

# Technology and Accreditation Process in Education of Communication

Yengin H.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hülya Yengin, İstanbul Aydın University, (Turkey)  
e-mail: hulyayengin@aydin.edu.tr

## Abstract

Technological development has been a profound effect on the communication field. Global mass media and electronic mass media has undergone a radical change. Global technological development has included terms such as new media, digital media, social media in our lives. Besides, media and content of it have had a transformation. This transformation changes our social and individual lifestyles and our communication habits. Technological development in the field of mass communication also changes the education of communication in higher education. Education of communication aims to educate well-equipped graduates who can be positioned according to new professions emerged in the communication sector. This change occurs within the frame of quality in the education of communication and accreditation. Quality and accreditation studies conducted at an international level are also adopted in Turkey, and thus transformation process has started. Opportunities brought by technological development are used in higher education within the context of student, academic member, and sector. Student profile and communication skills in the education of communication are changing. Universities raising scientists in higher education are carrying on their studies regarding forming an academic member profile adopting and using the opportunities of technology. Higher education works with harmony with communication sector to produce equipped graduates in line with the development of technology. Updating schedules using technological innovations, adding new courses, preparing new contents for course contents, using new tools for courses with technological opportunities are discussed in the education of communication. Each transformation's beginning, adopting, experiencing, and concluding become possible in a particular process by overcoming the featured problems. This study investigates quality and accreditation studies within the context of changes brought by technological development in the education of communication.

Keywords: Technology, Education of Communication, Accreditation, Quality, Globalization.

## Introduction

Globalization constitutes a global culture with the global economy and new mass media of technology worldwide. Technological determinism approach by Marshall McLuhan forms a basis for "mainstream" approaches in which the world has turned into a village. Walter Ong emphasizes that history of humanity included oral culture and written culture, respectively, and now we are living in the second oral culture period. In this context, the sovereignty of audiovisual communication emerges. English is the universal language in the new media. A new lifestyle, new habits brought by global culture is forming.

The globalization process has accelerated from the 1980s in Turkey. In particular, change is observed in the education of communication within the frame of adaptation to the European Union. This study approaches the education of communication as an independent variable, and technology, economy, new media, education policies as a dependent variable within the historical context. (Tokgöz: 2003:13).

Education of communication started with the establishment of the two-year Institute of Journalism at İstanbul University in 1950. Four-year license education started with the establishment of The School of Press and Broadcasting within the Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University in 1965. These schools or institutes of Ankara University, Gazi University, İstanbul University, Marmara University, and Ege University took the name of School of Press and Publication in 1982.

Eskişehir Academy of Economic and Commercial Sciences attempted to establish a television station since the beginning of the 1970s, and in 1972, television education institute, which was affiliated with the academy institutionalized after the television use. The institute transformed into College of Cinema and Television in 1975 and renamed as Faculty of Education and Teaching with Television in 1979. Then Press Department was added in the Faculty, which was renamed as Faculty of Communication Sciences in 1980.

Higher education law no 2547 enacted in 1982, resettling of all education and teaching in all current state universities and academies was brought to agenda. With the decree no 41, Ankara University Faculty of Political Science School of Press and Broadcasting, and Istanbul University Faculty of Economics Institute of Journalism and Public Relations were incorporated into rectorates of Ankara and Istanbul University, respectively as The School of Press and Broadcasting. Schools of Journalism and Public Relations affiliated to academies in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir were incorporated into the rectorates of Gazi, Marmara and Ege University as The School of Press and Broadcasting.

With the law, no 3837 enacted in 1992, five Schools of Press and Broadcasting transformed into faculties of communication. With this law, Faculty of Communication affiliated to Selçuk University was established in Konya, and Faculty of Communication Sciences affiliated to Anadolu University was established in Eskişehir. This transformation continued with İstanbul Galatasaray University Faculty of Communication in 1994, Erzurum Atatürk University Faculty of Communication in 1997, Elazığ Fırat University Faculty of Communication in 1997, Kocaeli University Faculty of Communication in 1998 and Akdeniz University Faculty of Communication in 1999.

The number of faculties of communication increases in state universities and license programs regarding communication in faculty of fine arts, communication, public relations, radio and television broadcasting, photography departments in vocational schools and institutions providing special education of communication involved in state universities. Besides, after allowing to establish foundation universities in 1997, Faculties of Communication in Yeditepe, Maltepe and Bilgi Universities were established in 1997, Faculty of Communication in Bahcesehir University was established in 2000, and İstanbul Ticaret University Faculty of Communication was established in 2001 in İstanbul. In Ankara, Baskent University Faculty of Communication was established in 1997. Istanbul Aydin University Faculty of Communication was established in 2008, Faculties and Departments of communication were established in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Eastern Mediterranean University, Cyprus International University, Near East University and European University of Lefke. In 2019, there are 67 faculties of communication in total.

Since 1992, changes have been done in the Faculties of Communication in Turkey within the process of adaptation to the European Union. The syllabus was arranged as semi-annual within the scope of Bologna process studies and studies regarding course contents, and stylistic background has been conducted until now. Turkish Qualifications Framework was created based on the European Qualifications Framework. Style and content adopted in accreditation studies set forth by Europe.

For the accreditation studies in education of communication, Education of Communication Assessment Accreditation Council (ILEDAK) was established with the approval of the Communication Research Association (ILAD) in the meeting of Deans of the Faculties of Communication. Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey accredited ILEDAK in January 2018.

ILAD/ILEDAK started to conduct accreditation studies in the departments of faculties of communication from this date on. ILEDAK aims to

\*enhance the quality of education-training and improve education with a systematical approach,

\*assure the quality of education-training,

\*reassure the people they provide service (student, parent, sharer sector) about conducting the quality of education-training based on specific standards

for the accreditation of the universities in Turkey, TRNC and Turkish republics.

Similar institutions in Europe and the US (ACA and ACEJMC) were researched. European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and principles and standards of National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey were investigated. Learning outcomes regarding the education of communication were created as a draft

based on these principles. Learning outcomes of ILEDAK general communication program and seven different programs were prepared to apply in the accreditation process of education of communication program. These are;

\*General outcomes of education of communication

\*Field of Journalism and New Media

\*Field of Visual Communication Design

\*Department of Public Relations and Publicity

\*Field of Communication Sciences

\*Field of Radio and Television and Cinema

\*Field of Advertising

\*Field of New Media and Digital Media (Aziz:2016)

The extent education programs met the requirements of today, and the extent the technological developments adapted to these programs have always been a discussion topic (Topuz:2003:378).

Employment of graduates is also a problem within the frame of the relationship between the academy and communication sector. Besides, the high number of faculties of communication also bears an employment problem.

Development of technology and its effect on the field of communication makes the education of communication to be in a dynamic structure. Communication is an interdisciplinary field that benefits from each discipline of social sciences. Technological innovations necessitate the change of target masses in the education of communication. Students, academicians, and communication sector comprise these main target masses. Harmony is aimed among each of these three targets for their social, economic, and cultural completion by technological development in the global world.

At first, student-centered instruction is adopted in the education of communication. Technological infrastructure, classrooms enhanced with software and communication facilities make the communication between student and academician easier. Elements such as recording, course selection, approving courses and announcing the test scores are necessary infrastructure studies conducted to adapt to technological innovation and change.

Each university, faculty or department can create new education process infrastructure according to their vision, mission, and culture. Today, e-transformation and e-learning are discussed in education-training. New teaching methods take shape within the frame of synchronous processes, lecturing independently from time and space. These are instant processes. Digital transformation makes the infrastructure of education technology. Smartphones are used more than computers as training technologies. Primarily, the internet access problem should be solved.

Education-training environment includes flexibility. The learning process is moving outside of the campus. Time and space notions are transforming for education. Preparing the content of instructional materials is a significant subject apart from infrastructure. For special course design, academicians who are experts on their fields need to devote themselves to study regarding this subject and adopt the transformation. Copyrights, institutional core curriculum instructions and methods of fundamental principles should be shaped and guaranteed by the universities. This type of education-training processes provides flexibility, awareness to learn to be able to choose what, where and when and taking responsibility.

This approach that requires working coordinated within the university units foresees developing new online courses and programs creating new value, experience, product service transformation, and mobile application.

This type of “special course designs” also transform researching, planning, application, and evaluation processes. They include audiovisual-based, short, comprehensible, clear, competition and rewarding with gamified content. Micro-learning is aimed through virtualization elements. Education of communication is a field in which theoretical and practical studies are within one another. Syllabus

studies conducted in compliance with the technological innovations make the backbone of the accreditation studies. Following the international studies within the context of adaptation, updating, innovation, creating, globalization makes syllabus studies possible. Course names become in conformity with the course contents, the way of teaching and sector using the technology. Therefore, communication interacts with social, economic and cultural change within the globalization. Changing and transformation are sustainable. New programs are created, and new courses are added to the syllabus. External stakeholders' meetings are set to communicate with the sector, and a student profile in compliance with the sector is created. Target mass making these innovations, changes, and transformations is academicians. Not only do universities' missions include graduating students from 4-year license programs, but it also includes raising scientists. Postgraduate and doctorate programs also need constant improvement works such as license programs. In this context, all academicians need to be a part of the process and need to be efficiently raised for teamwork, strong leadership, pedagogical performances.

The student is the focal point in the education of communication. A student who knows his/her mother tongue, has the mathematical knowledge, can think analytically in primary, middle and high school is the student who is ready for the education of communication. If s/he can learn a foreign language effortlessly, s/he can benefit from "Erasmus" student change program brought by Bologna and can be educated in a European country for at least a semester, which is a significant experience. The syllabus includes social sciences core courses, core courses regarding general communication field, and courses and elective courses of the program. Students undergo internship in the sector and graduate with a capstone project within the frame of these lessons. A graduate student has the following characteristics: able to think critically, in compliance with teamwork, able to solve a problem in a crisis, has ethical values, leader, creative and able to think analytically.

## Accreditation in Higher Education

### Accreditation Description

According to 3rd article of Higher Education Quality Assurance Regulation published in the Official Gazette no: 29423 of 23 July 2015, accreditation is the quality assurance and evaluation process measuring whether a higher education program meets the academic and field standards, determined by an accreditation agency in a specific field.

Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey (HEQC) is responsible for authorization and recognition of accreditation agencies in Turkey. The processes of authorization of national accreditation agencies and recognition of international accreditation agencies are conducted within the scope of principles and standards determined by HEQC.

The 6th article of Higher Education Quality Assurance and Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey published in the Official Gazette no: 30604 of 23 November 2018 states the tasks of Higher Education Quality Council of Turkey as below:

- a) Determining the national policies and strategies regarding the quality assurance in higher education, and releasing these to the public,
- b) Being engaged in activities to develop and popularize the quality culture in higher education,
- c) Encouraging the establishment of internal quality assurance systems, and guiding higher education institutions in this subject,
- d) Following the studies regarding quality assurance systems in higher education on a national and international level, and conducting joint studies on a national and international level,
- e) Determining principles, quality indicators and rules that will be performed in external evaluation and accreditation process,
- f) Carrying out an external evaluation of higher education institutions regarding education and training, research and development, quality levels of social contribution and administrative services at least once in every five years and evaluating the higher education programs if necessary.

g) Evaluating and following the activities of higher education institutions within the scope of mission differentiation and specialization program, and presenting the results to the Council of Higher Education,

h) Conducting activities and broadcasting to inform higher education institutions regarding external evaluation and accreditation processes,

i) Preparing, publishing Higher Education Quality Status Report including advice regarding quality improvements by evaluating institutional feedback reports every year after the external evaluation process of Higher Education institutions, and submitting them for stakeholders' information,

i) Deciding by evaluating the letter of registration of private persons/entities applying to register within the scope of principles and rules to conduct activities in external evaluation and accreditation areas, following the activities of these institutions and being informed, warning or canceling their registrations if necessary,

j) Representing Turkey regarding quality assurance in higher education in the presence of international institutions,

k) Cooperating with the Council of Turkey Qualifications Framework regarding higher education quality assurance system,

l) Evaluating the implementation level of qualifications, provisions in the Rules and Procedures regarding the Quality Assurance within the scope of Turkey Qualifications Framework.

The Authorization and Recognition of Accreditation Agencies process section in the 6th section of the Council of Higher Education Quality Regulation is as below:

Article 27: National, independent accreditation agencies shall be authorized and given Quality Assessment Registration Certificate by the Council, and international accreditation agencies shall be recognized by the Council.

HEQC (Higher Education Quality Council) implements The Authorization and Recognition of Accreditation Agencies by the below principles.

1)The agency should have predetermined and predeclared missions and goals, should maintain its activities in the direction with these goals, should ensure broad stakeholder participation in management processes and implementations, and should prove that outcome-oriented applications regarding program accreditation and the standards are reliable and suitable for national and international standards (particularly ESG), and the right decisions are made.

2)The agency's corporate and financial structure should be suitable for regulation and field of activity and should be firm and sustainable.

3)The agency should independently move in terms of organizational structuring, operational processes, and formal results' responsibility.

4)The agency should regularly publish general assessment reports analyzing the results of program accreditation activities.

5)The agency should have enough and suitable human and financial resources to conduct the program accreditation activities.

6)The agency should participate in suitable internal quality assurance processes to follow, assess and assure the activity outcomes, and conduct constant improvement studies.

7)The agency should participate in external assessment processes for the constant improvement of the quality assurance system and to assess whether its activities are suitable for the national and international standards (particularly ESG).

HEQC recognizes accreditation agencies according to below standards.

1)The agency should prove that implementations and standards regarding program accreditation are trustworthy and suitable for national and international standards (particularly ESG).

2)The agency should prove that they embrace the outcome-oriented (learning outcomes, following the student success, assessment and evaluation approaches, graduate opinions, etc.) accreditation approach.

Besides, Higher Education Quality of Turkey was accepted as a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) from March 2019.

ENQA, established in 2000, is one of the leading associations representing quality assurance organizations in Higher Education in Europe. It aims to encourage European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education and developing and sharing implementations. It also aims to share its knowledge and specialty with its members and stakeholders to improve quality assurance dimension.

### **Quality Assurance In Education**

A program should have mission, stakeholders' views, and loud and clear education purposes both for accreditation studies and for Bologna process in the frame of education-training quality assurance. Besides, the European Qualifications Framework and National Qualifications Framework should be taken into consideration. Basic field competencies, program outcomes and course contents should be compatible with learning outcomes. The correlation matrix is formed between program education purposes and program outcomes. Measurable learning outcomes related to program qualifications and that will determine the program competencies are written for each course.

A student passing the course gain measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities from this course. Program qualification correlation matrix is formed in the courses. Required workload and the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits are calculated without breaking the 30 ECTS/term rule to reach course learning outcomes.

Program quality assurance system should be established and operated for the conformity between course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes. Quality assurance should include planning, implementation, assessment, reporting, and quality improvement activities providing that qualifications are met the predetermined quality standard and principles. Course learning outcomes and measurement results should be evaluated, proofs regarding program outcomes should be investigated, the achievement of program education goals and the results should be evaluated in the meetings conducted with stakeholders.

### **Conclusion**

Technological opportunities transform the education of communication in the globalizing world. Outcome-oriented education of communication includes quality and accreditation studies. Accreditation includes the plan-do-check-act study as a whole. In this context, Quality Assurance Guidelines, Quality Council and National Accreditation Body aim to generalize quality culture with quality and accreditation studies.

ILEDK taking the Quality Registration Certificate in 2008 use syllabus as a base in accreditation. The syllabus should be updated constantly with interaction with the sector and external stakeholders. Accreditation aims constant, outcome-oriented, student-oriented, project-based education. Graduates are desired to have the following characteristics: able to express themselves, creative, able to produce and able to create awareness. Achievement of education goals is proved. Simplicity and accuracy are sought.

Behavioral dimension is significant in the evaluator educations of accreditation. It should ethically be strengthened. Reports with loud and clear standards written for field-specific improvement provide quality assurance. Technology changes features of program and syllabus. Transivity is obligatory in terms of interdepartmental harmony.

Technological development sets forth computer-based, dynamic, flexible and interactive syllabus. Required updates should be done for sustainable changes. In this context, the foundation of quality and accreditation standards is laid down with university-sector cooperation. The fundamental things are departments, in other words, programs.

The syllabus includes compulsory and selective courses consisting of core lessons of social sciences, general communication lessons. Elective courses consist of university, department and faculty courses. Contents of core lessons create the infrastructure of accreditation standards.

Communication, which is an interdisciplinary field, benefits from other social sciences. The balanced syllabus includes theoretical and practical lessons. Knowledge, skill, and competence harmonize with each other by putting the knowledge gained in the lessons into practice.

Theories and models produced with studies and reviews conducted within the frame of description, function and communication studies benefit from various social science disciplines. It is approached on a broad technological, social, economic and cultural dimension. It is significant to understand the connection between education and social life.

Technology brings new technologies such as gaining adaptability with fast learning, smart management. “Core Education of Communication Program” includes sustainable development, preserving humanitarian and moral values. It also includes gaining oral, written, visual and audio competences, analytical critical thinking, knowledge-based agile leadership, and problem-solving ability. All studies state that quality and accreditation studies will continue in the education of communication and should be updated within the frame of technological development.

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