# Retention and English as the Medium of Instruction at Turkish Private Universities
(Foundation)

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Student retention in higher education is commonly defined as a student's desire to remain at an institution until her or his academic goals - usually graduation - have been achieved.

"Student retention is uncharted territory in Turkey...it is an invisible problem that leads to inefficiencies in the higher education system" (Aypay, Cekic, and Boyaci, 2012).
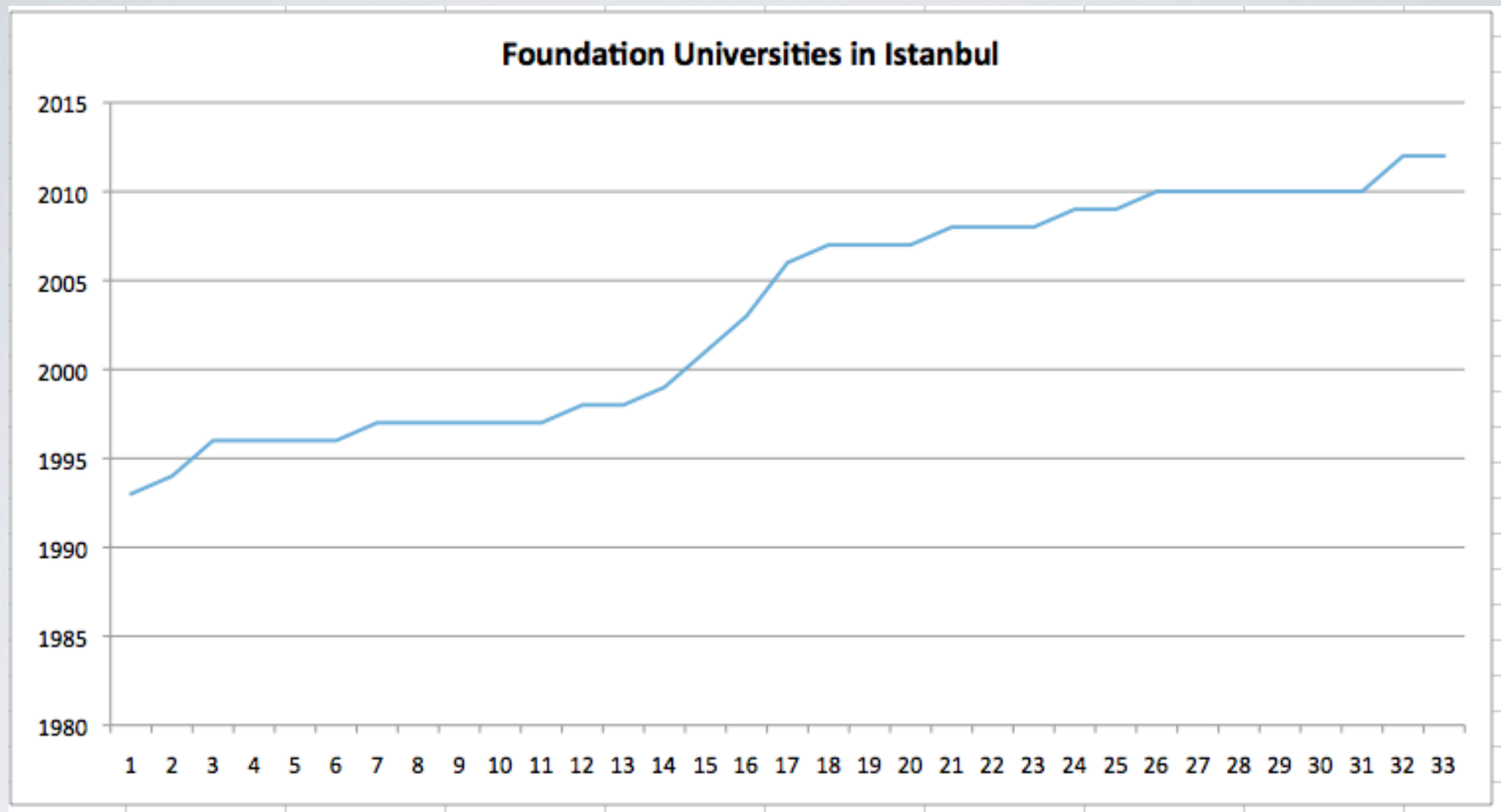
Total number of universities in Turkey: 180; 71 foundation

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

- Is there a retention problem (at our foundation U)?

- If so, what is the nature of the problem?

- What can be done about it?

Since 2009 – 752 students have left school(~20%)

- 190 specified EFL – 25%
- Remaining 560 gave the same responses.
- The most common stated reasons for leaving:
  - Personal Request
  - Unsuccessful in language school
  - Transferring to another U
  - Family financial matters

Swirl - 195/752 transferred (of those who specified) 25%

Bradford Framework

The challenges that arise alongside adoption of EMI programs can be categorized into three types –

Linguistic

Cultural

Structural

Linguistic

Quality of language during instruction

Because I can't understand the lectures, I get stressed. This, in turn, prohibits me from learning.

When the professor starts teaching in English, I pay attention. But at some point I lose attention...I drift off, and then I begin to not understand what is going on

Cultural

- Student centered? (How important is English?)
- To what degree is English used in courses?
- Are Erasmus/Foreign students coming?

I was in a class in my first semester when I asked a question. When the instructor heard my English, he replied by saying that 'here you are in a university and you're talking like a primary school student.' This really demoralized me, and from that point on, in large part, I didn't participate in the class.

Structural

- Prep Program (exit exam policies)
- Freshman English Program
- Institutional Structures (course load, attendance policies)
- Entrance exam scores- predictive analytics; supports?

I struggled in my first semester. I was really affected by this, so I stopped working altogether.

- Courses – 50 minutes…should they be shorter, according to attention spans?
- Enrollment & Registration Office - No data collection & analysis efforts made; no dedicated resources

What gets measured gets done.

Osborne and Gaebler, 1992

References

Aypay, A., Cekic, O., & Boyaci, A. (2012-2013). Student retention in higher education in Turkey: A qualitative study. Journal of College Student Retention, 14:1, pp. 91-116.

Bradford, A. (2012).Challenges in Adopting English-Taught Degree Programs. International Higher Education, 69, pp. 8-10.