

Effectiveness of University English Preparatory Programs: Eskisehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department English Preparatory Program*

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Abstract—This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the English preparatory program based on students' opinions at Eskisehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department. The participants of the study were 129 students who studied at the department in 2006-2007 academic year and finished the program successfully. In this study, questionnaire technique containing Likert type and open-ended questions were used and the quantitative and qualitative data obtained via the questionnaire were analyzed accordingly. In the analysis of quantitative data frequency, percentage and arithmetic mean were studied with the help of program called SPSS. The qualitative data were analyzed with descriptive analysis technique. The findings of the study stated that the students were content with the program, the program was successful in teaching English and the instructors were good at teaching. On the other hand, the students also stressed that the physical conditions of the prep school were not satisfactory and an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) course be implemented in the program since these were seen as the deficiencies of the program in total.

Index Terms— foreign language teaching, English preparatory program, English for specific purposes

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, technological developments are taking place in almost every area. This development and changes bring about cultural changes, too. In this process, mother tongue alone is not enough for communication among individuals, so people feel they have to learn a foreign language (Özdemir, 2006, p. 28; Braine, 2005, p. 13). Foreign languages, especially English, together with expansion of the concept of world citizenship, today are gaining more importance and it has almost become the world's common language (Braine, 2005, p. 13).

English, which has become the most widely used language in almost every area of our age, continues to have an importance as a world-wide language. In our country, English is literally regarded as an equivalent for the term 'foreign language.' Indeed, the majority of university preparatory schools or preparatory programs offer English preparatory education.

A. Foreign Language Teaching

There are many languages in the world and increasing international relations make it difficult for nations to communicate through only their own mother tongue. Therefore the need for learning languages of other countries is increasing. The number of languages learned as foreign languages is limited. A country's political and economic situation is the most significant one among the factors that makes it a requirement for the individuals from other nations to learn that language as a foreign language (Demirel, 1987, p. 5). Languages of the countries dominating the world in all aspects are learned by people of other nations.

Language teaching can be seen as a kind of problem-solving activity. Just like the social environments it takes place in, language teaching is a phenomenon which is constantly changing and challenging the traditional thinking methods (Widdowson, 1990, pp 2-7).

An examination of the historical development of language education in the 20th century shows that the focus of the language teaching approaches are based on changes in teaching methods (Richards, 2001, p. 2).

Language teaching is defined as art since it is an activity which can occur as a result of practices performed through very careful observations and patience and requires pretty high a level of skills; and it is defined as science because it

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includes linguistics which provides scientific information about the language taught and can promote the efficiency of language teaching concept (Demirel, 2003, p. 1). Foreign language teaching can be defined as the process in which a language with other concepts, structure and grammar rules different from mother tongue is taught. The success of the foreign language teaching realized in the school environment is known to be significantly related to the principles applied, because these methods and techniques constitute an entire system designed to transfer grammatical structures and rules processed within a particular context (Widdowson, 1990, p. 190).

Foreign language teaching has experienced many significant changes over the years. The language teaching methods before the 20th century faced the dilemma between an approach focusing on speaking and understanding the language and another approach focusing on the analysis of the language, grammatical rules of the language in other words. After 20th century, different approaches methods and techniques about language teaching were developed. Approach in this context is regarded as the main framework including methods and techniques. While approach is considered as a phenomenon that reflects a particular model in language teaching, method is defined as a series of processes and technique as classroom instrument and efficiency (Celce-Murcia, 1991, pp. 3-5).

It is observed that foreign language teaching is seen as one of the most important issues in our country. It is reported that despite all the effort and investment, the desired level cannot be achieved in foreign language education in Turkey (Işık, 2008). It is also pointed out that students receive a total of 6 years of foreign language education in secondary school and high school, but they still can not be effective and competent in foreign language (Tosun, 2006). There have been studies about what should be done for a more efficient foreign language teaching and some foreign language education policy has gone through some changes. For example, foreign language courses have been put in the programs beginning from primary school fourth grade. Foreign language preparatory programs in secondary education have been abolished and foreign language training has been spread to the entire program (Ministry of Education Regulations, 2006).

The medium of instruction at many universities in our country is English and there is an increase in demand for the universities whose language of instruction is English (Kırkgöz, 2005). Foreign language teaching at universities is generally carried out through preparatory programs. All of foundation (private) universities and most of state universities in our country usually offer foreign language preparatory programs lasting for an academic year. After students successfully complete these programs, they continue their education in departments they have been qualified to study at.

B. Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department English Preparatory Program

In universities there are preparatory schools, schools of foreign languages and preparatory departments offering foreign languages education to solve the problem of foreign language in Turkey and to bring individuals up to an adequate level in terms of foreign languages. These preparatory units usually provide one-year education and some have level system. Some of these levels systems make it possible for students to attend the courses in their departments even if it the middle of an academic year, while some others follow entire-year systems requiring that students attend preparatory programs for at least an entire academic year and go to their departments after they prove successful.

Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department is a unit of the university which offers foreign language education in a preparatory program. Operating as a unit under the authority of the Rector's Office, the department cannot accept all new students for the program due to lack of enough staff; it can directly accept only students of Electrical and Electronics Engineering and Computer Engineering departments for completing English preparatory program is a pre-requirement and there is a quota for other departments.

The aim of the ESOGU English Preparatory Program is to have the students admitted to university's departments with voluntary or compulsory preparatory education acquire a level of English through which they can understand what they read or listen to in their field in English, perform translations into Turkish and to express themselves by speaking or writing (ESOGÜ, 2005).

II. PROBLEM

Although Eskişehir Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department English Preparatory Program has been serving since 1995-1996 academic year, it hasn't been subject to any program evaluation and development process or any study to be conducted into the program's purpose, content, learning and teaching process and dimensions of evaluation up to now. It is necessary to determine whether this program meets requirements or not because this program is significant for students' success in the program they are supposed to attend after preparatory education. This study originated from the need to determine the effectiveness of Eskişehir Osmangazi University English Preparatory Program.

III. AIM

The aim of this study is to determine effectiveness of Eskişehir Osmangazi University English Preparatory Program based on student opinions. To this end, the answers to these questions were sought:

What do students think about

- the reasons for attending Eskişehir Osmangazi University English Preparatory Program, the importance of language skills and their opinions concerning the level at which they possess these language skills?
- the level Eskişehir Osmangazi University English Preparatory Program has them acquire the desired qualities?
- the effectiveness of Eskişehir Osmangazi University English Preparatory Program?

IV. METHOD

A. Research Model

This study is a descriptive research conducted to determine the existing status. Research data were collected through survey model using both quantitative and qualitative measurement.

Screening models are research approaches aimed at describing the situations in the past or existing at present. Individuals, objects or events subject to research subjects are described within their own conditions as they already are. The most important consideration here is to make sure that phenomena are observed without trying to change the conditions (Karasar, 2002, p.77).

The study data were obtained through questionnaire prepared by the researcher. Closed-ended questions as well as open-ended ones were included in the questionnaire. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected together through the questionnaire.

B. Universe and Sample

The universe of the study is the first-year students of Eskişehir Osmangazi University studying at the departments whose medium of instruction is English. No sampling was done due to the accessibility and reasonable size of the study universe. Accordingly, a total of 129 students, 88 males and 41 females, who completed Eskişehir Osmangazi University English Preparatory Program successfully in 2006-2007 academic year and studying in their first year at the time of the research at Faculty of Engineering and Architecture Departments of Electrical and Electronics Engineering and Computer Engineering and Faculty of Arts and Science and Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences participated in the study.

C. Data and Collection

A questionnaire form designed by the researcher was employed in the research as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was split into three sections. The first part included the participating students' personal information, the second part included questions about the level at which the English Preparatory Program have students acquire the desired qualities and the third section included questions concerning the effectiveness of the English Preparatory Program.

D. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected through the study were analyzed according to the characteristics of the data obtained. Frequency, percentage and arithmetic mean were used to analyze the quantitative data collected by means of the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire. Level of significance was taken as .05 for the statistical analyses performed in the research. Also, SPSS package program was employed for data analysis (the Statistical Packet for Social Sciences).

The qualitative data collected via open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed with the descriptive analysis techniques. Descriptive analysis was conducted in four stages. The first stage is the stage of creating a framework for descriptive analysis. At this stage, a framework was established by taking the research questions, the type of qualitative research method and the conceptual dimension of the research into consideration. At the second stage, how to arrange data in the form of themes according to the framework generated was identified. Data processing was carried out according to the thematic framework. At this stage the data were read, selected for identification purposes and were brought together in a meaningful and logical way. At the third stage, the stage of defining the findings, the data brought together in a meaningful way were clearly defined and supported with direct quotes. At the last stage, interpretation of the findings, described findings were explained associated with some suggestions and interpreted (Yildirim and Simsek 2004, pp.171-172).

To ensure reliability of data in data analysis, the obtained questionnaire responses were converted into "Interview Coding Keys" and were multiplied for 15 students. The researcher and another expert from the field independently read the interview records of 15 students and coded the appropriate corresponding options in "Interview Coding Keys" for the response of each question. After a set of "Interview Coding Keys" was created for each student, the consistency of the "Interview Coding Keys" filled in by the researcher and the expert was compared. After this process, every single response option covering the question item marked by the expert and the researcher was controlled and they were defined as "Agreement" or "Disagreement" among experts. When the researcher and the expert marked the same response option for a question, it was taken as "Agreement" and when they marked different options, it was taken as "Disagreement" and in this case the researcher's choice was taken into consideration.

The reliability of the study was determined by the "Agreement Percentage Formula" quoted from Croll (1986, p.152), Robson (1993, s 222), Bakeman and Gottman'dan (1997, p. 60) by T  rn  kl   (2000).

Na

$$P = \frac{Na}{Na + Nd} \times 100$$

NA+Nd

P: Percentage of Agreement

Na: Number of Agreement

Nd: Number of Disagreement

In Table 4 below, the reliability percentages of the questions converted into qualitative data coding keys by descriptive analysis technique based on the students' responses to open-ended questions in the questionnaire were listed in a descending order beginning with the highest reliability on top and the lowest at bottom.

Questions	Reliability Percentages (%)
Question 4	97,2
Question 2	94,5
Question 3	94,5
Question 1	85,3
Total	92,8

In the reliability study of the "Interview Coding Key," the reliability was calculated as 85,3% in question 1 and 94,5% in questions 2 and 3. Having the highest reliability in the "Interview Coding Key", the reliability of question 4 was calculated as 97,2%. The average reliability for all of the questions was calculated as is 92,8%. According to these calculations, the research was considered to be reliable.

V. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

This part of the study included the opinions of the first-year faculty students receiving education in English.

A. Students' Opinions about the Reasons for Attending the English Preparatory Program, the Importance of Language Skills and the Level They Think They Have Language Skills

1. The Reasons for Attending the English Preparatory Program

The opinions of the students involved in the research about the reasons for attending the English Preparatory Program are given in Table 2.

Reason for Attending	f	%
To improve my English	34	26,3
Because it is compulsory in my department	89	68,9
Other	6	4,8
Total	129	100

As can be seen in Table 2, 68,9% of students stated that they attended the English Preparatory Program because the medium of instruction was English in their departments, 26,3% said they attended the program to improve their English and 4,6% indicated other reasons for enrollment in the program.

2. The Opinions of the Students Involved in the Research about the Importance of Language Skills

The opinions of the students involved in the research about the Importance of Language Skills were given in Table 3.

TABLE 3. THE OPINIONS OF THE STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE SKILLS										
Skills	Very Important		Important		A Little Important		Unimportant		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Listening	86	66,6	41	31,7	1	0,7	1	0,7	129	100
Speaking	108	83,7	20	15,5	1	0,7	0	0,0	129	100
Reading	49	37,9	64	49,6	14	10,8	2	1,5	129	100
Writing	49	37,9	58	44,9	20	15,5	2	1,5	129	100

Table 3 shows that 66,6% of the students find listening very important; 31,7% find it important; 0,7% find it a little important and 0,7% think this skill is unimportant.

As for speaking skill, 83,7% of the students find speaking very important; 15,5% find it important; 0,7% find it a little important and no student thinks this skill is unimportant.

49,6% of the students regard reading as an important skill; 37,9% find it very important; 10,8% find it a little important and 1,5% think this skill is unimportant.

44,9% of the students think that writing is an important skill, 37,9% find it very important; 15,5% find it a little important and 1,5% think this skill is unimportant.

3. Students' Opinions about the Level They Think They Have Language Skills

The participating students' opinions about the level they think they have language skills were presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4.
STUDENTS' OPINIONS ABOUT THE LEVEL THEY THINK THEY HAVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Skills	Very Good		Good		Medium		Low		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Listening	13	10,0	60	46,5	44	34,1	11	8,5	129	100
Speaking	3	2,3	38	29,4	64	49,6	22	17,0	129	100
Reading	18	13,9	79	61,2	28	21,7	3	2,3	129	100
Writing	9	6,9	74	57,3	38	29,4	7	5,4	129	100

As shown in Table 4, 46,5% of students think that they have a good level of listening skill while 34,1% think they have a moderate level of listening, 10% think they have a very good level and 8,5% think they have a low level.

49,6 % of students think that they have a moderate level of speaking skill while 29,4% think they have a good level of speaking, 17% think they have a low level and 2,3% think they have a very good level of speaking.

61,2 % of students think that they have a good level of reading skill while 21,7% think they have a moderate level of reading, 13,9% think they have a very good level and 2,3% think their reading level is low.

57,3 % of students think that they have a good level of writing skill while 29,4% think they have a moderate level of writing, 6,9% think they have a very good level and 5,4% think their writing level is low.

B. Students' Opinions about the Level at which the English Preparatory Program Has Them Acquire the Desired Qualities

Table 5 shows the students' opinions about the level at which the English Preparatory Program have them acquire the desired qualities.

Table 5 shows numerical and percentage distribution and the arithmetic averages related to the realization levels of the 20 skills as a result of the English Preparatory Program based on the opinions of the students who finished English Preparatory Program successfully and studying at their faculty. The arithmetic means indicating whether or not the expected language skills are efficiently achieved at the end of the English Preparatory education vary between 3,21 and 2,50.

According to these arithmetic means, it could be suggested that the skills statements were achieved at a "adequate" level since 19 out of 20 skill statements of English Skills proficiency level had an arithmetic mean greater than mean value of the scale (2,50). However, the arithmetic mean of one of the skill statements was found to be at the limit of the mean value of the scale. It could therefore be said that this skill statement was at the limit. According to the student opinions, this "at the limit" skill statement is "being able to make reports of presentations" (2,50).

According to these data, the overall arithmetic mean of English Skills proficiency level is 2,95. Because this mean is greater than the mean value of the scale (2,50), it could be concluded that the skills statements were achieved at a "adequate" level.

TABLE 5.
STUDENTS' OPINIONS ABOUT THE LEVEL AT WHICH THE ENGLISH PREPARATORY PROGRAM HAS THEM ACQUIRE THE DESIRED QUALITIES

Skills	Definitely Agree		Agree		Don't agree		Definitely don't agree		Total		Arithmetic Mean X
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
I can ask instructors questions in English	32	25,2	71	55,9	21	16,5	3	2,3	127	100	3,04
I can answer questions asked in English	22	17,4	85	67,4	19	15,0	0	0,0	126	100	3,02
I can participate in activities in English	25	19,6	81	63,7	18	14,1	3	2,3	127	100	3,01
I can use English in lessons	12	9,6	59	47,2	52	41,6	2	1,6	125	100	2,65
I can read a text in English and understand its main idea	30	23,8	86	68,2	10	7,9	0	0,0	126	100	3,16
I can answer the questions about the text	22	17,4	90	71,4	13	10,3	1	0,7	126	100	3,06
I can read and summarize the text	19	15,0	85	66,9	19	14,9	4	3,1	127	100	2,94
I can read the text and paraphrase it	19	15,0	77	61,1	29	23,0	1	0,7	126	100	2,90
I can read and understand a text in English	35	28,0	83	66,4	5	4,0	2	1,6	125	100	3,21
I can understand instructors' speaking in English	31	24,4	86	67,7	9	7,0	1	0,7	127	100	3,16
I can understand listening materials	13	10,2	73	57,4	37	29,1	4	3,1	127	100	2,75
I can understand English presentations	20	15,8	91	72,2	12	9,5	3	2,3	126	100	3,02
I can understand English instructions	26	20,6	81	64,2	17	13,4	2	1,5	126	100	3,04
I can understand class discussions in English	17	13,3	96	75,5	11	8,6	3	2,3	127	100	3,00
I can take notes in English	16	12,6	66	51,9	37	29,1	8	6,3	127	100	2,71
I can write English paragraphs	20	15,8	80	63,4	23	18,2	3	2,3	126	100	2,93
I can make reports of presentations	10	7,9	49	38,8	61	48,4	6	4,7	126	100	2,50
I can summarize in English by writing	15	11,8	68	53,5	37	29,1	7	5,5	127	100	2,72
I can write English letters	23	18,1	81	63,7	17	13,3	6	4,7	127	100	2,95
I can fill in forms in English	31	24,4	86	67,7	8	6,3	2	1,5	127	100	3,15

C. Students' Opinions Concerning the Effectiveness of English Preparatory Program

This part of the research includes findings gained by analysis of the answers provided by the faculty students for the open-ended questions concerning the effectiveness of the English Preparatory Program.

1. The Answers of the Faculty Students to the Question "What Are Your General Opinions about the English Preparatory Program?"

The question "What Are Your General Opinions about the English Preparatory Program?" was the first to be asked in order to get the students opinions about the English Preparatory Program. Faculty students' answers to this question and frequency distributions are shown in Table 6.

As can be seen in Table 6, out of those students who provided positive opinions concerning the program, 29 students said "The program offers necessary knowledge and skills related to English," 9 students said "The program can teach English at a good level," 4 students said "The program is challenging but useful," 3 students said "The program is adequate for faculty courses," 2 students said "The instructors are successful," 2 students said "The program provides a useful infrastructure for those with no background of English" and one student said "The program helps us comprehend English."

For example, Hale, one of the students, pointed out that it is quite a useful program despite its intensity saying "At first I thought I would lose a year in vain. But I think it is very useful. They challenge us but I saw that this would yield better results" (st.112-113).

Another student, Suna, expressed her satisfaction with the program by the following words: "To me they give a good education. The instructors in the preparatory unit do their job really well" (st. 231).

TABLE 6.
DISTRIBUTION OF THE ANSWERS OF THE FACULTY STUDENTS TO THE QUESTION "WHAT ARE YOUR GENERAL OPINIONS ABOUT THE ENGLISH PREPARATORY PROGRAM?"

The Answers of the Faculty Students to the Question "What Are Your General Opinions about the English Preparatory Program?" f

Positive Opinions

a. The program offers necessary knowledge and skills related to English	29
b. The program can teach English at a good level	9
c. The program is challenging but useful	4
d. The program is adequate for faculty courses	3
e. The instructors are successful	2
f. The program provides a useful infrastructure for those with no background of English	2
g. The program helps us comprehend English	1

Total of Opinions 50

Negative Opinions

a. The program is good but inadequate for faculty courses	8
b. The program is adequate to learn English but inefficient for professional English	6
c. The program could get better	5
d. The program is inadequate for beginner language learners	5
e. Physical conditions of the preparatory unit building are inadequate	4
f. The program is challenging and intensive	3
g. The education offered is not qualified	3

Total of Opinions 34

As can be seen in Table 6, of the faculty students who provided negative opinions concerning the English Preparatory Program, 8 students said "The program is good but inadequate for faculty courses," 6 students said "The program is adequate to learn English but inefficient for professional English," 5 students said "The program could get better," 5 students said "The program is inadequate for beginner language learners," 4 students said "Physical conditions of the preparatory unit building are inadequate," 3 students said "The program is challenging and intensive" and 3 students said "The education offered is not qualified."

Mert, a student stating his opinion about the program, pointed out that the program is adequate in general but inadequate for technical English by saying "*It is adequate to learn a foreign language but not for professional English*" (st.276).

Tuna, on the other hand, stated that the program was adequate for those with a background of English but inadequate for those with no knowledge of English by saying "*I don't think it is adequate for beginner English learners. I believe that those students from Anatolian high-schools or equivalent schools are a little bit luckier*" (st. 875-876).

2. Students' Answers to the Question "To What Extent the Knowledge of English You Acquired in the English Preparatory Program is Adequate to Follow Faculty Courses in English?"

In order to obtain faculty students opinions concerning the English Preparatory Program through semi-structured open-ended questionnaire questions, the students were addressed the following item as the second question: "To what extent the knowledge of English you acquired in the English Preparatory Program is adequate to follow faculty courses in English?" Faculty students' answers to this question and frequency distributions are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7.
DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENTS' ANSWERS FOR THE QUESTION "TO WHAT EXTENT THE KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH YOU ACQUIRED IN THE ENGLISH PREPARATORY PROGRAM IS ADEQUATE TO FOLLOW FACULTY COURSES IN ENGLISH"

Students' Answers to the Question "To What Extent the Knowledge of English You Acquired in the English Preparatory Program is Adequate to Follow Faculty Courses in English?" f

a. It is adequate but should include Technical English	36
b. It is adequate to a great extent	28
c. It is not very adequate	19
d. It is adequate	9

Total of Opinions 92

As shown in Table 7, for the question "To what extent the knowledge of English you acquired in the English Preparatory Program is adequate to follow faculty courses in English?", 36 faculty students said "It is adequate but should include Technical English," 28 students said "It is adequate to a great extent," 19 students said "It is not very adequate" and 9 students said "It is adequate."

Merve, for example, pointed out that the knowledge of English acquired in the English Preparatory Program did not contribute to department courses by saying "*It hardly has any contribution to faculty, not much*" (st. 63).

Fikret, however, stated that the English Preparatory Program was beneficial, saying "*I wouldn't be able to*

understand what is told in lessons if I hadn't attended the Preparatory Program"(st.188).

Another student, Nurhan, expressed that the program was inefficient about Technical English, saying *"It is not very adequate. What we learnt in preparatory program was daily English. It is inadequate for technical matters"* (st. 266).

Lale stated that she did not think the education given was not good, it was impossible to learn a foreign language in one year and a student should be –pre-intermediate level at the beginning of the program so that he or she could improve the language by saying that *"I don't think the program gave enough a good education. To me, a foreign language cannot be taught in just one year. Language means culture at the same time. Is this your fault? No it is all ours. It is the system's fault. A student attending the preparatory program should be pre-intermediate level* (st. 367-369).

3. Students' Answers to the Question "To What Extent Do You Think the English Preparatory Program Offers the Level of English You Need?"

In order to get faculty students opinions concerning the English Preparatory Program through semi-structured open-ended questionnaire items, the students were addressed the following question as the third one: "To what extent do you think the English Preparatory Program offers the level of English you need?" Faculty students' answers to this question and frequency distributions are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8.
DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU THINK THE ENGLISH PREPARATORY PROGRAM OFFERS THE LEVEL OF ENGLISH YOU NEED?"

Students' Answers to the Question "To What Extent Do You Think the English Preparatory Program Offers the Level of English You Need?"		f
a. It offers English at an adequate level		35
b. It gives knowledge of daily language, but it doesn't give knowledge of professional language	34	
c. It doesn't offer knowledge of English at an adequate level		18
d. It may vary depending on the level; it is adequate at higher levels but inadequate at lower levels	5	
e. It is inadequate only at teaching vocabulary		3
f. It offers all the knowledge and skills except for speaking skill		3
Total of Opinions		98

As can be seen in Table 8, for the question concerning the extent to which the English Preparatory Program offers the level of English students need, 35 students said "It offers English at an adequate level," 34 students said "It gives knowledge of daily language, but it doesn't give knowledge of professional language," 18 students said "It doesn't offer knowledge of English at an adequate level," 5 students said "It may vary depending on the level; it is adequate at higher levels but inadequate at lower levels," 3 students said "It is inadequate only at teaching vocabulary" and 3 students said "It offers all the knowledge and skills except for speaking skill."

Sude, one of the students, stated that general English was taught at an adequate level except for technical English, saying *"If it is the technical aspect that is meant by 'need,' it is not very efficient but adequate in other aspects of the language"*(st. 135).

Another student, Murat, also emphasized the absence of Technical English, saying *"It doesn't meet our department's needs because the preparatory program does not give technical English. We face some difficulties when we come to our departments"* (st. 163-164).

Nurgül also mentioned the need for technical English teaching but added that the program was beneficial for a beginner level language learner and that the most important component of language learning process is the individual himself or herself by saying *"I think the education given was inefficient in terms of technical English but adequate for someone just starting to learn English. I also believe that what is learnt in preparatory program is forgotten if not practiced after preparatory education"* (st.612-615).

Like the majority of the students involved in the study, Hamdi agreed with the idea that knowledge of technical area *"should be taught in Preparatory Program"* and said *"I don't think it is very adequate. The education we get only brings us to a level at which we can understand what is spoken. In my opinion, at least for the departments with compulsory English, there should be vocabulary teaching activities for faculty courses. Technical English courses should be offered in Foreign Languages Department not in our own departments* (st. 735- 738).

4. Students' Answers to the Question "What Are Your Suggestions for the English Preparatory Program to Teach English More Efficiently?"

In order to get faculty students opinions concerning the English Preparatory Program through semi-structured open-ended questionnaire items, the students were addressed the following question as the fourth and last one: "What are your suggestions for the English Preparatory Program to teach English more efficiently?" Faculty students' answers to this question and frequency distributions are shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9.
DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENTS' ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "WHAT ARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ENGLISH PREPARATORY PROGRAM TO TEACH ENGLISH MORE EFFICIENTLY?"

Students' Answers for the Question "What Are Your Suggestions for the English Preparatory Program to Teach English More Efficiently?"

	f
a. Speaking skill should be emphasized	38
b. Technical English should be emphasized	38
c. Listening skill should be emphasized	16
d. Native speakers of English should teach	6
e. Speaking clubs should be functional	6
f. Writing skill should be emphasized	5
g. Instructors should manage lessons in English	5
h. Video lessons should be emphasized	5
i. Students of each faculty/department should be separated	5
j. Grammar should be emphasized	4
k. Student-centered teaching should be realized	3
l. Vocabulary game tournaments among classes are useful, they should continue	3
m. Instructors' quality should be increased	2
n. Students should be informed about the objectives at the beginning of the academic year	2
<i>Total of Opinions</i>	<i>138</i>

As shown in Table 9, students were asked about their suggestions for the English Preparatory Program to teach English more efficiently. 38 students said "Speaking skill should be emphasized," 38 students said "Technical English should be emphasized," 16 students said "Listening skill should be emphasized," 6 students said "Native speakers of English should teach," 5 students said "Writing skill should be emphasized," 5 students said "Instructors should manage lessons in English," 5 students said "Video lessons should be emphasized," 5 students said "Students of each faculty/department should be separated," 4 students said "Grammar should be emphasized," 3 students said "Vocabulary game tournaments among classes are useful, they should continue," 2 students said "Instructors' quality should be increased" and 2 students said "Students should be informed about the objectives at the beginning of the academic year."

Sabri pointed out that the program should include Technical English and some activities were needed especially for the departments with compulsory English Preparatory Program education with the following words: *"In addition to what is already performed, general technical knowledge related to departments could be useful. There could be some activities particularly for the departments whose medium of instruction is English"* (st.257-258).

Asu came up with the suggestion that a program including Technical English and emphasizing listening and reading would be appropriate and said *"The program should emphasize listening and reading and meet the requirements of departments (technical English for Engineering and economic English for Economy)"* (st. 288-289).

Harun stated his satisfaction with the program, saying *"I was pleased with the program. However, I think repeating the program due to failure shouldn't be abolished because nobody takes it seriously then"* (st. 305-306); he pointed out that the 2006-2007 revision in regulations making it possible for students of departments with no compulsory preparatory education to attend their departments in case of failure in the program after one year decreases students' motivation and that this situation should be corrected.

Another student, Selda, stated that the main textbook used focused more on communication, but students need grammar and technical English more by saying *"Our textbook, 'Innovations' are based on speaking making the process difficult for those students with no background knowledge of English as it covers almost no grammar at all. When it presents a piece of grammar, it is usually a difficult part; so grammar should be emphasized more and students should be taught the professional vocabulary relevant to our departments so that we do not have difficulty there"* (st. 594-597).

Zafer, on the other hand, said *"students should be trained in a way that has them understand lecturers and take notes in lessons"* and pointed out to the fact that one of the requirements of students was note-taking during lessons and a relevant training was needed.

VI. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This part of the study includes the results gained through the analysis of the data collected by means of data collection tools.

A. Results

1. Results Concerning Students' Opinions about the Reasons Why Students Enroll in the English Preparatory Program, the Importance of Language Skills and the Level They Think They Have Language Skills

- 68,9% of students state that they attended the English Preparatory Program because the medium of instruction was English in their departments, 26,3% said they attended the program to improve their English and 4,6% indicated other reasons for enrollment in the program.

- Of the students involved in the study, 66,6% are of the opinion that listening skill is very important; 83,7% find speaking skill very important; 37,9% find reading skill very important and 37,9% think that writing is a very important skill.

- Of the students involved in the study, the percentages of the students thinking that they possess listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are 46,5%, 29,4%, 61,2% and 57,3% respectively.

2. Results Concerning the Students' Opinions about the Level at which the English Preparatory Program Has Them Acquire the Desired Qualities

- Students think that the acquisition level of 19 skills out of the language skills intended to be acquired by students are adequate (I can ask instructors questions in English; I can answer questions asked in English; I can participate in activities in English; I can use English in lessons; I can read a text in English and understand its main idea; I can answer the questions about the text; I can read and summarize the text; I can read the text and paraphrase it; I can read and understand a text in English; I can understand instructors' speaking in English; I can understand listening materials; I can understand English presentations; I can understand English instructions; I can understand class discussions in English; I can take notes in English; I can write English paragraphs ; I can summarize in English by writing; I can write English letters; and I can fill in forms in English) while they think the acquisition level of 1 skill is "at the limit" (I can make reports of presentations). Therefore, the arithmetic mean of the Program for the acquisition of the desired language skills is 2,95, which makes us conclude that the English Preparatory Program is "satisfactory" in having students acquire language skills.

3. Results Concerning Students' Opinions about the Effectiveness of English Preparatory Program

- According to their statements, students think the program offers the necessary skills; it can teach English at a good level; the instructors are successful, the program provides a useful infrastructure; it helps comprehend the language and provides a good level of English. However, they think physical conditions of the preparatory unit building are inadequate and knowledge of Technical English is not provided at an adequate level.

- Students think that English courses in the program are adequate to follow faculty courses in English and the program offers a high level of English education. However, they also claim that the program should certainly include Technical English, it is not adequate for beginner learners, the fact that the program focuses more on daily use of language is negative for students and language used in the faculty is relatively limited.

- Students state that they think the program offers a level of English meeting their needs for the faculty and in general they are satisfied with the education they received in the preparatory program. However, they point out that the program is very inadequate in terms of Technical English and their expectations were not met in terms of acquiring neither grammar nor vocabulary and other technical terms.

- For the program to provide a better English education, students suggest that speaking and listening skills should be emphasized, the speaking club should be more functional, there should be more emphasis on "note-taking" skill.

B. Discussion

Conducted into the effectiveness of English preparatory education offered at universities, this study revealed that in general students acquired the language skills intended to be acquired by students in the English Preparatory Program except for "being able to make reports of presentations" and that the program provided the required skills, the program offers the necessary skills; it can teach English at a good level; the instructors are successful, the program provides a useful infrastructure; it helps comprehend the language and provides a good level of English education. However, apart from these positive qualities, students point out to shortcomings of the program such as the fact that physical conditions of the preparatory unit building are inadequate and knowledge of Technical English is not provided at an adequate level.

The most significant finding of this research based on the data from students is the fact that the English Preparatory Program is stated to be inadequate about Technical English. This finding of the research matches up with Kinsız's (2005) study emphasizing that "foreign language education should be interdisciplinary, participatory and innovative," arguing that "the need of professions for foreign language knowledge should be met" and therefore highlighting the importance of professional English. This finding is also in parallel to Kocaman's (1983) study stating that a new foreign language learning situation for specific purposes emerged and this situation is better defined and suitable for use in addition to general objectives in foreign language teaching; it is called professional English or English for specific purposes or foreign language, there are and should be courses related to technical terms, usages and field knowledge. Also, the finding of this study that the program should certainly include Technical English supports Mirici and Saka's (2004) emphasis that students of engineering faculties in particular have to learn English for both general and specific purposes in order to keep up with the latest technological and scientific developments and Technical English is a requisite. As a matter of fact, the findings derived from this study explain to some extent why students at Eskişehir Osmangazi University have difficulty about some English terms and concepts in their first year in the faculty.

C. Suggestions

- English Preparatory Programs should focus on speaking and listening skills, too. Also, the number of activities like speaking club should be increased for speaking skill.

- Technical English should definitely be included in the program and its functionality should be increased in terms of both structure and vocabulary acquisition.
- The program should focus more on “ability to make reports of presentations” and “note-taking” skill as well as grammar.
- The effectiveness of English preparatory programs should be determined in a way covering the applications in all universities and by using different methods as well as separate evaluations.

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