



Available online at:

<http://www.eltrj.com>

*International Association of Research  
in Foreign Language Education and Applied Linguistics*

**ELT Research Journal**

**2014, 3(4), 201-221**

ISSN: 2146-9814

## **Evaluation of a language preparatory program: A case study**

**Enisa Mede<sup>1</sup>**

Bahçeşehir University, Turkey

**Serkan Uygun<sup>2</sup>**

Yeditepe University, Turkey

### **Abstract**

In today's globalized era, English has become a lingua franca serving as a medium of communication for effective communication between people of different languages. Variationist language programs have been designed to develop English language competence of students to the level sufficient to pursue successfully in their career or academic life. However, to be able to teach English effectively, the identification and evaluation of students' needs should be taken into consideration while designing language programs. In the light of these observations, the present study aims to evaluate whether the Language Preparatory Program designed for English Language and Literature and Translation departments has met the students' language and learning needs. To this end, 64 preparatory students constitute the working group of this research. The quantitative data were obtained through a needs analysis questionnaire and the qualitative data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study revealed significant implications in relation to the evaluation of the Language Preparatory Program based on the language and learning needs of the preparatory students.

**Keywords:** *Program evaluation, language needs, learning needs, language preparatory program.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor Doctor, ELT Department, Bahçeşehir University, Turkey.

E-mail: [enisa.mede@es.bahcesehir.edu.tr](mailto:enisa.mede@es.bahcesehir.edu.tr)

<sup>2</sup> PhD Candidate, English instructor, Language Preparatory School, Yeditepe University, Turkey.

E-mail: [serkanuygun2014@gmail.com](mailto:serkanuygun2014@gmail.com)

## **Introduction**

From various discussions on the effectiveness of different teaching methods to the debates about particular programs, evaluation has typically been recognized as a crucial area of second/foreign language education to measure whether the program is functioning as it was planned. Several definitions of program evaluation have been formulated. The two most widely used are probably the ones offered by Lynch (1996, p. 2) who views this process as “the systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgments or decisions” and Brown (1995, p. 18) who describes program evaluation as “the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a program and evaluate its effectiveness within the context of the particular institutions involved.” Although these two definitions seem similar to that given for needs analysis, there is a difference. While a needs analysis is typically conducted in the initial stages of curriculum development relying on interview procedures, questionnaires, linguistic analyses, conjecture and a good deal of professional judgment, evaluation can take advantage of all these to assess the effectiveness of a program, but can also utilize the information gathered during developing objectives, writing and using the tests, adopting, developing and adapting materials, and teaching.

Since evaluation has gained attention in education, a great deal of evaluation studies that differ in terms of their purposes, emphasis and methodologies have been conducted in a variety of instructional settings. The studies generally investigated whether the institutions met their goals and objectives at the end of the program by identifying the perceptions of the course instructors, students and principals about the program followed (Henry & Roseberry, 1999; Nam, 2005; Tarnapolsky, 2000; Yıldız, 2004).

Henry and Roseberry (1999), for example, evaluated the teaching method and materials used in the writing course based on the process-genre approach at the University of Brunei Darussalam. The aim of the study was to investigate whether the participants would improve their ability to texture their writing, and whether they would produce texts closer to the allowable structure after genre-based language instruction. Findings from the essay written before and after instruction revealed that students showed progress in their ability to structure their essay introductions and their ability to texture their writing effectively.

Another study with parallel results was carried out by Tarnapolsky (2000) who evaluated the process-genre approach in the writing course at the language program in Ukraine. The past and present situations in teaching writing and the reasons for avoiding teaching communicative writing skills in English courses in that country were considered. The findings of the needs analysis indicated a necessity of introducing writing using the process-genre approach. The first version of the course was evaluated and it was concluded that there were certain problems with the activities used after the process-genre approach was integrated in the program. Although the course was communicative, the activities that are more fun needed to be added. After adapting the course in terms of students’ needs, the second version of the course was found to be more successful.

Yıldız (2004) aimed to investigate the Turkish Language Teaching Program for Foreigners at Minsk State Language University (MSLU) in Belarus. The purpose of the study was to identify the discrepancies between the current status and the desired outcomes of the Turkish program at MSLU. The study also tried to find out the aspects of the Turkish program that should be maintained, strengthened, added or deleted. Data were collected from the prospective students and their parents, instructors teaching in the program, the graduates of the program, the former instructors, the authorities at the institution and the employers of the graduates of this program. Questionnaires and interviews were administered to the target groups and written documents were analyzed. The results of the study indicated that the language program at MSLU partially met the needs and demands of the learners since the Turkish language proficiency among the current students, graduates and the university authorities was higher than expected.

Finally, Nam (2005) investigated the development of communication-based English language instruction in a Korean university context by (a) evaluating/critiquing a specific college English program at Pusan National University (PNU), (b) describing and exploring perceptions regarding English instruction at the collegiate level in Korea among Korean college students and their teachers in the EFL program, and (c) identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the college EFL curriculum of the university in terms of how close it was to the perceptions of the students' and teachers' needs about English. The findings gathered from the surveys and interviews revealed that while students generally seemed to have somewhat negative opinions, teachers were more positive about the effectiveness/quality of the new curriculum. Additionally, the possibility of the current communication-based EFL curriculum might not be closely related to the students' desires, due to several weaknesses of the curriculum itself and the institutional system.

Apart from the program evaluation studies carried out in various second or foreign language contexts abroad, many program evaluation studies in terms of English language teaching and learning have been conducted in Turkish EFL context as well. While some of these studies made a thorough program evaluation, some others tried to evaluate only one particular aspect of a program (Karataş, 2007; Muşlu, 2007; Özkanal, 2009; Sarı, 2003; Toker, 1999).

To begin with, Toker (1999) evaluated the Preparatory School Program at Gaziantep University in terms of the students' attitudes. The participants included 120 freshmen students and 35 instructors selected randomly from the program. Two questionnaires including 25 items were used to collect data. The questions were either in yes-no format or open-ended. According to the results of the study, the program was reevaluated in terms of the needs of the students, the objectives, the duration, language skills, materials, teaching methods, laboratory hours and the ESP course.

In another study, Sarı (2003) investigated the English teaching program at Gülhane Military Medical Faculty and suggested a new program based on the Monitor Model. The participants of the study were 230 students, 25 doctors and 7 teachers. The instruments used

for data collection were two questionnaires for the students, a structured interview for the doctors, two questionnaires (in the form of structured interview) for the teachers and random written student reports. The findings reported that speaking and reading were considered to be the priority skills. Additionally, to understand and translate medical material, to get an overseas assignment, to talk to foreigners, and to follow lectures were identified as the common language-related goals in the study.

Similarly, Muşlu (2007) aimed to find out the teachers' view on the writing curriculum in terms of the materials, the process-genre approach, journal writing, portfolios, project work and the writing competition at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages (AUSFL). 48 writing course instructors working at different proficiency levels at AUSFL participated in the study. A questionnaire was designed to identify the teachers' views on the writing curriculum. In addition, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 40% of the teachers to get their further thoughts. According to the results of the study, there were problems with the course packs and supplementary materials used during the terms. They were inappropriate for the students and needed to be revised. As for the process-genre approach, most of the teachers stated that the genre and the approach taught in the program were parallel to the students' needs. Additionally, the grammar syllabus was considered to be crucial while preparing the writing syllabus particularly in the lower levels. As for journal writing, portfolios and project work the teachers believed that it was a good communication opportunity between the teacher and the students. Finally, the teachers suggested that the award and the topics should be changed in terms of the writing competition.

In a different study, Karataş (2007) evaluated the syllabus of the English II instruction program applied in the Modern Languages Department, Yıldız Teknik University (YTU) School of Foreign Languages by using Stufflebeam's (2000) context, input, process and product (CIPP) model. 35 teachers implementing the English II program and 415 students were chosen randomly to participate in the study. Data came from two questionnaires given to the teachers and students. The findings revealed some significant differences between the teachers' and students' opinions in terms of context, input, process and product. Specifically, the suitability of the program's objectives for the students' improvement, the proficiency level and the comprehensibility of the textbook and the use audio-visual materials used in the program for the improvement of the students were among the crucial concepts that were taken into consideration while redesigning the program.

Finally, Özkanal (2009) investigated the English Preparatory Program of Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Foreign Languages Department to find out whether the program was successful and suggest a new Preparatory Program model. Two questionnaires and interviews were carried out with 354 students who were either enrolled in the program, finished the program or studied at the faculties and 27 instructors of the program. The results of the study showed certain problematic elements particularly in technical English, and suggested the necessity for an English Preparatory model and increase the qualities of the program.

Based on the above overviews, it can be implied that considering the changes in language teaching, recent research has focused on the process of evaluating a program based on students' needs. Despite the high number of studies that investigated the role of program evaluation in language teaching and learning process, most of them attempted to identify the general needs of the students enrolled in School of Foreign Languages or Preparatory Program. To fill in this gap, the present study aims to evaluate the preparatory program primarily designed for students who will major in English Language Literature and Translation departments based on their language and learning needs, and also provide evidence for the modifications to be done in the program.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design and Aim*

The present study is built with a structure appropriate for mixed methods as a research design where quantitative and qualitative methods are used together during the data collection and analysis phases. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate whether the Language Preparatory Program designed for the students who will major in English Language and Literature and Translation departments has met their language and learning needs. The research questions posed for this study are as follows:

1. Do the students enrolled in the language preparatory program designed for English Language and Literature and Translation departments feel that the program has met their language and learning needs?
2. Are there any differences between the perceptions of the students enrolled in the language preparatory program in relation to their department and proficiency level?
3. What are the possible side effects of the language preparatory program?

### *Setting and Participants*

In Fall 2008 academic year, a language preparatory program was designed and started to be implemented for prospective students who are going to major in the field of English Language Teaching (Mede, 2013). The nature of the program was based upon the perceptions of the student teachers' language and learning needs. The program employed an integrated syllabus design to meet the perceived language needs of the student teachers and help them reach the expected level of proficiency in English. To fulfill these goals, a skills-based and a structural syllabi were developed which aimed to promote both receptive and productive skills by mastering and internalizing the grammatical rules, stimulating interactive language use and encouraging personal involvement during the learning process. By the end of the program, the student teachers were expected to reach the competence to use English in oral and written form both accurately and fluently.

After the implementation of this particular program for one academic year, a parallel preparatory program was designed for students who are going to major in English Language and Literature and Translation departments. Based on the needs analysis findings gathered from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, a skills-based syllabus and a structural syllabus are designed for two proficiency levels namely, low-intermediate and high-intermediate. As for the skills-based syllabus, relative emphasis is given to each language skill. The primary purpose is to raise the student teachers' awareness of the language strategies appropriated for their proficiency levels, and provide them with the opportunity to use them in meaningful contexts. Additionally, the aim of the structural syllabus is to enhance the student teachers' grammatical knowledge and provide them with the opportunity to practice the related structures in the given tasks. The program for the high-intermediate level comprised twenty-nine hours of weekly instruction (reading: 6 hours, grammar: 6 hours, listening: 5 hours, speaking: 5 hours, writing: 6 hours, and writing feedback: 1 hour) whereas the program for the low-intermediate level comprised 30 hours (reading: 6 hours, grammar: 9 hours, listening: 3 hours, speaking: 6 hours, and writing: 6 hours). At the end of the program, the students are expected to reach the competence to use English accurately, by internalizing and mastering the grammatical structures, and also fluently, by applying the language strategies in related tasks effectively.

Within this framework, a sample of 64 preparatory students participated in the study. 29 participants were preparatory students who will major in the English Language and Literature department while 35 were preparatory students who will major in the Translation department. Besides, 44 participants were female and 20 participants were male students. As for their proficiency level, 35 preparatory students were at the low-intermediate level whereas 29 were at the high-intermediate level.

### *Data Collection Instruments*

After the implementation of the preparatory program for 5 years, a needs analysis questionnaire together with the semi-structured interviews were administered to find out whether the program has met the language and learning needs of the students enrolled in the Language Preparatory Program.

### The Needs Analysis Questionnaire

The needs analysis questionnaire used for the purposes of this research was adapted from a study conducted by Mede (2013) which aimed to design and evaluate a language preparatory program for the students who will major in the department of English Language Teaching. The questionnaire comprised two main parts (see Appendix A). The first part (Part 1) was designed to gather demographic information about the students to identify their gender, proficiency level and the department they will pursue their BA degree. As for the second part (Part 2) of the questionnaire, the aim was to gather information on the following concepts related to the students' perceived language needs: the importance of the improvement of the language abilities namely, reading, writing, speaking and listening (Part

2a), the students' performance in the tasks related to the four language skills (Part 2b), and the difficulties the students experienced with the application of the language strategies in given tasks (Part 2c). Each item in the scale was accompanied by a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' (a) through 'strongly disagree' (e).

Before the questionnaire was administered to the participants, it was piloted with 32 undergraduate student teachers. Reliability estimates for subscales were  $\alpha = .781$  for Part 1,  $\alpha = .86$  for 2a,  $\alpha = .80$  for 2b and  $\alpha = .98$  for 2c and  $\alpha = .96$  for the whole needs analysis questionnaire which indicates a high internal consistency of the items in the scale (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

### Semi-structured Interview

In an attempt to support the data gathered from the needs analysis questionnaire, a semi-structured interview was administered to the preparatory students to find out whether the program has met their language and learning needs (see Appendix B).

The questions were parallel to the ones in the needs analysis questionnaire by primarily focusing on the aim of the program, the importance given to the four language skills, the effective tasks used to improve the student teachers' performance in the four language skills, the frequent problems observed in the program and the possible reasons behind them. Finally, the data gathered from the semi-structured interview were used to identify the possible side effects of the program.

Specifically, the interview included four different parts. Part 1 aimed to gather general information in terms of the primary aim of the program and emphasis given to the improvement of the four language skills. As for Part 2, questions in terms of improving the students' four language skills were included. For example, the two groups of participants were asked questions about the effective tasks that the student teachers could be engaged in to improve their language ability. In Part 3, questions related to the difficulties the students experience with the application of the language skills and strategies in given tasks were included. Finally, Part 4 aimed to gather some information about students' perceptions in terms of the side effects of the preparatory program.

### *Data Analysis*

As for the evaluation of the language preparatory program related to the students' language and learning needs, first, the needs analysis questionnaire was tabulated and analyzed statistically. Specifically, independent samples t-tests were conducted to find out whether there are any differences between the perceptions of the preparatory students enrolled in relation to their proficiency level.

Furthermore, the obtained quantitative data were supported via semi-structured interviews carried out with the participating students which were transcribed and coded according to Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) framework. Specifically, the qualitative data

gathered from the interviews were first transcribed, and then, by reading each participant's transcripts, the conceptual themes were identified by the researcher according to the recurring words and ideas. These conceptual categories were used to create a matrix of major themes which were sorted under specific headings. Finally, the supporting quotes from each participant were listed and discussed under each heading.

## Results

As it will be discussed in the following pages, the findings related to the needs analysis questionnaire and semi-structured interviews are used to provide evidence for the evaluation and modifications to be done in the language preparatory program designed for the students who will major in English Language and Literature and Translation departments.

### *The Findings of the Needs Analysis Questionnaire*

Data obtained from the needs analysis questionnaire were analyzed by independent samples t-tests to find out whether there are any differences between the perceptions of the students enrolled in the preparatory program with respect to their department and proficiency level. Since the first part of the questionnaire attempted to gather demographic information about the students, the second part of the questionnaire namely, Part 2 was analyzed according to the three subcategories, the importance of the students' improvement of the four language skills (Part 2a), the students' performance in the tasks related to the four language skills (Part 2b) and the difficulty the students experienced with the application of the language strategies in given tasks (Part 2c).

To begin with, an independent samples t-test was conducted to find out if there were any significant differences between the students from two different departments.

The first subcategory of the second part of the needs analysis questionnaire (Part 2a) focused on the importance of the improvement of the four language skills namely, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The t-test results showed that the English Language and Literature students do not differ significantly from the Translation students in reading ( $t(62) = .661, p = .511$ ), writing ( $t(62) = 1.129, p = .263$ ), listening ( $t(62) = -.761, p = .450$ ), and speaking ( $t(62) = .288, p = .775$ ).

As for the second subcategory Part 2b, the students' performance in the tasks related to the four language skills was investigated. The results revealed no significant differences between the participants from two different departments in reading ( $t(62) = -.570, p = .571$ ), writing ( $t(62) = -.609, p = .545$ ), listening ( $t(62) = -.315, p = .754$ ), and speaking ( $t(62) = .650, p = .518$ ).

Finally, in the last subcategory of the questionnaire (Part 2c), the difficulty the students experienced with the application of the strategies in given tasks was examined. According to the results obtained from the t-tests, there was a significant difference only for the application of writing strategies in related tasks ( $t(62) = -2.164, p = .034$ ) while no



significant difference was obtained for the use of reading ( $t(62) = -1.701, p = .094$ ), listening ( $t(62) = -1.135, p = .261$ ), and speaking ( $t(62) = -1.778, p = .080$ ) strategies in language tasks between two departments.

In addition, a second independent samples t-test was conducted to find out if there were any significant differences between the preparatory students based on their proficiency level.

First, as discussed in the previous paragraphs, Part 2a focused on the improvement of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The results gathered from the independent samples t-test showed that the low-intermediate students do not differ significantly from the high-intermediate students in reading ( $t(62) = -.914, p = .364$ ), writing ( $t(62) = 1.203, p = .233$ ), listening ( $t(62) = -.879, p = .383$ ), and speaking ( $t(62) = .306, p = .761$ ) skills.

Furthermore, based on the obtained results from Part 2b related to the students' performance in the given tasks, there is no significant difference between the participants from two different proficiency levels in the language abilities namely, reading ( $t(62) = -.575, p = .567$ ), writing ( $t(62) = .983, p = .330$ ), listening ( $t(62) = .497, p = .621$ ), and speaking ( $t(62) = 1.966, p = .057$ ).

Finally, according to the statistical analysis of Part 2c which aimed to explore the difficulties the students experienced with the application of the strategies in tasks based on the four language skills, there was no significant difference for reading ( $t(62) = -1.299, p = .199$ ), writing ( $t(62) = -.849, p = .399$ ), listening ( $t(62) = -.356, p = .723$ ), and speaking ( $t(62) = -.792, p = .431$ ) between two proficiency levels.

### *The Findings of the Semi-Structured Interviews*

Data gathered from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed under the following four assertions: the aim of the program, the emphasis given to the students' improvement of the language skills and strategies, the difficulties the students experience with the application of the strategies in given tasks and finally, the side effects of the program.

#### The Aim of the Program

When asked about the major aim of the preparatory program, both literature and translation students from different proficiency levels namely, low-intermediate and high-intermediate shared the same viewpoint. Specifically, they agreed that the program aims to help them improve their English skills before they get engaged in the undergraduate program as shown in the excerpts below:

I think that the program aims to help us improve our language skills before we begin studying in our departments.

The major aim of this program is to improve our English before we start the undergraduate program.

### The Emphasis Given to the Students' Improvement of the Language Skills and Strategies

Considering the importance given to the students' progress in relation to the language skills and strategies in the preparatory program, the opinions of the students overlapped. To put it simply, the participating students regardless of their department and proficiency level believed that equal emphasis is given to the improvement of the four language skills. Related to the issue, two students made the following comment:

The program helps us to improve all four language skills equally. We are asked us to participate in many tasks and use different strategies to aid with our performance in reading, writing, listening and speaking courses.

In my opinion, the program helps us to improve the four language skills by engaging us in various tasks and activities.

Similarly, the preparatory students indicated that the program mainly focuses on strategy training by engaging them in various language tasks. To illustrate, the students are asked to read course handouts or texts on the internet followed by the application of the reading strategies like, getting the main idea or identifying key information in the given tasks.

In the program, we are asked to read and perform tasks from various reading resources such as, textbooks or the internet. The teacher shows us how to apply the necessary strategies such as, skimming or scanning in the given tasks and guided them during their learning process

Likewise, the two groups of students stated that they receive intensive training on how to write a paragraph and an essay by learning how to make an outline, organize ideas, include details etc. which helps them become more disciplined writers as shown below:

The teachers introduce us to the effective steps of writing a paragraph and an essay. We made an outline, organize our ideas, include some details etc. In this way, we have learned how to become more disciplined writers.

On the other hand, the translation students particularly perceived the strategy of researching the topic before writing to get some background information to be important to aid in the development of their writing ability making the following comment:

Researching the topic before writing is crucial to have an idea before we start writing a paragraph or an essay. We enjoy searching on a topic to get background information.

As for the listening skills, all students agreed that they learn how to take notes while listening to lectures. One of the students expressed the following opinions:

In the listening course, we receive instruction on how to take notes while listening to lectures. We also ask questions to each other and share our ideas on different topics.

Finally, in relation to the speaking skills, the students enrolled in the language preparatory program stated that they learned how to discuss on a certain topic by exchanging their ideas effectively and they enjoyed it. A participating student said:

In the program, we discuss on specific topics and exchange ideas with each other. It is really enjoyable.

### The Difficulties the Students Experience with the Application of the Language Skills and Strategies in Given Tasks

Apart from the emphasis given to the students' progress of the language skills and strategies, the students were asked about the difficulties they experience with the application of the relevant skills and strategies in given tasks. Consequently, when asked about the most frequent problems experienced in the reading course, the high-intermediated students from two different departments stated that they had some difficulty with summarizing what they read, and sometimes felt boring writing summaries. Instead, they prefer oral summaries rather than typed ones as illustrated below:

Summarizing what we read may sometimes be difficult and boring. Instead of typing our summaries, it would be fun to make our summaries orally.

Furthermore, the participating groups experienced certain problems with the application of the writing skills and strategies in given tasks. Specifically, while the high-intermediate students experienced problems with generating ideas and providing examples, the low-intermediate students found it difficult to use vocabulary and structures effectively while writing. They commented on this issue as follows:

I think that writing is one of the most important skills to be developed. Although we receive some training on how to write a paragraph or an essay, I still have difficulty in generating ideas and providing examples.

Although we get guidance on how to write paragraphs or essays in the program, I still have problems to choose the appropriate vocabulary and structure while writing.

Finally, regardless of their department and proficiency level, the preparatory students asked for more emphasis on extensive reading which would help with their comprehension. One of the students said:

Extensive reading is crucial in terms of improving our reading ability. I think that the number of readers should be increased which would help us with understanding what we read more effectively.

### The Side Effects of the Program

In an attempt to find out about the side effects of the program, the students were asked about the major strengths and weaknesses of the language preparatory program. First, the groups with two different department and proficiency levels shared the same viewpoint that the program was effective in terms of improving the four language skills. Since the students are going to major in English Language and Literature and Translation departments, they need to gain fluency and accuracy in the target language. In other words, they need to learn how to use the language strategies in the related tasks and get familiar with the basic key concepts which would help them follow their undergraduate courses more effectively. Regarding this topic, two of the students said:

Since we are going to major in English Language and Literature and Translation departments, we need to be competent in English. Considering this issue, the major strength of this program was that it helps us improve our English by applying the language strategies in the related tasks and get familiar with the basic key concepts. This would help us follow the undergraduate courses.

Being a student of a specific program is a privilege for us. I am happy to be in a program that will help me improve my English effectively. I have learned the strategies such as, making inferences or organizing my ideas clearly. I have also learned many key terms which will help us follow the courses in the undergraduate program more effectively.

On the other hand, when asked about the major weaknesses of the program, the participating students shared some crucial ideas. To exemplify, the literature and translation students at two different proficiency levels argued that the number of hours of the listening course should be increased. Since in the graduate program, the students usually take notes while listening to lectures, the preparatory students believed that there should be more focus on the improvement of this particular strategy. In relation to this issue, one of the students made the following comment:

Listening is one of the most difficult skills to develop. Although in the preparatory program, we are asked to take notes while listening, I think that there should be more hours of listening and more emphasis should be

given to this particular strategy since we are mostly required to take some notes while listening to lectures in our undergraduate courses.

Finally, all participants believed that extensive reading is very important for the development of the reading skill, and thus, should be integrated in the program thoroughly. They suggested that the students can choose some of their favorite readers apart from the ones assigned by the course instructors. This would help them to enjoy reading more, and also develop a reading habit outside the class. Specifically, they made comments about this topic as follows:

Most of our students start reading books at university. Although in the preparatory program, we are asked to read outside the classroom and write book reports, I think that the number of books should be increased. For example, we can choose one or two of our favorite readers. In this way, they can develop a reading habit outside the class and reading will also become more enjoyable.

Extensive reading is very important for our reading development. Although I like the books assigned in the class, I think that some small changes could be made. For example, we can choose some of the books we like so that, we can enjoy reading outside the class.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to evaluate whether the Language Preparatory Program designed for the students who will major in English Language and Literature and Translation departments has met their language and learning needs. The reported findings provided insights in relation to the aim of the program, the students' performance in tasks related to the four language skills, the difficulties the students experience with the application of the language strategies in given tasks and the side effects of the program.

Based on the data obtained through the needs analysis questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the preparatory students agreed that the program has helped them improve the four language skills equally and also positively affected their performance in the application of language strategies in the given tasks. In other words, they could use the strategies like, skimming, scanning, taking notes, and expressing their ideas clearly in the language tasks more effectively after receiving instruction in the program.

As for the differences between the perceptions of the students with respect to their department, the only difference was about the writing ability. Specifically, the preparatory students who will major in the Translation Department stressed the importance of doing research to get some idea on a specific topic. They believed that this strategy is crucial for getting background information on various topics and thus, should be particularly emphasized in the program.

Furthermore, the perceptions of the two groups of students differ when it comes to their proficiency level. To illustrate, the high-intermediate students stated that they experienced problems with generating ideas and providing examples whereas the low-intermediate students found it difficult to use vocabulary and structures effectively while writing. To fulfill this gap, the preparatory program designed for the higher level should emphasize more on the how to generate ideas and provide examples during the writing process. As for the lower level group, students should receive more guidance on how to use vocabulary and structures in writing tasks effectively.

As for the side effects of the preparatory program, the participants shared similar viewpoints regardless of their department and proficiency level. First, the two groups of students agreed that after being engaged in the program, they learned how to use the language strategies in the given tasks and got familiar with the basic key concepts which would help them follow their undergraduate courses. Next, the participants indicated that the number of hours of the listening course should be increased by focusing more on note taking which is necessary to be developed to follow their undergraduate courses more effectively.

In addition, the students emphasized the importance of doing oral summary and note taking suggesting some changes to be emphasized in the program. Specifically, they found writing a summary to be boring and believed that giving oral summary instead might be more enjoyable and motivating. As for the note-taking, the same group stated that there should be more emphasis on this particular strategy since they were mostly required to take some notes in the undergraduate program. Thus, while designing the preparatory program for the following years, oral summary and note-taking should be integrated in the program more thoroughly.

Finally, the gathered results showed that more importance should be given to extensive reading in the program. The students suggested that the students should be asked to read more books, and they should be provided with the option to choose one or two of their favorite readers. Therefore, the number of readers should be increased by adding some novels and giving students the responsibility to choose their favorite books for the next year.

According to what's been discussed above, the results of this study can be taken for granted while redesigning the preparatory program designed for the students who are going to major in English Language and Literature and Translation departments for the following academic year.

## References

- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1998). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Needham Heights, MA: Ally & Bacon.
- Brown, J. D. (1995). *The elements of language curriculum*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle.

- Gliem, J. A., & Gliem, R. R. (2003). *Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-type scales*. Presented at the Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education, The Ohio State University.
- Henry, A., & Roseberry, R.L. (1999). Raising awareness of the generic structure and linguistic features of essay introductions. *Language Awareness*, 8(3), 190-200.
- Karataş, H. (2007). *Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Modern Diller Bölümü İngilizce II Dersi Öğretim Programının öğretmen ve öğrenci görüşlerine göre dağlam, girdi, süreç ve ürün (CIPP) modeli ile değerlendirilmesi*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Yıldız Technical University, Turkey.
- Kaur, S., & Khan, A. M. (2010). Language needs analysis of art and design students: Considerations for ESP course design. *ESP World*, 9(2), 1-16.
- Lynch, B. K. (1996). *Language program evaluation. Theory and practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mede, E. (2013). *Design and evaluation of a language preparatory program at an English medium university in an EFL setting: A case study*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yeditepe University, Turkey.
- Muşlu, M. (2007). *Formative evaluation of a process-genre writing curriculum at Anadolu University School of Foreign Language*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Anadolu University, Turkey.
- Nam, J. M. N. (2005). *Perceptions of Korean language students and teachers about communication-based English instruction: Evaluation of a college EFL curriculum in South Korea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University.
- Özkanal, Ü. (2009). *The Evaluation of English preparatory Program of Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department and a Model Proposal*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Anadolu University, Turkey.
- Sarı, R. (2003). *A suggested English language teaching program for Gülhane Military Medical Academy*. Unpublished master's thesis. Middle East Technical University, Turkey.
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (2000). The CIPP model for evaluation. *Evaluation in Education and Human Services*, 49, 279-317.
- Tarnapolsky, O. (2000). Writing English as a foreign language: A report from Ukraine. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 9(3), 209-226.
- Toker, O. (1999). *The attitudes of teaching staff and students towards the preparatory curriculum of the Department of Foreign Languages in the University of Gaziantep*. Unpublished master's thesis, Gaziantep University, Turkey.
- Yıldız, Ü. (2004). *Evaluation of the Turkish language teaching program for foreigners at Minsk State Linguistic University in Belarus: A case study*. Unpublished master's thesis, Middle East Technical University, Turkey.

## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Needs Analysis Questionnaire

##### PART 1-Participant Profile

1. Gender                    F ( )                    M ( )
2. Proficiency Level: Low Intermediate ( ) High Intermediate ( )
3. Please write down the department you will pursue your BA degree.

\_\_\_\_\_

##### Part 2-Language and Learning Needs

**Circle one of the items below.**

*2a. The Language Preparatory Program has helped me to improve the following language skills:*

*a: strongly agree    b: agree    c: somewhat agree    d: disagree    e: strongly disagree*

1	Reading	a	b	c	d	e
2	Writing	a	b	c	d	e
3	Listening	a	b	c	d	e
4	Speaking	a	b	c	d	e



2b. *The Language Preparatory Program has helped me to improve my performance in the following tasks related to the four language skills:*

*a: strongly agree   b: agree   c: somewhat agree   d: disagree   e: strongly disagree*

<b>Reading</b>						
1	textbooks	a	b	c	d	e
2	articles in journals	a	b	c	d	e
3	reference tools (i.e. dictionaries)	a	b	c	d	e
4	course handouts	a	b	c	d	e
5	texts on the Internet	a	b	c	d	e
6	computer-presented readings	a	b	c	d	e
7	instructions for projects	a	b	c	d	e
8	newspapers/magazines	a	b	c	d	e
9	lecture notes	a	b	c	d	e
10	works of literature	a	b	c	d	e
11	graphs/ charts/ diagrams/ tables	a	b	c	d	e
<b>Writing</b>						
1	a resume (CV)	a	b	c	d	e
2	essays in reaction to readings	a	b	c	d	e
3	references for a report or project	a	b	c	d	e
4	book reports	a	b	c	d	e
5	workbook exercises	a	b	c	d	e
6	essay-type questions	a	b	c	d	e
7	term papers	a	b	c	d	e

**Listening**

1	lectures	a	b	c	d	e
2	question/answer sessions	a	b	c	d	e
3	class presentations	a	b	c	d	e
4	dialogues	a	b	c	d	e

**Speaking**

1	oral presentations	a	b	c	d	e
2	oral presentations using multimedia tools	a	b	c	d	e
3	state opinions on different topics (discussions/ debates)	a	b	c	d	e

2c. The Language Preparatory Program has helped me to apply the following strategies in given tasks:

**a: strongly agree   b: agree   c: somewhat agree   d: disagree   e: strongly disagree**

**Reading**

1	Recognize words automatically.	a	b	c	d	e
2	Guess the meaning of an unknown word from context.	a	b	c	d	e
3	Recognize the organization of ideas to see their relationships.	a	b	c	d	e
4	Identify key information.	a	b	c	d	e
5	Predict the content of a text.	a	b	c	d	e
6	Understand information in a text when not openly stated.	a	b	c	d	e
7	Read and respond critically.	a	b	c	d	e
8	Distinguish fact from opinion.	a	b	c	d	e
9	Ask questions about a text.	a	b	c	d	e
10	Read carefully and understand the details of the text.	a	b	c	d	e

11	Go through a text quickly to get the general idea.	a	b	c	d	e
12	Read quickly and selectively to find important information.	a	b	c	d	e
13	Search for simple information.	a	b	c	d	e
14	Distinguish the main idea from the supporting detail(s).	a	b	c	d	e
15	Identify cause-effect relationships.	a	b	c	d	e
16	Understand writer's aim/attitude.	a	b	c	d	e

---

### ***Writing***

1	Summarize information in your own words.	a	b	c	d	e
2	Combine information from multiple texts to prepare an assignment.	a	b	c	d	e
3	Organize writing to express major and supporting ideas.	a	b	c	d	e
4	Organize ideas for compare and contrast purposes.	a	b	c	d	e
5	Organize ideas to show cause and effect relationships.	a	b	c	d	e
6	Organize ideas for argumentative purposes.	a	b	c	d	e
7	Organize ideas to describe events.	a	b	c	d	e
8	Write references and quotations.	a	b	c	d	e

---

### ***Listening***

1	Understand information when not openly stated in a lecture.	a	b	c	d	e
2	Predict the content of a lecture.	a	b	c	d	e
3	Understand the subject matter of a lecture.	a	b	c	d	e
4	Listen for specific information.	a	b	c	d	e
5	Distinguish fact from opinion.	a	b	c	d	e
6	Listen to a lecture to take effective notes.	a	b	c	d	e

7	Follow question / answer sessions.	a	b	c	d	e
8	Understand spoken instructions.	a	b	c	d	e

---

*Speaking*

1	Ask relevant questions in class.	a	b	c	d	e
2	Participate in discussions/debates.	a	b	c	d	e
3	Give oral presentations.	a	b	c	d	e
4	React to speech and lecture.	a	b	c	d	e
5	Produce correct pronunciation.	a	b	c	d	e
6	Provide solutions to given problems.	a	b	c	d	e
7	Summarize information in your own words.	a	b	c	d	e
8	Express your ideas in your own words.	a	b	c	d	e

## **Appendix B**

### **Semi-structured Interview**

#### **Part 1. Aim of the Program and Language Skills**

1. What do you think was the primary aim of the Language Preparatory Program? Briefly explain.
2. What were the most important language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) emphasized in the program? Briefly explain.

#### **Part 2. Improvement of the Four Language Skills**

1. What were the most effective tasks used in the program to improve your language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking)? Briefly explain.

#### **Part 3. Difficulty Experienced with the Application of the Language Strategies in Given Tasks**

1. What difficulties do you experience with the application of the language skills and strategies in given tasks? Briefly explain.

#### **Part 4. The Side Effects of the Program**

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Language Preparatory Program? Briefly explain.