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## EVALUATION OF THE VOLUNTARY ENGLISH PREPARATORY PROGRAM AT A TURKISH STATE UNIVERSITY\*

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### Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the voluntary English Preparatory Program at Usak University. The research utilized Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) program evaluation model. The research data were collected through a questionnaire which was developed by Tunc (2010) and adapted by the researcher, as well as semi-structured interviews with instructors. The research data were gathered from 208 preparatory students who were studying in preparatory classes in the academic year of 2015-2016 and two instructors. The quantitative research data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and the qualitative data were subjected to content analysis. As a result of context evaluation, it was revealed that both students and instructors were highly dissatisfied with the physical conditions of the School of Foreign Languages. The results obtained from input evaluation indicated that speaking, writing skills and vocabulary teaching were not emphasized sufficiently in preparatory program. Process evaluation unearthed that lecturing of instructors was the most frequently used teaching method. Besides, students were found to be highly pleased with the instructors. Product evaluation suggested that most students perceived themselves less competent in vocabulary, speaking and writing skills as consistent with the findings from input evaluation. Based upon the results of the study, it can be suggested that the content of the prep program needs to include all language skills and the educational setting needs to be improved.

**Keywords:** Program Evaluation, Voluntary Preparatory Program, CIPP.

### Introduction

Evaluation is defined as “the systematic assessment of the worth or merit of some object” by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985, p.3). Program evaluation in education refers to a careful rigorous examination of any development or system intended to improve or enhance the educational experiences of students (Walberg & Haertel, 1990 as cited in Gredler, 1996).

Program evaluation seeks to provide feedback (Reith, 1984). Three uses of program evaluation may be mentioned as improvement (providing information for assuring the quality of a program or for improving it), accountability (providing information for sponsors and customers such as cost-effectiveness) and enlightenment (considering all criteria to promote understanding of the phenomena involved in the evaluation) (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985).

Thorough evaluation is essential to curriculum development (Oliva & Gordon, 2013). Many program evaluations consist of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a detailed description and analysis of the program. Program evaluation may also be conducted at any stage of development and implementation.

### Research Studies on Language Program Evaluation

The literature presents various evaluation studies on different level language programs (Bilican, 2014; Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Er, 2006; Kirmizi, 2011; Kozikoglu, 2014; Ozudogru & Adiguzel, 2015). Recently, more studies have been carried out on the evaluation of university level preparatory school language programs. For instance, Tekin (2015) carried out an illuminative evaluation of the English Language Teaching (ELT) and English Language and Literature (ELL) preparatory classes of a state university in Turkey. Yilmaz-Virlan (2014) evaluated the effectiveness of the speaking curriculum in a public university preparatory school program by using CIPP program evaluation model. Bayram (2011) evaluated the English Preparatory Curriculum at TOBB University of Economics and Technology Department of Foreign Languages based upon CIPP model. Tunc (2009) evaluated the effectiveness of the English Language Teaching Program at Atılım University, Preparatory School. Karatas (2007) evaluated the syllabus of English II instruction program applied in Modern Languages Department, Yıldız Teknik University School of Foreign Languages by using CIPP model. Inal & Aksoy (2014) evaluated Çankaya University

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Preparatory School curriculum in the light of Bloom's program evaluation model based on four program components. Gerede (2005) evaluated the effects of curriculum renewal project started at Anadolu University, Intensive English Program through needs analysis. Similarly, Cosaner (2013) evaluated the effectiveness of the program conducted at Gazi University Preparatory School from the freshman students' point of view by realizing a need-based evaluation method. Ozkanal (2009) evaluated the English Preparatory Program of Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department. Mede (2012) designed and evaluated a Language Preparatory Program at an English medium university. Tunc (2010) evaluated the effectiveness of Ankara University Preparatory School utilizing CIPP program evaluation model.

The evaluated program in this study is Usak University English preparatory school program with 25 hours of instruction a week for two semesters. It has been providing voluntary English language preparatory classes since 2013-2014 academic year. It determines a quota for each faculty, which is limited. Students at this university either go to the preparatory classes for one year or enter their departments directly and take three-hour weekly compulsory English course for two semesters. Students who enter the preparatory classes are given an online placement exam and ranked according to the results of this test. Furthermore, students are again placed in appropriate levels at the beginning of the second term according to the results of the tests in the first term.

Besides, there is not any common teaching approach in the school. The program has used different course books for three years and the course books have not been analyzed in detail. Also, students are given a European Language Portfolio at the end of the year if their total score is more than 60. The assessment percentages of the preparatory program are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The assessment percentages of the preparatory program

First Semester			Second Semester			At the end of year
Midterms	Quizzes	Project	Midterms	Quizzes	Project	Final Exam
%20 (%10 each)	%4 (%1 each)	%1	%20 (%10 each)	%4 (%1 each)	%1	%50

There were 12 classes, 220 students enrolled, 13 full-time Turkish instructors and 2 native speaking instructors in the academic year of 2015-2016 in the School of Foreign Languages.

This study is important due to several reasons. Since the preparatory program has been providing voluntary English classes for three academic years and has never been evaluated before, it is important to evaluate the program based upon students and instructors' views so a curriculum can be designed that addresses them. Also, urgently needed revisions in the curriculum may be conducted based on this evaluation.

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the voluntary English Preparatory Program of Usak University. Based upon the general aim, the following research questions were posed:

*Context Evaluation:*

- 1) What kind of educational setting do the prep classes have?

*Input Evaluation*

- 2) What are the students' perceptions in relation to the emphasis on four skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation teaching in prep classes?

*Process Evaluation*

- 3) What are the students' perceptions in terms of teaching methods, materials, assessment dimensions of the program, and communication opportunities?

*Product Evaluation*

- 4) What are the students' perceptions of their own competencies in relation to four language skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation?
- 5) In general, are the students satisfied with the current program?

**Method**

**Research Design**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the English Preparatory Program of Usak University, which has been carried out for three academic years. Context-Input-Process-Product (CIPP) program evaluation model was utilized in the study. CIPP program evaluation model provides useful information for decision-making, serves accountability needs and promotes understanding of the program

strategy or object being evaluated (Gredler, 1996). According to Fitzpatrick, Sanders and Worthen (2004), CIPP evaluation model is management-oriented, serving to the needs of decision-makers. However, according to Gredler (1996), it is framed by utilitarian perspectives, making judgments based on the notion of the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Context evaluation identifies the strengths and weaknesses of a program and indicates direction for improvement. Input evaluation identifies any barriers or constraints in the program environment that may influence or impede the operation of the program. Process evaluation provides feedback about the extent to which program activities are on schedule, being carried out as planned, and using the available resources in an efficient manner. Product evaluation measures, interprets, and judges the attainments of a program (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985). Hence, it is possible to realize a very comprehensive evaluation via this model.

Besides, this study employed a mixed-method design, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data were gathered via a questionnaire and the qualitative data were collected through open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews.

### Participants

The participants of this study were English prep class students who were studying in the School of Foreign Languages, Usak University in the academic year of 2015-2016 and two prep-school instructors. The research aimed to reach the whole population, so no sampling method was used. The demographic properties of students are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic properties of students

Variables		N	%
Age	18-19	131	62.9
	20-21	77	37.1
Gender	Female	93	44.7
	Male	115	55.3
High School Graduated	General	33	15.9
	Vocational and Technical Anatolian	82	38
	Anatolian High Schools	80	37.5
	Other	13	8.6
Departments	Social Sciences	148	71.2
	Natural and Applied Sciences	60	28.8
Academic Achievement	Low	50	24
	Medium	88	42.3
	High	70	33.7
Total		208	100

Besides, two instructors were interviewed for this research. Both of them are female. Both of them are between 26-30 years old and one of them has 1-5 years' experience and the other has 6-10 years' experience. Also, both of them graduated from English Language Teaching department.

### Data Collection

The research data were gathered at the end of the spring semester of 2015-2016 academic year. In the research, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire developed by Tunc (2010) and adapted by the researcher. The questionnaire, which was administered to the prep class students, consisted of 48 items including six demographic questions. The first part of the questionnaire included two items about how they perceived the educational setting of prep classes. The second part of the questionnaire included seven items about how sufficiently four skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation teaching were emphasized in prep classes. The other parts of the questionnaire focused on students' perceptions in terms of teaching methods, materials and assessment dimensions of the program, communication opportunities, their own competencies in relation to four language skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation and their general satisfaction with the program. The qualitative data were collected through two open-ended questions about students' positive and negative opinions in relation to the English prep program to get in-depth data and have a broad understanding about their opinions of the English prep program. In the semi-structured interviews, instructors were asked five questions about the aims, content, materials, assessment dimensions of the program and problems they encountered during the implementation of the program.

The questionnaire was piloted and applied to six preparatory students and the Cronbach alpha reliability was found as  $\alpha = 0.89$  which can be evaluated as high reliability. After the questionnaire was administered to students, the reliability was tested again and it was found that the questionnaire had a Cronbach alpha reliability of 0.91. The questionnaire was administered to students in Turkish as the original

questionnaire is. The research data were collected at the end of the spring semester of 2015-2016 academic year.

### Data Analysis

In this study, the quantitative data were compiled and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 19.0 was used to analyze these data through descriptive statistics. The qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. Content analysis is used to identify the core consistencies and meanings in qualitative data. The core meanings found through content analysis are called patterns or themes (Patton, 2002). The common and significant points, themes and patterns were found in the data. The themes were coded and cross-checked by the researcher and a colleague to ensure inter-rater reliability. Then, these coherent patterns were categorized.

### Findings

#### Research Question 1. What kind of educational setting do the prep classes have?

Table 2. Students' perceptions about the educational setting of the prep classes

Educational Setting	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	X	SD
1.I am generally pleased with the building and classrooms where we study.	7.7	19.7	27.9	44.7	1.90	.97
2.I am generally happy with equipment and materials used in class.	12	49	29.8	9.1	2.63	.81

As seen in Table 2, more than %70 of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement "I am generally pleased with the building and classrooms where we study". However, %61 of the students were found happy with the equipment and materials used in class.

Students also wrote some extra comments about the physical conditions of the prep classes, which are very negative. Some of them are in the following:

*We are not pleased with classrooms. They are underground and we are affected negatively by them (S5)*

*The building we receive education is very bad and it makes us bored to learn in the underground classrooms (S15)*

*Classrooms have a low ceiling and affect us negatively. We get bored easily (S52)*

*The classrooms need to be changed. Separate classrooms for school of foreign languages are needed. These classrooms are insufficient to study English (S102)*

*The TV and other equipment in the classrooms do not work efficiently (S128)*

In the semi-structured interviews, instructors also complained about the inefficiency of the physical conditions. Their views are as in the following:

*Instructor 1: One thing that really demotivates students is the classrooms. The classrooms are in the basement floor with no sunlight. Also, the canteen is on the fourth floor so it is really hard for students to go to the canteen in five minutes' break.*

#### Research Question 2. What are the students' perceptions in relation to the emphasis on four skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation teaching in prep classes?

Table 3. Students' perceptions of prep classes in relation to the emphasis on different language skills

	Quite sufficient %	Sufficient %	Insufficient %	Quite insufficient %	X	SD
3.Writing	10.6	53.4	29.3	6.7	2.67	.75
4.Reading	19.7	60.1	17.8	2.4	2.97	.68
5.Listening	22.6	55.8	19.2	2.4	2.98	.71
6.Speaking	8.7	44.2	38	9.1	2.52	.77
7.Grammar	24	48.6	25.5	1.9	2.94	.75
8.Vocabulary	9.7	46.6	39.9	3.8	2.62	.71
9.Pronunciation	12.5	53.9	26.4	7.2	2.71	.77

Table 3 suggests that students found prep classes sufficient in relation to the emphasis on different language skills. Besides, according to their perceptions, reading, listening and grammar were the most emphasized skills in prep classes; however, speaking, vocabulary and writing were the least emphasized skills.

Students also wrote some extra comments about the content of the courses. They think that speaking and writing, which are productive skills, are not emphasized enough in prep class program whereas they believe the emphasis on grammar and listening skills is sufficient. Students' comments are in line with the findings obtained from questionnaire items. Their views are listed below:

The time allocated for writing and speaking activities were not enough. They should have been more (S42)  
 More time should be allocated for writing and speaking activities (S72)  
 Courses are fun and content is enough (S85)  
 Listening activities helped me a lot in improving my English (S41)  
 Listening activities were enough (S46)  
 Prep class is enough in terms of improving grammar and vocabulary, as well as listening comprehension (S139)  
 Time for writing and vocabulary activities is very limited ( S120)  
 Vocabulary exercises are insufficient (S3)

The interviews conducted with two instructors focused on different dimensions of prep class program. When instructors were asked about the aims of the prep program, they complained that prep class program was not enough to improve students' English in sufficient level. Views about aims of the prep program can be seen below:

*Instructor 1: The prep class program aims to prepare students for the English courses they are going to take in their departments in the following year, as well as for the Erasmus program to study abroad. However, they still have low level of English at the end of the year because they were almost beginner level at the beginning. It was only possible to finish two levels.*

In parallel with students' views, it was stated that speaking and writing skills were not addressed enough in the program because of lack of a skills-based program. Instructors' views are in the following:

*Instructor 2: There should be a skills-based syllabus. Certain hours need to be allocated for each skill and each skill needs to be taught by a separate instructor so we can focus on each skill equally. In the current program, not enough hours are allocated for speaking and writing skills."*

**Research Question 3. What are the students' perceptions in terms of teaching methods, materials, assessment dimensions of the program, and communication opportunities?**

Table 4. Students' perceptions in terms of teaching methods

	Always/Often %	Sometimes/Rarely/Never %	X̄	SD
10.Question asking of students	56.3	43.8	3.56	.69
11.Role-play	20.2	79.8	3.20	.68
12.Group work	49.5	50.5	3.49	.73
13.Lecturing of instructors	90.4	9.6	3.90	.76
14.Pair work	69.2	30.8	3.69	.66
15.Question answering of students	60.6	39.4	3.60	.77
16.Discussion	38.5	61.5	3.38	.71
17.Presentation of students	13.5	86.5	3.13	.81

Table 4 shows that students thought that lecturing of instructors was the most frequently used teaching method. After that, pair work and question answering of students were used frequently. In contrast, presentation of students, role-play and discussion were rarely used.

Table 5. Students' perceptions in terms of materials used

	Quite sufficient %	Sufficient %	Insufficient %	Quite insufficient %	X̄	SD
18.Reading texts	19.7	63	14.9	2.4	3.00	.66
19.Listening CDs/DVDs	15.4	60.1	21.2	3.4	2.87	.69
20.Writing materials	8.7	48.1	39.9	3.4	2.62	.69
21.Grammar materials	15.9	49	32.7	2.4	2.78	.73
22.Speaking materials (visual and audial)	12	44.2	35.1	8.7	2.59	.81
23. Materials about daily life	8.7	56.7	26.9	7.7	2.66	.74

It is very vivid in Table 5 that students found prep classes sufficient in terms of the materials used. They found the use of reading texts, listening CDs/DVDs and grammar materials sufficient the most whereas they found the use of speaking, writing materials and materials about daily life less sufficient.

Moreover, students depicted that they were displeased with the overuse of course book in teaching.

Their statements are as

in the following:

*We are dependent on the course book and do not do other activities such as watching films, reading a text. I think it is going to be better if these are also included (S12)*

*It is wrong to be totally dependent on the course book. We could have learnt in a different way (S37)*

*Enough materials were not distributed (S161)*

*Education is provided in a highly boring way, with course book (S3)*

Also, in the semi-structured interviews instructors complained about demotivated students and lack of materials.

*Instructor 2: I cannot say that all the students are motivated to learn English. Some of them see this year as a break after a long preparation time for university exams... Also, we don't have many materials such as colorful pictures, CDs and DVDs. If we have more opportunities, education can be promoted in prep classes.*

Table 6. Students' perceptions in terms of assessment dimension of the program

Assessment	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	X̄	SD
24.Exams reflect the content of the course.	21.6	67.3	7.7	3.4	3.07	.65
25.Exams and quizzes help me learn better.	15.4	56.3	21.6	6.7	2.80	.77
26.The difficulty level of exams is generally consistent with each other.	10.6	40.4	38.9	10.1	2.51	.81
27.Portfolio is beneficial to evaluate the improvement of my language skills.	8.2	53.4	23.6	14.9	2.54	.84
28.The number of exams is sufficient.	20.7	58.2	15.9	5.3	2.94	.75

Table 6 also reveals that students found assessment dimension of the program sufficient. Most of the students agreed or strongly agreed that exams reflected the content of the course. Also, a high number of students agreed or strongly agreed that the number of exams was sufficient. Furthermore, half of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The difficulty level of exams is generally consistent with each other". Besides, more than half of the students agreed or strongly agreed that portfolio was beneficial to evaluate the improvement of their language skills.

In addition, in the interviews instructors reported that they were displeased with the assessment dimension of the prep program. They asserted that assessment policies needed to be changed by adding attendance and participation items to the assessment and changing the percentages of other assessment items. Their views about assessment are in the following:

*Instructor 1: In the current assessment system, we do not grade students on attendance and participation. According to absenteeism policies, students can be absent a lot of hours and it affects their success negatively. Therefore, students must certainly be graded on attendance and participation.*

*Instructor 2: There are some problems with the assessment procedures. For example, the final exam is fifty percent. However, it is not much different from mid-term exams in terms of both content and difficulty level. Also, each quiz is only one percent so students do not attach any importance to the quizzes. Thus, the percentages of assessment need to be revised.*

Furthermore, students wrote extra comments about the change of classes according to their end-of-first semester grades.

*Our classes were changed according to academic success at the beginning of the second semester and it took some time to get used to new classmates and instructors (S59)*

*Change of classes at the beginning of the second semester led us to adapt to the courses very late after a long semester break (S81)*

Table 7. Students' perceptions in terms of communication facilities

Communication	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	X̄	SD
29.I can reach my instructors whenever I want.	40.4	52.9	6.3	0.5	3.33	.61
30.When I have a question, I can easily ask my instructors.	40.9	55.3	3.4	0.5	3.36	.57
31.I can easily tell my ideas in class.	33.7	54.3	11.5	0.5	3.21	.65
32.Our ideas are taken into account when designing in-class activities.	26.4	51.9	17.3	4.3	3.00	.78

Table 7 shows that students strongly agreed that they could reach their instructors whenever they wanted and when they had a question, they could easily ask their instructors. Moreover, they agreed that they could easily tell their ideas in class and their ideas were taken into account when designing in-class activities. Students also wrote positive comments about the instructors:

*Instructors are very friendly and we can easily ask questions (S6)*

*Our communication with the instructors is very good (S40)*

*I can benefit from the instructors all the time because communication between us is very good (S41)*

*We can reach our instructors whenever we want and ask questions (S122)*

**Research Question 4. What are the students' perceptions of their own competencies in relation to four language skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation?**

Table 8. Students' perceptions of their own competencies

	Quite competent %	Competent %	Incompetent %	Quite incompetent %	X̄	SD
33.Writing	12	44.2	38.5	5.3	2.62	.76
34.Reading	20.7	60.1	17.3	1.9	2.99	.67
35.Listening	14.4	54.8	27.9	2.9	2.80	.70
36.Speaking	9.1	45.2	38.9	6.7	2.56	.75
37.Grammar	14.4	44.7	37	3.8	2.69	.76
38.Vocabulary	6.7	43.8	44.2	5.3	2.51	.70
39.Pronunciation	11.5	52.4	31.3	4.8	2.70	.73

As can be seen from Table 8, students perceived themselves competent in all skills. They perceived themselves more competent in reading, listening and pronunciation while they found themselves less competent in vocabulary, speaking and writing. Students' extra comments are listed below:

*I thought that I would improve my speaking skills because we had American instructors but it did not happen so (S14)*

*I could not improve my speaking skills, which were necessary to be a flight attendant because speaking skills were not focused on enough (S16)*

*We mostly focus on grammar. We improved our grammar but it is not necessary on its own. We did not progress in speaking and writing skills (S20)*

*I cannot write in English because writing skill was not focused enough. Also, no attention was paid to make us speak so I could not improve my speaking, either (S22)*

**Research Question 5. In general, are the students satisfied with the current program?**

Table 9. Students' perceptions in terms of general satisfaction

General Satisfaction	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	X̄	SD
40.English prep program met my needs and expectations.	11.5	39.9	38.9	9.6	2.53	.82
41.I am generally pleased with my instructors.	36.5	51.9	10.6	1	3.24	.67
42.I am generally happy with the education provided in prep program.	10.1	49	30.8	10.1	2.59	.80

As can be seen from Table 9, half of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "English prep program met my needs and expectations". In addition, more than half of the students were found happy with the education provided in prep program. Besides, most of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they were generally pleased with the instructors. As consistent with the findings obtained from the questionnaire items, students' views about the instructors are very positive. Some of their views are listed below:

*Instructors are very good and successful in their field (S7)*

*I am happy with the endeavor and effort of the instructors (S37)*

*Instructors are very good and did their best (S52)*

*Our instructors are very good in their field so the courses continue very effectively (S96)*

Students' positive views were also about the weekly teaching hours and a variety of instructors teaching each class. Their views are below:

*Weekly teaching hours is sufficient (S42)*

*A variety of instructors teaching to each group and their use of different teaching methods is good (S90)*

The negative views of students and instructors focused on attendance policies.

*The right to absenteeism is too much, which leads some friends to miss many classes. It must be reduced (S104)*

*Attendance policies are very inefficient (S122)*

*Instructor 1: ".According to absenteeism rules, students can miss many classes, which affects their success seriously. They shouldn't be let miss so many classes."*

**Conclusion and Discussion**

In this research, five research questions were posed to obtain information for the evaluation of voluntary prep program of Usak University through CIPP program evaluation model. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered for this aim.

Based upon the results of the study, it would not be wrong to say that the prep program was partially effective. This finding is also consistent with Tunc's (2010) study, which determined that prep program at a state university partially served for its purpose. However, there are studies that report that students were generally satisfied with the English prep school program (Gerede, 2005; Sen-Ersoy & Kurum-Yapicioglu 2015; Tekin, 2015).

In the current study, as a result of context evaluation, it was revealed that both students and instructors were highly dissatisfied with the physical conditions of the prep program. The literature contains evaluation studies that similarly report that teaching and learning facilities and resources at the preparatory school were not effective (Tekin, 2015; Tunc, 2010). Aydin (2012) also investigated the factors causing demotivation for English teachers and found that ineffective physical conditions were one of the factors that created demotivation. Ulum's (2016) study illustrated that if basic physical needs in education were not met, language learning quality decreased. Hence, the educational setting should be supplied with the most required physical facilities in order for an effective education atmosphere.

The results obtained from input evaluation indicated that reading, listening and grammar were emphasized more than speaking, writing skills and vocabulary teaching. Instructors also asserted that prep program was not sufficient to improve students' speaking and writing skills. In studies conducted by Inal & Aksoy (2014), Karatas (2007), Tunc (2009) and Tunc (2010), it was revealed that the content did not include speaking and listening skills sufficiently. As Richards (2006) argues, learners learn a language through communicating in it and communication that is meaningful to the learner provides a better opportunity for learning than too much focus on grammar and reading. Thus, the current prep program needs to be revised in terms of focus on different language skills. Equal importance should be attached to each skill.

Furthermore, as a result of process evaluation it was unearthed that speaking, writing and daily life materials were not utilized sufficiently and the course book was overused, which led students to lose their motivation. Therefore, it can be recommended to use additional teacher-developed materials to cater for students' needs for speaking and writing instead of just using the course book. Also, it was found that the most frequently used type of teaching method was lecturing; nevertheless, discussion, role-play, and students' presentations were not used sufficiently as teaching methods. Similarly, in Tunc's (2010) study, lecturing was found as the most frequently used method. As Oradee (2012) asserts, speaking skill can be developed through communicative activities which include an information gap, a jigsaw puzzle, games, problem-solving, and role-playing. Such activities help create interaction in the language classroom. Additionally, communicative activities can motivate the learners and establish good relationships between the teacher and the students as well as among the students thereby encouraging a supportive environment for language learning. Hence, speaking activities need to be increased through interactive materials.

In addition, students were found to be generally pleased happy with the assessment part of the prep program. They believed that exams reflected the content of the course, mid-terms and quizzes helped them learn better, the number of exams was sufficient and portfolio was beneficial to evaluate their language skills. Tunc (2009) also comes up with a similar finding with regard to the quizzes, which indicated that they were useful for revision for the exams such as midterms, kept learners alert, and provided weekly feedback. However, the data obtained through interviews with instructors illustrated that instructors also found it necessary to grade students on attendance and participation for an effective assessment. It may be effective in terms of both increasing students' attendance and participation and thereby their learning. Moreover, students perceived the prep program very positive in terms of communication facilities. Students strongly agreed that they could reach the instructors whenever they wanted, easily ask questions to the instructors and tell their ideas in class and their ideas were taken into account when designing in-class activities. Similarly, in Tunc's (2010) study, communication opportunities were found high.

Moreover, product evaluation suggested that most students perceived themselves more competent in reading, listening and pronunciation, whereas they perceived themselves less competent in vocabulary, speaking and writing skills. This finding is consistent with the data obtained from input evaluation. There is a match between students' perceptions of their own language competencies and their perceptions in relation to the emphasis on four skills, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation teaching in prep classes. Similarly, in Bayram's (2011) study, students perceived themselves less competent in speaking skill and in Tunc's (2010) study, students were found to perceive themselves less competent in listening and speaking skills. It was also found that half of the students believed prep program met their needs and expectations and sixty percent of students were happy with the education provided in the prep program.



The results suggested that some improvements were needed to be made, particularly in the content, materials, and assessment aspect of the preparatory program and physical conditions of prep school. With the purpose of enhancing the preparatory program, it can be suggested that the content of the prep program needs to include all language skills including productive skills of speaking and writing as well as vocabulary teaching. Also, overuse of the course book should be avoided and communicative activities such as role-plays should be utilized more in class. Besides, the learning context needs to be improved in order to foster students' motivation. Having implemented the necessary revisions and corrections in the program, this program may be evaluated again in order to find out to what extent the changes worked.

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