peer debriefings and stakeholder checks as part of establishing credibility and conducting a research audit (comparing the data with the research findings and interpretations) for dependability. Other procedures that can be used for assessing the trustworthiness of the data analysis include consistency checks or checks of inter-rater reliability (e.g., having another coder take the category descriptions and find the text that

belongs in those categories) and member or stakeholder checks" (Taylor, 2006, p. 243).

In order to assure credibility, that is the internal validity of data and its analysis, "peer debriefings" and "stakeholder checks" were used. That is; the researcher had discussions on a number of occasions with peers about her study findings, insights and conclusions. She also repeatedly checked, both formally and informally, the accuracy of her transcriptions, her descriptions of settings and her interpretations of findings with the participants of the study to make sure her representation matched the reality.

The researchers "prolonged engagement" as a manager and an inspector with QA and accreditation processes and settings, establishing rapport and trusting relationships with participants involved in these processes and settings, also ensured the credibility of the study. The researcher was well aware of the danger of her beliefs and assumptions interfering into her evaluations, a danger that Guba and Lincoln (1985) warned about prolonged engagement. The researcher's extensive training and experience in supervisory observations as a director and program evaluations as an inspector enabled her to control her subjective perspective to get in the way of her analysis. The other measure to avoid subjective interference of the researcher was the fact that the study used a general inductive method (Taylor, 2006). In other words, the study evolved

around the nature of data collected through one instrument to the other, diminishing any possibility of the researcher's perspective to affect the direction of the study.

The limited number of returns to the questionnaire, for example, necessitated an informal inquisition to instructors in order to understand whether there might be hidden resistance in their reluctance other than questionnaire fatigue or pure indifference to the topic.

Triangulation was another method used to ensure validity of the study. As described by Lynch (1996) "triangulation refers to the gathering and reconciling of data from several sources and/or from different data-gathering techniques" (p. 59). In this research, the use of questionnaire, interviews, focus groups, observations, a range of formal and informal inquisitions, repeated checks of data and conclusions with peers, all incorporated to strengthen the validity of conclusions.

On the other hand, as Lynch (1996) further discusses, using multiple sources of data and analysis techniques does not necessarily provide consistency of data in this study which seeks to understand the perceptions of different groups. As such, it inevitably carries some bias and inconsistencies. "Validity can be

enhanced through the inclusion of multiple data sources and perspectives, but only to the degree that the evaluator can reasonably construct meaningful conclusions from these data" (p. 62). Inconsistencies and biases apparent in the data in this study, such as the study of discourse in different EAQUALS document example, are carefully determined and used for making meaningful propositions.

To conclude, trustworthiness criteria in this research study was met thought the utilization of techniques suggested by Guba and Lincoln (1982, 1985), applied, described and referred to by naturalistic, qualitative researchers in social and behavioral sciences. Although the application of these techniques might have not ensured absolute validity of the study, the researcher's own sensitivity and ethical concerns in the collection and analysis of the data also contributed to strengthening the validity of her procedures.

By assuming a general inductive approach (Taylor 2006) for the analysis of data, this research study has deprived itself from more straightforward analysis and conclusions, but strengthen its "fairness" by taking a representational variety of information from different participants in different settings into account (Lynch, 1996).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the results of the questionnaire, interview and focus group data. The case of two language schools which received accreditation from two different international accreditation bodies (EAQUALS and CEA) are described. The chapter also presents the EAQUALS accreditation process of one of these schools from the perspective of one of the inspectors, the researcher herself.

4.1. Presentation of Results

The questionnaire results are presented in tables by color coding the responses of the managers and instructors, the former in blue and the latter, in salmon color. The selected statements and preferences are ordered according to their frequency of occurrence. Data from interviews, observations and personal experiences are presented as anecdotal texts.

4.2. QA Processes which Currently Exist in Preparatory English Language Programs and their Effectiveness

4.2.1. Written QA statements and QA Processes that Exist in the University Documents and the Curriculum Documents of the Preparatory English Language Programs

According to the results of the questionnaire, %46.2 of the respondents in the management group said that their university had a written QA statement, %33.3 said there wasn't, and %20.5 was not sure. %58.8 of respondents who are the instructors working in private universities (%100) said that their university had a QA statement, %11.8 of the same group of instructors thought there wasn't, and %29.4 were not sure if there was a written QA statement in their university (Table 2).

The general information on the web pages of four public and 12 foundation universities with preparatory language programs were scanned. They all have statements of the Universities' vision, mission and goals; three of them provide direct links to committees for "academic assessment and quality enhancement" that are founded in accordance with the CoHE requirement (Academic Assessment and Quality in Higher Education guide, YÖDEK,).

In order to validate this data, the researcher asked all managers and instructors that she encountered for three months (around 75) very casually whether they were aware of the existence of a quality guide prepared by CoHE. She put a tick (yes) and a cross (no) in her agenda every time she had a chance to ask this question and got a response. Tallying the ticks and crosses, it is interesting to note that in the end the number of crosses (no) much overweighed the ticks, which also include the "not sure" answers (Field notes). This conclusion validated the results of the questionnaire that instructors are not well informed about and/or interested in QA in their institution which are regarded as managerial issues.

In their response to whether a QA statement exists in the curriculum documents of the preparatory English program; % 66.7 of managers and %70.6 of the instructors said that there were "quality related statements" in their curriculum documents (Table 2). One comment to this question from one of the teachers was "What is a quality assurance statement?" which is a sincere declaration of the vagueness and ambiguity of this concept for the instructors.

Another such example is the comment that says: "I think, there should be quality related statements in the curriculum documents, but I don't know certainly if there are any."

Table 2 Existing QA and Q Statements

QA Related Statements in University Documents			
Responses	Yes %	No %	Not Sure %
Managers	46.2	33.3	20.5
Instructors	58.8	11.8	29.4
Q Related Statements in Curriculum Documents			
Responses	Yes %	No %	
Managers	66.7	33.3	
Instructors	70.6	29.4	

Manager responses

Instructor responses
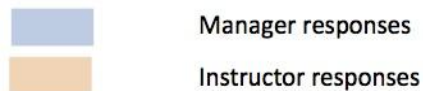
The curriculum documents of the same four public universities and 12 foundation universities were scanned, it was found that there was not an explicit QA statement in the curriculum documents of preparatory English programs available on their web pages.

According to the responses to the question which asks the QA processes that exist in the university, the statement which is most frequently ticked is (%59 managers, %58.8 instructors): "Regular workshops and training sessions are carried out with all staff members to ensure quality" (Table 3).

Table 3 QA processes currently existing in Universities and their effectiveness

	QA PROCESSES	EFFECTIVE	
		Managers %	Instructors %
1	Regular workshops and training sessions are carried out with all staff members to ensure quality.	59.0	58.8
2	Annual documents are prepared for annual YÖK inspections when required by the Rector.	43.6	29.4
3	There is a QA steering committee appointed by the Rector.	43.6	11.8
4	There is one contact person in each faculty/department/ program in charge of QA.	38.5	17.6
5	The Rector and the steering committee make QA decisions in consultation with senior level managers.	38.5	11.8
6	There is a YOK (Higher Education Council) mandated committee called ADEK (Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement Committee) in every university.	35.9	11.8
7	Only senior level managers are aware of QA processes in the university.	33.3	23.5
8	There is a general QA handbook specifying standards and processes for all faculties/department/programs.	33.3	29.4
9	QA is not a requirement in the preparatory English program.	23.1	5.9
10	Students are part of the QA processes and decisions are given in consultation with senior level managers.	10.3	17.6

Manager responses
Instructor responses

Highest percentages in Manager's responses
Highest percentages in Instructor's responses
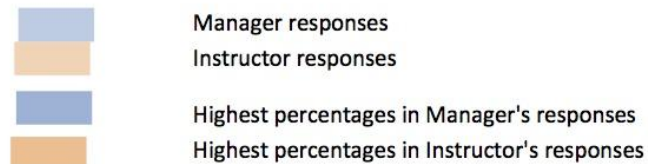
Although CoHE mandated the foundation of an "Academic Assessment and Quality Enhancement Committee" (ADEK) in every university, whether public or foundation, only %35.9 respondents from management and %11.8 from

instructors are aware of its existence. The second most frequently ticked statements (%43.6 of the managers) to this question are "there is a QA steering committee appointed by the rector", and "annual documents are prepared for CoHE inspections when required by the rector" (Table 3). Although the steering committee itself is ADEK and the annual documentation of all activities of the university are prepared for CoHE inspections by all higher education institutions in Turkey, not all managers are aware of this, which can be interpreted as a lack of communication between the University management and school of languages as a general problem in HE nationwide. (Personal conversations and insider information)

A comment from one of the instructors sincerely confesses the confusion of instructors about the concept of QA.

> Do not have much info, sorry, but I can say several external inspectors have visited our institution for QA purposes, but actually I cannot see much difference. They made classroom observations randomly, had meetings with focus groups (teachers and coordinators), talked to some student focus groups and checked some official documents, I guess, their feedback on the equipment and physical conditions are somehow ignored, but only the feedback on observations and teaching were taken into consideration.

4.2.2 QA Processes that Currently Exist in Preparatory English Language Programs and their Effectiveness

Another item on the questionnaire asks the respondents the currently existing QA systems and processes that are specific to their programs and rate their effectiveness on a likert-scale. The most frequently rated QA processes are "regular feedback and evaluation meetings with all staff" and "a strategic plan", both of which were ticked by %48.7 of managers as "effective" processes. "Continuous improvement of the curriculum" is ticked by %38.5 of managers as a "very effective" process, followed by: "pre and/or in-service training and development programs for teachers" (%38:5) and "regular feedback and evaluation meetings with all staff" (%33.3) (Table 4).

Instructors, on the other hand, have chosen "supervisory lesson observations" as "effective" by %82.4, "continuous improvement of curriculum", "regular focus group meetings with students" and "regular feedback and evaluation meetings with all staff" as processes that are "effective" by %52.9 respectively. "Teacher evaluation surveys" was marked as "not very effective" by %52.9 respondents. This can be an indication that either the teachers feels that these evaluation surveys are not acted upon by managers or are not administered in their programs at all (Table 4).

Table 4 QA Processes that currently exist in Preparatory English Language Programs and their effectiveness

	QA PROCESSES	EFFECTIVE		N\A	
		Managers %	Instructors %	Managers %	Instructors %
1	Continuous improvement of curriculum	82.0	82.3	2.6	0.0
2	Regular feedback and evaluation meetings with all staff	82.0	58.8	2.6	0.0
3	Student evaluation surveys	71.8	35.3	7.7	0.0
4	Pre and/or in-service training and development programs for teachers	71.8	64.7	5.1	0.0
5	Regular internal self-evaluation of all curriculum aspects	69.2	70.6	10.3	11.8
6	A strategic plan	66.6	41.1	15.4	23.5
7	Teacher evaluation surveys	64.1	35.3	12.8	0.0
8	Performance review	53.8	47.0	23.1	5.9
9	Regular focus group meetings with students	48.7	58.8	20.5	0.0
10	Follow-up of students' performances in their faculties	46.1	29.4	12.8	35.3
11	Periodic external inspections	43.6	29.4	28.2	23.5
12	Supervisory lesson observations	43.5	82.4	17.9	5.9
13	Peer and/or video observations	41.0	47.1	20.5	17.6

> Manager responses
> Instructor responses
>
> Highest percentages in Manager's responses
> Highest percentages in Instructor's responses
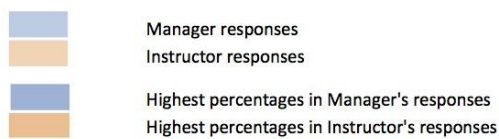
One remark made by an instructor may be interpreted as one of the reasons why such a scarcely small number of instructors responded to the questionnaire in 135 Universities that it was sent to. The instructor's comment was as follows:

You need an "I don't know" option – or you shouldn't force us to answer. 'Follow up of students' performances in their faculties has led to some curriculum innovations but performances are so dependent on a range of factors that we can hardly attribute them to the quality of English instruction (or lack thereof).

One of the interview questions asked instructors to identify the existing systems and processes that most effectively assure quality. The observable resistance and hesitation of instructors to answer the interview questions and the variety of answers to this question can also be considered as an indication to the fact that instructors do not have a clear notion of QA and its processes. The effectiveness of the existing systems in a language program is judged by the personal expectations and experiences of the instructors themselves, rather than institutionally defined standards and criteria.

The existing QA processes that are regarded as most effective as selected from the answers of each interviewee are:

- "Developmental observations"
- "Integrating technology and devices into out teaching"
- "The dynamics of the institution and the way teachers cooperate with each other"
- "Great many teams of dedicated quality professionals working to continually improve and update all systems and procedures
- "Collaboration….group work…teamwork"
- "The training programs"

- "Standardization sessions in which issues of quality of students' products may reflect issues of quality in the teaching"
- "Well structured and organized curriculum and well qualified, experienced instructors"
- "Room for self-improvement"
- "Recruitment...experience, qualifications, ability or competence in English"

Although each instructor commented differently, reflecting different perspectives, seven of the comments are related to teachers and professional development. Only one instructor talks about facilities and resources and one mention of the curriculum (Appendix F, L1, L8).

4.2.3. Perceptions of impact of QA Processes on the Improvement of Language Learning

QA processes that are believed to have an impact on language learning are identified as: "cooperation and commitment among staff increases", "student satisfaction rates improve" by %58.8 of the instructors, followed by: "teachers are motivated to improve their teaching" and "staff satisfaction rates improve" both with %52.9. "Teachers are motivated to improve their teaching" got the highest rating (%87.2) from managers which is followed by: "the success rate in the proficiency exam increases" (%79.5) and "staff satisfaction rates improve" (%71.8) (Table 5).

Table 5 Impact of QA processes on the improvement of language learning

	QA PROCESSES	IMPACT	
		Managers %	Instructors %
1	Teachers are motivated to improve their teaching.	87.2	52.9
2	The success rate in the proficiency exam increases.	79.5	41.2
3	Cooperation and commitment among staff increases.	76.9	58.8
4	Staff satisfaction rates improve.	71.8	52.9
5	Student satisfaction rates improve.	64.1	58.8
6	Faculty is happier with the language level of their students who study in the preparatory English program.	61.5	41.2
7	Absenteeism rates of students decrease.	35.9	5.9
8	Student numbers increase.	33.3	23.5
9	Staff turn-over decreases.	33.3	23.5

Manager responses
Instructor responses

Highest percentages in Manager's responses
Highest percentages in Instructor's responses
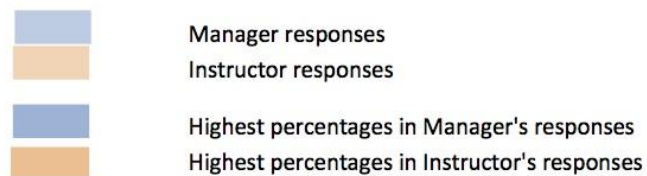
The comments written to this question by the instructors show that they are not sure what QA processes really are and they focus on the negative effects rather than the positive, thinking that QA increases work load for instructors and creates a competitive environment which negatively affects "team spirit and

harmony" as pointed out by one of the instructors. Another comment that exemplifies instructors' position in relation to QA processes says:

> I'm not sure what you mean by QA processes. If its developmental observations and teacher development programs then some of these things are true. If its performance management and financial incentives than I think it decreases job satisfaction, leads to competition between colleagues and people getting involved in things only to have something to put down on their assessment…But then not actually contributing very much to the work.

4.3. Most Desired QA Processes in Preparatory English Language Programs

Two questions in the survey focused on the QA processes which help improve teaching and learning and does not exist in the respondents teaching contexts or not implemented effectively. Teaching and learning are intentionally asked in two separate questions to find out whether different QA processes are associated with the improvement of teaching and improvement of learning.

Table 6 QA processes that help improve teaching

	QA PROCESSES	IMPROVE	
		Managers %	Instructors %
1	A well defined and reliable testing system	48.5	57.1
2	Motivated students with high university entrance scores	48.5	71.4
3	Socializing facilities and social activities	48.5	50.0
4	Orientation program for new teachers	45.5	7.1
5	Fair payment and fringe benefits for staff	45.5	71.4
6	Effective leadership from top management	42.4	57.1
7	In-service teacher training programs	39.4	28.6
8	High technological infra-structure	39.4	64.3
9	Well-equipped classrooms	39.4	64.3
10	Well-defined and realistic level/course objectives and learning outcomes	30.3	42.9
11	A written curriculum and weekly syllabus	30.3	21.4
12	A fair and objective performance review system for teachers	30.3	50.0
13	Physical space allocated especially for teachers (teacher rooms, coffee room, etc)	27.3	50.0
14	Good course books and supplementary materials	24.2	64.3
15	Internal evaluation and review of academic management	24.2	42.9
16	An environment conducive to learning	15.2	50.0

Manager responses
Instructor responses

Highest percentages in Manager's responses
Highest percentages in Instructor's responses
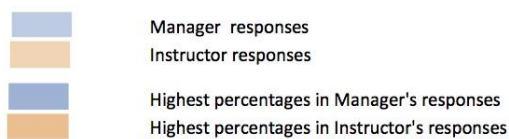
Table 7 QA processes that help improve learning

	QA PROCESSES	IMPROVE	
		Managers %	Instructors %
1	Campus and accommodation facilities conducive to learning	66.7	64.3
2	Scholarships and rewards for successful students	54.5	50.0
3	Counselling services	54.5	42.9
4	Orientation programs for new students	48.5	35.7
5	High technological infra-structure	48.5	64.3
6	Motivated classmates	45.5	100.0
7	Well-equipped classrooms	42.4	64.3
8	A well-defined and reliable testing system	39.4	42.9
9	Well-qualified and up-to-date teachers	36.4	35.7
10	Well-defined objectives and learning outcomes	33.3	21.4
11	Good course books and supplementary materials	24.2	64.3
12	Effective leadership from top management	24.2	35.7
13	Internal evaluation and review of curriculum and syllabuses	24.2	28.6
14	A written curriculum and weekly syllabus	18.2	21.4

Manager responses
Instructor responses

Highest percentages in Manager's responses
Highest percentages in Instructor's responses

For the improvement of teaching; "a well-defined and reliable testing system", and "motivated students with high university entrance scores" and "socializing facilities and social activities" got the highest rating (%48.5) from management. "fair payment and fringe benefits for staff", "motivated students with high university scores" got the highest rating from instructors (%71.4), followed by "high technological infra-structure", "good course books and supplementary materials", "well-equipped classrooms" with %64.5 responses for all. When managers perceive the lack and/or ineffectiveness of the testing system and student motivation as hindrances for the improvement of teaching, instructors relate it more with better conditions and teaching resources (Table 6).

The QA processes that managers thought to be ineffective in their institutions for the improvement of learning are listed as: "campus and accommodation facilities conducive to learning" with %66.7 responses, followed by "scholarships and rewards for successful students" and "counseling services" with %54.5 responses. All Instructors on the other hand chose "motivated classmates" (%100), followed by "high technological infra-structure", "good course books and supplementary materials" and "well-equipped classrooms" with %64.3 responses (Table 7). These results show that among the responses received, instructors relate improvement of teaching and learning more with

students and facilities and managers relate it to the conditions provided by the university, which are beyond their control and territory.

4.4. Definitions of Quality and QA in Language Education as Perceived by Managers, Instructors and Students

Table 8 Definitions of Quality

	QA PROCESSES	CHOICE	
		Managers %	Instructors %
1	Quality is continuous improvement of teacher performance.	72.7	35.7
2	Quality is motivated teachers and effective teaching.	69.7	71.4
3	Quality is continuous improvement of curriculum and resources.	63.6	64.3
4	Quality is reliable assessment procedures, high level of language attainment.	54.5	42.9
5	Quality is satisfied staff members and students.	54.5	64.3
6	All of the above	42.4	21.4
7	Quality is transparency of management.	39.4	42.9
8	Quality is state-of the-art infra structure in the school and good resources.	36.4	21.4
9	Quality is assuring value for money in the services provided for the students.	21.2	21.4

Manager responses
Instructor responses

Highest percentages in Manager's responses
Highest percentages in Instructor's responses
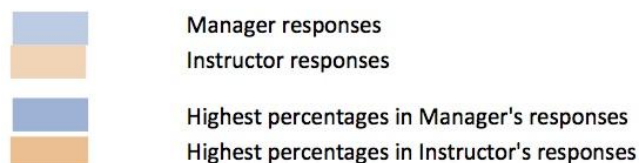
For the definition of quality in their educational context, "quality is continuous improvement of teacher performance", "quality is motivated teachers and effective teaching" and "quality is continuous improvement of curriculum and resources" got the highest ratings from management with %72.7, 69.7 and 63.6 consecutively. The majority of instructors have chosen "quality is motivated teachers and effective teaching" (%71.4), "quality is satisfied staff members and students" (%64.3) and "quality is continuous improvement of curriculum and resources" (%64.3) respectively (Table 8).

The ratings of the definitions of quality in the respondents teaching contexts shows that "quality" is directly associated by teachers and teaching first, then with curriculum and resources. It is also possible to infer that quality is perceived as a static condition when it comes to teaching and teachers but associated with "improvement" when it is related with curriculum and resources.

The analysis of the interview answers of the instructors to the question which asked them what quality in language education means, brought forth the following items, with each mentioned by only one of the interviewees:

- improvement in students' learning and language skills
- Prepare students to communities where they will use the language
- Prepare students for their freshmen courses with an appropriate level of academic English

- Integrating more technology into teaching
- An atmosphere of mutual respect between students and teachers
- Well-trained, experienced, professional teachers
- Students learning the language and being able to use it
- Making students see the importance of learning English for their future
- Awareness of trying your best and putting it into practice in class
- Understanding and addressing students' needs
- Ability to deliver courses in ways to meet students' needs
- Motivating students
- Students using the language they are being thought
- Respecting students and treating them as colleagues
- Educating the whole person, recognizing the individuality of students
- Communication and transparency of aims and their achievement

The managers who were the coordinators of QA in the two accredited institutions answered to this question as follows:

> **C1:** For me quality in language education is what you can do within your own context. Of course there are determining external standards but, how much you can do depends on the resources available in one's own context and quality is achieving your aims within the limitations of your own resources, meeting the needs of your students.
> The most important feature of QA is the curriculum design and implementation. If you have an effective curriculum, and well-qualified instructors, the rest will come naturally and contribute to achieving quality. (Appendix Ka)

C2: Personally, I believe the number one criterion for "quality in language education", among many others, is teacher training and development. When a school provides enough opportunities for training and development, that school is on the right track. Language education in which professional development is given priority and importance is quality education for me. (Appendix Kb)

For students who participated in the focus group meetings, quality in language education was a difficult concept to define. From their answers and from the numerous conversations the researcher had with the students who are studying in other preparatory English programs, it will not be wrong to claim that students judge the quality of a language program with the effectiveness of the teacher and the level of learning they have achieved at the end of the program. For the participating students, passing the proficiency exams administered at the end of preparatory programs is an indication of quality of the language program and finding jobs after graduation is the QA of a university (Appendix La, Lb).

4.5. QA Processes Suggested to be Included in an Effective National QA Scheme

The next item on the questionnaire asked respondents to tick the QA processes to be included into National Standards for English Language Teaching according to their order of importance. None of the items listed was found to be "least important" by the respondents.

The most important ones were chosen by managers as: "teaching staff with adequate qualifications and competencies" (%87.9), "support and guidance for teachers" (%78.8), "staff and student feedback" (%75.8), "training and professional development opportunities" (%75.8) (Table 9).

For the participating instructors, the most important items were: "teaching staff with adequate qualifications and competencies" (%78.6), "training and professional development opportunities" (%78.6), "shared curriculum goals and objectives" (%78.6), "comfortable and sufficiently equipped work spaces" (%78.6), "work ethics" (%78.6) (Table 9).

Table 9 Items that should be included in the National Standards for English language education in Turkey

	QA PROCESSES	IMPROVE	
		Managers %	Instructors %
1	Campus and accommodation facilities conducive to learning	66.7	64.3
2	Scholarships and rewards for successful students	54.5	50.0
3	Counselling services	54.5	42.9
4	Orientation programs for new students	48.5	35.7
5	High technological infra-structure	48.5	64.3
6	Motivated classmates	45.5	100.0
7	Well-equipped classrooms	42.4	64.3
8	A well-defined and reliable testing system	39.4	42.9
9	Well-qualified and up-to-date teachers	36.4	35.7
10	Well-defined objectives and learning outcomes	33.3	21.4
11	Good course books and supplementary materials	24.2	64.3
12	Effective leadership from top management	24.2	35.7
13	Internal evaluation and review of curriculum and syllabuses	24.2	28.6
14	A written curriculum and weekly syllabus	18.2	21.4

Manager responses
Instructor responses

Highest percentages in Manager's responses
Highest percentages in Instructor's responses

4.5.1. Most Essential Features of QA in Language Education

Finally, the only open-ended question in the questionnaire asks respondents to write "three essential features of QA" according to their own experiences. The answers given to this question were first written down word by word in a list and read several times and then separated according to their relation to teaching, learning and management. However, some comments were so general or ambiguous (eg: "motivation and feedback") that it was difficult to put them into one of these columns. Thus, the inductive analysis of the compiled data led to the division of comments into five categories:

- Teaching and professional development
- Learners and learning
- Curriculum and syllabus
- Assessment and evaluation
- Facilities and resources
- Management and administration

Table 10 lists all the comments made under these categories. Each comment was made only once. Both managers and instructors comments were compiled together without making any distinctions.

Table 10: Most Essential Features of QA in ELT Programs

TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LEARNERS AND LEARNING	CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS	ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION	FACILITIES AND RESOURCES	MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION
• Training and professional development opportunities • Some incentives/ rewards for teachers • Well qualified instructors • Well-trained and qualified teachers • Experienced and well-equipped teachers who are also satisfied money-wise • Pre and in-service training for teachers • Staff development and highly qualified recruitment	• Satisfied and happy students, teachers and related faculty members • Students with homogeneous competence • motivation of teachers helping students to be autonomous learners • Teacher and student motivation	• Setting realistic goals for exit level • Clearly described and written procedures, processes or guidelines for all of the activities of teaching • An applicable and realistic program • A well written curriculum and weekly syllabus • Up-to-date curriculum • Needs analysis • Regular check of what is being done and spotting if there are any weak points that should be worked on	• Regular feedback and improvement cycle • Feedback • Assessment and evaluation • Clear feedback and evaluation • On-going assessment • Reliable testing system and qualified testers • Accountability and transparency • Assessment in regards to the level and difficulty of the lesson • Regular evaluation-support • Effective and reliable testing program	• Teaching activities and materials • All the necessary and up-to-date materials and technology • Teacher motivation provided by humanistic working conditions • Suitable work material and equipment • Course materials especially books that are carefully selected by the staff • Course book and materials • Counselling Effective materials	• for teachers and also for students • Student and staff feedback • Feedback –both teachers and students • Student and teacher activities outside class • Well-defined expectations about teaching, manners and work ethics from all teachers and equal treatment to everyone when one fails to meet these expectations

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Table 10: Most Essential Features of QA in ELT Programs (Continued)

TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LEARNERS AND LEARNING	CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS	ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION	FACILITIES AND RESOURCES	MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

• Continuous professional development
• Competency
• Teaching staff with adequate competencies
• Teachers who understand the system
• Well-qualified dedicated instructors
• Motivated teachers and learners
• teacher training
• training sessions workshops
• Teachers motivation in terms of working hours, course books, supplementary materials, clear objectives, syllabus and curriculum guidelines
		• Setting not idealistic and/or imaginary but realistic goals for the program
		• Well-stated and organized curriculum and assessment procedures
		• Curriculum goals and objectives
		• Clear cut objectives in accordance with national curriculum defined in advance
		• Clearly laid out teaching and learning objectives
		• A framework that leads to later learning in further university years
			• Effective assessment
			• A reliable and valid assessment system
			• Assessment and evaluation
				• Well-equipped, hi-tech classroom
				• Facilities for teaching
				• Appropriate physical environment and a good support of the very top management
				   ○ Orientation programs
					• Staff meeting every week
					• Teacher satisfaction
					• Motivated and professional staff with transparent management
					   ● Non-profit based approach
					   ● The institution must be visionary, fair and highly aware of the applicability of certain procedures to their own context
					   ● Accessible and accurate information about all procedures
					   ● That procedures which are above classroom-level (i.e. not within the realm of the individual teacher) are outlined and specified

Table 10: Most Essential Features of QA in ELT Programs (Continued)

TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LEARNERS AND LEARNING	CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS	ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION	FACILITIES AND RESOURCES	MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION
• Target setting, self-monitoring and evaluation • In-service training opportunities • Orientation programs • Professional development opportunities • Professional development opportunities • Professionally well-equipped teaching staff • Dedication to learning and development. • Collaboration • Trained teachers		• Curriculum prepared according to the course objectives • Well-defined, realistic set of goals and objectives • Shared curriculum goals and objectives • A solid program structure			• Transparency and consistency in all administrative and educational processes • Clearly written QA guidelines • A clear channel of communication • Cooperation among, in our case, the rectorate, our managers and teachers • Integration of all staff in decision making • Appropriate rules and regulations that meet institution's need in order to carry on an effective education • Platform for communication

Table 10: Most Essential Features of QA in ELT Programs (Continued)

TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LEARNERS AND LEARNING	CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS	ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION	FACILITIES AND RESOURCES	MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION
					• A shared understanding of goals • Consistency between the objectives of the university and the prep program in terms of the expectations and outcomes of language teaching processes • High salary and fringe benefits • Well-defined organizational structure • Fairness • Staff and student feedback • Well-defined structure and procedures

From the analysis of the answers to the interview question which asked instructors what needs to be implemented in preparatory English programs for QA, the following features emerged:

- Inspiration, freedom and mentoring for teachers
- Student involvement, autonomy and responsibility
- Needs analysis
- Peer observations for development
- Student and teacher reflection
- On-line sharing of all teaching materials
- In-house developmental sessions
- Motivation for teachers
- Self-improvement opportunities
- Student tutorials
- Recruitment of well-qualified instructors
- Cooperation in projects, group intelligence
- More room for student creativity and reflection in the curriculum
- Stability, providing job security and sense of belonging for instructors

All of the above items that emerged out of the analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaire and the interviews were mentioned by one or two (maximum three) participants. Since the aim of the researcher is not to arrive at conclusions from comments that are most frequently appearing, but to provide the variety in the perspectives related to QA, all of the comments are listed without grouping them into categories.

A first glance to the variety of comments prove that improvement of quality and improvement of teaching and learning are not yet connected together and there is much confusion in what managers, instructors and students understand from quality and its assurance. As Houston righteously points out: "the language and practice of quality in higher education might be reshaped to bridge between the rhetoric of quality and practice of improvement" (2008, p. 62).

4.6. QA Processes that Exist Outside of Turkey and their Application in the Turkish Higher Education Context

CoHE specifies the threshold standards in terms of the qualifications of staff and methods of recruitment of both the staff and students for preparatory English programs in higher education and the programs go through regular CoHE audits as part of the annual University reviews. However, these audits are only concerned with accurate reporting and documentation of the activities and expenditures of the institution. The implementation of procedures for quality enhancement and assurance of its provisions and the procedures for program evaluation are not specified (Appendix M).

During the time of this study, internal or external program evaluations of preparatory English programs were not a requirement of CoHE and a national

organization or agency specifically concerned with the QA of ELT programs was not founded and/or appointed as yet. Thus, the processes that currently exist in the field outside of Turkey, primarily specified and promoted by EAQUALS and CEA were implemented on a voluntary basis by language programs. The first one being recognized by European Commission as an accrediting agency in the European Higher Education Arena but not limited to EU countries, the second one recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education as a national accrediting agency for English language programs and institutions, but is also open to international demands.

The quality standards and QA processes presented by these external organizations reflect the dominant values and policies of the "center" (Canagarajah,1999) as has been the case in the field of ELT for many years through the activities of British Council and The English Language Office of the United States Information Agency (Phillipson, 1992).

EAQUALS and CEA were involved in the evaluation and accreditation of four language schools with large (more than 1000 students per annum) preparatory English language programs up to date. Three of these programs are part of foundation universities and one a public university.

4.6. 1.The Case of CEA Accredited School

Two preparatory English programs, one a foundation university language school and another one a public university language school, were awarded CEA accreditation, having fulfilled all the requirements and meeting their standards in all categories. The public one was chosen as an example case in this research study, being the only language school of a public university in Turkey at present.

The school was visited by the researcher (April 2012) three months after they had their site inspection and just after they received their inspection report and accreditation. After talking to the coordinator of the inspected program, the inspector toured around the premises and had a chance to talk briefly to several students waiting in the corridors who knew nothing about accreditation but "generally satisfied" with the "quality of teaching".

The program coordinator (C1) who is one of the initiators of QA process and assume active responsibility in the steering committee during the preparation phase, stated that their reason for choosing CEA was because of the 12 dual-degree programs the University carries out with seven US universities and the preference of their graduates to pursue their post-graduate degrees in US

universities. Another reason she stressed was their commitment to continuous improvement and desire to learn from the process of accreditation.

Their preparation for accreditation required two years of intensive work, which she claimed was a learning experience, helped them to improve their academic management through continuous meetings and documentation of progress. They wrote down procedures for all the QA processes that are required by CEA standards and improved their teaching resources.

In the CEA accredited program, the purposes of accreditation seemed to be twofold, one of accountability and the other, learning and improvement. Accreditation was hoped to validate their fitness for purpose, the compliance of their program with the standards set by CEA. From the words of the coordinator and study of their documentation and information, it was possible to say that the second purpose was also achieved. Learning and improvement did occur. However, whether this learning and experience gained by the management had its ramifications in the classroom was difficult to judge. At the time of the inspection, 190 instructors were working in the language school. With such large numbers of teachers and students, it is hardly viable for the inspection scheme to go beyond managerial procedures and curriculum documents to be

able to observe all classes and make accurate judgments on actual teaching and learning.

Considering the heavy work load taken, time spent and cost undertaken in order to receive accreditation, it seemed like a significant investment on the part of this public university. Although it came like a reward to the management after such a commitment and investment, it is long term effect is questionable. As Harley (2010) states: "If quality monitoring is seen as an "event" rather than as a "process", there is little likelihood of the event making much long-term impact" (p. 9). The sense of pride and relief of achievement evident between the lines of the coordinator demonstrated that "accreditation" was perceived as an event after a long period of preparation, possibly not bearing much impact into the future.

4.6. 2. The Case of EAQUALS Accredited School

Two preparatory English programs, both of foundation universities so far received accreditation from EAQUALS. One was the first university language program that applied for accreditation and awarded in 2004 by this organization in the European context. The program went through a re-inspection process three years later to renew its accredited status and membership to the association; however, stopped paying its membership dues and lost its

accredited status in 2009 when there was a change of management in the university and its language programs.

The second school applied for accreditation in 2011, received their advisory and final inspection visits in 2012 and very recently received their accreditation. The researcher visited the school as one of the inspectors for the advisory visit and thoroughly evaluated all aspects of the language programs as specified in the inspection manual (EAQUALS, 2010).

The reason for the pursuit of accreditation as stated in the meeting with managers during the visit and the answer of the coordinator was that they wanted to find out where they stand, in other words, confirmation of their fitness for purpose. The second reason was prestige, in other words, improvement of their brand name.

The way this school prepared for the accreditation was more or less the same as the other one, forming committees, holding regular meetings to review progress, long hours of work into writing procedures and keeping records of activities and organization of documentation. At the time of the inspection visit, 180 instructors were employed in this school and the coordinator pointed out that their most challenging task during the preparation phase was to get the

support of the instructors: "Naturally, the biggest challenge was to convince the staff about the importance of all these innovations; because it is not always easy for the staff to embrace the 'changes'…" (Appendix Kb).

In the conversations, the inspectors were engaged with the instructors during the visit, in observations, the attitude of the teachers was polite and positive. In the focus group meeting, however, while some instructors were keen to answer questions and offer explanations, some others prefer to keep silent and a couple remained with a cynical expression on their faces all the way through and made a couple of critical comments about the superficiality of the accreditation process and the effectiveness of the academic management (Field notes).

The students the inspectors talked to during the breaks and at the dormitory seemed unaware of what's going on and what accreditation was. Nevertheless, students who participated in the focus group meeting were positive and knew that there were "inspectors" in the school, even though they didn't know the purpose (Field notes).

At the end of the inspection process, a final meeting was held by the managers to give them an oral account of the written report which was sent to the school

three weeks after the inspection. The managers' delightful relief was again demonstrated how stressful and burdensome the accreditation process was, besides being costly for an institution. Also for instructors, who were asked to prepare lesson plans for the ad-hoc observations of the inspectors, the process was a short term workload for a one-off event, rather than a long term process of professional development.

In his discussion of 'bureaucratic process' of external quality monitoring, Harvey (2010) states that: "There were many references to 'game playing' and compliance with external requirements and 'performance' to ensure maximum return from monitoring processes, whether it be financial rewards, allocation of extra student numbers, or safeguarding reputations". He goes on to say that: "institutional managers went so far as requiring staff to present a particular image of the institution even when the staff were opposed to it or knew it to be a misinterpretation" (p. 8).

In the case of this school, there was no evidence that instructors were engaged in some sort of 'game playing' and expected a financial reward. On the other hand, safeguarding reputations, especially within the university as a language instructor who is always made to feel 'second class' and take the blame when

students display inadequate language skills, an accreditation is a means to save face is a fact to be taken into consideration.

4.7. Insights and Impressions Gained Through Being an Insider Evaluator/Inspector

The insights and observations of the researcher were used as data sources for this study because of her experience in program evaluation and accreditation in manager and inspector roles from both ends. As a manager of a preparatory language program of a foundation university, she was involved in the process of an external program evaluation on the receiving end. The program had gone through an inspection visit and received EAQUALS accreditation in 2004, which was followed up three years later in 2007 and reconfirmed. She became an EAQUALS inspector herself in 2005, fulfilling the training requirements and attending the recommended review and standardization meetings up to the present time. She was coincidentally appointed to carry an evaluation visit to the language school of a foundation university with a large English preparatory program during this study which gave her the opportunity to study and to reflect upon the process from another end, as an inspector and researcher (Appendix N).

> As a director of an English language program, when I took the decision to apply for accreditation from EAQUALS, I was purely seeking accountability and thought that QA from a European organization will help increase the recognition

of my program within the university which was giving high importance to the processes of the Bologna treaty and international partnerships and projects. The level of language competence of the students who completed the preparatory language program had always been a point of complaint by the faculty and the quality of instructors and instruction at the preparatory program was always the source of blame. This was hindering the motivation of both the instructors and students, resulting in a suspicious and cynical attitude from both towards any improvement effort and a stressful environment jeopardizing effective teaching and learning. I thought having a strategic plan which aimed to achieve international recognition could solve all our problems.

The preparation for the external inspection was a very labor intensive and stressful period for the management group, especially the curriculum and testing members and the teacher-training unit. It required a lot of commitment, cooperation and communication. Although, some instructors maintained their cynical attitude, all of them participated in the meetings and internal evaluation processes and shared the joy in the after party of receiving the accreditation.

The joy gradually faded and I soon realized that hanging the accreditation certificate on the wall and using the EAQUALS membership logo on our printed materials had not changed anything. The only recognition we received was a congratulation letter from the rector which did not help change the bias of faculty towards the ELT program and the instructors in the ELT program towards the faculty.

Although we went through a second inspection three years later, as a condition of maintaining our accreditation and membership to EAQUALS, it was more for keeping a connection with the other member organizations in other countries through EAQUALS in the hope of sharing good practices with each other, than benefiting from the accreditation process for quality enhancement of our program.

Even though I realized that it was not cost-effective for institutions to obtain accreditation from external organizations such as EAQUALS, I continued believing in the importance of adhering to its standards for quality assurance in the international arena and kept promoting their standards in hopes to enhance quality awareness among language educators and increase demand for QA and accreditation.

That is the reason why, after resigning from my managerial position 2010, I maintained my contacts with EAQUALS and my inspector status. Being appointed to participate in the advisory inspection process of this language school which was very similar to the one I worked and gone through the same inspection process at the other end gave me a good opportunity to critically review both the standards and the inspection process from both ends of the spectrum.

This insider experience confirmed the outcomes of available research on the effectiveness and efficacy of accreditation other than compliance with the standards set by the accrediting bodies as the right way to do things. The extent they brought the recognition that management expected to gain, or how much they led to continuous improvement of the quality of language education that accreditation agencies claim to provide was dubious for this researcher.

The researcher, in her insider role agrees with Harvey (2002) that: "External quality monitoring is primarily to ensure accountability and conformity… Improvement is an 'add-on' that is presumed to result from compliance with the method" (p. 260).

From both of these cases, it seemed like the most important gain for the programs from these evaluations was the enhancement of cooperation and team-spirit among managers and the learning they attained from the preparation phase which discontinued after the accreditation was received.

Rather than monitoring the QA of the programs, "accreditation monitors the sector to ensure that accredited institutions continue to fulfill the expectations of a university or college" (Harvey, 2004, p.210).

In this sense, the need for a national accreditation agency urgently prevails since the sector's demand for accreditation will not diminish in a perceivable future. A national accreditation scheme for language education can opt for quality criteria and QA processes that are more dynamic and shared than fixed and imposed upon as is the case with the existing external schemes.

Another point that needs careful consideration and further study is the "one size fits all" approach of these accreditation schemes which is facilitated by the discourse in the inspection reports. These reports objectively describe what actually happens and make recommendations of the gaps spotted between what is written and what is actually happening during inspections. The gap is not actually between the documents and practices of the institution but the

defined threshold level in the standards and the performance of the program participants.

EAQUALS standards and inspection scheme are regularly reviewed and updated with the intention to meet the rapidly growing and changing needs of the market which is becoming more varied by the inclusion of new languages and language schools in different countries. The need to make the standards and the approach to inspection more flexible that will recognize and incorporate the local and cultural differences in different contexts grew out of this challenge. The descriptions of the criteria are turned into generic statements that will lend themselves to different interpretations to incorporate the realities of different cultures and contexts.

Despite the generic discourse used in the definitions of criteria and the source of information the inspectors need to look for, the interpretation of these criteria bear the biased notions of good practices in language teaching that are expected to be carried out from the ESL contexts of the center countries to others.

One such example can be given from the category of 'teaching'. An excerpt from this category under the heading of "teaching methods", the "assessment criteria and focus points" reads as:

> Effectiveness and appropriacy of methods in relation to course participants' age, level, aims and needs, effectiveness and appropriate use of resources… (EAQUALS, 2010, cited in Muresan, 2011).

This statement demonstrates the use of language in the descriptions of expected threshold levels with vague terms like "appropriateness" and "effectiveness", The purpose being (as discussed in the review meetings) to enable the inspectors to interpret these quantifiers within the context of the inspected school culture.

Something easier said than done. Since the inspectors are all experienced language educators, it is hardly possible to leave their beliefs and ideas behind and be able to understand and define the conditions in different institutional cultures within the time frame of an inspection. Neither the number of inspection reports the researcher came across during the standardization meetings and the reports she has actually participated in, nor the experience she gained as an inspector, proved otherwise.

The below excerpts from two different inspection reports under the category of "teaching methods" one written in 2004 and the other in 2012 clearly demonstrated what the inspectors thought "good teaching" was:

(For reasons of confidentiality, the CEA inspection report was not shown to the researcher. Hence, the conclusions made here are based on the EAQUALS Inspection Scheme Manual (EAQUALS, 2010) and the reports that the researcher had access to as an insider but used sparingly in order to respect their confidential status).

From the report dated 2004:

> But, it was interesting to note that there were some examples of excellent teaching in which the instructor engaged the students in the class and stimulated interest and an eagerness to learn, thus providing that it is possible.

From the report dated 2012:

> Teaching methodology throughout the school clearly reflected the influence of a structured and progressive teacher development programme and normally demonstrated clear staging, a lively pace, a consistent focus on the learner and a good level of class management. Explanations and directions were generally clear, materials were generally effectively exploited and learners were given frequent

opportunities to produce language together in pairs or small groups before feeding back.

As demonstrated by these excerpts and the rest of the descriptions and recommendations made under the category, the inspectors carried assumptions that good language teaching should be communicative, allowing interaction of students. Even if the language of the teaching criteria in the standards was not prescriptive and the approach of the instructors was flexible, the discourse of the reports carried messages to the institutions about how teaching should be, regardless of the local culture that might have yielded for a more teacher-fronted instruction even in language classes to make them more effective.

If two reports with eight years in between carried very similar messages to two different institutions in one country, it certainly deserved consideration. Either, applied linguistics was not concerned with language teaching and learning anymore, ignoring the effects of globalization and technology on education and communication or, the change of wording in the inspection scheme did not change the deeply rooted assumptions underlying in the standards rendering them static in nature.

Another example was chosen from the category of "Quality Assurance" under the category of "professional development review of teachers":

From the report dated 2004:

> The director is carrying out too many appraisal interviews herself. The center may benefit from having a clearer channel of communication before going to the director.

From the report dated 2012:

> Currently the Director of the School and her two Assistant Directors carry out all reviews as a team, which means a little under 200 separate interviews. In our view this system requires some amendment to ensure that the load is more evenly distributed in order to render it of more use to both parties.

Although the wordings of the above excerpts were different, both comments implied a preference towards how appraisal interviews effectively carried out. One other striking example for the researcher was the comments made in both cases, on the accuracy of the language used by the teachers when presenting language. An excerpt from the "recommendations" on the 2012 report says:

> In pronunciation, ensure that students are regularly corrected and that all spoken models given by teachers are accurate at all times.

This was also one of the disagreements the inspector had with the chief inspector during their meeting prior to feedback to the managers. The chief inspector who came across with a couple of incidents where the non-English

speaking instructor's pronunciation of a word was "unacceptable". It was impossible to convince him otherwise and not to mention this point in the report.

Being a native-speaker, the inspector assumed an authority as to judge the acceptability of the instructor's utterance. Acceptability, as compared to a native-speaker's pronunciation of the word.

It was possible to find many other examples of cases from the reports which demonstrated how the knowledge construction in ELT was still very much dominated by the British and American traditions (Canagarajah 1999) and manifested in the rhetoric of quality in this domain even when the QA schemes claimed to respect multiculturalism and diversity. These concepts were respected when management structures and auxiliary services were evaluated but when it came to lesson observations, the inspectors did not hesitate to make judgmental comments on the nature of overall teaching quality based on their impressions of ten to twenty minute segments of classes on the day of inspection.

The flexibility and adaptability of standards manifested themselves only in the recognition and praise of strengths of a program, implemented and improved with hard work and commitment for the purposes of the inspection event. This

could be attributed to the genuine inclination of the inspectors and the system to reward the efforts undertaken by the institution. However, over-emphasis of strengths in the reports could jeopardize the credibility of the accreditation due to the revenues generated by these agencies from the fees and membership dues in the international market.

A deeper analysis of the discourse in the descriptions of standards and the excerpts from the inspection reports need to be made in order to draw accurate conclusions on these issues. Only a glimpse of sampling was provided in this study in order to exemplify one of the key reasons for the researchers' skepticism towards the standards approach and compliance requirement embedded in the inspection schemes of "international" accreditation agencies.

All in all, insights accumulated on the issues of QA and accreditation through active involvement and passive observation, led to much concern about the overt and covert agendas of their existence and practices. At the same time, they confirmed that these processes deserve much attention and debate in the sector to utilize their powers to improve language education, rather than to control the sector.

4.8. Summary of Conclusions Based on Findings

The conclusions drawn from the findings in order to answer the research questions are summarized in Table 11. The summary includes only the most frequently selected or mentioned items without making a distinction between managers, instructors or students. The explanations of the differences between the data gathered from the questionnaires and the data gathered from similar questions used in the questionnaire and asked in the interviews for triangulation purposes are not indicated in the summary. The overall insights gained from the study and the researcher's insider experiences verify these differences.

Table 11 Summary of Conclusions from Findings

Research Questions	Findings (based on manager and instructor perspectives who responded to the questionnaire)
QA processes currently exist in preparatory English language programs and their effectiveness	• Continuous improvement of curriculum • Regular feedback and evaluation meetings with staff • Pre and/or in-service training and development programs for teachers • Student evaluation surveys
The perception of impact of existing QA processes on the improvement of language learning	• Teachers are motivated to improve their teaching • The success rate in the proficiency exam increases • Cooperation and commitment among staff increases • Staff satisfaction rates improve
Most desired QA processes in preparatory English language programs	• Teacher training and professional development • Effective and supportive academic management • Effective assessment and evaluation

Table 11 Summary of Conclusions from Findings (Continued)

Perceptions of quality and QA in language education	• Quality is continuous improvement of teacher performance • Quality is motivated teachers and effective teaching • Quality is reliable assessment procedures and high level of language attainment • Quality is satisfied staff and students
Processes suggested to be included in an effective QA scheme	• Teaching staff with adequate qualifications and competencies • Support and guidance for teachers • .staff and student feedback • Work ethics • Shared curriculum goals and objectives • Assessment and evaluation
Expectations from QA and accreditation	• Recognition of status-quo • Prestige within the university • Improvement of educational provisions • Improve university profile
QA processes currently existing in ELT outside Turkey and their applicability in Turkish institutions	Processes that are defined in EAQUALS and CEA accreditation schemes. They are already implemented in three language schools. They provide accountability and managerial improvement, sustainable effects-questionable
Insights & conclusions gained through being an insider evaluator/inspector	• External accreditations from foreign agents are not cost-effective • QA processes do not instigate long term impact unless shared and initiated by all stakeholders in a program • A national accreditation commission can render more effective in terms of QA in ELT in HE context which has specific needs and demands than ELT in other contexts

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents the summary and discussion of the findings and makes suggestions for future studies. The first part of the chapter is a summary and discussion of the results. The second part of the chapter suggests a framework for quality enhancement and assurance of ELT programs in higher education institutions in Turkey. The last part makes suggestions for further study of the quality provisions in order to improve teaching and learning of English in the national higher education context.

5.1. Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the compiled data demonstrates that QA is on the agenda of ELT programs in the higher education context as a consequence of the growing competition among universities to respond to market needs and student demands. In order to increase their brand recognition and market share, especially the foundation universities are under pressure to demonstrate their educational quality to be able to attract students with high university entrance exam scores.

The CoHE statistics of student preferences show that the quality of ELT is one of the major points affecting students' university choices, at times more important than the academic quality of the department they want to study (www.osym.gov). As a result, especially for private universities, it is paramount to equip students with good language qualifications.

The quality endeavors of individual programs in HEIs are most often initiated by the management and more inclined towards institutional accountability to satisfy external bodies (CoHE, university boards and accreditation agencies) and focus on processes required to meet the standards and criteria set by those bodies. However, even the Language Schools that are committed to QA and received accreditation by meeting the threshold level of standards and criteria specified (EAQUALS and CEA) do not seem have a quality culture that are shared by all their members.

The findings of this research study coincide with the discussions at the final workshop of "Examining Quality Culture" project, held in February 2012, where it was accepted that: "quality culture cannot be simply equated with the institutional quality assurance system – although the system forms and important part of it- but that it builds on the values and practices that are shared by the institutional community and that have to be nurtured on many levels and

by various means at the same time" (Vettori, 2012, p. 1). The accredited language schools with their QA systems in place were cases where instructors, students and managers reflected different levels of awareness and attitudes towards quality in this study.

In this vein, it is important for the individual institutions to identify the beliefs and values shared in their own communities about what constitutes quality language education and then establish their own QA systems to assure and enhance the quality of their provisions. As Vettori (2012) further reports: "…any attempt to develop institutional quality cultures further towards the ideal of improvement and enhancement has to take into account the cultures that are already in place" (p. 3). Thus, quality standards and QA systems that are imported into the institution fail to create a culture of quality which can promote lasting results and continuous improvement.

While managers were more focused on the improvement of institutional procedures to achieve quality, instructors were skeptical of any such quality provisions, perceiving QA as a management issue that increases paper work and burdens them with unnecessary workload. The attitude of instructors towards quality manifested itself in this study in their reluctance to participate in this research in any capacity. When instructors were asked why they did not

want to participate, their polite refusals to answer demonstrated the fact that instructors see QA as a managerial concern which was beyond the scope of their work, something they did not want to have anything to do with.

Receiving accreditation was not perceived as something affecting the quality of their classroom teaching and improving student learning. QA processes and preparation for accreditation were regarded as practices that increase bureaucratization and work load in order to increase brand recognition of their institution in the sector or the management's desire to raise the profile of the language school in the university.

While managers' perceptions of quality education tended to lean more on "quality as excellence", focusing on enhancement and improvement, the definitions of instructors and students reflected "quality as fitness of purpose", focusing on teaching and learning.   The analysis of the data showed that instructors mentioned students learning the target language as an important feature of QA more so than the managers.

This study confirmed that there were still wide variations in the perception and interpretation of quality language education and its assurance in higher education institutions in Turkey. The differences did not only exist among

different institutions but also among the members of the same institution, even among the members of accredited programs who had very clearly defined quality standards and QA provisions.

> The concept of quality is found to be multifaceted and value-laden and various stake-holders who represent key groups in society, including government, employers and the professions, students and staff, the management of the educational institutions and the general public, place emphasis on the different dimensions of the concept" (Chung Sea Law, 2010, p. 66).

It seems like the key to quality education and assurance is a working definition of quality that is derived from the insights of all stake-holders in the institution and shared by them all. This does not mean setting up a committee which works with the management and teachers to define quality and set up the systems for its assurance but all teachers working together to generate definitions and procedures that reflect their beliefs and the realities of their own situation. A working definition of quality needs a shift from an institutional focus to a more individual one, taking teachers' perspectives of student learning and experience into the center of all provisions.

Although instructor and student feedback were regarded as essential QA processes and widely implemented in schools, neither students, nor teachers considered them as fundamental processes for the improvement of quality. A

feedback or evaluation form that students and instructors fill at the end of teaching periods is the most common procedure which, according to this study, does not have an impact on improving learning and teaching but only useful for curriculum renovation.

5.2. Discussion of Quality Accreditation

The case of two accredited language schools, one from EAQUALS and the other from CEA, clearly shows that these programs pursued accreditation in order to increase their credibility among the higher education institutions and attract better students to their universities. In both cases, the QA processes to apply for accreditation were not required by the university executives but proposed by the management of the language schools and initiated after approval and financial support were received from the rectors.

Both of these schools prepared for accreditation by appointing a steering committee comprised of instructors who had managerial responsibilities and informed the instructors and students only when their involvement were paramount for progress, such as self-evaluation reports, supervisory classroom observations and systematic documentation of student feedback and performance results.

As a result of careful observation and study of the cases of accreditation and active engagement of the researcher in program evaluation and inspections, it is possible to say that attaining accreditation helps institutions to improve administrative and academic management of the schools. However, it is hardly possible to claim that the improvement of these processes necessarily impacts the teaching and learning of the language and language learning skills. Further research and longitudinal and comparative study of students' language performances in similar accredited and non-accredited schools are needed to be able to make any comments on how much impact accreditation has had on the improvement of language education.

Although the standards and criteria required by EAQUALS and CEA accreditation show similarities, the differences in the prioritization and presentation of these standards and requirements for accreditation reflect beliefs and ideologies about language and methodology for teaching. These ideologies are mostly embedded in and imposed through the inspection reports received after a diligent process of evaluation by inspectors which lasts for a couple of days.

It is possible to read these inspection reports as official documents of domination and manipulation which impose the ideologies and beliefs of the

"center" embedded in the standards. "Center", being "the technologically advanced communities of the west which, at least in part, sustain their material dominance by keeping less developed communities in periphery status". Canagarajah (1999) uses this center/periphery paradigm also to refer to "the linguistic distinction between the traditionally English speaking communities (which claim ownership over the language) and those periphery communities which has recently appropriated the language" (p.4). Here, the paradigm refers to the English speaking countries, namely USA and UK, who claim authority not only over the language, but over theories of teaching and learning and more recently the standards of quality and its assurance. The periphery is used to cover all the countries where English is taught and widely demanded in all sectors, being the "lingua franca" of the globalized world.

On the surface level, the standards of quality, as presented in accreditation schemes, are very democratic, not didactic and claim to recognize and respect the differences in local realities reflected in the educational provisions of different countries and institutions.

> The EAQUALS accreditation scheme is international, and the standards and criteria are not prescriptive, although the basic requirements are clearly established. During the inspection process, these requirements can be applied in different ways in different contexts, and it is the institution's task to provide

evidence which demonstrates that they meet the requirements" (EAQUALS
Inspection Manual, p. 13)

As clearly stated in EAQUALS inspection scheme, the variety of needs and
purposes of language teaching and learning in different institutions, as well as
the differences in educational systems are taken into consideration. Thus, the
standards emphasize the importance of setting clear goals and objectives for a
language program and the existence of transparent and coherent systems to
meet these objectives. But, indeed, even the writing up of these goals and
objectives is a top down imposition, an authoritarian process which is more a
political instrument of power, rather than a working document to better the
teaching and learning of the language and skills students really need, using
methodologies that both the students and instructors feel comfortable with; not
ones defined by "the center", and imposed on the "periphery" in the form of
international quality standards and criteria for QA.

As a consequence, accreditation schemes become powerful tools which can
create and impose language education policies that serve the powerful
domination of "the center" as the norm over the others. It is, in a way, exerting
and exercising control over English education by imposing a correct and
acceptable way of teaching a language and managing a language program

approved by the academics and policy makers of the center and recognized by the authorities in the periphery.

The cases of accredited institutions and the study of defined criteria and standards proved that program evaluations and accreditation from such external bodies like EAQUALS and CEA are only other forms of exporting pedagogies that reflect the language education policies and practices of the center countries which often fail to address the needs of students and the instructors in the periphery countries. Another important aspect of these external accreditation bodies is the fact that their vested interest is more on selling their product, which is the inspection scheme and membership in this case, rather than to improve the quality of language education in ways that recognizes and responds to the learning needs of the institutions in the countries they are operating.

The increasing demand for English education enforces both the language education programs in the center and the periphery to seek ways to raise their profile and recognition in order to attract more students. This growing competition provides a new business venture in English language education which is program evaluation and accreditation. The expertise and schemes offered by the center are favored especially by higher education programs who

seek international recognition, despite the high cost that they pay to receive accredited status.

Since this demand for QA and accreditation continues, it is inevitable for periphery countries especially in the European Higher Education arena, to establish their own quality standards and accreditation bodies as in the case of Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary and Poland. These national quality organizations integrated and operationalized the quality principles and criteria in the EAQUALS scheme according to the emerging needs of their local contexts (Muresan, 2011).

As Canagarajah (1999) states: "if language learning is ideological….the solution is not to run away from politics, but to negotiate with the agencies of power for personal and collective empowerment" (p.173). Since it is essential to continuously improve holistic pedagogies in local educational contexts through the knowledge imposed and imported from the center, it is also necessary to cooperate and establish professional links with the accreditation agencies and formulate shared principles and procedures in order to stay in the game in the international arena.

Turkey is one of the signatory countries in the Bologna process, EAQUALS standards and procedures can also provide a leading sample for a national QA framework as in the case of other European countries aforementioned. However, they should not be accepted as solution providers for the improvement of language teaching in Turkish HEIs. Neither should they be regarded as gates for HE language programs to the international educational arena. They can only serve as sample systems to study and learn from, nothing more.

5.3. Suggested Framework for QA

Rather than applying and adopting standards and procedures for the Turkish context from the existing available ones presented by the external bodies in the sector, it will be more favorable for the improvement of ELT programs in higher education institutions to generate their own systems and processes based on a national framework which can better create a quality culture and enhance language learning than meeting international standards. "Improvement potentially depends on the development of definitions that reflect the interests and concerns of those in the sector" (Houston, 2007, p. 61).

Such a framework, specifically designed for HE language programs in Turkey, needs to entail the identification of perceptions and beliefs of all stakeholders

within a particular institution and develop local definitions of quality and QA as well as specify the purposes. It is crucial to start with a working definition of quality and collectively determined purposes that focus on the educational provisions at the program level rather than at the level of university management. This study reflects how the vision and mission statements written in the front pages of university documents and the goals set in order to meet international QA criteria remains superficial for the instructors and students. The positive impact of these processes is vague and received with skepticism. QA processes generated by external bodies and imported as management objectives carry the danger of producing nothing more than quality bureaucratization (Newton 2000).

In other words, Q monitoring and QA still remain as top down processes that burden the managers and instructors with much bureaucratic chores and work load without reaching classroom boarders. What Harley (2002) points out for the external evaluations carried out in HE contexts, is also true for the case of ELT domain that "external evaluation in legitimating the status quo, fails to ask significant questions about the reality of learning experience for students at a momentous historical juncture for post-compulsory education. Evaluators appear to be preoccupied with the method of evaluation, rather than the substance" (p. 245).

Hence, it is paramount that a framework for QA to refrain from offering methodologies for evaluations and accreditation schemes in the national context but offer an inquisitive guidance to individual institutions to recognize and cater for better learning in their own contexts and create their own quality cultures by involving all aspects and interacting with all stakeholders within the program.

5.4. Concluding Remarks

It is apparent that the cost-effectiveness and efficacy of existing QA initiatives and accreditation schemes need careful consideration both on a national and institutional level in order to meet the demands on HEIs to provide quality language education to their prospective students.

Quality in language education can only be achieved if it comes from within; produced, understood and internalized by all participants as well as taking the nature of language learning and the learners' needs in their specific contexts into consideration. If not, the implementation of QA processes as required by policy-makers and/or accreditation bodies, setting national and international standards, can only improve academic management and the status-quo of schools but fail to reach the classrooms.

QA systems that recognize the uniqueness of programs at institutional level and carefully consider the situational factors at the operational level are needed if the purpose is to improve the quality of educational provisions rather than the accountability of the management. Otherwise, quality will be bound to remain at the level of management objectives and QA processes as ritualistic, largely meaningless practices (Newton, 2000).

It is an undeniable fact that the demand for learning English will keep growing and the pressure on higher education institutions to continuously improve their ELT programs will continue at least for another decade. The increasing number of public and foundation universities also burdens the ELT programs to demonstrate their educational quality both nationally and internationally in order to attract students and increase their market share. Accreditation will soon be regarded as an essential requirement for English preparatory programs, rather than an added-value.

It is obvious that QA provisions mandated to higher education institutions by CoHE for academic assessment and quality is not suffice to neither demonstrate the quality of language programs, nor improve their educational provisions in particular. Thus, the search for QA and accreditation specifically designed for language education will gain momentum and not only EAQUALS

and CEA but other accreditation agencies will soon occupy the market and universities will bear the high costs of program evaluations in order to obtain accreditation from these foreign agencies promising international recognition.

Despite its limitations, this study clearly demonstrates that applying QA processes specified by external bodies and agencies only serve to meet managerial objectives and improve the accountability of the institutions within. However, in terms of enhancing and improving the quality of teaching and learning, their impact is minimal, if not none. Hence, the investment made to implement QA systems as management objectives and to obtain international accreditation is not cost effective. The program gains at the operational level are not worth the work load and budgetary burdens such applications and external international evaluations put on stakeholders.

It is paramount that a national agency to be founded by the approval and/or appointment of CoHE which can specify national standards and criteria for language education congruent with national educational policies which recognizes the national educational trends and approaches and meet the needs of institutions and students at a local level. A national agency can cooperate and learn from the experience and expertise of other national quality associations and private agencies at project level but remain intact as a national

body to serve the needs of the Turkish Higher Education arena in terms of program evaluations and accreditation.

Such a national body can be founded independently but recognized and authorized to carry evaluations and accredit programs by CoHE. As the study of national statutory and non-statutory national agencies and organizations shows, remaining independent is important for such QA agencies to be able to build more authentic relationships with the institutions and work interactively for long term QA enhancement, rather than short-term improvement to meet national accreditation requirements. However, some form of formal status and CoHE authorization is necessary to build up QA provisions in congruent with educational policies and be able to gain recognition.

The researcher proposes the initiation of such a national commission approved by CoHE which will bring together the local knowhow and expertise of highly esteemed academics and experienced practitioners in ELT in Turkey to provide supervision and program evaluations to language programs in higher education and beyond and award a national quality accreditation, valid and recognized internationally.

It is hoped that the end of this research study will be the beginning of TURQUALE (Turkey Quality Accreditation for Language Education). If CoHE approves such a proposal, the expertise, experience and framework for such an initiative are already present internally and can be organized in no time.

5.5. Implications for Practice: Turkish Commission for Quality Accreditation of Language Education (TURCQUALE)

This commission will consist of a core group (CC) of academics and practitioners who not only possess the experience and expertise in langauge education management and instruction but also possess the know-how and skills for effective program evaluation and supervision, as well as mentoring and training. It will not have a status as a unit of CoHE but will be delegated regulatory responsibilities to carry out quality monitoring activities on a national level with the approval of CoHE. In other words, the comission will function as an over-arching body for QA in HE language education in Turkey.

The case of non-satutory accreditation agencies in USA can be examined as examples where institutional accreditation is voluntary and carried out by privately established agencies that are recognized and legitimized by the government to provide a framework for evaluating quality. (Harley, 2002)

CC can be comprised of a minimum number of three or four members who will establish the ground rules for the functions and processes that the work of this commission will entail, congruent with the policies and requirements of CoHE. There will be a pool of experts from different institutions to be invited and appointed to carry out inspections and evaluation duties when required who are willing and eligible to travel to different sites if/when required.

CC will be responsible in organizing periodical feedback and review meetings with the appointed experts to continuously keep track of what is happening and what is needed in the field of language education in HEIs and update its standards and processes. CC will also be responsible in keeping records of all activities carried out by the commission and report outcomes to CoHE on a regular basis.

The comission will be financially independent and generate its income from the evaluation/inspection fees that the institutions pay for the services of the commision. The fees for the site visits, inspector travel and honorarium costs will commensurate with the accreditation fees of national agents and organizations in other sectors and will appropriately cover the value of the services offfered. Receiving external audits and inspections from a national agent will definitely bring costs down for the institutions and will make their QA

efforts more cost effective. Nationally established systems and procedures will better recognize the realities and requirements of each institution's local conditions and will provide long term assistance for sustainable results and continuous enhancement of the quality of their educaitonal provisions from within.

In order to promote long lasting QA within the programs, the commision will also be able to organize and offer guidelines and cirteria to provide specialized training to language educators in HE contexts. Language education in HEIs is certainly different from the ones offered in secondary education contexts and thus instructors involved in HE need to be equippped with pedagogical skills that will enable them to cope with the specialized demands and needs of different HEIs. "HE langauge teachers often have to engage in extensive independent course development and materials production, and often in specialist content areas" (Tudor, 2006, p. 521).

The importance of instructor qualifications and teaching in QA has also been an apparent outcome of this study, making it necessary to give them top priority in any QA monitoring initiative in HE. Providing specialized pre and in-service training and continuous professional development opportunities for instructors should definitely be incorporated into the agenda of the commision's activities.

Establishing a long term relationsip with the institution under contract, TURCQUALE, will also be able to provide guidelines and guidance in providing this kind of training for their instructors to enable them to better meet the pedagogical demands of their own circumstances.

As in the case of European HEIs (Tudor, 2006), the demand for langauge learning and particularly for English language learning will continue to grow, ever increasing the demand for qualified langauge teachers. To meet this demand and be able to find language teaching professionals who already possess the competencies required in HE context will make recruitment more and more difficult each year (personal conversations with managers of preparatory language programs), rendering it necessary to find long term solutions for this problem, rather than short term fixes for every program. As such, a national accreditation scheme can offer a long-term interactive relationship that can enhance the efffectiveness of existing systems for teacher training and development by directly intervening in the contents and delivery with an institutional and national educational policy perspective.

Figure 6 presents the stages of the suggested framework for QA and accreditation within which TURCQUALE may operate. The framework offers a long term contract with the applying institutions/programs which starts with the

identification of beliefs, values and know-how that are embedded in the culture of the institution at the first stage. From these specifications, the definitions and purposes of QA are drawn in the second stage. Based on the definitions and purposes, the policy and process decisions are made in the third phase. The fourth stage entails the training of staff for the implementation of the strategic plan derived from the policy and procedures. The final stage is the evaluation and reflection which will lead to accreditation.

The time frame for the stages depends on the size of the programs and their purposes for the pursuit of QA. The framework is an interactive one, based on continuous communication between the two parties. The receipt of accreditation does not seize this communication which continues during annual review and reflection process followed by reaccreditaiton every three years. The contract between TURQCUALE and the institutions can be abolished at any stage by mutual consent. However, it is important to maintain the relationship until the program is empowered to establish a long term culture change rather than implement short-term improvement plans.

"… a focus on quality should always be to enhance and improve the current status and develop the systems that assure it. This means that quality is and

ongoing exercise: it is not a state that is reached once and for all but one that needs to be pursued continuously" (EUA report, 2006, p.10).

This framework is suggested only as a model to provide inspiration for the development of a national QA scheme for ELT in HEIs in Turkey which, the researcher believes is urgently needed.
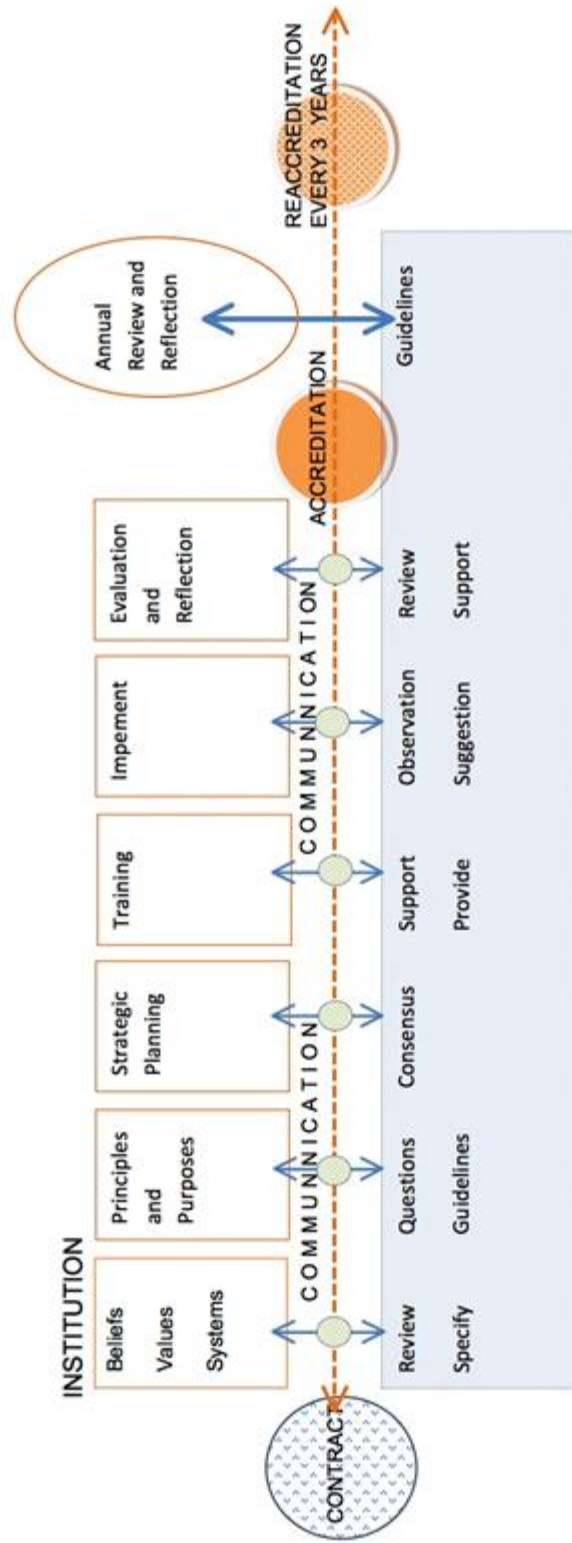
Figure 6: TURCQUALE QA and Accreditation Framework for HE Language Programs

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APPENDIX Aa

EAQUALS GENERAL CHARTER

Accredited Members of EAQUALS undergo regular inspections, and courses accredited by EAQUALS are regularly verified, to ensure that there is:

1. A commitment to:
1.1. Professional conduct and integrity;
1.2. Provide opportunities for language study and/or professional training in a teaching/learning environment of high quality within a clearly organised curriculum framework;
1.3. Improve and develop continually the means and resources available for study and training;
1.4. Uphold the EAQUALS Information Charter.

2. An undertaking:
2.1. Not to discriminate in any way against course participants, staff or other stakeholders on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, race or religion;
2.2. To inform course participants and clients about clearly specified procedures for dealing with complaints, dissatisfaction, discipline or non-participation, with cases being referred to the EAQUALS Ombudsperson when necessary;
2.3. To uphold the EAQUALS Staff Charter and Charter for Course Participants.

3. Acceptance of a duty to:
3.1. Take all reasonable steps to ensure the welfare and safety of their course participants and staff;
3.2. Provide written assurances, verified by EAQUALS, that the institution concerned has been established and operates according to all relevant national and local legislation, including company law, employment, accounting, taxation, advertising, privacy, hygiene, safety, insurance and copyright;
3.3. Work towards making provision for persons with special needs.

4. The existence of a registered legal entity with a published, physical address.

APPENDIX Ab

THE EAQUALS CHARTER FOR COURSE PARTICIPANTS

Accredited Members of EAQUALS undergo regular inspections, and courses accredited by EAQUALS are regularly verified, to ensure that:

1. Before the course:

1.1. Information: all information and publicity is accurate, complete and accessible, and includes:
☐ an outline of the course aims and course components;
☐ a stipulated number of taught hours and study hours per course;
☐ a stipulated maximum number of course participants per group;
☐ a specified age-range for courses;
☐ a clear description of the cost of tuition and of other services and materials
☐ transparent terms and conditions of business.
1.2. Enrolment: admission and enrolment procedures are efficient and transparent
1.3. Placement: effective procedures are in place to determine course participants' level of competence and/or other needs.

2. During the course:

There is a focus on providing course participants with opportunities for successful learning, in
particular:
2.1. Standards: teaching and educational standards are high, and yield effective learning;
2.2. Teaching/Training Staff: qualified and competent teachers or trainers experienced in
teaching the target language work under the supervision of an appropriately qualified academic manager;
2.3. Premises and Facilities: the premises and facilities and/or learning platforms for language learning and/or teacher training are suitable for the purpose;
2.4. Curriculum and course planning: the course of study is structured, is divided into levels of proficiency, and is appropriate;
2.5. Resources: resources and materials used are relevant to the needs of course participants and to the course objectives;
2.6. Teaching and Learning: the teaching and learning/training methods and techniques used are appropriate and effective for the course participants;

2.7. Quality Control: there is regular observation of teaching or sampling of training by the course provider;

2.8. Support and Advice: there are opportunities for course participants to discuss their individual questions and concerns, and to obtain information and advice;

2.9. Services: administration and auxiliary services are efficient;

2.10. Assessment: evaluation of and feedback on course participants' progress is regular and appropriate.

3. At the end of the course:

3.1. Certification: end-of-course assessment procedures are valid and soundly administered, and reports and certificates of attainment based on these are given to course participants and/or stakeholders;

3.2. Client Feedback: there is an opportunity for course participants and/or stakeholders to give feedback on the course.

APPENDIX Ac

THE EAQUALS STAFF CHARTER

Accredited Members of EAQUALS undergo regular inspections, and courses accredited by
EAQUALS are regularly verified, to ensure that:

1. The contracts of all staff are governed by local labour laws and by national contracts where these apply.
2. Terms and conditions of employment comply with EU directives, where applicable, and are fair in the context of the relevant local or national standards, especially in the following areas:
2.1. salary;
2.2. length of contract;
2.3. working hours and teaching hours per week;
2.4. paid holiday entitlement;
2.5. sickness, maternity, family and compassionate leave;
2.6. pension and severance pay arrangements, where relevant;
2.7. unpaid leave of absence;
2.8. conditions and remuneration for freelance staff.
3. An appropriate proportion of staff members are employed on a full-time and/or permanent basis.
4. Clearly specified written procedures exist for dealing with staff grievances and disciplinary problems.
5. EAQUALS sets high and achievable standards for each country, and for each language taught, and staff members have appropriate training, qualifications and experience for the work in question.
Teaching staff have received initial training as language teachers that included supervised teaching practice. This training was sufficient and appropriate in terms of its content and duration for the work they are doing.
6. In addition to initial training, all staff are given opportunities to improve their skills in continuous professional development within and outside working hours.
7. All staff have appropriate workspace and the facilities for them to carry out their duties effectively.
8. All staff, whether full or part time, are issued with written contracts or letters of agreement specifying the terms of employment under 2., the main responsibilities of the post, the procedures available for dealing with grievances, and the procedures to be followed in the event of disciplinary action.
9. The services of freelance/self-employed individuals are contracted according to national legislation, and people who are freelance/self-employed are treated fairly.
10. Staff members are informed about the status and ownership of the institution employing them, and about the organisations or associations it belongs to.

APPENDIX Ad

THE EAQUALS INFORMATION CHARTER

Accredited Members of EAQUALS undergo regular inspections, and courses accredited by
EAQUALS are regularly verified, to ensure that:

1. Advertising, promotional materials and course information follow national advertising standards,
are factual, and give a clear and truthful account of their courses and other activities.
2. Before enrolment, course participants or their representatives are provided with clear information
on the nature of and rationale behind the course. In addition, clear information is provided on the:
a. entry requirements (if any);
b. course outline;
c. minimum course length and dates;
d. number of hours taught face-to-face, and number and nature of teaching practice and observation sessions and other services offered;
e. number of hours of self-study: homework, assignments, computer-assisted study (e.g. online modules);
f. dates of closure and holidays;
g. admission and placement procedures;
h. size and make-up of groups, including age or any other restrictions;
i. use of classes for teaching practice purposes;
j. requirements in relation to attendance and assignments;
k. assessment criteria and procedures, reporting and certification;
l. terms and conditions of business, including cancellation regulations and charges.
3. Before enrolment, course participants or their representatives are given full and clear details concerning the contract, including exact course fees and the rights of each party, in the event of withdrawal or exclusion.
4. All prices mentioned in advertising and other publicity material or information specify clearly which services and goods are included in the price and which are available at additional cost. The cost of public examinations where courses aim to prepare course participants for these should be specified. Any additional taxes that may be payable are also specified.
5. All diplomas and certificates of any kind issued to course participants contain accurate statements of fact, and, if such certification is based on examinations or tests, these are valid and soundly administered.
6. In the case of course participants under the age of 18 on full-time and/or residential courses, clear information is provided to parents/guardians about supervision arrangements and the qualifications of supervisory staff.
7. The EAQUALS logo, name, signs and charters are used according to the guidelines established by EAQUALS on the institution's premises, on websites and in printed publicity and in other printed documents

APPENDIX B
EAQUALS Special Interest Project (SIP)
Project Summary

Provisional Title	Qualitative Research	
Aim / Outcome (c 50 words)	The core aims of the Qualitative Research SIP are: - To propose processes for the development of practical qualitative research techniques for instructional and institutional development - To support educational managers in promoting classroom research with their teachers to enhance teaching and learning on a day-to-day basis - To collect and collate qualitative data on the teaching and learning of languages from a variety of instructional contexts - To analyze and evaluate collated research data and to share collective know-how with all EAQUALS members The SIP will also provide a discussion and exchange forum for simple, practical qualitative research techniques to improve internal communications, get feedback, gauge effectiveness of approaches and processes.	
Coordinator	**Name:** Oya Başaran, Istanbul Bilgi University	**Email:** oyabasaran@bilgi.edu.tr
Rapporteur	**Name:** Deniz Kurtoglu Eken, Sabancı University	**Email:** kurtoglueken@sabanciuniv.edu
Other EAQUALS Members already interested	**Names:** Laura Muresan (QUEST) Brian North (Chair)	**Emails if known:** Laura.Muresan@eaquals.org bnorth@eaquals.org
Probable Timescale (6, 12, 24 months)	12-18 months	
Pre-workshop task for SIP members	Please see Section (i), Step 1 (a) and (b) and the 'Ongoing' section below.	
Provisional Project Description (max half a page please)	**i) Processes** **Step 1**	

	a) Consultation with all QR-SIP members on the proposed Project Summary
	b) Drawing up a questionnaire for all EAQUALS members in order to identify their research preferences, interests and needs
	c) Administering the questionnaire with all EAQUALS members
	d) Collating and reporting the findings
	Step 2
	Collectively identifying and agreeing on key research area from the report
	Step 3
	a) Deciding on the research process
	b) Implementation
	c) Evaluation
	Ongoing
	Work on the QR-SIP Research Handbook and regularly consult SIP members; regularly inform all members of the work in progress.
	ii) Outcomes
	a) The development of a QR – **Handbook** for institutional use (process-oriented outcome)
	b) The sharing of collective **know-how** on research-driven instructional and institutional development
	c) The development of a **network** which diagnoses and addresses immediate research needs of member institutions

Date: 24 August 2007

APPENDIX C

EAQUALS SIG PROJECT QUALITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Students,

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out about your perceptions of 'quality' in a language school with a view to contributing to the improvement of language teaching and learning processes.

Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept confidential. The collation and analysis of your responses will be carried out by a Special Interest Project Group consisting of a multinational team of language education professionals.

Thank you for your participation.

1. What is one key word that comes to your mind when you hear the word 'quality'?

2. Look at the factors again and decide on 3 most important factors that contribute to the quality of a language school and 3 least important factors. Please tick the relevant columns.

Factors	Please tick three **most** important	Please tick three **least** important
Reputation of school		
Teachers		
Ways of teaching		
Other students		
Classroms		

Computers		
Books and materials		
Library		
Extra-curricular activities		
Academic advising		
Administrative support		
Social/Cultural activities		
Cafeteria		
Cost of course		
Time of class		
Length of course		

Ease of access to school		
Any other factors? Please specify.		

3. What is a question you might want to ask to reassure yourself of the quality of the courses offered by the school?

APPENDIX D

Quality Assurance Survey Questions

Dear Colleagues,

This survey is part of my doctoral research study which aims to investigate the kind of quality assurance (QA) processes and procedures that exist in English Language teaching institutions in the Turkish higher educational context, how these processes are perceived by managers and teachers and what they believe that is needed for the improvement of the quality of their provisions.

The findings from this study will be compiled into a framework for QA for English Language programs in Turkish higher education. The criteria included in this QA framework may also help establish the standards for a national accreditation scheme for language teaching institutions in Turkey.

Please fill in the questionnaire below and submit it at your earliest convenience to: **oyabasaran@sabanciuniv.edu.tr**. Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of this research. Reports on the survey will be shared with all informants in Spring, 2012.

Filling in the questionnaire will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and invaluable contribution.

Oya Başaran

General Information

Your institution is part of a:

a). Public University
b). Private University
c). Other (please specify):

The medium of education in your university is:

a). Turkish
b). English
c). For some faculties/departments/programs Turkish, for others English

The preparatory English program is:

a). Compulsory for all programs if the students do not have the required level of English proficiency

b). Only required for English medium departments

c) Optional

What is the required CEFR level of proficiency at the end of the preparatory English program?

a). B1

b). B2

c). C1

d). C2

Approximately how many students do you have in a year:

a). Up to 500

b). Up to 1000

c). Up to 2000

d). over 2000

e). over 3000

How many administrative staff members (eg: secretary, IT support) work in the preparatory program:

a). Up to 5

b). Up to 10

c). Up to 20

d). Other (please specify):

How many instructors work in your program:

a). Up to 25

b). Up to 50

c). Up to 100

d). over 100

e). other (please specify):

Quality Assurance (QA) Processes in your institution

Is there a written quality assurance policy statement in your University?

a). Yes, there is.

b). No, there isn't.

c). May be there is but I am not aware of it.

Are there quality related statements in the curriculum documents of your program?

a). Yes, there are.

b). No, there aren't.

c). May be there is but I am not aware of them.

What kinds of QA processes exist in the university in general?
   (*Please choose all relevant options*)
    a). There is a QA steering committee appointed by the Rector.
    b). There is one contact person in each faculty/department/program in charge of QA.
    c).There is a general QA handbook specifying standards and processes for all
    faculties/department/programs.
    d). Annual documents are prepared for annual YOK inspections when required by the
    Rector.
  e). Regular workshops and training sessions are carried out with all staff members to
  ensure quality.
    f). Only senior level managers are aware of QA processes in the university.
    g). The Rector and the steering committee make QA decisions in consultation with
  senior level managers.
    h). Students are part of the QA processes and decisions are given in consultation with
  them.
    ı). QA is not a requirement in the preparatory English program.
    j). There is a YOK (Higher Education Council) mandated committee called ADEK
    (Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement Committee) in every university.
    k). Other (please specify):

What kinds of QA systems and procedures exist specifically in your program/department?
   (*Please tick all relevant options and if you think they are effective or not*)

ASPECT	TICK IF EXISTS	IF YES, HOW EFFECTIVE Very Not Effective Effective 4 3 2 1
Regular internal self-evaluation of all curriculum aspects		
Student evaluation surveys		
Teacher evaluation surveys		
Continuous improvement of curriculum		
Pre and/or in-service training and development programs for teachers		

Regular focus group meetings with students		
Periodic external inspections		
Regular feedback and evaluation meetings with all staff		
Supervisory lesson observations		
Peer and/or video observations		
Performance review		
A strategic plan		
Follow-up of students' performances in their faculties		
Other:		

What impact do you believe QA processes may have on the improvement of language learning? (please tick all that apply)
  a). The success rate in the proficiency exam increases.
  b). Faculty is happier with the language level of their students who study in
      the preparatory English program.
  c). Teachers are motivated to improve their teaching.
  d) Cooperation and commitment among staff increases.
  e). Absenteeism rates of students decreases.
  f). Student satisfaction rates improve.
  g). Staff satisfaction rates improve.
  h). Student numbers increase.
  i). Staff turn-over drop down.
  j). Other (please specify):

Perceptions and Expectations
How would you define quality in your educational context? (*please choose all that represent your views*)
  a. Quality is reliable assessment procedures, high level of language attainment.
  b). Quality is state-of the-art infra structure in the school and good resources.
  c). Quality is motivated teachers and effective teaching.
  d). Quality is assuring value for money in the services provided for the students.

e). Quality is continuous improvement of curriculum and resources.

f). Quality is continuous improvement of teacher performance.

g). Quality is satisfied staff members and students.

h). Quality is transparency of management.

i). All of the above

j). Other (please specify):

What kinds of QA processes will help improve teaching in your program?

a). Orientation program for new teachers

b). In-service teacher training programs

c). A well defined and reliable testing system

d). Fair payment and fringe benefits for staff

e). High technological infra-structure

f). Good course books and supplementary materials

g). Well-equipped classrooms

h) Motivated students with high university entrance scores

i). Effective leadership from top management

j). Well-defined and realistic level/course objectives and learning outcomes

k). A written curriculum and weekly syllabus

l). A fair and objective performance review system for teachers

m). Internal evaluation and review of academic management

n). Physical space allocated especially for teachers (teacher rooms, coffee room, etc)

o). Socializing facilities and social activities

p). An environment conducive to learning

q). Other (please specify):

What kinds of QA processes will help improve students' learning in your program?

a). Orientation programs for new coming students

b). A well-defined and reliable testing system

c). Scholarships and rewards for successful students

d). High technological infra-structure

e). Good course books and supplementary materials

f). Well-equipped classrooms

g). Motivated classmates

h). Effective leadership from top management

i). Well-defined objectives and learning outcomes

j). A written curriculum and weekly syllabus

k). Well-qualified and up-to-date teachers

l). Internal evaluation and review of curriculum and syllabuses

m). Campus and accommodation facilities conducive to learning

n). Counseling services

o). Other (please specify):

16). **Please tick the items below according to their order of importance, (1) the most important, (2) important, (3) not important, (4) the least important), that should be included in the National Standards for English Language Teaching in Turkey. Please add any other criteria that you believe needs to be added to the list.**

ASPECT	1	2	3	4
MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION				
Well-defined organizational structure				
Transparent record keeping and documentation				
Procedures for course organization and administration				
Procedures for student recruitment and enrolment				
Accessible and accurate information about all procedures				
Policy and procedures to deal with student complaints and appeals				
FACULTY				
Teaching staff with adequate qualifications and competencies				
Recruitment policy and procedures				
Contracts specifying terms and conditions				
Training and professional development opportunities				
Work ethics				
Policy and procedures for performance review				

CURRICULUM				
Shared goals and objectives				
Teaching activities and materials				
Assessment and evaluation				
Course and level descriptions				
Syllabuses				
Teaching equipment and resources				
Feedback and evaluation				
PREMISES				
Teaching and study facilities				
Policy and procedures for health and security				
Comfortable and sufficiently equipped work spaces				
Common areas for socializing and interaction				
STUDENT SERVICES				
Policy and procedures for student enrolment and placement				
New student orientation				
Social and recreational activities				
Counseling				
PROGRAM REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT				
Policy and procedures for on-going course review and evaluation				
Procedures for regular self-assessment				

ASPECT	1	2	3	4
Staff and student feedback				
Support and guidance for teachers				

17). What, in your view/experience, are 3 essential features of QA in an English language preparatory program?

18). Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding your views on QA in preparatory programs?

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions for instructors

1. What are the existing systems/procedures that most effectively help improve and assure quality in your educational context?

2. According to you, what is the most important procedure/system that needs to be present/implemented in a language department/program in order to improve the effectiveness of instruction and learning?

3. What does "quality in language education" mean for you? How would you define it?

4. Anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX Fa

Instructor Interview Transcripts

First Question Answers: What are existing systems or procedures that most effectively improve and assure quality in the educational institution/context:

I1: Oya, um, I thought about this and I thought that I don't really know. I only know what doesn't. I think that the existing procedures, like the performance review, for example, don't actually help. But I think some of the informal procedures that we have actually do help. Because I think assuring quality in education is a very very difficult thing, and you can't do it with a stick, actually. So I think for example the developmental observations – because they're not meant to be a stick – they're meant to help - that can help us to assure quality. Also things like the In-SeTs that we have, because we learn from each other in them, I think that can help assure quality. And similar things, when we have workshops, when we collaborate with each other – I think those types of things help us.

I2: Well, my observation has been I always felt since I started to work in my institution, that this era we are in, actually we are in an advantageous position in terms of integrating the technology and devices into our teaching. It can enable the teacher to use different channels and means of expressing or introducing material and knowledge, and it can also promote self-study, self-improvement, and indepence – autonomous learning. This and that. As long as you can motivate the students to get involved in these things. ... Actually some of our staff members look critically at what we are doing and say we are in a way doing too much for the students. Preparing most of things for them, and in a way spoon-feeding them. But all of these things that we have provided for them, like let's say vocab companions on SUCourse, really prove useful. And another example is our learning programs that include content summary items in a way, and vocabulary lists again, and objectives. And students started using these almost every day and they hold on to them and they feel they can tick things now, they've acquired or achieved or accomplished. So that's a good thing too.

I3: That I believe is the dynamics of the institution and the way teachers cooperate with each other. What I mean is, there is a strong link between, or strong liaison between different levels of the institution which helps improve, because they are all the time constantly following what is going on at different levels and different levels of duty. And moreover the institution places a lot of emphasis on personal development and this is supported by conferences, and by different teachers attending different conferences, which is promoted and encouraged. And it's a very open institution where all teachers find the opportunity to share views through

different means like workshops, swap-shops, sending emails to each other, or talk over lunch which helps people to be updated.

I4: in our section we have a great many teams of dedicated quality professionals working to continually improve and update all systems and procedures. Just as one example, the curriculum groups are constantly working to update – nothing is ever settled and finished. We know that we run a very high quality institution, but there's always room for improvement and adaptation. I think that works particularly well here because people choose to be members of these teams. They have genuine ownership of their tasks and true commitment to the tasks, not because they've been told to do anything. And their work is trusted and respected which leads to motivation and continued high quality out-put. I think that's the most important thing to me.

I5: …Collaboration, I would say group work, I would say teamwork. Teamwork, collaboration. Because although it's not a requirement, but it exists. And so we get together, we prepare – yani, naturally, with a few or a couple of colleagues of mine, we prepare our course outlines together, we exchange materials, we discuss problems that emerge in classrooms and we try to find solutions to them. We have periodic meetings – maybe not very frequently, but at the end and at the beginning of each semester. So these kind of help us share both good and – things that are working and things don't work. Um, what else... and questioning maybe ourselves continuously.

I6: I think the training programs we have in our context provide us with the opportunity to enhance, to ensure quality. And the expertise we have, therefore the meetings – because we have a lot of very experienced instructors in our program, and when we have meetings we actually, usually we can't have meetings every week because of time constraint, but still, when we do have a meeting, we have the opportunity to exchange ideas, we share among the group how we do certain – how we implement certain texts in the classroom and when we are coping with the problems, we suggest strategies to cope with the issues that come up in the classroom. So I learn a lot, personally speaking, from the expertise and from the programs that are run in our institution. And thirdly, maybe the observations we have. Because the feedback we have, you know, received at the end of the – after the observation helps us have a different perspective – the perspective of the outsider related to the lesson we had, so it is also a big opportunity for us to assure quality in our context.

I7: *Lots of them at the moment, of which the following is a sample.*

At the institutional level we have developmental observations which aim to get us thinking about various aspects of our teaching. In addition, we set both academic and personal targets every year, which we discuss with the Director and which I feel help me focus on certain aspects of

my teaching which I think may be beneficial to students. Finally, we are constantly having teacher education/discussion/workshop sessions which I know have helped me in my profession and the benefits of which have hopefully filtered down to my students. (Wish I could attend more of them)

At the group level, we have compiled our own objectives and written our own syllabuses based on discussions within the group and consultations with experts in the field, and these are constantly being revisited – especially the syllabus – with the aim of presenting a higher quality course to the students, taking their needs and abilities into account.

We also have standardization sessions in which issues of quality of students' products may reflect issues of quality in the teaching. I have learnt a lot from my colleagues in these sessions which I have later put into practice in the classroom. Related to this, we also have meetings to discuss the various common tasks we do and again, these discussions have helped me in my teaching and presumably the students in their learning.

Finally, student evaluations of the course also assist me in trying to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

I8: *Probably everything we do here are effective in improving an assuring quality in my institution I honestly cannot point out one that is most effective since I don't know if you mean improving the conditions or the instruction.*

If, for effectiveness of instruction, I can say it is the well structured and organized curriculum and well-qualified, experienced teachers.

I9: Okay, so one of the existing procedures that most effectively helps improve and assure quality in my institutional context is the room for self-improvement. I know that the school trusts me and gives me opportunities that I can improve myself. For example, we can attend conferences; we can prepare presentations and present those papers around the world. SO it really helps me improve myself, and I feel more self-confident as a teacher, I can reflect that in class.

The other thing is tutorials. I think tutorials really help students in terms of their writing. And it also helps the teachers as well as the students to bond as well. Because we have not only have writing tutorials, but also get to know tutorials, goal-setting tutorials – and those really help us, the teachers and the students, kind of bond together and learn from each other. I think that's really very valuable.

I10: In this institution, it seems to me that recruit is the first assurance of quality because experience, qualifications, ability or competence in English seem to be really high here. I think that's the first stage of assuring quality. After that, the number of people involved in any kind of project or change has to effect quality, as a whole is more than the sum of its parts. Group intelligence can be very powerful. And of course most of the changes made here are based on quite extensive research both from the literature and from the people who are involved here.

APPENDIX Fb

Instructor Interview Transcripts

Second Question: What do the Instructors think should be implemented to better assure quality?

I1: Um, Since I don't really know – as I said before – I can't really put my finger on it, but I have a few ideas. I think that first of all you need to inspire people, and to inspire them they need freedom, but also – ah, I've just remembered- maybe mentoring can actually help, because that way you're guiding but you're not doing it in a very strict, controlling kind of way. You're allowing the person to find their own way and you're sort of helping them along the path.

I2: Um, I feel we have been going towards a more structured teaching, in a way, and we are sort of going towards the teacher-oriented in a way and perhaps some years ago we were at the other end of the spectrum. But we need to find the balance between these two. ... Students need to get more involved and it is themselves that they can do something in terms of learning. Language learning is not learning mathematics or teaching mathematics. We need to involve them more, probably, in projects, tasks, presentations and such. We used to do them more, in the past, and we are going towards the other end these days, so we need a balance between dependentness and autonomy and responsibility.

13: To me, that is needs-analysis of the students, which is rather than implementing a program based on the institution's beliefs, but rather having student profile analyzed carefully and modify or alter needs as necessary. A lot of investment is made in book publishing. That's a fact. But still, there are changes in the society, there are changes in the population exam system which reflects itself in the student performance and student quality, if that is the correct word. To use the word 'quality' for a human being. But because of these needs- because of these changes, maybe we should be more careful with the way we implement our program as well. If the student profile is not the same as it was five years ago, it means we need to modify things according to the new group of students.

I4: Well I think here we've got a lot of different ways of gathering feedback about instructor performance. We've got student feedback, we've got developmental observations. ... I think that we could benefit from having a lot more of observations. I think a lot more peer observations could be a very positive step. I don't think that should be compulsory, because it doesn't work if it's compulsory. As a director, I tried to – before, as a novice director, to make

it compulsory and it didn't work. People didn't do it in the right spirit at all, I mean, they just ticked the boxes. But I believe in this institution there is a cooperative culture in which it could work if it were encouraged. In some way – I don't know how it could be encouraged. It would be nice.

I5: Reflection for both the teachers and the students. The students should reflect, and the teachers should reflect as well. And um, well as I stated for the first question, we do this occasionally, and um, and maybe not very systematically, but we do that. But maybe you can have this done systematically in an institution. But, um, but when such things are imposed on you – when it's top-down, such things don't work. (Answering follow-up about implementation:) It is difficult. I think it comes by age, it comes by experience. Yani, you should believe in the value of reflection. I think we have this non-systematic and voluntary kind of reflection here , and sharing and kind of action research, community or tradition here on this campus – we're lucky in that. But for an institution, or in an institution where there's a lot of inexperienced teachers, how you can do that is a question. You may have, yeah, training sessions maybe, to tell people about the value of reflection and how reflection can be done, but again – not making it a requirement, maybe. Because then it's like – people are reactive against such things.

I6: We have, to some extent the technology, online for example, but it doesn't include a lot regarding every aspect of teaching. School of Language. Uh, we have this online system where we actually upload the lessons we do in our classroom, the materials that we develop, but the thing is that there are usually exam practice type or the lessons that we prepare for the observations I assume, but I wish there were something regarding all the materials, all the texts, for example. Speaking of our context, EAP, Freshman English, I wish we had the chance to compare everything we do in the classroom because we do actually the same materials in the classroom and I'm sure we all implement in a different way and some of them might be - the activities might include things that I cannot think of on my own, so it would be – Sometimes we do talk, of course, because of again time constraints, sometimes we don't have the time to ask for more, and sometimes we may think that there's no need because it's very straightforward, you know, what the text entails or requires, but whenever we sometimes have a chat with our colleagues, we do see that there is always another perspective, there's always another way to do something. There is no end – there is endless, actually, ways of doing something, even if you do it for the … hundred time.

   (Cont. Regarding question of implementation) Good question. I don't think – I agree with you on that it doesn't have to be compulsory, yeah – why should be compulsory: a good question. But sometimes I don't want to cause extra work for my colleagues, so because when you actually especially, we are half-way through the course and things will get more hectic

soon because of the drafts and everything, and sometimes you don't want to disturb your colleagues. I know that they will never take it so – they will never see it as a, you know, extra thing to be done and they would very kindly accept – but it's difficult to go and ask someone every day about what he or she does. Certain thing, you know.

I7: *Difficult to mention just one, but if I had to it would be the in-house development sessions various aspects of teaching and learning.*

I8: *I think it is the motivation of teachers, motivated teachers can motivate the students which will result in better learning. That for me is the most important thing.*

I9: Um, according to me, what is the most important procedure that needs to be present? Uh, regarding the second question, at the moment the schedule we have is really very packed. There are lots of things we need to cover in class. So I need more room for creativity, for myself and for my students as well. There needs to be some room for creativity and discovery. I would love to do something extra in class to spice the lesson up, but really with the schedule we have it is not very possible. For example, they have short written assignment, longer written assignments, however the students cannot use their own ideas with those tasks. So I would love to see students more – students really need to contribute to class using their own ideas, their own creativity. They need to reflect more, and contribute to the class atmosphere with their creativity. That's what we lack, I think. And it kind of creates and environment that is very limited for students, really.

I10: Question two, to improve or to maintain an institution's quality. I think there needs to be stability, and that is achieved first of all by trying to keep the teachers and the staff that you've got. This means a high level of job security – not 100%, because that can be too – people taking their jobs for granted – but a high level nonetheless, and for the same reason, the staff need to be working – have good working conditions. Because if there's a place or an institution down the street that's offering better pay, better holidays etcetera, sooner or later you're going to lose your staff, or your best staff to them. Working conditions also obviously include the amount of stimulation, sense of achievement created, so people have to feel that they and the institution is maintaining its quality or improving it as well. Another way to improve quality is to change the focus of what you're trying to achieve quality in. So if you already get extremely good student results, for example, then you might want to shift your focus to look at other aspects of your program or your results. Or you can set yourself new targets, uh, in the areas you've already been working on.

APPENDIX Fc

Instructor Interview Transcripts

Third Question: What does Quality language education/Quality in language instruction mean to you? How would you describe it?

I1: I think it means for me that the students learn and improve according to their needs .That the language that we're helping them learn is what they will need in the near future. Not in the very distant future, but in the near future. And ..

O: So, catering for their needs? Would you say that?

I1: That's right. And seeing an improvement along that pathway. And also, it's not just – because we're in an academic context here, it's maybe not just language that we're talking about, it's not the actual language itself, but maybe it's the skills and habits that you need to learn the language. So if I can see an improvement in all of those areas, then to me it means that quality is being assured.

I2: Quality in language education in my opinion should overlap with the expectations the target languge community's needs and such, as long as you prepare the students to the community and environments they are going to be struggling or trying to cope with, or integrate or whatever. If they can do them effectively, they the quality must be there already, I feel.

I3: Uh, quality in education? Well there are two aspects of this. Quality, as in character, feature of something, or as in superiority. Superiority is a very subjective term and it may mean very different to different people in different contexts. I guess in our context quality means for us to prepare students for freshman courses with an appropriate level of academic English and some certain level of knowledge that is expected to be known by them in their faculty. And we, I think, acknowledge this as quality. And also I would like to add, well, in the age of technology maybe books need to be updated more often rather than being bulk-copied, because some information in the books may go quite not valid anymore because of changes in the world- global world, technology and other issues. So they should be able to be updates on semester basis, maybe. Uh, use of technology could be more emphasized, using laptops or mobile phones embedded into language learning can be more focused on. Learning environment, physical environment, may need to be revised. And one more important thing is as teachers I think, we may forget how difficult it is to learn a language, a new language,

especially when it is in academic context. I think I would, if possible, provide teachers with another language-learning program, on of course, optional basis, voluntary basis, but to remember as teachers how challenging it is to learn another language because sometimes when we forget the perspective we can be a little harsh on our students. Thank you very much.

I4: Oh, all sorts of things. Being a well trained and knowledgeable and experienced professional; an atmosphere of mutual respect between instructor and student. I think a collegial atmosphere and structure in the lessons, rather than a careless one, regarding one's students as one's colleagues not as one's charges. I think after the basic levels of professional knowledge and experience and so forth, it all comes down to rapport and realizing that we share goals. And my goal is to get my students to learn the things they have to get on the course, and their goal is the same. And so therefore we can work together with a positive spirit. … Working according to international standards obviously helps. Regarding each other as equals and it's very very good that we work so closely with them. It means that we're not out on a limb, it means that we're aware of what's going on and of global standards and benchmarks. The frequent opportunity for developmental seminars and training and conference attendance is also very very positive. Like the comments I made about peer observation earlier, it only works if it's voluntary, much the same as our students attending our lessons – it only works if it's voluntary and a big burden of attendance grades. That's it.

I5: … To call a program a 'quality' program, or a successful program, I would look at whether the students were able to speak, or use the language or not. Um. And um-

O: So in a way, if you have good results –

I5: But not numeric, yani – not high scores in proficiency exams and stuff. I would look at the – I would want to look at the practical side of it, the practice.

O: But how would you measure that?

I5: Ah, very difficult. (laughs). Qualitative exams, maybe – maybe not multiple choice ones, but um,.

O: So looking at students' performances to see whether the targets are met or not.

I5: Yes, and if the students – in addition to that, if the program has been successful in making the students see that language is an es- that foreign language is an essential part of this century and the future, for their future, um, I think that is a successful quality in language education, because many students come out of intensive language programs hating the language they're learning, so I think that's also part of quality.

I6: Quality means, I think, awareness to me. Awareness and trying your best to put that into practice. Because you may be aware of what is to be done, but maybe sometimes you don't think that every day you have to do it in that way. Or sometimes you may just, you know, get a little bit lazy and try to do things in a very traditional way. Not trying to enhance yourself. There is a great temptation, especially when the students are not that motivated – they don't actually make you feel motivated to do something different- but I guess we have to – In order to be motivated, ourselves I mean – we have to try to be aware of the problems we have, to be sorted out regarding the classroom atmosphere, and we have to try to find a solution – even if they are not easy sometimes, the solutions to the problems. But we have to try to develop a certain method to address our students' needs.

O: Good, okay, so in other words you personally, to enhance your instruction, to improve your instruction, you believe in awareness, to learn more, to develop professionally, and also to cater for the students' needs. What about on a more macro-institutional level? What would say quality assurance is? I mean what your understanding of quality assurance is in the institution you work. …Or your expectation, if they want to assure quality, what do you think?

I6: The teachers should know… should be – I don't want to use 'aware' again, but when we go to the classroom we should have an aim in our mind. We shouldn't be teaching the material, we should be teaching the students. So if we know-

O: So again student centeredness?

I6: Exactly. And sharing, actually. We have to keep questioning why we are doing a certain thing in a certain way, and what's the outcome.

I7: *Good quality is the ability to deliver courses in ways that meet the needs of a student, exploit the capabilities that s/he possesses and motivate the student to the fullest, in order to achieve the goals - and beyond - s/he has in mind as far as learning the language is concerned*

I8: *It really means seeing students use the language you are teaching at the end of the teaching period.*

I9: Um, what does quality in language education mean for me? I think without focusing on whole person education we cannot really achieve quality, because I attach so much importance to lowering the affective filter because without lowering the affective filter, we cannot teach them anything. And um, I think this is very important, building self-confidence, building self-awareness. Raising awareness of the world around them. These are very important for me as a teacher. And materials that we use, they are also very important. I

believe in the value of content-based instruction so these are important. So quality in language education? Quality means individuals for me. Without focusing on the individuals, it's like, you know the song 'we don't need no education' and that song reads 'we don't need no education/ teacher leave those kids alone'. It says 'it's another brick on the wall' and I personally think without focusing on the physical and psychological walls around the individuals we cannot really teach them anything. So focusing on the individual matters for me. We should first of all educate the individual, raise awareness of self-awareness, and then we can teach something to that individual. Um, as I said before, materials are also important, but institutions' attitude towards teachers is also very important and here I am very content with it because I feel that I'm trusted as a teacher, I know that the school, the institution always supports me, there is always room for self-improvement, which I'm very happy with. Um...

I9: ..And anything else I'd like to add? Again I think without focusing on whole person, education - I think education is a whole; you cannot really separate it – if you focus on the whole, then you can have the quality you would like to have.

I10: For me, quality in education – question three – is about doing your best to achieve what you set out to achieve. Different institutions have different goals in education, in terms of learning or in terms of method, so they have to prioritize those and decide how they're going to achieve those and how they're going to evaluate how much they've achieved those. So communication and transparency of aims and achievement is a key aspect.

APPENDIX G

Questions for the coordinators of QA initiatives in accredited language programs

1. What was the reason of your application for accreditation? Was it a requirement of the university board? Why did you choose EAQUALS/CEA?

2. Please briefly tell how you prepared for accreditation? What were your major challenges during this preparation?

3. What are the novel QA processes that you needed to implement in order to meet the required standards for accreditation?

4. How much support and involvement you have got from instructors and students during the preparation process?

5. How would you define quality in language education? What does it mean for you?

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX H

SURVEY DATA – MANAGERS

n = 64   Total Completed Survey: 30 (46.9%)

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1. For each item, please choose the appropriate response from the drop-down menus.

My institution is part of a...university

	Public	Private	Other	Response
Options	43.8% (28)	53.1% (34)	3.1% (2)	64

The medium of instruction in my university is...

	Turkish	English	For some Turkish, for others English	Response
Options	14.1% (9)	39.1% (25)	46.9% (30)	64

The preparatory English program is...

	Compulsory for all programs	Compulsory for English medium departments	Optional	Response
Options	34.4% (22)	62.5% (40)	3.1% (2)	64

My position

	Manager	Teacher	Response
Options	70.3% (45)	29.7% (19)	64

We have approximately...students in a year

Up to 500	Up to 1000	Up to 2000	Over 2000	Over 3000	Response
26.6% (17)	45.3% (29)	15.6% (10)	7.8% (5)	4.7% (3)	64

The required CEFR level at the end of the preparatory program is...

	B1	B2	C1	C2	Response
Options	23.4% (15)	64.1% (41)	10.9% (7)	1.6% (1)	64

There are...instructors working in our program

Up to 25	Up to 50	Up to 100	Over 100	Other	Response
14.1% (9)	40.6% (26)	31.3% (20)	10.9% (7)	3.1% (2)	64

Any comments on your responses above?

- We have 57 instructors working in our preparatory programme.
- All the instructors teach between 28 or 30 hours in a week including the manager and the asst. managers.
- I don't think I know if B2 is the equivalent of 60 out of 100 Needs correcting I guess
- Our institution is a foundation university

2. For each item, please choose the appropriate response from the drop-down menus.

Is there a written quality assurance (QA) statement in your University?

	Yes, there is.	No, there isn't.	Not sure.	Response
Options	46.2% (18)	33.3% (13)	20.5% (8)	39

Are there quality related statements in the curriculum documents of your program?

	Yes, there are.	No, there aren't.	Response
Options	66.7% (26)	33.3% (13)	39

3. What kinds of QA processes exist in the university in general? Please tick all relevant choices.

	Response Percent	Count
* There is a QA steering committee appointed by the Rector.	43.6%	17
* There is one contact person in each faculty/department/ program in charge of QA.	38.5%	15
* There is a general QA handbook specifying standards and processes for all faculties/department/programs.	33.3%	13
* Annual documents are prepared for annual YOK inspections when required by the Rector.	43.6%	17
* Regular workshops and training sessions are carried out with all staff members to ensure quality.	59.0%	23
* Only senior level managers are aware of QA processes in the university.	33.3%	13
* The Rector and the steering committee make QA decisions in consultation with senior level managers.	38.5%	15
* Students are part of the QA processes and decisions are given in consultation with them.	10.3%	4
* QA is not a requirement in the preparatory English program.	23.1%	9
* There is a YOK (Higher Education Council) mandated committee called ADEK (Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement Committee) in every university.	35.9%	14
	7.7%	3

- We have an assessing unit in our Prep Program; but, we do it informally since we are not a high school.
- On item 5 above, "workshops and training sessions" should be replaced with "questionnaires" for my institution.

4. What kinds of QA systems and procedures exist specifically in your program/department? Please indicate the effectiveness of each or tick Not Applicable (N/A) if it does not exist.

	Very effective	Effective	Not very effective	Not effective at all	N/A		Response
* Regular internal self-evaluation of all curriculum aspects	25.6% (10)	43.6% (17)	17.9% (7)	2.6% (1)	10.3% (4)	3.03	39
* Student evaluation surveys	30.8% (12)	41.0% (16)	17.9% (7)	2.6% (1)	7.7% (3)	3.08	39
* Teacher evaluation surveys	28.2% (11)	35.9% (14)	23.1% (9)	0.0% (0)	12.8% (5)	3.06	39
* Continuous improvement of curriculum	38.5% (15)	43.6% (17)	15.4% (6)	0.0% (0)	2.6% (1)	3.24	39
* Pre and/or in-service training and development programs for teachers	35.9% (14)	35.9% (14)	23.1% (9)	0.0% (0)	5.1% (2)	3.14	39
* Regular focus group meetings with students	23.1% (9)	25.6% (10)	25.6% (10)	5.1% (2)	20.5% (8)	2.84	39
* Periodic external inspections	12.8% (5)	30.8% (12)	17.9% (7)	10.3% (4)	28.2% (11)	2.64	39
* Regular feedback and evaluation meetings with all staff	33.3% (13)	48.7% (19)	10.3% (4)	5.1% (2)	2.6% (1)	3.13	39
* Supervisory lesson obs.	20.5% (8)	23.1% (9)	28.2% (11)	10.3% (4)	17.9% (7)	2.66	39

* Peer and/or video observations	15.4% (6)	25.6% (10)	25.6% (10)	12.8% (5)	20.5% (8)	2.55	39
* Performance review	20.5% (8)	33.3% (13)	17.9% (7)	5.1% (2)	23.1% (9)	2.90	39
* A strategic plan	17.9% (7)	48.7% (19)	12.8% (5)	5.1% (2)	15.4% (6)	2.94	39
* Follow-up of students' performances in their faculties	15.4% (6)	30.8% (12)	30.8% (12)	10.3% (4)	12.8% (5)	2.59	39

5. What impact do you believe QA processes may have on the improvement of language learning? Please tick all relevant choices.

	Response Percent	Count
* The success rate in the proficiency exam increases.	79.5%	31
* Faculty is happier with the language level of their students who study in the preparatory English program.	61.5%	24
* Teachers are motivated to improve their teaching.	87.2%	34
* Cooperation and commitment among staff increases.	76.9%	30
* Absenteeism rates of students decrease.	35.9%	14
* Student satisfaction rates improve.	64.1%	25
* Staff satisfaction rates improve.	71.8%	28
* Student numbers increase.	33.3%	13
* Staff turn-over decreases.	33.3%	13

Other (please specify)

- That kind of a process will certainly bring extra work to teachers. Considering that instructors already have a lot of extra work to do in addition to their class hours, this process may indeed become painful and lose its efficiency.
- Standardization in teaching, learning and assessment improves.
- QA is to be encouraged at all levels of FLT in regard to institutional expectations and staff development.

6. How would you define quality in your educational context? Please choose all that represent your views.

	Response Percent	Count
* Quality is reliable assessment procedures, high level of language attainment.	54.5%	18
* Quality is state-of the-art infra structure in the school and good resources.	36.4%	12
* Quality is motivated teachers and effective teaching.	69.7%	23
* Quality is assuring value for money in the services provided for the students.	21.2%	7
* Quality is continuous improvement of curriculum and resources.	63.6%	21
* Quality is continuous improvement of teacher performance.	72.7%	24
* Quality is satisfied staff members and students.	54.5%	18
* Quality is transparency of management.	39.4%	13
* All of the above	42.4%	14

* Other (please specify)
Quality is cooperation among colleagues.

7. What kinds of QA processes will help improve teaching in your program? Please indicate ONLY those that your program does NOT currently have or you believe is/are not very effective.

	Response Percent	Count
* Orientation program for new teachers	45.5%	15
* In-service teacher training programs	39.4%	13
* A well defined and reliable testing system	48.5%	16

	Response Percent	Count
* Fair payment and fringe benefits for staff	45.5%	15
* High technological infra-structure	39.4%	13
* Good course books and supplementary materials	24.2%	8
* Well-equipped classrooms	39.4%	13
* Motivated students with high university entrance scores	48.5%	16
* Effective leadership from top management	42.4%	14
* Well-defined and realistic level/course objectives and learning outcomes	30.3%	10
* A written curriculum and weekly syllabus	30.3%	10
* A fair and objective performance review system for teachers	30.3%	10
* Internal evaluation and review of academic management	24.2%	8
* Physical space allocated especially for teachers (teacher rooms, coffee room, etc)	27.3%	9
* Socializing facilities and social activities	48.5%	16
* An environment conducive to learning	15.2%	5

Other (please specify

- Students have high university entrance scores but many are still not motivated English language learners.
- N/A
- The support provided by the Department teachers on the importance of English Language Learning. They should believe and make their students believe this.

8. What kinds of QA processes will help improve student learning in your program? Please indicate ONLY those that your program does NOT currently have or you believe is/are not very effective.

	Response Percent	Count
* Orientation programs for new students	48.5%	16
* A well-defined and reliable testing system	39.4%	13
* Scholarships and rewards for successful students	54.5%	18

* High technological infra-structure	48.5%	16
* Good course books and supplementary materials	24.2%	8
* Well-equipped classrooms	42.4%	14
* Motivated classmates	45.5%	15
* Effective leadership from top management	24.2%	8
* Well-defined objectives and learning outcomes	33.3%	11
* A written curriculum and weekly syllabus	18.2%	6
* Well-qualified and up-to-date teachers	36.4%	12
* Internal evaluation and review of curriculum and syllabuses	24.2%	8
* Campus and accommodation facilities conducive to learning	66.7%	22
* Counseling services	54.5%	18

Other (please specify)

- Enhancing Intrinsic motivation for their learning

9. Please tick the items below according to their order of importance that should be included in the National Standards for English Language Teaching in Turkey. Please add any other criteria that you believe needs to be added to the list.

	Very important	Important	Not that important	The least important	Rating
* Well-defined organizational structure	66.7% (22)	27.3% (9)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.61
* Transparent record keeping and documentation	48.5% (16)	42.4% (14)	6.1% (2)	3.0% (1)	3.36

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* Procedures for course organization and administration	42.4% (14)	51.5% (17)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.36
* Procedures for student recruitment and enrolment	30.3% (10)	60.6% (20)	9.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.21
* Accessible and accurate information about all procedures	63.6% (21)	21.2% (7)	15.2% (5)	0.0% (0)	3.48
* Policy and procedures to deal with student complaints and appeals	45.5% (15)	51.5% (17)	3.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.42
* Teaching staff with adequate qualifications and competencies	87.9% (29)	9.1% (3)	3.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.85
* Recruitment policy and procedures	60.6% (20)	33.3% (11)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.55
* Contracts specifying terms and conditions	36.4% (12)	51.5% (17)	12.1% (4)	0.0% (0)	3.24

* Training and professional development opportunities	75.8% (25)	21.2% (7)	3.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.73
* Work ethics	69.7% (23)	27.3% (9)	3.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.67
* Policy and procedures for performance review	60.6% (20)	36.4% (12)	3.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.58
* Shared curriculum goals and objectives	69.7% (23)	24.2% (8)	3.0% (1)	3.0% (1)	3.61
* Teaching activities and materials	63.6% (21)	27.3% (9)	9.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.55
*Assessment and evaluation	72.7% (24)	21.2% (7)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.67
* Course and level descriptions	54.5% (18)	33.3% (11)	12.1% (4)	0.0% (0)	3.42
* Syllabuses	63.6% (21)	33.3% (11)	3.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.61
* Teaching equipment and resources	54.5% (18)	42.4% (14)	3.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.52
* Feedback and					

Evaluation	69.7% (23)	24.2% (8)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.64

* Teaching and study

Facilities	66.7% (22)	27.3% (9)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.61

* Policy and

procedures for health

and security	30.3% (10)	57.6% (19)	12.1% (4)	0.0% (0)	3.18

* Comfortable and

sufficiently equipped

work spaces	45.5% (15)	48.5% (16)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.39

* Common areas for

socializing and

interaction	36.4% (12)	54.5% (18)	9.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.27

* Policy and procedures

for student enrolment

and placement	39.4% (13)	54.5% (18)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.33

* New student

Orientation	57.6% (19)	33.3% (11)	9.1% (3)	0.0% (0)	3.48

* Social and

recreational activities	36.4% (12)	54.5% (18)	9.1% (3)	0.0% 0)	3.27

* Counseling	54.5% (18)	39.4% (13)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.48

* Policy and procedures

for on-going course

review and evaluation	51.5% (17)	42.4% (14)	3.0% (1)	3.0% (1)	3.42

* Procedures for

regular self-assessment	51.5% (17)	45.5% (15)	3.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.48

* Staff and student

feedback	75.8% (25)	18.2% (6)	6.1% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.70

* Support and guidance

for teachers	78.8% (26)	18.2% (6)	3.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.76

Other (please specify)

I think all the above are equally importanty...

10. What in your view/experience are the 3 ESSENTIAL FEATURES of QA in an English preparatory program? (Also add any other comments you would like to make regarding your views on QA in English language preparatory programs.)

33 responses

- Curriculum/s prepared according to the course objectives well-qualified dedicated instructors reliable testing system and qualified testers
- Well-defined organizational structure - shared curriculum goals and objectives - counseling
- A solid program structure (curriculum, assessment, etc) Motivated teachers and learners Clearly written QA guidelines
- Teacher training Effective materials Effective assessment
- Orientation programs - Regular evaluation + Support - Training sessions/workshops
- Motivation of the teachers helping students to be autonomous learners
- The assessment in regards of the level and difficulty of the lesson
- Well defined and realistic set of goals and objectives, a reliable and valid assessment system 3. professionally well equipped teaching staff
- Fairness Transparency Dedication to learning and development
- Professional development Collaboration Feedback-both teachers and students

- I would say all the above again as I cannot separate them from one another.
- Well-defined goals -Regular check of what is being done and spotting if there are any weak points that should be worked on -Cooperation among, in our case, the rectorate, our managers and teachers
- Less teaching, more learning (Providing necessary skills to the learners to become independent / autonomous learners). The integration of all staffs in decision making process. Needs analysis!
- Trained Teachers, Teacher and Student Motivation Appropriate rules and regulations that meet institution's need in order to carry on an effective education Appropriate physical environment and a good support of the very top management
- Motivation-Teacher Satisfaction-curriculum
- FGFDGFDGFDG
- Training and professional development opportunities * Support and guidance for teachers and also students * Staff meeting in every week also student and staff feedback
- Student and teacher activities outside class - platform for communication - some incentives / rewards for teachers
- One, two, three
- Accountability and transparency 2. Well defined structure and procedures 3. Competency
- Training and professional development opportunities -Teaching activities and materials - Assessment and evaluation
- 1 Teacher Training 2 Suitable Medium 3Suitable Work Material and Equipment
- Well trained & qualified teachers Comfortable, well-equipped, hi-tech classrooms A shared understanding of goals
- 1 Facilities for teaching 2 Students with homogenous competence 3 Experienced and well-equipped teachers who are also satisfied moneywise.
- Teacher training programmes teachers' motivation in terms of working hours, course books, supplementary materials clear objectives, syllabus, curriculum guidelines
- Consistency between the objectives of the university and the prep program in terms of the expectations and outcomes of language teaching processes 2. Transparency and consistency in all administrative and educational processes 3. Setting not idealistic and/or imaginary but realistic goals for the program
- A written curriculum and weekly syllabus Assessment and Evaluation Curriculum goals and objectives
- Well- qualified Programme (including testing, material development, curriculum, syllabus, effective standardization ..) Well- qualified instructors Clear feedback and evaluation
- All the items above are really very important for teaching in prep-school
- On-going assessment 2. Up to date curriculum 3. Pre and in -service training of teachers
- Satisfied and happy students, teachers and related faculty members (departmental)
- Staff development and highly-qualified staff recruitment 2. Clear cut objectives in accordance with national curriculum defined in advance 3. Consistency among institutions' language teaching applications and a clear channel of communication

APPENDIX I

SURVEY DATA – INSTRUCTORS

n = 30   Total Completed Survey: 13 (43.3%)

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1. For each item, please choose the appropriate response from the drop-down menus.

My institution is part of a...university

	Public	Private	Other	Response
Options	0% (0)	100.0% (30)	0% (0)	30

The medium of instruction in my university is...

	Turkish	English	For some Turkish, for others English	Response
Options	0% (0)	86.7% (26)	13.3% (4)	30

The preparatory English program is...

	Compulsory for all programs	Compulsory for English medium departments	Optional	Response
Options	80.0% (24)	16.7% (5)	3.3% (1)	30

My position

	Manager	Teacher	Response

Options	0.0% (0)	100.0% (30)	30

We have approximately...students in a year

	Up to 500	Up to 1000	Up to 2000	Over 2000	Over 3000
	Response				
Options	23.3% (7)	26.7% (8)	33.3% (10)	13.3% (4)	3.3% (1)
	30				

The required CEFR level at the end of the preparatory program is...

	B1	B2	C1	C2	Response
Options	40.0% (12)	53.3% (16)	3.3% (1)	3.3% (1)	30

There are...instructors working in our program

	Up to 25	Up to 50	Up to 100	Over 100	Response
Options	0.0% (0)	20.0% (6)	73.3% (22)	6.7% (2)	30

Any comments on your responses above?

- Our students' exit is B1+
- My position is somewhere between the manager and the teachers.
- Some numbers can be different as I'm not sure of the exact number of students or teachers
- Are we asked about the no of sts in the prep. program or the whole university?
- Student numbers may vary slightly from year to year but a figure of about 650 is normal.

2. For each item, please choose the appropriate response from the drop-down menus.

Is there a written quality assurance (QA) statement in your University?

	Yes, there is.	No, there isn't.	Not sure.	Response
Options	58.8% (10)	11.8% (2)	29.4% (5)	17

Are there quality related statements in the curriculum documents of your program?

	Yes, there are.	No, there aren't.	Response
Options	70.6% (12)	29.4% (5)	17

Any comments on your responses above?

- I think, there should be quality related statements in the curriculum documents, but I don't konw certainly if there are any.
- There used to be QA in our previous university but in the past 2 years I'm not sure there is any which indicates that if there is I am not informed enough as a teacher.
- I don't know much about this really...
- What's a quality assurance statement?
- Curriculum documents have been inspired by the CEFRL and certain documents have been developed as a direct consequence of the European framework.

3. What kinds of QA processes exist in the university in general? Please tick all relevant choices.

	Response Percent
* There is a QA steering committee appointed by the Rector.	11.8%
* There is one contact person in each faculty/department/ program in charge of QA.	17.6%
* There is a general QA handbook specifying standards and processes for all faculties/department/programs.	23.5%
* Annual documents are prepared for annual YOK inspections when required by the Rector.	29.4%
* Regular workshops and training sessions are carried out with all staff members to ensure quality.	58.8%
* Only senior level managers are aware of QA processes in the university.	29.4%
* The Rector and the steering committee make QA decisions in consultation with senior level managers.	11.8%
* Students are part of the QA processes and decisions are given in	17.6%

consultation with them.

* QA is not a requirement in the preparatory English program.   5.9%

* There is a YOK (Higher Education Council) mandated committee   11.8%

called ADEK (Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement

Committee) in every university.

Other (please specify)   17.6%

- Do not have much info, sorry, but I can say several external inspectors have visited our institution for QA purposes, but actually I cannot see much difference. they made classroom observations randomly, had meetings with focus groups (teachers and coordinators), talked to some student focus groups and checked some official documents, I guess. their feedback on the equipment or physical conditions are somehow ignored, but only the feedback on observations and teaching are taken into consideration.
- I'm not really sure about the other items
- Our lessons are observed and performance evaluations are carried out on an occasional but regular basis. Access to management is available for students and parents if they feel the need to. Feedback is obtained on a regular basis on teaching (from students), curriculum and assessment.

4. What kinds of QA systems and procedures exist specifically in your program/department? Please indicate the effectiveness of each or tick Not Applicable (N/A) if it does not exist.

	Very effective	**Effective**	**Not very effective**	**Not effective at all**	**N/A**	**Rating**	**Response**
* Regular internal self-evaluation of all curriculum aspects	23.5% (4)	47.1% (8)	11.8% (2)	5.9% (1)	11.8% (2)	3.00	17
* Student evaluation surveys	5.9% (1)	29.4% (5)	35.3% (6)	29.4% (5)	0.0% (0)	2.12	17
* Teacher evaluation surveys	17.6% (3)	17.6% (3)	52.9% (9)	11.8% (2)	0.0% (0)	2.41	17

* Continuous improvement of curriculum	29.4% (5)	52.9% (9)	11.8% (2)	5.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.06	17
* Pre and/or in-service training and development programs for teachers	17.6% (3)	47.1% (8)	35.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2.82	17
* Regular focus group meetings with students	5.9% (1)	52.9% (9)	35.3% (6)	5.9% (1)	0.0% (0)	2.59	17
* Periodic external inspections	0.0% (0)	29.4% (5)	41.2% (7)	5.9% (1)	23.5% (4)	2.31	17
* Regular feedback and evaluation meetings with all staff	5.9% (1)	52.9% (9)	29.4% (5)	11.8% (2)	0.0% (0)	2.53	17
* Supervisory lesson observations	0.0% (0)	82.4% (14)	5.9% (1)	5.9% (1)	5.9% (1)	2.81	17
* Peer and/or video observations	0.0% (0)	47.1% (8)	23.5% (4)	11.8% (2)	17.6% (3)	2.43	17
* Performance review	5.9% (1)	17.6% (3)	47.1% (8)	23.5% (4)	5.9% (1)	2.06	17
* A strategic plan	11.8% (2)	29.4% (5)	35.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	23.5% (4)	2.69	17
* Follow-up of students' performances in their faculties	5.9% (1)	23.5% (4)	29.4% (5)	5.9% (1)	35.3% (6)	2.45	17

Other:

- You need an 'I don't know' option - or you shouldn't force us to answer. 'Follow-up of students' performances in their faculties' has led to some curriculum innovations but performances are so

dependent on a range of factors that we can hardly attribute them to the quality of English instruction (or lack thereof).

5. What impact do you believe QA processes may have on the improvement of language learning? Please tick all relevant choices.

	Response Percent	Count
* The success rate in the proficiency exam increases.	41.2%	7
* Faculty is happier with the language level of their students who study in the preparatory English program.	41.2%	7
* Teachers are motivated to improve their teaching.	52.9%	9
* Cooperation and commitment among staff increases.	58.8%	10
* Absenteeism rates of students decrease.	5.9%	1
* Student satisfaction rates improve.	58.8%	10
* Staff satisfaction rates improve.	52.9%	9
* Student numbers increase.	5.9%	1
* Staff turn-over decreases.	23.5%	4

Other (please specify)

- Faculties are never happy with the language level of sts who study in the prep programs.
- Depending on the burden that a QA process might put on the shoulders of the teachers it might be either something motivating or demotivating as the workload of the teachers in the private universities around the country is way above the world average and such a process might mean nightmare rather than a satisfaction. That's why the decision makers must know what's quality and what's actual work to be done and the motivational factors of the workers in their institutions.
- What about possible negative effects?!
- I'm not sure what you mean by QA processes if its developmental observations and teacher development programmes then some of these things are true if its performance management and financial incentives than I think it decreases job satisfaction, leads to competition between colleagues or people getting involved in things only to have something to put down on their assessment...but then not actually contributing very much to the work
- Ideally all the above mentioned processes should improve however, it may increase rivalry by creating competition between staff members as a result team spirit and harmony may be negatively affected.

6. How would you define quality in your educational context? Please choose all that represent your views.

	Response Percent	Count
* Quality is reliable assessment procedures, high level of language attainment.	42.9%	6
* Quality is state-of the-art infra structure in the school and good resources.	21.4%	3
* Quality is motivated teachers and effective teaching.	71.4%	10
* Quality is assuring value for money in the services provided for the students.	21.4%	3
* Quality is continuous improvement of curriculum and resources.	64.3%	9
* Quality is continuous improvement of teacher performance.	35.7%	5
* Quality is satisfied staff members and students.	64.3%	9
* Quality is transparency of management.	42.9%	6
* All of the above	21.4%	3
* Other (please specify)		

"All of the above" - rather a leading question, isn't it

7. What kinds of QA processes will help improve teaching in your program? Please indicate ONLY those that your program does NOT currently have or you believe is/are not very effective.

	Response Percent	Count
* Orientation program for new teachers	7.1%	1
* In-service teacher training programs	28.6%	4
* A well defined and reliable testing system	57.1%	8
* Fair payment and fringe benefits for staff	71.4%	10

* High technological infra-structure	64.3%	9
* Good course books and supplementary materials	64.3%	9
* Well-equipped classrooms	64.3%	9
* Motivated students with high university entrance scores	71.4%	10
* Effective leadership from top management	57.1%	8
* Well-defined and realistic level/course objectives and learning outcomes	42.9%	6
* A written curriculum and weekly syllabus	21.4%	3
* A fair and objective performance review system for teachers	50.0%	7
* Internal evaluation and review of academic management	42.9%	6
* Physical space allocated especially for teachers (teacher rooms, coffee room, etc)	50.0%	7
* Socializing facilities and social activities	50.0%	7
* An environment conducive to learning	50.0%	7

Other (please specify)

- Less emphasis on teacher popularity and more investigation and discussion of classroom practices.
- All are present in my work place:)

8. What kinds of QA processes will help improve student learning in your program? Please indicate ONLY those that your program does NOT currently have or you believe is/are not very effective.

	Response Percent	Count
* Orientation programs for new students	35.7%	5
* A well-defined and reliable testing system	42.9%	6
* Scholarships and rewards for successful students	50.0%	7
* High technological infra-structure	64.3%	9

* Good course books and supplementary materials	64.3%	9
* Well-equipped classrooms	64.3%	9
* Motivated classmates	100.0%	14
* Effective leadership from top management	35.7%	5
* Well-defined objectives and learning outcomes	21.4%	3
* A written curriculum and weekly syllabus	21.4%	3
* Well-qualified and up-to-date teachers	35.7%	5
* Internal evaluation and review of curriculum and syllabuses	28.6%	4
* Campus and accommodation facilities conducive to learning	64.3%	9
* Counseling services	42.9%	6

9. Please tick the items below according to their order of importance that should be included in the National Standards for English Language Teaching in Turkey. Please add any other criteria that you believe needs to be added to the list.

	Very important	**Important**	**Not that important**	**The least important**	**Rating**
* Well-defined organizational structure	42.9% (6)	50.0% (7)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.36
* Transparent record keeping and documentation	42.9% (6)	57.1% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.43
* Procedures for course organization					

and administration	42.9% (6)	57.1% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.43
* Procedures for student recruitment and enrolment	35.7% (5)	64.3% (9)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.36
* Accessible and accurate information about all procedures	57.1% (8)	35.7% (5)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.50
* Policy and procedures to deal with student complaints and appeals	50.0% (7)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.50
* Teaching staff with adequate qualifications and competencies	78.6% (11)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.79
* Recruitment policy and procedures	71.4% (10)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	3.57
* Contracts specifying terms and conditions	71.4% (10)	28.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.71
* Training and professional development opportunities	78.6% (11)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.79
* Work ethics	78.6% (11)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.79
* Policy and procedures for performance review	57.1% (8)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.57

* Shared curriculum goals and objectives	78.6% (11)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.79
* Teaching activities and materials	57.1% (8)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.57
* Assessment and evaluation	57.1% (8)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.57
* Course and level descriptions	64.3% (9)	35.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.64
* Syllabuses	71.4% (10)	28.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.71
* Teaching equipment and resources	71.4% (10)	28.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.71
* Feedback and Evaluation	71.4% (10)	28.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.71
* Teaching and study Facilities	64.3% (9)	28.6% (4)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.57
* Policy and procedures for health and security	71.4% (10)	14.3% (2)	7.1% (1)	7.1% (1)	3.50
* Comfortable and sufficiently equipped work spaces	78.6% (11)	21.4% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.79
* Common areas for socializing and interaction	50.0% (7)	42.9% (6)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	3.36

* Policy and procedures

for student enrolment and placement	42.9% (6)	50.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	7.1% (1)	3.29
* New student Orientation	35.7% (5)	57.1% (8)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.29
* Social and recreational activities	28.6% (4)	42.9% (6)	28.6% (4)	0.0% (0)	3.00
* Counseling	42.9% (6)	57.1% (8)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.43
* Policy and procedures for on-going course review and evaluation	64.3% (9)	28.6% (4)	7.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.57
* Procedures for regular self-assessment	50.0% (7)	35.7% (5)	14.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	3.36
* Staff and student feedback	64.3% (9)	35.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.64
* Support and guidance for teachers	64.3% (9)	35.7% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	3.64

10. What in your view/experience are the 3 ESSENTIAL FEATURES of QA in an English preparatory program? (Also add any other comments you would like to make regarding your views on QA in English language preparatory programs.)

- Clearly described and written procedures, processes or guidelines of all the activities of teaching. 2. All the necessary and up-to-date materials and technology. 3. Regular feedback and improvement cycle.
- Well-defined expectations about teaching, manners and work ethics from all teachers and equal treatment to everyone when one fails to meet these expectations - course materials, especially books, which are carefully selected by the staff according to the needs of the students in the institution and rather than the course books that the administration decides - setting realistic goals for exit level; ı mean claiming that the level of sts who successfully finish prep program is B1 or B2 sounds good when advertising or marketing , but the real level of most students are far below these levels. How could it be possible for a zero beginner student

to reach B1 in all skills in 8 months especially for the students who have poor study habits and unfortunately with limited capacity?

- Standardization (implementing the same techniques, etc), continuous professional development, feedback
- Assessment and evaluation course book and materials curriculum and syllabus
- Motivated and professional staff with a transparent management , an applicable and realistic program , effective, reliable testing program
- Motivation Transparency Non-profit based approach
- The institution must be visionary, fair and highly aware of the applicability of certain procedures to their own context so in a way, the decision makers must be highly empathetic and check whether what they want is realistic within the current conditions.
- Teaching staff with adequate qualifications and competencies Staff and student feedback Accessible and accurate information about all procedures
- The procedures which are above classroom-level (i.e. not within the realm of the individual teacher) are outlined and specified. That it works to preserve the teachers' status, individuality and independence as much as possible and respects his/her knowledge, expertise and experience. That it does not detract from the time given to teaching e.g. by producing and insisting on formulaic, mechanical and essentially meaningless paperwork and hoops to jump through.
- Staff (teacher) motivation provided by humanistic working conditions, high salary and fringe benefits 2. Professional development opportunities for teachers 3. Well stated and organized curriculum and assessment procedures
- Target setting, self monitoring and evaluation, and in-service training opportunities.
- Clearly laid out teaching and learning objectives Teachers who understand the system A framework that leads into later learning in further university years

APPENDIX J

The inspector's account of the EAQUALS inspection process

Febuary 28 – March 3, 2012 – Izmir

The inspection process for the inspector starts when receiving the appointment letter two months before the inspection is due. The EAQUALS Secretariat first sends a letter to the inspector asking availability during the periods requested by the school applying for inspection. Once the preferred period of the inspector is received, the secretariat contacts the school and arranges the inspection time. The inspector then receives the application form filled by the school, consisting of basic information about the management team, the academic and administrative staff and their qualifications, the premises, student profile, the courses offered and teaching philosophy and approach. The school is expected to send detailed information on academic and administrative management, curricula and syllabuses to the inspectors two weeks before the actual inspection date.

This is an account of an inspection carried out in February- March 2012, in İzmir at the School of Foreign Languages of a prestigious and rapidly growing foundation university. The School of Foreign Languages has an ambitious strategic plan to offer quality services in all its endeavors in line with the vision and mission of the university. Since it is a fairly large program offering 1.843.756 hours of teaching to approximately 6.500 students, three inspectors were appointed to carry out the inspection on three consecutive days.

Besides a largely populated preparatory school intensive English program (PE), the school offers Freshman English (FE) and eight different languages, as well as a variety of academic language skills courses to different faculties. There are 146 full-time (FT) and 26 part-time (PT) instructors in PE, 17 FT in FE, 9 FT, 11 PT in Spanish, 11 FT and 3 PT in Italian, 11 FT and 3 PT in German, 6 FT, 5 PT in French, 3 FT, 1 PT in Russian, 2 PT in Japanese, 1 FT in Chinese and 1 FT in Portuguese. All these courses which are compulsory for all the students throughout their studies are referred to as second languages programs (SL).

Having received a fairly large amount of information prior to the inspection, it took two full days, to study all documents, taking notes and preparing questions on points that require further clarification during interviews.

All three inspectors scheduled to arrive in İzmir the evening before the inspection started to go over the provisional inspection plan that was prepared by the inspector who is appointed as the chief who is responsible from planning the inspection process and writing the final inspection report.

Upon arrival, I was picked up by one of the assistant directors and taken to the dormitory where they reserved a room for each inspector. Staying at the dormitory which is located right next to the university buildings saved travelling time and made it easy for inspectors to inspect the premises by allowing firsthand experience of the conditions offered to students.

The room was ensuite, with two single beds, one table, an armchair, a study desk, with a TV set and a telephone, two chairs and a carpet. The bathroom had a shower unit, toilet and a wash-basin. The room was stuffed with furniture which was too big for the size of the room to hold. The TV screen was a big one, occupying half of the study desk and didn't have any channels except one state channel which was blurred and not possible to watch. There was a cable connection which was not working. When I called the reception desk to ask for technical help, the receptionist told me that I needed to wait until next morning. She didn't have a clue who I was and why I was staying at the dormitory. However, when I went downstairs to find out more about the procedure of using the internet, she was more cooperative, I was given a guest password to use that night.

Although I wasn't happy with the room, the heating and hygiene, the other inspectors didn't have any problems. It seemed that the size and the furniture in the rooms vary; there wasn't a standard, except all are double rooms, with two single beds. The information given to the students on the bulletin boards on each floor indicates that rooms were cleaned everyday and sheets changed every other day. There were evacuation plans and fire extinguishers in the elevator halls of each floor. On the ground floor, at the entrance there was a coffee-house with comfortable seating units, besides the reception desk and an open office behind it.

The information provided on the web-page about the dormitory was accurate. Overall, the dormitory met the basic needs of the students. The students I met in the elevator and chatted were not complaining, saying that the facilities were "ok".

The next morning, we met at the reception at eight, went over to the main building to have breakfast. There were three cafeteria stations in the large lobby area with tables and chairs scattered all around the large area. All stations are self-service. Everyone should first go to the cashier's booth and get tickets, then go to the counter and order what they want. In all the stations, there was enough number of staff which made the service fast and efficient. We went over the day's plan in more detail and decide who will do what one more time over coffee and toast, both of which were fresh and tasty.

Sharp at nine, we were met by one of the assistant directors, who gave us the first tour of the premises and took us to the room allocated for the inspectors during our stay. The preparation in the room was impeccable. There were one desk and one desk-top computer for each one of us with our names tagged on them. Stationary, information leaflets and school brochures, note-pads and most important of all flash disks, contents of which are written were nicely laid out on each desk. Also, all the course books and all files were put on shelves, all meticulously labeled and organized to make it very easy for the inspectors to find what their way through without any further assistance needed.

Our first interview was with the Department Director, who talked us through the administrative and academic management system and how things work on a day-to-day basis. The first impression the director and the two assistant directors gave was one of professionalism and enthusiasm in the way they run the school and prepared for this inspection. When they decided to go through an external inspection and apply for EAQUALS accreditation a year ago, they formed a committee who meet once a week and coordinated the preparation process. The committee did an on-going evaluation of their internal quality assurance procedures and plan actions according to weaknesses and needs identified. They only applied for the accreditation after the committee felt that the programs meet the required standards and ready for an external eye.

The most important area for an EQAUALS accreditation is the teaching standards in the institution; how much what is happening in the classrooms match with the aims and

objectives set by the curricula, how much the teaching approach in the classrooms reflect the teaching philosophy of the institution and how much learning is actually taking place Therefore, it is vital to observe as many classes as possible to be able to draw conclusions based on the real picture rather than what is written on paper. However, not being able to stay in one class more than 10, utmost 20 minutes does make the judgments made about the effectiveness of teaching in an institution inevitably superficial.

Bearing in mind the size of the operation, we needed to plan every minute of our stay very effectively and use our time efficiently. Right after the interview with the director, the two of us started classroom observations while the chief inspector interviewed the assistant directors. Before lunch, I was able to observe six different classes.

During the inspections the teachers are requested to prepare a lesson plan and leave it on an empty chair for the inspector. Unfortunately these are ad hoc observations without even meeting the instructors beforehand. Because of time-constraints, each class can be observed minimum for 10, maximum 20 minutes which means at most cases the inspector shows up in the middle of the lesson. This is not only nerve-wrecking for the teacher but may also be annoying for the students. Despite the circumstances, I was so far impressed by the preparation of the teachers, the level of teaching and the cooperative attitude of the students.

At lunch time, we met in our room, received information on where to eat and how to get our lunch tickets and went to the basement to eat. The basement restaurant was also very spacious with enough number of sitting areas both for students and instructors. Although both the students and instructors were able to buy their tickets from the same cashier booth at the entrance, they were served from different counters. The quality and portions of food was adequate and well-balanced.

During inspections, inspectors are not allowed to accept hospitality accept tea or coffee and prefer not to be accompanied by members of the management to be able to chat with teachers and students. However, this time we needed to use our loch time to meet, share ideas and plan further moves.

After lunch, all three of us met with the head of the preparatory program and visited the Self-Access Center (SAC) with her. She gave us information on both the preparatory courses and the foundation and development of SAC. They had a large

area with 48 individual working stations, study area where self-study materials prepared in-house were in drawers, all labeled according to levels and skills, readers and newspapers.   There were two full-time members in the SAC who keep good records and statistical information on the use of SAC, give students tutorial help when needed, organize games and activities to promote the center and increase its use. They also have two IT members located in the center who were responsible from updating the SAC web page and provide teachers and students assistance on the use of their online system.

In the afternoon, I observed six more classes and in between breaks inspected the premises. The building was kept clean and the cleaners were around after each break to clean the toilets and the corridors. There were fire extinguishers and evacuation plans on each corridor. However, I felt like these plans need to be placed in each classroom and the plans on the corridors to be made more visible to attract attention. The classrooms on the main building that I observed were all well-equipped with a projector, white-board, sound system, bulletin boards. They were small in size but bright and airy. However, one major problem with the the main building was the number of toilets on each floor. There were four toilets (2 male, 2 female) placed at both ends of the corridors where there were on average 24 classes and two or more offices.

The main building was where the School of Foreign Languages and the preparatory classes were located was built as a hotel building and converted to a school after being bought by the foundation to build this university. When I mentioned the number of toilets and the size of the classes to the director, she showed us the plans of a new building that will be constructed once the approval is received from the municipality.

There were two adjacent annex buildings to the main one, which were later added and had more spacious classrooms and enough number of toilets on each floor. The SL classes and faculty courses are offered in those buildings which I observed on the second day.

On the first day, we met at the office for a wrap-up of the day after the classes were over. We shared our notes and observations with each other. The chief inspector collated the information for the report. After spending another hour on studying the

files for teacher files, meeting minutes and student feedback documents, we left the school for dinner.

The second day started by planning the day and our questions over breakfast. After checking the timetables and available lessons in the office we set off for observations. After observing four classes, we met in the office for the teacher focus group meeting. Teachers who do not have any teaching at that hour were invited to the meeting and 14 of them attended the meeting which was monitored by the chief inspector while the other two were taking notes.

As always, teacher focus group meeting was an interesting one. While some teachers were cooperative and very positive in their attitude, a couple of native speaker teachers were critical and cynical of both the management and the accreditation process. However negative the attitudes of these teachers were, it was obvious that the academic support systems and professional development opportunities that were written on paper were actually taking place. At the end of each teaching period, teachers fill out feedback forms and able to voice their opinions and concerns. While a majority of teachers felt they were listened and responded, a couple of native speaker teachers felt that the management was not open to criticism. The feelings towards the performance appraisal system and appraisal interviews were the same. Some teachers commented that they did not see any value in the way appraisal interviews were held. The three directors were holding the interviews with all the teachers and thus could only spare 15 to 20 minutes with each instructor. These instructors felt that the appraisal system existed only for the sake of having one but not really worthwhile for them.

All the teachers had contracts, had private insurance, free shuttle service and lunch. They all have an allowance of 1500 USD annually to use if they want to participate in an international or national conference as a presenter. One point that made some native speaker teachers insecure was the fact that the minimum required teaching hours (18) were mentioned in the contracts. They wanted this statement to be changed into the maximum teaching hours, although it is clearly stated in their job descriptions that full-time instructors are required to do 18-21 hours of teaching per week.

One recommendation we noted down after our focus group meeting with the teachers was that teachers were not aware of the complaints and grievance procedures that existed on paper but obviously not made public and practiced. When we inquired about it in our feedback meeting, the management team told us that they wrote the procedures and developed the forms as a requirement of EAQUALS standards. It was planned to introduce this policy to teachers in the next teaching period and put the procedures in effect.

After a power-lunch with the other inspectors, the afternoon was spent observing 6 different classes and an interview with the Writing Center (WC) Coordinator. WC was an office located in the main building and the coordinator was providing services to all other faculty members and graduate students in editing their academic papers. It was not offering any services to undergraduate or preparatory students. I thought the name WC was misleading since writing centers generally exist to provide writing support in terms of workshops and tutorials to all students and staff in universities. This was one of the points I wanted to inquire in our final meeting with the directors to find out if there is a plan for the improvement of the center to expand its services or not. If not, I would make a recommendation to change the name. The coordinator of the center was happy with what he was doing and was not aware of a plan to improve services of the center.

After the classes were over, I continued inspecting the files in the office. All documentation was very well-kept and filed. It was not difficult for an outsider to study these files and understand the communication channels and how curriculum and assessment decisions are taken, implemented and evaluated. There was a good system of hierarchical and horizontal communication at all levels.

At the end of the second day, we had a fairly good idea of how things work and found the preparation for the external inspection and the internal quality assurance systems admirable. All the staff members, the management, the administration and the teachers were well qualified, cooperative and well-coming. All the position holders had PhD degrees and teachers either had BAs in Educational fields or a teaching certificate if their degrees were not in a teaching related field. We all agreed that the teaching we observed in classes were generally effective in involving the students and meeting the curriculum objectives. All teachers had their lesson plans well-prepared, making it possible for the inspector to follow exactly what was being done when entering the

room by looking at the plan put on the chair. All plans had a standard format, regardless of the type of course offered.

The third day was a hectic one. After a brief meeting over breakfast, I observed two freshmen courses to have a good sample of all different courses offered by the school. After the observations, I held a student focus group meeting with the students who volunteered to come when the other two inspectors continue their lesson observations. The meeting was planned to take an hour but took half an hour longer because the students wanted to keep talking. I gave the students the option of speaking Turkish if they want to but interestingly they chose to speak English all the way through.

Students were generally happy with the services offered by the school and the effectiveness of language education. They were content with the facilities but thought that the buildings are not enough to meet the student population which was increasing every year. They all wanted a campus with more open space, green areas and sports facilities. Classroom sizes in the preparatory program were not a concern of the students, they were happy with the technological equipment provided in the classes and the availability of free wireless internet access in the buildings. The only complaint they had was that they could not use two different devices, both their laptops and cell-phones to access the net but only their laptops. They were happy about the compulsory second language courses, believing that knowing another language besides English would increase their mobility and job opportunities in the global market.

Students believed that their feedback forms are taken into consideration and responded by the management. They said most of the teachers and all of the coordinators and directors were very approachable and try to resolve their problems when they go to them. However, they had complaints about the ineffectiveness of Student Affairs office which was not included in the scope of this inspection but worth mentioning to the management to make them aware of a problem which directly affects their students.

I participated in the meeting with the Curriculum and Materials Development Coordinators (CMDU) and Testing Coordinator (TU), as well as members of the Teacher Development Unit (TDU). I also visited the Student Affairs office and Human

Resources offices and talked to key staff members and asked questions about the student registration process, staff recruitment process and inspected contracts and legal documents. The procedures described were congruent with what was claimed in the written documents and the information made publicly available on the University web pages and printed materials.

I also visited the infirmary which was located in the basement where the library was also located. There was a full-time doctor and a full-time nurse on duty and the infirmary was well-equipped to be able to provide first-aid and medical help for minor illnesses.

The library had a section for English Language Education, with books donated to the university by the British Council. There was also a good collection of readers, DVDs, magazines and CDs in English.

Inspecting the posters and information leaflets on the bulletin boards and in the classrooms, talking to students and inspecting the web page showed that there were plenty of social and sports activities organized for the students. There were voluntary student clubs organizing trips, games and other social or academic programs. One concern a student who was actively involved in one of the clubs raised was the indifference of students in the University towards these events. He complained that all the effort they put into the organization of events was sometimes wasted because very few students participate and benefit from them.

We all gathered back in the office an hour before the final feedback meeting with the management director and the two assistant directors. The final stage of an EAQUALS inspection process is to give an objective oral account of the inspection and making recommendations without making any comments of the grades given or the result. Since this inspection was only an advisory one, we didn't have to give grades and did not hesitate to tell them that the school was ready for accreditation and EAQUALS membership if they chose to apply immediately. It was up to the director to decide who to invite to the final feedback meeting and her preference was to include the two assistant directors besides herself. After we reviewed all points to be made in the order of the report form and agreed on the recommendations, we met the team. The chief inspector did all the talking and we chipped in if there was further clarification needed or something forgotten. The directors carefully listened and took notes of all

the points mentioned. They were very receptive to the recommendations. Instead of making excuses, they asked clarification questions and suggestions for further improvement. Their enthusiasm and ambition were praiseworthy.

The feedback included (in the order of the inspection report format):

Description of the institution
- The institution (legal status, ownership)
- The premises
- The students
- The courses
- The Staff
- Resources

Assessment of the institution
- Teaching
- Curriculum and Syllabus
- Progress Assessment and Certification
- Quality assurance
- Academic resources
- Other services to students
- Staff contracts, terms and conditions
- Qualifications, experience and conditions
- Communications
- Information
- Premises
- Management and administration

We did make sure we covered all the above areas and agreed that the School of Foreign Languages met the required standards in all and in terms of academic management and administration to the point of excellence.

The meticulous preparation for the external inspection process, the commitment and professionalism reflected in the attitudes and work of the management team, the cooperation and hard work of all staff made such a positive impression from the

moment the pre-inspection documents were sent that one wonders if this striking effect blurs the vision of the inspectors in any way.

The inspection feedback and report makes an objective and detailed account of everything done and observed. All the diagnosed strengths and weaknesses of the services and facilities are mentioned and suggestions, if there are any, made in two categories: recommendations and requirements. Recommendations are points that the inspectors think will help the institution to further improve their services to achieve excellence. Requirements are points that they need to consider in order to receive accreditation and EAQUALS membership. The school can work on these areas and can apply of a re-inspection after fulfilling the requirements.

In the case of this school, there were no requirements to be made but only recommendations.

One of the recommendations was to improve the performance appraisal system and appraisal interviews with the teachers to make them more developmental and meaningful for the teachers. Another one was to consider rewording of the contract to include the maximum classroom teaching hours as this was a point of doubt for some teachers.

In terms of the improvement of the facilities, we recommended that the plans for the new building to be shared and discussed with all the teachers so that the new building will serve the needs of their programs better. We also suggested that a fire drill need to take place and evacuation plans of the building to be made more visible and available in all the classrooms.

At the end of the feedback, the chief inspector told the directors that the school was ready for accreditation which cheered the directors. It was impossible to miss their relief after the intense work they put into the preparations for a year and the tension they went through for the last three days.

This is a moment of relief not only for the receiving end but also for the inspectors. An inspection process puts so much responsibility on the inspector that it is the weight of this pressure more than the intensity of the work that wears you out in the end. The feeling of relief though, is only a temporary one. On the way home and for days afterwards you have to fight with the question of "what if…" and convince yourself

over and over again that you haven't missed anything, that you were objective, that you were fair and just in your observations and decisions.

Is it really possible to be "objective" no matter how much training you have gone through and how much standardization sessions you have sit through?

Accreditation is a very costly process, not only in terms of the time and effort spent but also financially. Is it really necessary to go through this process in order to offer better education for the students?

What is it that a school investing in accreditation hopes to gain; improvement in their educational services or increase in their student numbers and revenues?

Not only the "what if…" question, but also such ethical concerns bug the conscience of the inspector for days after each inspection. Then fades away, until the next time!

11/03/2012

APPENDIX Ka

COORDINATOR 1 Responses (CEA accredited Language School)

1. What was the reason of your application for accreditation? Was it a requirement of the university board? Why did you choose EAQUALS/CEA? (one or the other)

The reason we had for accreditation was purely developmental. We are committed to continuous improvement of our curriculum and services. Thus by preparing for an international accreditation we wanted to see how we are doing and what we need to do for further improvement. Some of our colleagues searched for an external body to accredit our programs and looked into both EAQUALS and CEA standards and procedures. In the end we decided to go for CEA because our university has 12 dual-diploma programs with seven American Universities and most of our graduates prefer to go to the US for post-graduate education. Therefore, we thought an American organization suits our needs better.

2. Please briefly tell how you prepared for accreditation? What were your major challenges during this preparation?

First we got ourselves familiar with CEA standards and established sub-committees to work on each standard. We, as the steering committee, identified the improvements to be made together with these committees in order to meet the requirements of the standards and worked on them. The preparation took two years. We started by holding one meeting per month with the sub-committees but then increased the meetings to once a week. It was very hard work but worth all the effort because we learned a lot from the process of preparation. It helped us to systematize all our processes and procedures and improve all the academic management functions.

3. What are the novel QA processes that you needed to implement in order to meet the required standards for accreditation?

Actually we had all the processes that were required for QA, except "performance review of administrators" which is not something that we can implement without the consent of the Higher Education Council. Since we are a state university, some administrative procedures like student recruitment are beyond our control as a department. However, we did write down procedures that are congruent with the standards and took action to implement a performance review system for our administrators and coordinators. Something we started doing was better documentation of everything we do. All the procedures were clearly written and all resources were properly organized according to the requirements of the standards.

4. How much support and involvement you have got from instructors and students during the preparation process?

We got full support of the instructors and students during the site visit of the inspectors. We informed the instructors and students regularly about the progress we were making during the preparation period. During the site visit, the inspectors had focus group meeting with the staff and students and the comments made by both groups were very positive. Students are satisfied by the education they receive at the school of languages.

5. How would you define quality in language education? What does it mean for you?

For me quality in language education is what you can do within your own context. Of course there are determining external standards but, how much you can do depends on the resources available in one's own context and quality is achieving your aims within the limitations of your own resources, meeting the needs of your students.

The most important feature of QA is the curriculum design and implementation. If you have an effective curriculum, and well-qualified instructors, the rest will come naturally and contribute to achieving quality.

APPENDIX Kb

COORDINATOR 2 Responses (EAQUALS accredited school)

1. What was the reason of your application for accreditation? Was it a requirement of the university board? Why did you choose EAQUALS/CEA? (one or the other)

We decided to apply for accreditation because we were curious to know how an outsider would see our school. It was not a requirement of the university board. Also not very many universities-language programs- have this kind of accreditation in Turkey, and we thought it would be prestigious for our institution. We chose EAQUALS, after educating ourselves both on EAQUALS and CEA for a long time by both attending meetings and reading the related materials; because it looked more professional and the charters made us believe that it is the agency to opt for for application.

2. Please briefly tell how you prepared for accreditation? What were your major challenges during this preparation?

We had to put some new procedures in place (such as appraisal system, keeping meeting minutes, more organized and better filed paperwork, etc). Naturally, the biggest challenge was to convince the staff about the importance of all these innovations; because it is not always easy for the staff to embrace the "changes" especially in a school like ours where 180 teachers work across three different language programs ☺

3. What are the novel QA processes that you needed to implement in order to meet the required standards for accreditation?

Before we decided to apply for accreditation we already had most of the required procedures in place. The one novel process I remember is the student and teacher complaint procedures. We did not have these procedures formally but had them informally.

We spent most of our time and energy to make sure we had the same/similar standards across the three main programs within the school (in terms of teaching, assessment, management, etc).

4. How much support and involvement you have got from instructors and students during the preparation process?

I think we gained instructors' support right from the beginning by sharing every single step of our accreditation 'journey' with them (all the way from why we are applying down to what exactly happens during inspection). The first thing we did was to form an EAQUALS committee consisting of teachers from the three programs and this committee constantly communicated with the staff regarding our application for EAQUALS. The ways of formal communication, besides informal communication channels, were e-mails and face-to-face meetings. Through e-mails and meetings we explained the rationale for our every single move for the application for accreditation, and informed and updated them about the latest with the process.

5. How would you define quality in language education? What does it mean for you?

Personally, I believe the number one criterion for "quality in language education", among many others, is teacher training and development. When a school provides enough opportunities for training and development, that school is on the right track. Language education in which professional development is given priority and importance is quality education for me.

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX La

FOCUS GROUP MEETING WITH STUDENTS-1

Focus Group meeting with students during the EAQUALS inspection:

Friday, March 2nd, 2012, 13:45 – 14:30

Students told that they can speak in English or in Turkish.

Three students are speaking in English, very eager and pleasant, quite fluent, limited vocabulary and minor mistakes…

Two students are answering in Turkish, the rest of the students are silent. They only nod with agreement when I look at them for confirmation…

Students are told that the inspectors will be talking to them, that the inspectors are here to evaluate the programs and premises for quality…

They haven't heard EAQUALS before. They are not sure what will happen if the school gets accreditation. None of them made any comments, except "we are not sure", "must be beneficial "probably good thing for the university"…

"What is quality in English language education for you?" question is not easy for them to answer. One of them said: "passing the proficiency exam", a couple of nods from others…

"How can you pass the proficiency exam? How can you learn better?"

"Depends on the teacher. Teachers qualifications are not the same. Some are good teachers and some do not know how to teach"

"We get good education here. We are learning English."

"books are expensive for scholarship students, we want the school to help us get the books cheaper"

"teachers and coordinators are very helpful, we can go to them when we need help"

"quality langauge education means quality teachers"

FOCUS GROUP MEETING WITH STUDENTS – 2

Student Focus Group meeting notes:

 April 26, 2012, School of Languages, an English-medium foundation university

(Students preferred to speak Turkish)

"Sizce İngilizce Eğitiminde kalite nedir? Yani, dil eğitiminde kalitenin sağlanması için neler olması gerekir? Ne beklersiniz?"

(Students found it difficult to answer the question, chatted to each other before answering)

"Eğitimin sonucunda öğrencilerin durumu kalite"

"Mezun olduktan sonra arayandeğil, aranan olmak"

"Akademik İngilizce seviyesinin yükseltilmesi"

"Sınıfların ergonomic yapısı, koçaklı sandalye istemiyoruz"

"%50 okulun konumu, İstanbul'da trafikte çok vakit kaybı oluyor"

"hocaların CVsi önemli"

One covered female student said*: "hocaların erkek olması, kadın hocalar derse duygularını karıştırıyor".*

APPENDIX M

CoHE – The Law on Teaching and Education of Foreign Languages

Article related to QA of Language Education

The Law on Teaching and Education of Foreign Languages and Learning of Languages and Dialects of Turkish Citizen's (Law No. 2923) (only available in Turkish)

YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KURUMLARINDA YABANCI DİL ÖĞRETİMİ VE YABANCI DİLLE ÖĞRETİM YAPILMASINDA UYULACAK ESASLARA İLİŞKİN YÖNETMELİK
(04/12/2008 Tarih, 27074 Sayılı Resmi Gazete)

Yabancı dille yapılan öğretimin denetlenmesi

MADDE 8 – **(Değişik:RG-28/06/2009-27272)** (1) Yabancı dille yapılan öğretimin kalitesi, Yükseköğretim Kurulu tarafından denetlenir. Yapılan bu denetim sonucuna göre Yükseköğretim Genel Kurulunun kararı ile ön lisans, lisans veya lisansüstü programın yabancı dille okutulması izni geri alınabilir.

Retrieved from: http://www.yok.gov.tr/en/content/view/544/230

APPENDIX N

INSPECTOR RE-APPOINTMENT LETTER

Oya Basaran

Kurtulusderesi cad. No: 47

Dolapdere, Sisli

Sisli 34437

İstanbul

15 June 2009

Dear Oya,

On behalf of the Inspections Sub-committee I would like to thank you for your contribution to the work of EAQUALS as an inspector. We hope you have found the cooperation with EAQUALS a rewarding professional experience and we would like to confirm that your appointment as an EAQUALS inspector has been extended for another 3-year period, i.e. until **30th June 2012**.

During the next three years of your appointment you will be requested to be available to do at least **3 inspections** and attend at least one **inspector standardisation session** organised for appointed inspectors before AGMs or Workshop meetings.
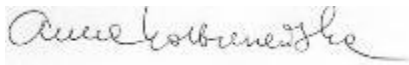
In the coming period standardisation will acquire a special significance by the fact that the new version of the Guide to the Inspection Scheme will be released in January 2010. Although the philosophy and spirit of EAQUALS inspections will remain the same, some changes have been introduced to the approach to inspections, which may require a different focus from inspectors.

We would therefore strongly recommend that you attend the inspector training day sessions in Graz (Saturday, 14 November 2009) and/or in Berlin (Thursday, 22nd April 2010), which will focus on the revisions of the scheme. The programme of both meetings will be available on the EAQUALS website very soon.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your valuable suggestions made during training sessions and in the post-inspection questionnaires and we would like to encourage you to continue to send us your comments.

We look forward to working with you in the future.

Kind regards,

Anna Kolbuszewska

Chair of the EAQUALS Inspections Sub-committee

Appendix O

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☐

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı :

Adı   :

Bölümü :

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

TEZİN TÜRÜ :   Yüksek Lisans ☐   Doktora ☐

1.Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐

2.Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir ☐

   bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

3.Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☐

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:

APPENDIX P

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name:	Basaran, Oya
Nationality:	Turkish (TC)
Date and Place of Birth:	November 23, 1954, Ankara
Marital Status:	Single
Phone:	+ 90 532 7964804
Email:	oya.basaran@hotmail.com
	oyabasaran@sabanciuniv.edu

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	Bilkent University, Faculty of Humanities and Administrative Sciences	1990
MA	Hacettepe University, Department of English Language and Linguistics	1976
High School	TED Ankara College	1972

OTHER CERTIFICATE AND TRAINING PROGRAMS ATTENDED

-Quality Training the Trainees, 2007, ECML (Council of Europe Modern Languages Division)

-Inspector Training, 2004 – (on-going), EAQUALS (European Association of Quality Language Services)

-Coaching for Development, Center for Creative Leadership, Belgium, 2004

-Critical Thinking across the Curriculum, Sonoma University, USA, 2003

-Management in TESOL, February – April 2003 (on-line course with a follow-up at the 2002 TESOL Conference in Baltimore, USA)

-Alternative Assessment and Action Research, Dr. Kari Smith, Istanbul Bilgi University, 2003, 2004

-Communication Skills, Dr. Tony Humphreys, Istanbul Bilgi University, 2001, 2005

-Leadership and Total Quality Management, Istanbul, 2000/2001 (Continuous In-House

 Training programs)

-Management in Aviation, Vienna, Austria, 2000

-Human Resources Management in Aviation, Finland, Germany, Austria, 1999, 2000

-Salary Administration, Pricewaterhouse Coopers Istanbul 1999

-Human Resources Management, Prometheus Istanbul 1999

-ISO 9000, Quality Management, TSE Istanbul, 1997

-ISO 9000, System documentation, TSE Istanbul, 1997

-ISO 9000, Quality Assessment, TSE Istanbul 1997

-Educational Management Program, Gallilee College, Israel, 1996

-Language Teaching Methods (Rassias method) Professor John Rassias, USIS, Ankara, 1996 United States Information Agency (USIA) Assistant English Language Programs Officer, - Management Training Program, USA, 1995

-Counseling skills in Education, Bilkent University School of English Language, 1992

-Training English Language Teacher Trainers, British Council,

Edinburgh, 1991

-Teacher Training in English Language Teaching (ELT),

Fulbright, Istanbul, 1988

-Teaching Certificate, Hacettepe University, Faculty of Education, Ankara, 1976

WORK EXPERIENCE

YEAR	PLACE	ENROLLMENT
2011-Present	Sabancı University, School of Languages	Visiting Instructor
2009-2010	Bilgi University,Department of English Language Teacher Education	Coordinator, Instructor
2008-2009	Bilgi University, English Language Programs	Director
2007-2008	Bilgi University, Foundation Program	Advisor to the Rector
2004-Present	EAQUALS	Inspector
2001-2007	Bilgi University, English Language Programs	Director
1999-2001	TAV Ataturk Airport International Terminal	Human Resources Coordinator
1997-1999	Bilgi University	Dean of Students
1996-1997	Başkent University, School of Languages, Teacher Training and Development Unit	Head
1993-1997	USIA, American Embassy English Language Office	Assistant Officer
1990-1993	Bilkent University, School of Foreign Languages, Cambridge RSA Teacher Training Courses	Teacher Trainer
1987-1990	Bilkent University, School of Foreign Languages	Instructor

APPENDIX Q

TURKISH SUMMARY

Sanayide ve iş dünyasında uzun yıllardır hakimiyetini sürdüren kalite, kalite güvencesi, kalite akreditasyonu gibi kavramlar, küreselleşen dünyada giderek daha çok bir pazara dönüşen eğitim sektörünü de kaçınılmaz olarak etkisi altına almıştır. Özellikle yüksek öğretim kurumları, varlıklarını sürdürebilmek, gerek ulusal, gerekse uluslar arası kalıcılık ve çekiciliklerini arttırmak için, küresel ekonominin rekabetçi ortamında yer alabilecek öğrenciler yetiştirmeyi hedefleyen eğitim programları sunmak ve bu programların kalitesini belgelemek zorunluluğunda kalmışlardır. İşte bu zorunluluk, Avrupa Üniversitelerini ortak arayışlara sürüklemiş, küreselleşen dünyada varlık gösterebilecek yetkinlik ve bilgilerle donanımlı insan yetiştirmeye yönelik eğitim süreçlerinin belirlenmesi ve uygulanmaya konması için, anlaşma ve projelere yönlendirmiştir. Bu amaçla 1999 da hayata geçirilen Bolonya süreci bir Avrupa yüksek öğretim alanı oluşturarak, yüksek öğretim sistemlerinde uyumu arttırmak ve bu sayede ülkeler arası geçişlerin kolaylaştırarak, öğretim üyeleri ve öğrencilerin hareket ve istihdamının arttırlımasını hedeflemiştir. Türkiye, 2001 yılında bu sürece dahil olarak, sürecin tanımladığı eğitim kriterlerine uymayı ve uygulamayı taahüt etmiştir. (bologna@yok.gov)

Bolonya süreci, yüksek öğretim kurumlarına akademik değerlendime ve kalite güvence süreçleri oluşturma zorunluluğu getirdiği gibi, bu kurumlarda dil eğitimine verilen önemin artmasına da yol açmıştır. İngilizce'nin sanayi ve teknik alandaki hakimiyeti, özellikle bu dilin öğrenilmesini bir artı değer olmaktan çıkarıp, zorunluluk haline getirmiş ve İngilizce yüksek öğretimin temel taşlarından biri haline gelmiştir.

Bu bağlamda, Türkiye'deki yüksek öğretim kurumlarının hemen hemen tamamı İngilizce hazırlık programları sunmakta ve bu programların kalite arayışları önem kazanmaya başlamıştır. Giderek sayıları artan vakıf ünüversiteleri, daha iyi öğrencileri çekmek için, devlet üniversiteleri öğrencilerini daha iyi yetiştirmek için İngilizce programlarına yatırım yapmakta, uluslar arası kurumlarla işbirlikleri ve projeler yürütmektedirler. Dolayısıyla, sadece sınıf-içi eğitim değil, müfredat geliştirme, sürekli iyileştirme, performans denetleme, program değerlendirme ve kalite güvencesi gibi kavramlar İngilizce hazırlık programlarının esas gündemini oluşturmaya başlamıştır.

Uzun yıllar İngilizce dil programlarında eğitimci, yönetici ve denetçi olarak görev yapan araştırmacı, bütün bu süreçlerin eğitimin iyileştirilmesine gerçekten katkıda bulunabilmesi için nasıl uygulanması gerektiği konusunda hala

belirsizlikler olduğundan yola çıkarak böyle bir çalışma yapmaya gereksinim duymuştur. İngilizce dil programlarının temel paydaşları olan yöneticilerin, öğretim görevlilerinin, okutmanların ve öğrencilerin bu kavram ve süreçlerin ne kadar içinde olduklarını anlayarak, belirsizlik kaynaklarının saptanması ve giderilmesine yönelik çıkarımlar yapılabilmesi hedeflenmiştir.

Araştırmanın amacı, Türkiye'deki Yüksek Öğretim Hazırlık İngilizce Programlarında çalışan yönetici, öğretim elemanı ve öğrencilerin kalite ve kalite güvence süreçleri ile ilgili algı ve beklentilerini saptamak, bu programlarda halen uygulanan kalite güvence süreçlerini anlamak ve tanımlamaktır.

Çalışma, kurumsal süreç ve uygulamaların dil eğitiminin iyileştirilmesine ne gibi katkıları olduğuna ve bu katkıların paydaşların beklenti ve algılarını nasıl etkilediğine bakarak, bu beklentilere uygun kalite güvence süreçlerinin neler olması gerektiği konusunda önermeler yapmayı ummaktadır.

Bu amaçlarla, aşağıdaki sorular araştırmanın çıkış noktasını oluşturmuştur:

1. Türkiye yüksek öğretim kurumlarında yer alan İngilizce hazırlık programlarında hali hazırda varolan kalite güvence süreçleri nelerdir?

a. Universite dokümanlarında İngilizce hazırlık programlarında kalite güvencesi ile ilgili yazılı tanımlamalar var mıdır?

b. İngilizce hazırlık programlarının müfredat dokümanlarında yazılı kalite güvencesi süreçleri ile ilgili tanımlar hangileridir?

2. Halihazırda uygulanmakta olan kalite güvence süreçlerinin öğretme ve öğrenmeye etkisi nedir?

3. İngilizce Hazırlık programlarında görev alan idareciler, öğretim elemanları, ve öğrenciler tarafından en gerekli görülen kalite güvence süreçleri nelerdir?

a. İdareciler, öğretim elemanları ve öğrenciler eğitimde kaliteyi nasıl algılıyor ve tanımlıyorlar?

b. İdareciler için, hangi kriter ve süreçler Türkiye'deki yüksek öğretim kurumlarıda İngilizce programlarının kalite güvencesi için etkilidir?

c. İdareci, öğretim elemanı ve öğrencilerin kalite güvencesi ve akreditasyondan beklentileri nelerdir?

4. Turkiye dışında İngilizce eğitimi alanında hangi kalite güvence süreçleri uygulanmaktadır ve bunların Turkiye'de uygulanabilirliği ne düzeydedir?

a. Türkiye'de dış kaynaklı standart ve sistemlere uygun kalite güvence süreçleri uygulayan kurumlar hangileridir?

b). Araştırmacının, idareci, öğretim elemanı ve denetçi olarak kendi deneyimlerinden çıkardığı sonuçlar nelerdir?

Çalışma, nitel araştırma yöntemleri ve özellikle de tümevarım yöntemi temel alınarak yürütülmüştür. İlk önce kapsamlı bir alanyazın taraması yapılmış. Türkiye'nin Bolonya anlaşmasını imzalayan ülkelerden birisi olduğu göz önünde bulundurularak, bu tarama Avrupa yüksek öğretim alanı ile sınırlandırılmış, bu anlaşmayı imzalayan ülkelerdeki konu ile ilgili araştırmalar takip edilmiştir. Alanyazın taraması, bu araştırmaya temel oluşturan kalite ve kalite güvencesi kavramlarının çok bilinir kabul edilmesine rağmen, çok farklı şekillerde algılanıp, tanımlandığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu nedenle, araştırmacı, bu kavramları tanımlayarak yola devam etmek yerine, kavramların kurumların amaçları doğrultusunda nasıl çeşitlilik gösterebileceğini aktarmayı seçmiş ve herhangi bir varsayım oluşturmadan araştırmayı kendi akışında yürütmeyi tercih etmiştir. Bir anlamda, bir yöntemle toplanan veriler, bir sonraki araştırma aşama ve yöntemini belirlemede anahtar görevi üstlenmiştir. (Taylor, 2006)

Araştırmanın geçerlilik ve güvenirliğinin sağlanması için, Lincoln ve Guba (1982) tarafından, bu tür nitel araştırmalar için önerilen yöntem ve stratjilerden yararlanılmıştır. Onların, nicel araştırmalarda kullanılagelen geçerlilik ve güvenirlilik kavramları yerine kullandıkları; inandırıcılık, tutarlılık, aktarılabilirlik, teyid edilebilirlik (1989) kriterleri tercih edilmiş ve önerdikleri stratejilerden araştırmaya uygun olanları kullanılmıştır. Bu bağlamda, veriler toplandıkça meslektaşlarla paylaşılmış, onların görüşleri ve teyidleri her aşamada alınmıştır.

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Araştırmacının paydaşlarla uzun süreli etkileşimi, konu ile ilgili derinlik odaklı veri toplama ve uzman görüşü alma olanaklarının olması verilerin inandırıcılık kriterine uygunluğunu ve güvenirliliğini arttırmak için kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca veri toplama yöntemleri çeşitlendirilerek ve değişik zaman dilimlerinde, değişik kurumlardaki paydaş grupları ile etkileşimde bulunularak, araştırmanın teyid edilebilirliği ve aktarılabilirliği güçlendirilmiştir.

Araştırmanın temelini Türkiyedeki İngilizce hazırlık programlarının müdürlerinin oluşturduğu YDYO- TR (Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okulları Müdürleri) grubuna dahil olan müdürler aracalığı ile, 135 İngilizce Hazırlık programına, bilgisayar ortamında gönderilen bir anket oluşturmaktadır. Bu anket üç ay süreyle açık tutulmuş, katılımın arttırılması için gönderilen hatrlatma mesajları ile desteklenmiştir. İlk aşamada müdürlerden toplanan anket, daha sonra öğretim elemanlarına iletilmek üzere yeniden açılmış ve yine üç ay süreyle açık bırakılarak veri toplanmaya çalışılmıştır.

Anket sonuçları araştırma sorularına göre, tekrar tekrar kodlanarak gruplanmış ve değerlendirilmiştir. Dereceli ölçme anahtarı kullanılarak hazırlanan sorular, en sık işaretlenen şıkların ayrıştırılması yöntemi ile ayrı tablolara dökülmüş ve sıklık derecelerine göre yorumlanmıştır. Açık uçlu soruya verilen cevaplar ise,

tekrar tekrar okunarak, ortak temalar belirlenmiş ve bu temalara göre kategorilere ayrılarak yorumlanmıştır.

Anket sonuçlarının analizi, takip eden mülakatların yapılması ve sorularının saptanması için temel oluşturmuştur. Mülakatlar, İngilizce hazırlık programlarında çalışan öğretim elemanlarını örnekleyebilecek nitelikte gönüllüler seçilerek, onların tercihine göre direk ses kaydı, not tutma ve yazılı cevap verme yöntemleri ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ses kayıları kelime kelime yazılı metinlere dönüştürülmüş, toplanan cevaplar sorulara göre ayrıştılılarak analiz edilip yorumlanmıştır. Araştırmacı yorumlarını tekrar tekrar meslektaşları ile paylaşarak doğruluklarını teyid etmeye çalışmış, kendi yorumunu katmamaya, katılımcıları yönlendirmemeye ve tarafsız kalmaya özen göstermiştir.

Araştırmacı, veri toplama süresinde, atandığı bir akreditasyon denetimini, araştırmasına dahil ederek, bu sürecin kalite ve kalite güvence kavramlarını nasıl etkilediğini ve paydaşlar tarafından nasıl algılandığını ilk elden gözlemleme fırsatı bulmuş ve diğer yöntemlerle elde ettiği verilerin doğrulanması ve tutarlılıklarının sağlanması amacıyla bu fırsatı veri toplama yöntemi olarak araştırmaya dahil etmiştir.

Anket sonuçlarından elde edilen bulgular, araştırma sorularını cevaplayacak şekilde bir tablo ile özetlenmiş daha sonra diğer yöntemlerle toplanan bulgularla birlikte yorumlanarak sonuçlandırılmıştır. Bu sonuçlar, ankete katılan, Türkiye yüksek öğretim kurumlarındaki 64 İngilizce hazırlık programını, bu programların paydaşlarını kapsadığı varsayılarak değerlendirilmelidir. Ancak bu programların hangileri olduğu, çalışmanın gizlilik ilkesi doğrultusunda saklı tutulmuştur.

Araştırma bulguların çözümlenmesi sonucunda, kalite ve kalite güvencesinin, her alanda çok kullanılmalarına rağmen; eğitimde, tanım karışıklığı yaratan, uzak durulmak istenilen kavramlar olduklarını iddia etmek olasıdır. Gerek idareciler, gerek öğretim elemanları ve gerekse öğrenciler "kaliteli eğitim" istemelerine ve hedeflemelerine karşın, bu konuda konuşmaya ve araştırmaya katılmaya pek istekli olmamışlardır. Çalışmaya katılanlardan toplanan bulgular, paydaşların bu kavramları yönetim ile ilgili süreçler olarak algıladıklarını, kalite güvence ile, dil eğitiminin iyileştirilmesi arasında direk bir bağ oluşturmadıklarını ortaya koymuştur.

Tüm paydaşların ortak isteği "dil eğitiminde kalite", her katılımcı için, kendi beklenti ve deneyimleri doğrultusunda ayrı ayrı şeyler ifade etmektedir. Ancak,

bu ifadelerde çoğunlukla beliren ortak tema, dil eğitiminde kalitenin öğretmen ve öğretme ile ilişkilendirildiği ve sonuç odaklı değerlendirildiğini ortaya koymuştur.

Türkiye'de, halihazırda kalite güvence süreçlerini uluslararası kabul gördüğü öngörülen EAQUALS VE CEA kurumlarının standart ve kriterleri ile uygulayan programlar araştırma kapsamında incelenmiştir. Bağımsız ve özel dernekler olarak faaliyet gösteren bu kurumlardan EAQUALS (Avrupa Dil Eğitiminde Kalite ve Akreditasyon Derneği), Avrupa Konseyi tarafından onaylanmış, Avrupa'daki tek dil eğitim odaklı akreditasyon organizasyonudur ve kapsam, faaliyet alanı ve etkinliği açısından en önemli organizasyonlardan birisidir. CEA (İngilizce dil eğitimi akreditasyon komisyonu) iseç Amerika'daki yabancı öğrencilere verilen İngilizce programlarını denetleyerek akredite etmek üzere kurulmuş yine özel statülü bir organizasyondur.

Bu kurumların denetimiyle, akreditasyon için gerekli olan bütün kalite güvence sistemlerini uygulamaya koyan programların paydaşları arasındaki tanımlama farklılıkları da, diğer bulgulardan elde edilen çıkarımları teyid eder niteliktedir. Bu çalışmanın kapsamı dahilinde, bu programlardaki kalite güvence süreçleri ile sınıftaki eğitimin iytileştirilmesi arasında direk bir ilgi saptamak mümkün olmamıştır. Bu program paydaşları için akreditasyon, yoğun bir çalışma ve

maddi, manevi özveri ile yapılan bir hazırlık sonucu ulaşılan son noktadır. Yani, bir iyileştirme sürecinin başlangıcı değil, bitişini simgelemektedir. Bu bağlamda, dil eğitiminin kalitesini iyileştirme ve bu iyileştirmeyi sürekli kılma konusundaki etkinlikleri tartışmaya açıktır.

Üniversitelerin iyi öğrenci çekmek için, İngilizce öğretimine verdikleri önemin artması, dil programlarının akreditasyon arayışlarını artacağı ve bu tür yabancı organizasyonlara yönelimim kaçınılmaz olacağı varsayımı ile, oldukça pahalı olan bu tür kalite güvence ve akreditasyon yatırımlarının iyi araştırılması ve uzun vadeli düşünülmesi gerekliliği aşikardır. Bu araştırmanın bu tür arayış ve araştımalara zemin oluşturarak, ışık tutması beklenmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları değerlendirildiğinde ortaya çıkan sonuçlar, kalite konusunda Avrupa yüksek öğretim alanında gerçekleştirilen kapsamlı araştıma sonuçları ile bir anlamda paralellik göstermektedir. O da; eğitim kalitesinin sürekli iyileştirilmesi için standartlara uymanın ve kalite güvence sistemleri uygulamanın, kurum içinde bir kalite kültürü oluştumaya yetmediği ve kalite kültürü oluşmadığı sürece de, eğitimde sürekli iyileşme ve gelişmenin sağlanamayacağıdır. (Vettori & Lueger, 2010)

Bolonya sürecinin amaçladığı, EAQUALS ve CEA gibi organizasyonların yaygınlaştımaya çalıştığı gibi, eğitimde kalite standartları ve süreçlerinin ortaklaştırılması, tek tipleşitirilmesi, ortak projelerin ve değişim programlarının artması bağlamında işe yaramakla birlikte, iddia edildiği gibi farklılıkların korunmasına değil, kaybedilmesine yol açmaktadır. Bu da, bu tür uygulamaların öğretim elemanları tarafından tepki ile karşılanması ve uzak durulması sonucunu doğurabilmektedir.

Özellikle, her ne kadar dünya dili haline gelse de, Amerikan ve İngiliz güdümünden kurtulamayan İngilizce eğitiminde, bu yabancı kaynaklı akreditasyon sistemleri de, Türk eğitim sistemiyle bağdaşmayan yöntem ve süreçleri empoze etmeye devam ederek, öğretim elemanlarını ve öğrencileri yanlış beklentilere sevkedebilmekte ve dil eğitiminde iyileşme sağlamayacağı beklenirken, tam tersi yavaşlatabilmektedir.

Eğitimde kalite arayışlarının bir süre daha gündemi koruyacağını öngörmek olasıdır. Bu arayışların İngilizce dil eğitiminde de süreceğinden kuşku duymak imkansızdır. Bu nedenle, dış kaynaklı kalite güvence sistemleri ve akreditasyona yönelmek yerine, Türkiye'de, Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu tarafından yetkilendirilmiş bağımsız bir komisyonun kurulması ve bu komisyonun,

Türkiye'nin eğitim politika ve sistemine uygun, yerel ihtiyaç ve farklılıkları gözeten ve onlara göre şekillenen kalite güvence çerçevesini oluşturması gerekli gözükmektedir.

Çalışma, bu gerekliliği ortaya koyarak, böyle bir komisyonun kurulmasını önermektedir. TURCQUALE, (Turkish Commision for Quality Accreditation of Langauge Education) , Türkiye'de Dil Eğitiminde Kalite Akreditastonu olarak isimlendirilen bu komisyon, yüksek öğretim kurumlarındaki dil programları ile uzun vadeli iletişim kurarak, bu programların kendi gerçeklerine ve ihtiyaçlarına uygun kalite güvence süreçlerini tanımlamalarını ve uygulamaya koymalarını sağlayabilir ve kurumlar kendi kalite kültürlerini oluşturana kadar destek ve denetimlerini sürdürebilir. Böylelikle, akreditasyon sadece statükoyu korumaya yönelik pahalı bir araç olmaktan çıkarılarak, sürekli iyileşirme ve gelişmenin kontratı haline dönüştürülebilir.

Diğer ülkelerdeki, özellikle Avrupa'daki benzer komisyon ve organizasyonların titizlikle incelenmesi, bu komisyonun planlanması sürecinde iyi örneklerden yaralanılması ve ortak projeler yürütülmesi, tek tip standardartlara uyum göstererek sağlanacak hareketlilik ve faydadan çok daha verimli sonuçlar doğurabilir.

Çalışma bulguları, ayrıca, araştırmaya katılan paydaşların beklentileri doğrultusunda kalite standartları ve süreçleri önermek yerine, bu standart ve süreçlerin her programın kendi tanım ve ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda oluşturulmasının daha verimli olacağını da ortaya koymuştur. Bu nedenle, bir standarlar ve kriterler listesi yerine, örnek bir kalite güvence çerçevesi geliştirilmiş ve üzerinde çalışılmak üzere burada sunulmuştur.

Bu çerçeve dahilinde, İngilizce programlarına verilecek en önemli destek, çalışma sonuçlarının da gösterdiği gibi, üniversitede eğitim verecek öğretim elemanlarına, üniversite eğitiminin hedefleri doğrultusunda mesleki formasyonlarını geliştirici program hizmeti sağlamak olmalıdır. Dil öğretim beceri ve yetkinliklerinin her eğitim kademesinde aynı olduğunu varsaymak ve bu alanda eğitim ve deneyimi olan öğretim elemanlarının yüksek öğretimde yeterli olacağını düşünmek safdillik olacaktır. Yüksek öğretim kurumlarında dil eğitiminin, küresel dünyada etkin yer alacak bireyler yetiştirmeyi hedefleyen üniversite eğitimine ayak uydurabilecek düzeye getirilebilmesi ve bu düzeyin hızla değişen teknolojiye ve ekonomik piyasa koşullarına paralel gelişim gösterebilmesi, ancak öğretim elemanlarına verilecek destek ve yapılacak yatırım ile mümkün olabilir.