

Education for Sustainable Development at Higher Education in Turkey: The Integraton of Sustainable Development Goals in Preparatory EFL Classes

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Abstract

This study investigates the integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curricula at the preparatory level in Turkish higher education, focusing on Tarsus University. Employing a mixed-method research design, the study involved 90 upper-level EFL students, equally divided into experimental and control groups. The participants were selected through purposive random sampling. The research aimed to evaluate how sustainability-related themes are integrated into EFL instruction and to assess the extent to which this integration enhances learners' awareness and competencies within the language education process. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-tests, while qualitative insights were gained via minute paper, interviews, and checklist-based content analyses. Findings indicate that students in the experimental group demonstrated significantly enhanced awareness of global challenges and showed improved competencies, particularly in the areas of Zero Hunger, Climate Action, Gender Equality, Quality Education, and Partnerships for the Goals. Furthermore, the integration of ESD in language education encouraged students to engage in deeper reflection, critical thinking, and civic responsibility, illustrating the transformative potential of interdisciplinary sustainability education. The study concludes that embedding SDGs into language curricula not only enhances linguistic competence but also cultivates sustainable worldviews and ethical engagement among learners, supporting the broader objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

Keywords

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), language education, transformative learning, higher education, Türkiye.