



## EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PREPARATORY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN THE LIGHTS OF ILLUMINATIVE EVALUATION MODEL

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### Abstract:

The study aims to evaluate the curriculum implemented at the School of Foreign Languages at a public university in Turkey. In accordance with this purpose, it is aimed to evaluate whether the objectives of the preparatory school are appropriate for low-level students' expectations of general English, departmental English and vocational English. The method of the study is designed according to Illuminative Evaluation Model, complying with mixed method using both quantitative and qualitative data sources. For this purpose, it is aimed to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the program in the light of the data obtained from the students and instructors about the instructional system of the program through observations, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that the objectives are appropriate for low level students' expectations of general English, but they do not adequately meet their expectations of departmental English and vocational English.

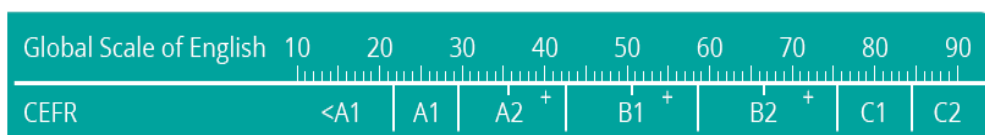
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## 1. Introduction

Since Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was taken as a reference in language education, there has been a shift both in EU member countries and in candidate countries of EU to implement programs prepared according to this framework. Accordingly, international publishing companies have started to design their own objectives that comply with CEFR scales and have defined their new books and materials according to outcomes based on these scales as well. The Global Scale of English (GSE), developed by Pearson Publishing Company, is basically based on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The Global Scale of English (GSE) is a scale which comprises four distinct parts such as a granular scale, GSE learning objectives, course materials and assessment tests to create an overall English learning ecosystem (Pearson, 2016). The GSE is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Global Scale of English (GSE)

As it is stated in the booklet of Global Scale of English (De Jong et al, 2016), the scale has been used by three institutions around the world. Because the School of Foreign Languages is one of the institutions using this scale, there is a need to evaluate whether the scale is effective in meeting students' expectations. Such an evaluation is thought to contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the program of the preparatory school. An analysis of literature shows that there are some studies on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is the main criterion of Global Scale of English. For example, experiences related to the implementation of the scale to language education in several countries in Europe are summarized in a study (Byram et al, 1997). Although CEFR has been used in curriculum development and evaluation processes in many schools and language courses, there is a limited number of studies conducted on CEFR within the context of Turkey. Some of the studies have compared programs in Turkey and in other countries and have analyzed what is done within the frame of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Arslan and Coşkun, 2012; Çağatay and Gürocak, 2016; Güler, 2005). One of the areas of research focuses on analyzing Common European Framework of Reference for Languages according to students' language proficiency (Ergunay et al., 2015; Soruc, 2012; Üstünoğlu et al., 2012). Another field of study deals with preparing reliable exams to test students' language proficiency (Üstünoğlu, 2011). In another study, CEFR is evaluated according to how teachers apply the issues stated in the CEFR (Sülü and Kır, 2014). Demirezen and Bakla (2007) compare a mainstream reading syllabus with the one prepared in connection with the principles of the CEFR.

Although there are several researches about Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the number of researches on Global Scale of English in literature is limited. One of the reasons of this might be the fact that it is a commercial scale. For this reason, the studies found in literature are limited to the ones developed either within the structure of the company or with the support of the company. Another reason might be the fact that the scale is a relatively new instrument that has been applied in educational institutions only recently.

The study is also thought to be important in terms of revealing less successful students' ideas about the program. The studies aiming to evaluate an education program generally focus on more successful students' competencies, and thus they fail to address the problems of less successful students especially in low levels. Therefore, traditional evaluation studies seem to ignore low level students' competencies for the sake of evaluating what competent learners can do. Because low level students cannot reach many of the objectives of a program, traditional evaluation studies do not reflect how much an education program actually prepares low-level students for their needs and expectations. For this reason, in order to show what low-level students can actually do, it is important that the program be evaluated within the context of low-level students' competencies.

The low-level students in the English preparatory school can reach the objectives within 59-66 intervals, constituting the exit level objectives of the program, during one-year education period. It could be beneficial to determine what skills the low-level students have in terms of English competencies and to evaluate the competencies of the exit level of the program.

Traditional evaluation models have long been criticized for not dealing with what is actually happening in the program for the sake of dealing with defining and classifying the objectives of a program, selecting and planning detailed evaluation systems, developing objective data collection tools and preparing reports. Many researchers question what the numbers, figures and tables in the evaluation studies actually reflect and they think that these evaluation studies lack the human factor. As a result, a new approach which emphasizes contacting with the real participants of the program has emerged. In participant-oriented evaluation approach, findings are collected from various data sources with different data collection methods. Because participant-oriented evaluation depends on multiple viewpoints, multiple realities are accepted (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). Marsh and Willis (2007) state that there are multiple data sources such as inputs explaining general aims, materials and student capabilities, interactions between teacher and student, student and student, student and source, procedures explaining learning-teaching process and outcomes composed of formal learning, attitudes and values in evaluation.

Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) support that the compliance between the planned outline and the emerging situation depends on the compatibility of all of the observed prerequisites, program and outcomes with the ones intended at the beginning. According to this evaluation model, the program evaluation focuses on activities of the program

rather than aims of the program and considers the stakeholders' needs (Demirel, 2013). Therefore, evaluators aim to reflect the needs of all participants who are involved in the program.

One of the participant-oriented evaluation models is Illuminative Evaluation model, developed by Parlett and Hamilton (1972). This model, which tries to illuminate both the problems and important features of the education program, is thought to provide a wide range of information and flexibility that cannot be obtained by any other traditional evaluation paradigms (Gordon, 1991; cited in Topper and Lancaster, 2016). Experimental and psychometric approaches of traditional program evaluation models are criticized to be restricted in scope and thus to be far from evaluating complex problems of the area because they generally fail to make necessary explanations and from handling the program as a whole (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972). Illuminative evaluation model, on the other hand, argues that an education program cannot be separated from its learning environment composed of its cultural, social, institutional and psychological aspects. For this reason, it gives importance to handling the program as a whole and reaching true information related to the program rather than engaging in numbers and figures (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972). Because of its potentials to provide relevant data related to the program with its participant-oriented approach, Illuminative evaluation model is preferred to traditional evaluation models.

### **1.1. The Purpose of the Study**

The main aim of the study is to evaluate whether the objectives of the preparatory school are appropriate for low-level students' expectations of general English, departmental English and vocational English. For this purpose, it is aimed to illuminate strengths and weaknesses of the program in the light of data obtained from students and instructors about the instructional system of the program.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. The Research Model**

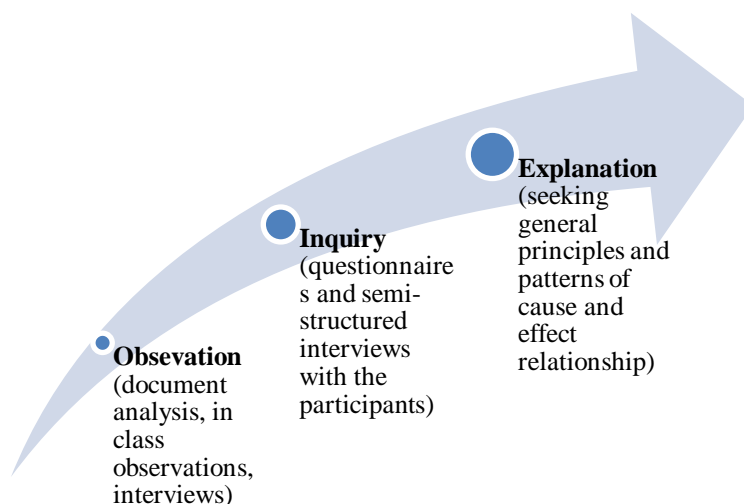
The method of the study is designed according to Illuminative Evaluation Model, complying with mixed method using both quantitative and qualitative data sources. For this purpose, the data are collected through observations, a student questionnaire prepared by Özdoruk (2016) and semi-structured interviews with students and instructors.

The aim of this evaluation model is to illuminate special conditions of the participants of the program including instructors, students, and program developers by examining a new program from different views of the participants. In addition to this, it also aims to examine the problems encountered during the application of the program and to reveal significant factors and issues for the participants (Özüdoğru and Adıgüzel, 2016). Similarly, Küçüköğlü (2015) states that illuminative evaluation model intends to develop a better understanding about different features of a program by focusing on

teaching and learning process and says that it is possible to have a deeper understanding related to all aspects of the program by examining several activities in the process.

Parlett and Hamilton (1972) claim that many of the statistical and experimental techniques used in educational researches are in fact originated from agricultural-botany paradigm and thus an evaluation study conducted according to such a model inevitably sees students like plant crops. Therefore, traditional evaluation model is presented as an assessment of the effectiveness of an innovation by examining whether or not it has reached required standards on pre-specified criteria. However, this evaluation approach provides data only about whether the program has been successful or not, but it cannot present detailed information about why the program has been successful or unsuccessful and how the program can be developed (Özüdoğru and Adıgüzel, 2016). Because of these reasons, using a traditional evaluation model in the study of innovations is generally a cumbersome and inadequate procedure, so the evaluation study fails to meet its claims to be controlled, exact and unambiguous (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972).

On the other hand, Illuminative evaluation model provides an approach that pays attention to wider contexts related to education programs because the strengths and weaknesses of the program are determined in the light of data obtained from all participants such as students, instructors, program developers, material developers and administrators of the program. Illuminative approach evaluates a program in terms of two concepts such as the instructional system and learning milieu. While the former represents educational catalogs, prospectuses and reports containing a variety of formalized plans and statements of the teaching arrangements, the latter emphasizes the socio-psychological and material environment in which students and teachers work together (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). An illuminative evaluation is composed of three stages such as Observation, Inquiry and Explanation (Figure 1).



**Figure 2:** Stages of the Illuminative Evaluation Model

In the first stage, the evaluator both observes day to day activities of the program and has some discussions with and between participants in order to get ideas about

common incidents, recurring trends and issues of the program. In the second stage, the phenomena, occurrences and opinions obtained from the observation stage are used as topics for intensive inquiry to be more focused on the components of the program. For this purpose, questionnaires and interviews with the participants are used to get more directed, systematic and selective information about the program. In the explanation stage, the evaluator tries to explain general principles of the organization and cause and effect relationship of its operation.

As a result, illuminative evaluation model can be used in evaluation studies in which both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools are used in evaluating especially innovative programs (Özüdoğru and Adıgüzel, 2016). Illuminative evaluation model eliminates disadvantages of using only one data collection tool and allows evaluators who do not want to collect restricted data related to the program to use different data collection tools together and thus provides data triangulation which increases both validity and reliability of the data to be evaluated (Patton, 2001). The opportunity of data triangulation with data obtained through different data collection tools of the Illuminative evaluation model provides important advantages in evaluating innovative programs.

In recent years, there has been a tendency to participant-oriented evaluation models particularly to the Illuminative evaluation model. Although the Illuminative evaluation model is a new model for Turkey, studies conducted with Illuminative evaluation model have been increasingly used for programs in many education levels. As a result of this, Illuminative evaluation model is preferred among researchers who want to evaluate innovative programs.

The studies aiming to evaluate an education program generally focus on more successful students' competencies and thus they fail to address the problems of less successful students especially in low levels. Therefore, traditional evaluation studies seem to ignore low level students' competencies for the sake of evaluating what competent learners can do. Since low level students cannot reach many of the objectives of a program, traditional program evaluation studies do not reflect how much an education program actually prepares low level students for their needs and expectations. For this reason, in order to show what low-level students can actually do, it is important that the program be evaluated within the context of low-level students' competencies.

The preparatory school is one of the institutions using Global Scale of English as its objectives. The low-level students in the English preparatory school can reach the objectives within 59-66 intervals which constitute the exit level of the program. Since most of the students in the preparatory school cannot reach the objectives within 67-90 intervals in one-year education period, they are thought to close the gap by themselves to be proficient users in English.

Therefore, it is important to determine how these objectives are understood by all of the participants by getting their views on special conditions of the program. In this way, to what extent the knowledge and skills expected from D and C level students at the preparatory school meet the objectives of the Global Scale of English could be

evaluated by the participants of the program. Such an evaluation could help determine not only the knowledge and skills expected from the students but also the effects of the materials and assessment instruments used in the program.

## 2.2. Participants

The universe of the study is 1200 D and C level students of the English preparatory school at a state university in Turkey. The number of the students who were actively attending the lessons was determined to be 213 because of absenteeism problem. In qualitative studies, the sample of the individuals is selected according to whether the individuals are directly related to the research subject rather than the power of representing the universe (Neuman, 2006; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). Mayring (2007) supports that qualitative studies can be conducted with small samples. Similarly, a minimum sample size of 10% is recommended for a qualitative research (Gay, 1987; cited by Arlı and Nazik, 2001). Therefore, in order to represent the active students at D and C levels, 3 students from 8 departments (total 24 students) were included in the study by considering minimum sample size of 10 %. First of all, a questionnaire was applied to these 24 students. Then, by considering the minimum sample size of 10 %, 12 students of these 24 students were included in the semi-structured interviews. Because the study aims to get the instructors' opinions about the components of the program as well, the instructors working in different units such as program development, material development, testing and administration (total 10 instructors) were included in the study. The participants included in the research were selected according to maximum variation sampling, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The participants in the purposeful sampling method are selected according to the subject and the purpose of the research.

In order to handle the problem deeply and thus to illuminate different aspects of the problem in accordance with the Illuminative evaluation, a data triangulation was performed by using different techniques in the study. For this purpose, four observations were made in two C level and two D level classrooms. According to the data obtained from the observations, factors affecting the academic achievement of the students at low levels were determined. In addition to the observations, the observer also had pre-interviews with the students and the instructors in order to get information about background structure of the program. The documents, exams and phenomena of the program were also analyzed at the observation stage.

In the second stage of the evaluation, information about the phenomena was directed to be more focused, systematic and selective. The data obtained from observation was systematically converted into an inquiry through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. In order to get quantitative data, a questionnaire developed by Özdoruk (2016) was used, while the qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with students.

### **3. Findings**

#### **3.1 Findings obtained in the Observation Stage**

In the observation stage, documents such as students' book, students' pack, students' handbook, staff handbook, quizzes, and midterm exams were analyzed and pre-interviews were made with students and the instructors. In the handbooks (Student Handbook, 2019) there is information about mission, vision, aims and expectations of the school. There is also information about organizational structure of the school which explains responsibilities of each unit in the school. In the following pages of the handbooks the learning outcomes of the school are given. There is also a link to the website of Pearson Company for a detailed explanation of Global Scale of English (GSE) outcomes.

The second document analyzed in the observation stage was students' book which was published by Pearson company. In the contents page of the book, some brief information is given about what is to be covered in each unit in terms of outcomes. Since the book is prepared according to GSE outcomes, it complies with the outcomes. The book is also supported with an online portal providing online materials. The materials presented on the portal are found to be compatible with the GSE outcomes.

In the observation stage, the works of curriculum development unit were also analyzed. According to the analysis it was found that curriculum development unit works in coordination with other units such as material development unit, testing unit, technology integration unit and coordinators before the academic year and decides which outcomes to be included in and which outcomes to be excluded from the program. According to the final outcomes, decisions are taken about the course book, weekly plans, assignments and tasks, and extra materials. In the light of these decisions, the program is continually revised according to feedbacks from the instructors at the school. The GSE outcomes are observed to be the main criteria for choosing the course book and extra material pack. Extra materials and activities to support the course book are included in the students' packs. The GSE outcomes seem to be the main criteria for including the activities and subjects in the packs. Additionally, The GSE outcomes are presented on the first pages of the material pack so that the students and the instructors can see which unit to be followed that week. In the observation stage, exams were also analyzed. It was seen that quizzes, mid-terms, and tasks are prepared according to a table of specifications which directly represents the GSE outcomes.

#### **3.2 Findings obtained in the Inquiry Stage**

In the Inquiry stage of the study, the findings obtained in the observations were used to create themes for the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to analyze deeply the factors affecting the students' academic achievement. For this purpose, the findings obtained in the Inquiry stage are analyzed in two separate parts such as findings obtained from the quantitative data and findings obtained from qualitative data respectively.



### 3.2.1. Findings obtained from the quantitative data

The quantitative data obtained from the students' questionnaires are evaluated in terms of findings related to five areas such as aims, content, learning-teaching process, assessment and evaluation, and language skills.

The findings about the aims of the program are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Students' views on the aims of the program

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	St Dv.
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Prep school enables students to follow their departmental courses	5	20,8	9	37,5	7	29,2	2	8,3	1	4,2	3,6250	1,055
The aims are appropriate for the students' level.	3	12,5	11	45,8	7	29,2	3	12,5	-	-	3,5833	,88055
The aims are clear and understandable.	5	20,8	7	29,2	9	37,5	3	12,5	-	-	3,5833	,97431
The prep school is developed to meet the expectations of learning English.	5	20,8	11	45,8	5	20,8	3	12,5	-	-	3,7500	,94409

According to the findings, 58.3 % of the students (n=14) think prep school enables them to follow their departmental courses. 58.3% of the students (n=14) have positive views on the appropriateness of the aims of the program for their level. 50 % of the students (n=12) think the aims of English preparatory school are clear and understandable and 66.6% of the students (n=16) think that the prep school is developed to meet the expectations of learning English.

The findings about the content of the program are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Students' views on the content of the program

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	St. Dv
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
The content is compatible with the aims of the program.	2	8,3	10	41,7	7	29,2	5	20,8	-	-	3,3750	,92372
The content of the program is up-to-date.	6	25	9	37,5	8	33,3	1	4,2	-	-	3,8333	,86811
The materials ease learning English.	6	25	10	41,7	7	29,2	1	4,2	-	-	3,8750	,85019
Materials are interesting	4	16,7	8	33,3	12	50	-	-	-	-	3,6667	,76139

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Online programs encourage me to learn English.	4	16,7	9	37,5	4	16,7	7	29,2	-	-	3,4167	1,10007
The materials are appropriate.	7	29,2	11	45,8	4	16,7	1	4,2	1	4,2	3,9167	1,01795
Online programs are suitable for the students' level.	9	37,5	12	50	3	12,5	-	-	-	-	4,2500	,67566

50 % of the students (n=12) have positive views on the compatibility of the content with the aims of the program. 62.5 % of the students (n=15) state that the content of the program is up to date. 66.7% of the students (n=16) think that the materials ease learning English. 50 % of the students (n=12) support that the materials are interesting. 54.2 % of the students (n=13) think that online programs encourage them to learn English. 75 % of the students (n=18) believe the materials are appropriate and 87. 5 % of the students (n=21) think that online programs are suitable for their level.

The findings about the learning-teaching process are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Students' views on learning-teaching process**

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	St. Dv.
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Duration of the program is suitable.	8	33,3	4	16,7	6	25	6	25	-	-	3,5833	1,21285
Student center activities have positive effect on learning.	5	20,8	6	25	10	41,7	3	12,5	-	-	3,5417	,97709
Presentations help learning English.	9	37,5	7	29,2	5	20,8	3	12,5	-	-	3,9167	1,05981
The examples and exercises given by the instructors make English easy to learn.	6	25	16	66,7	2	8,3	-	-	-	-	4,1667	,56466
Classroom activities develop English skills.	13	54,2	9	37,5	2	8,3	-	-	-	-	4,4583	,65801
Individual studies help learning English.	9	37,5	9	37,5	5	20,8	1	4,2	-	-	4,0833	,88055
Assignments ease learning English.	4	16,7	6	25	9	37,5	2	8,3	3	12,5	3,2500	1,22474
Conversation Club encourages me to speak.	7	29,2	6	25	9	37,5	1	4,2	1	4,2	3,7083	1.08264
Prep school classes are suitable.	9	37,5	11	45,8	4	16,7	-	-	-	-	4,2083	,72106
Movie Club contributes learning English.	5	20,8	5	20,8	11	45,8	2	8,3	1	4,2	3,4583	1,06237

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Students can express their thoughts during the lessons	9	37,5	4	16,7	6	25	4	16,7	1	4,2	3,6667	1,27404
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50% of the students (n=12) think that the duration of the program is suitable. 45.8 % of the students (n=11) state that student center activities have positive effect on learning. 66.7 % of the students (n=16) believe presentations help learning English. 91.7 % of the students (n=22) think the examples and exercises given by the instructors make English easy to learn. 91.7 % of the students (n=22) think classroom activities develop English skills. 75 % of the students (n=18) believe that individual studies help learning English. 41.7 % of the students (n=10) support that assignments ease learning English. 54.2 % of the students (n=13) believe that Conversation Club encourages them to speak. 83.3 % of the students (n=20) think that Prep school classes are suitable. 41.6 of the students (n=10) support that Movie Club contributes learning English and 54.2 % of the students (n=13) believe students can express their thoughts during the lessons.

The findings about the assessment and evaluation process are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Students' views on assessment and evaluation process

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	St. Dv.
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Difficulty levels of midterms and quizzes are appropriate.	4	16,7	10	41,7	7	29,2	3	12,5	-	-	3,6250	,92372
Midterms and quizzes are compatible.	7	29,2	8	33,3	8	33,3	1	4,2	-	-	3,8750	,89988
The number of midterms and quizzes is adequate.	10	41,7	9	37,5	3	12,5	2	8,3	-	-	4,1250	,94696
Instructors give feedback for students' works.	12	50	11	45,8	1	4,2	-	-	-	-	4,4583	,58823

58.4 % of the students (n=14) believe that difficulty levels of midterms and quizzes are appropriate. 62.5 % of the students (n=15) support that midterms and quizzes are compatible. 79.2 % of the students (n=19) think that the number of midterms and quizzes is adequate and 95.8 % of the students (n=23) think that instructors give feedback for students' works (assignments, exams).

The findings about the students' views on language skills are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Students' views on language skills

Item	Strongly agree		Agree		Partly agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	St. Dv.
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
I can write an essay or a report.	9	37,5	10	41,7	3	12,5	2	8,3	-	-	4,0833	,92861
The Prep School develops English skills.	6	25	7	29,2	6	25	5	20,8	-	-	3,5833	1,10007
The program developed the vocabulary knowledge.	11	45,8	9	37,5	3	12,5	1	4,2	-	-	4,2500	,84699
The program developed my English grammar.	5	20,8	9	37,5	9	37,5	1	4,2	-	-	3,7500	,84699
I can do independent reading by using dictionaries and other reference sources.	7	29,2	12	50	4	16,7	1	4,2	-	-	4,0417	,80645
Activities for listening are adequate.	4	16,7	10	41,7	5	20,8	5	20,8	-	-	3,5417	1,02062
I can understand the TV news, current affairs, presentations and films using daily/standard speech.	7	29,2	8	33,3	5	20,8	4	16,7	-	-	3,7500	1,07339
Attending Speaking Club develops speaking skills.	6	25	9	37,5	8	33,3	1	4,2	-	-	3,8333	,86811
Activities for speaking are adequate.	6	25	10	41,7	5	20,8	3	12,5	-	-	3,7917	,97709
Activities for writing are adequate.	13	54,2	4	16,7	4	16,7	2	8,3	1	4,2	4,0833	1,21285
Activities for reading are adequate.	7	29,2	11	45,8	3	12,5	2	8,3	1	4,2	3,8750	1.07592

79.2 % of the students (n=19) have positive views about the effects of the program on writing skill. 54.2 of the students (n=13) think that the Prep School develops English skills. 83.3 % of the students (n=20) suppose that the program develops the vocabulary knowledge. 53.3 % of the students (n=14) believe that the English prep school program develops their knowledge of English grammar. 79.2 % of the students (n=19) think that they can do independent reading by using dictionaries and other reference sources when needed. 58.4 % of the students (n=14) support that prep school activities improving listening skills are adequate. 62.5 % of the students (n=15) think that they can understand the TV news, current affairs, presentations and films that use daily/standard speech. 62.5 % of the students (n=15) believe that attending Speaking Club develops speaking skills. 66.7 % of the students (n=16) support that prep school activities improving speaking skills are adequate. 70.9 % of the students (n=17) think that prep school activities improving writing skills are adequate and 75% of the students (n=18) believe that prep School Program activities planned to improve reading skills (Readers) are adequate.

When all of the findings obtained from the questionnaires are analyzed, it is seen that the students generally have positive views about most of the components of the program. However, the students also have some negative views on a few subjects. For example, the students are not pleased with student center activities, assignments and movie club.

### **3.2.2. Findings obtained from the semi-structural interviews with the students**

The findings of the semi-structural interviews with the students reveal different views on the aims of the preparatory school. The students state that the aims of the preparatory school are general English, departmental English and vocational English: "Preparing us for English because it starts from the lowest level according to the students' knowledge" (Azra). *"In my opinion, the aim of the program is to build up knowledge in order to understand the lessons in the departments"* (Tarık). *"The aim of the program is to prepare us for our departments, to teach English and to make us socialized"* (Deniz). *"The aim of the prep school is to prepare the students to understand the lessons in the departments and to use our knowledge in our vocation"* (Naci).

Most of the students think that the program meets the aims in general. One of the students states that the program meets the aims: *"In my opinion it meets the aims because our teachers give us enough English for social life, daily life and academic life"* (Nazmi). One of the students states that the program meets the aims much more than necessary: *"I don't think we have to learn that much English. For example, I am studying Public relations and I don't have to learn English as much as an engineer does"* (Naci).

The findings about the students' views on whether they are informed about the objectives and whether the objectives are clear and understandable are given below. According to the findings, some of the students' state that they are informed about the objectives, while most of them say they are not informed about the objectives: *"Yes, we are informed about them thanks to our teachers. They are also in the packs"* (Naci). The students who state that they aren't informed about the objectives explain it as follows: *"I've just remembered. The teachers explain the objectives in the first week, but we forget them because so much time has passed since then. They are in the student's pack but I don't remember where I put my pack. I haven't even looked over it. I can just now remember that the objectives are on the first pages of the pack, but because they are in English, we cannot understand them"* (Deniz).

While some of the students state that the objectives are clear and understandable, most of the students say that the objectives are not clear and understandable because they are in English: *"For one thing, that they are in English shows they are not clear. We are here to learn English, so it means that we don't know English. In this case, the fact that the objectives are not in Turkish is a problem"* (Nazmi).

The objectives are found to be compatible with the content of the program: *"They are compatible. As a matter of fact, the objectives shown on the first pages of the pack show which lessons to be taught in each week (Deniz). They are compatible because the objectives of the program are on providing the students with a professional English. However, they can be criticized for giving the same education to all of the students. For example, the students of*

30% compulsory English departments have the same education as the ones of 100% compulsory English departments" (Ramazan).

More than half of the students think that the content of the program is interesting: "It is interesting. They use colorful pictures, projectors and videos in the class" (Deniz). "Except pack, the course book is interesting. The grammar subjects in the pack are not interesting" (Kaan). Some of the students think that their expectations are taken into consideration in material selection: "All of the programs are prepared by taking students' expectations into consideration" (Deniz). On the other hand, half of the students think that their expectations are not taken into consideration "I don't think they take our expectations into consideration. We have to learn English but I don't think these materials are sufficient for us" (Ayşe).

The students think that the program mostly develops language skills. Most of the students state that the program develops reading, speaking and writing, whereas only half of the students think that it develops listening: "I think it has positive effects on all skills. Of course, they develop with our own efforts. Reading develops far better. Writing absolutely develops. I can write better after my teacher's lectures. We practise for speaking. Thus, speaking develops. We do activities related to this. Among these four skills, speaking and listening develop less. Writing and reading develop more because speaking and listening are more difficult than writing and reading" (Kâmil).

Most of the students think that the program is sufficient for the D and C level students' expectations: "They expect the students to use English in everyday life, and I believe the preparatory school meets this expectation" (Nazmi). "It is sufficient for the expectations, but it is not enough to prepare us for the proficiency exam. But if we leave the exam aside, the education here is sufficient for general English" (Azra).

Most of the students think that the program does not comply with the departmental English: "I don't think it is sufficient for the department because English used in departments is more different than the one here. Because we learn general English here, I don't think it meets the expectations of the departmental English" (Kâmil).

More than half of the students think that the program is sufficient for vocational English: "It is sufficient for vocational English because the education here is very good. A student who successfully finishes here can be very successful in his business life if he develops himself" (Ramazan). The rest of the students say it is not sufficient for vocational English: "It is not sufficient because I think vocational English is much more different. We learn general English here, so I don't think the education here can meet the requirements of the vocational English" (Kâmil).

Few of the students think that it is impossible to include any skills or strategies in the program for their departments and vocations: "I think it is impossible because in that case the teachers have to learn the information of each of the departments" (Nurcan). However, most of the students think that some skills and strategies should be included for their departments and vocations. Education for departments, speaking for the department, manual skills for the department, technical terms, speaking and writing skills, speaking to foreigners and having education with the students of the same department are some of the skills and strategies suggested by the students. Similarly, education for the

department, education for the vocation, business skills, presentation skills, elective courses of the departments, and speaking for the vocation are suggested for the requirements of the vocational English.

All of the students state that the books and the materials are suitable for the aims of the program for general English: *"I think they are suitable for general English because I can easily chat with other people or when I have to prepare a presentation, I know how to do it with the help of the books and materials"* (Tülay). *"They are suitable because they progress from easy to difficult. For example, there is a grammar part at the end of the book"* (Nurcan).

On the other hand, most of the students state that the books and the materials are not suitable for the departmental English: *"I think departmental English will be learnt when we go to our departments and I think it cannot be applicable because everybody is from a different department"* (Kâmil). *"If you want to write something about all of the departments, the book will be so thick that we can never finish it"* (Nurcan).

Similarly, more than half of the students think that the books and the materials are not suitable for vocational English: *"In some of the subjects they can be suitable, and in some others, they are not suitable"* (Ayşe). *"They are not suitable because there are so many terms in vocational English"* (Nazmi).

All of the students state that the activities in the program are suitable for the aims of the program for general English: *"Generally we have speaking activities. I can say that we learn most of the spoken language. We can communicate with people and thus they are effective"* (Tarık). *"I think they are suitable but unfortunately most of the students do not want to do these activities"* (Yakup).

On the other hand, nearly all of the students think that the activities in the program are not suitable for departmental English: *"They aren't suitable for departmental English because we use general English in those activities. We don't use anything for departmental English"* (Tülay). *"There are many students from different departments, so they cannot comply with all of us. If they want to do so, they have to separate us according to our departments and this can be very difficult for the school"* (Ayşe).

Similarly, more than half of the students think that the activities in the program are not suitable for vocational English: *"The current activities are not sufficient for vocational English, but they can do it if they want to add them for the next year"* (Tarık).

Nearly all of the students state that the assessment and evaluation processes are suitable for the aims of the program in terms of number: *"They are suitable because we have 8 or 9 quizzes in a term, and it makes nearly a quiz in a week, and I think it is enough. You can show what you have learnt or what you haven't learnt in a week to your teacher in the next quiz, or you can see them by yourself and you can revise the subjects"* (Nazmi).

Moreover, most of the students think that the assessment and evaluation processes are suitable for the aims of the program in terms of duration: *"There is not a problem in terms of duration either. As a matter of fact, the duration they give for the quiz and the questions are proportional"* (Deniz).

In addition, most of the students think that the assessment and evaluation processes are suitable for the aims of the program in terms of content: *"I can say that they*

are 90 % suitable. The exams completely correspond to what we have learnt” (Naci). “Because they test what they have taught, they are suitable in terms of content” (Kâmil).

### 3.2.3. Findings obtained from the semi-structural interviews with the Instructors

Most of the instructors state that the aims of the preparatory school are general English, and academic English adequate enough to meet the students’ needs in their departments: “Our aim is to give our students an intermediate level general English before they go to their departments” (Leyla). “Giving them a general language skill and providing them with a certain level of English or other languages” (Nuri). Some of the instructors state that the prep school has the aims of general English, academic English and vocational English: “The aim of the prep school is to provide the students with a language skill that will be required in their university life and a language skill that they will use in their departments and even in their professional life” (Metin).

More than half of the instructors think that the program meets the aims in general. “Many factors are involved in meeting the goals. From the motivation of the student to the conditions that the school provides and to the physical and technological conditions are all in it, but in general, I can say that we are in a very good condition and our program meets the goals” (Metin). Some of the instructors state that they are not sure whether the program meets the aims: “I have some doubts about whether the program meets the aims because the ones who can answer this better are the teachers in the departments. The feedbacks we got from them show that the students do not have the required language proficiency in the departments” (Ali). “It is debatable. We think that the students are somehow successful enough to complete the program but we should ask this question to the teachers in the departments to get the actual answer and get their feedbacks” (Erdal).

All of the instructors state that they are informed about the objectives at the beginning of each term and they are given a written copy of the objectives. “Our objectives are stated in written forms for each level” (Leyla). “There is a detailed explanation about what the system is, what is expected from the students, what the system is based on in the student handbook. There is also a detailed explanation about the GSE in the handbook. Therefore, students have a chance to have a certain level of knowledge. There is also a handbook for teachers as well. Apart from that, most of them took part in the establishment of the system. After the establishment of the program, meetings were held with them and they were informed about the program. There is also a meeting we hold every Wednesday to discuss the issues about the program, it is possible to follow the program easily (Caner).

Most of the instructors state that the objectives are clear and understandable: “They are clear and understandable. We have a criterion prepared according to the CEFR. The students and teachers can see very clearly what they will learn or teach in a term. Since we are an accredited preparatory school, I don’t observe a problem” (Nuri).

A few of the instructors state that they are not sure whether the objectives are clear and understandable: “Not all of them are clear and understandable. I think some of them are explicit, whereas some others are implicit and they are open to interpretation. Some say, for



*example, the student can discuss, talk or create a short text on familiar topics; but it is not clear what familiar topics are. They can vary depending on the situation and context” (Ali). “The objectives are very clear and there is enough information about them in our books” (Erdal).*

Half of the instructors state that the objectives are clear and understandable for the students: *“The objectives are included in the materials distributed to the students. The orientation presentations at the beginning of the terms are also devoted to the objectives” (Orhan). “I think they are clear and understandable. I mean when a student comes here, s/he knows what s/he will learn” (Eyşan).*

On the other hand, half of the instructors think that the objectives are not clear and not understandable for the students: *“I don’t think so. The students cannot understand these objectives” (Betül). “Some of the students especially those of the low levels say having the objectives in English affects the comprehensibility negatively. I agree on that. At first, we translated our objectives to Turkish for D level, that is, for our lowest level. The students had Turkish outcomes in their self-evaluation lists but because they were simple “can do” statements, we omitted them from the books later” (Caner).*

The objectives are thought to be compatible with the content of the program by most of the instructors: *“The content is compatible with the objectives because we use the books that are prepared for those objectives and we also support these books in accordance with the objectives of the prep school” (Metin). “They are compatible because the materials prepared for the lessons and the syllabus are designed by considering these objectives, so they are created as compatible as possible” (Ali).*

However, a few of the instructors think that the content is not compatible with the objectives: *“Some more production-based things can be done. In this sense, it is not compatible. The students can be allowed to do much freer exercises. Technology should not be prioritized too much” (Betül). “It is compatible with the objectives but it cannot fully meet them” (Eyşan).*

More than half of the instructors think that the content of the prep school is interesting for the students: *“I think it is interesting enough for the students. I mean there are basic things to be included in foreign language education. We also support it with technology. There are more entertaining activities in lab hours. Moreover, the school organizes extracurricular activities such as speaking clubs, word games and discussions” (Nuri). “I think it’s interesting because we try not to do the lesson only in the class. We also support them with online activities and extracurricular activities. Thus, we don’t just follow the book, but everyone has a contribution as teachers. Therefore, it is interesting” (Eyşan). One of the instructors thinks that the content is partially interesting: “I believe that we are trying to make it as interesting as we can, but as with any learning environment, there are both interesting and uninteresting parts of the content” (Metin).*

On the other hand, a few of the instructors think that the content is not interesting for the students: *“When I think of my students, I see that they get bored. We should do much more extracurricular activities. There should be more up-to date topics and we should leave them to themselves” (Betül). “It depends on the teachers and the way how they teach their lessons. Without extra materials and activities that the teachers will bring to the classrooms, the current content is not interesting, but it has a potential to be more interesting” (Ali).*

Most of the instructors think that students' expectations are taken into consideration while selecting the materials of the program: *"There is enough information and pictures for the needs and professional expectations of this age in the materials. We prepare our materials according to universal, national, current and necessary developments"* (Orhan). *"Before the program was applied for the first time, a questionnaire was conducted within a very detailed needs analysis in order to determine the interests of the both the students who were still attending the program and the ones who had already finished the program"* (Caner). The rest of the instructors state that the students' expectations are partially taken into consideration. *"They try to make the materials interesting for the students but I think this is not very successful. As they know this, they try to prepare the extra materials that are more parallel with the books"* (Betül). *"These materials are in accordance with not only the levels of the students but also the objectives of the program. First, the levels of the students are taken into consideration. They also consider the aims. Of course, there is also a book dimension. They try to match them with the most suitable book on the market"* (Ali). *"Everything is based on our exit level that we have chosen for our program. Especially when GSE is considered, we don't have a lot of choices when choosing materials. It is a reference that has been accepted only recently. In other words, it is not as common as CFR, so there are few materials directly produced for this area. Therefore, we have to use the best of all"* (Erdal).

Most of the instructors state that the program has positive contribution to reading, writing, speaking and listening: *"We do teach all skills. The materials and technology use are very good to develop these skills and I think we are successful in that. I mean although many universities cannot do a speaking exam, we can do it. I think it has been performed for years resolutely and successfully. All four skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing are performed properly"* (Nuri). Another instructor states that it is difficult to determine the effect of the program on all skills because of the integrated program used in the school. *"In fact, we can say that it is quite effective, but since an integrated program is implemented, it is obviously difficult to say how well each one can be taught separately"* (Metin). Another instructor emphasizes the effect of the program by comparing it with the programs of other institutions: *"It has positive effects because our school implements writing, listening and speaking exams, while these skills are not included in central exams. We can even teach our students how to write compositions even when the National Education institutions cannot. I think we teach these skills equally"* (Orhan). Another lecturer who thinks that the program contributes positively to all of the skills states that language skills cannot be developed effectively without the students efforts: *"Our only shortcoming is the issue of raising our students' consciousness about providing the continuation of the task even after they leave the classroom"* (Eyşan).

On the other hand, listening and speaking are stated to be the most problematic skills: *"Students feel they fall further behind especially in the areas of listening and speaking, and we see this clearly in the exam results because these are the skills that develop the slowest and the hardest. Because we feel that we have to progress through written texts and grammar studies during the lesson, it is not easy to develop other skills"* (Ali). *"Listening is the biggest problem in Turkey. Because it is difficult to find materials, we are limited with the possibilities offered by the*

internet and the book. We can say that we improve reading skill, but we cannot say that we have given a lot of strategy training on listening” (Caner).

Some of the instructors state that the objectives of the program meet the students’ expectations of general English: *“Some students, such as engineering students, want to learn something about their field. We teach basic English or academic English here. Sometimes it is not compatible with their expectations, but we tell the students in the meetings and presentations that they are going to learn academic English at our school, but it is not departmental English or English for specific purposes. However, we can say that the program is compatible with general English and academic English”* (Nuri). *“It generally meets the students’ expectations because we comply with the learning outcomes of the program, but when we think of the low-level students, we can say that it complies with their expectations at a minimum level”* (Orhan).

Most of the instructors, on the other hand, think that the program does not meet the students’ expectations: *“Our objectives are suitable on paper, but time is not enough to improve them. This is related to technical reasons or regulations, so we do our best to make it appropriate for the students’ expectations”* (Leyla). *“I think it is a heavy program. That’s to say, the objectives are suitable, but they look good on paper for the students. It is not possible for the students at that level to digest so much information. The objectives could be compatible for only very determined students, but not for the majority”* (Eyşan).

Most of the instructors think that the objectives of the program are not sufficient for the students’ expectations of departmental English: *“Unfortunately, language production cannot be limited to what is given at school. If a student makes some efforts outside the school and does extra activities such as reading, listening, watching or whatever is needed related to his department, then it is sufficient for his department”* (Metin). *“If we are talking about D and C level students’ passing the proficiency exam, I think the students are not at that level yet. Having a proficiency exam at the end of the year is a right granted to those students, so the students only have that right although they are not at that level, and they only take the exam and try their luck”* (Ali).

More than half of the instructors think that the objectives of the program are not sufficient for the students’ expectations of vocational English: *“The prep school alone is not enough, but I think it could be possible with the English courses in their departments for 4 years after the prep school”* (Leyla). *“It is not possible with the prep school alone. In fact, to some extent, it depends on the students. What the students can do is to get basic English education here, or at least a desire for English, to pursue and develop it by themselves, so I don’t think it will be enough in their professional lives with the prep school education only”* (Erdal).

Most of the instructors think that it is impossible to include any skills or strategies in the program for departmental English: *“We cannot do more than general English in the prep school but I think the instructors at their departments can do it. In fact, I know some examples of this”* (Leyla). On the other hand, there are some instructors who recommend some skills and strategies for the departments: *“For example, the students from the same departments can be brought together. We can surely get them accustomed to their departments with some materials..., more emphasis can be placed especially on reading and writing skills”* (Erdal). *“A few skills can be given to the low-level students in relation to interpretation of a few scientific*

*statistical data” (Orhan). “There may be a notetaking skill especially in listening and reading...Or many things can be done in reading. If the texts the students read maintain their background, they will be successful” (Caner). “21. century skills and fine skills are important these days. How can we integrate fine skills into language teaching and how can we encourage our students to acquire those skills while learning the language in the prep school?” (Lale).*

Most of the instructors think that it is impossible to include any skills or strategies in the program for vocational English: *“It is somewhat impossible to apply a program for vocational English to students from different departments within a year” (Betül). “I think there is no place for vocational English in prep schools” (Caner). A few of the instructors recommend some ideas for vocational English: “If they really need English, speaking and written communication should be included. Maybe the number of professional subjects may be increased and adapted for speaking and writing skills. I think that the students will need speaking skills especially in their professional life” (Erdal). “There may be some skills and strategies for academic reading and research. There should be more comprehension skills for academic texts. But it is not possible to gain all of these skills within a year” (Eyşan).*

All of the instructors state that the books and the materials are suitable for general English: *“They are suitable for general English because I think we use materials that will prepare the students in both academic English and general conversations in general terms” (Metin). “They are compatible. They exactly comply with the objectives of general English because we plan everything according to the learning outcomes. The outcomes are specified from the very beginning and the books are determined to be suitable for the objectives. If a book lacks any parts, we always support it with additional materials” (Nuri).*

Only a few of the lecturers state that the materials and books applied in the program are suitable for departmental English: *“They are suitable only if we bear in mind that students take support courses such as technical English in their departments” (Orhan). “They are suitable for the basis of departmental English. We cannot support them with vocabulary, but they are suitable for general English. Since we already prepare our materials according to our own learning outcomes, we apply those materials after deciding they comply with the outcomes” (Eyşan).*

On the other hand, all of the instructors state that the materials and books applied in the program are not suitable for vocational English: *“I don’t think we do anything about vocational English, so it’s not possible to say that the materials are suitable for vocational English” (Ali). “The books fail to meet this. The materials we use here are not for vocational English” (Erdal).*

Most of the instructors think that the activities used in the program are suitable for general English: *“The best opportunity for students is to contact and communicate with each other. We try to provide an environment for creating the communication environment in daily life in the classroom and using general English” (Ali). “When we consider general skills such as speaking, discussion, notetaking in academic lectures, listening, understanding the lectures of a professor and compositions as an academic writing type, we can say that they are suitable and sufficient” (Orhan). “Perhaps our student packs are the products that are sustained most. It is open for continuous improvement and I think it has a right place in the program. The teachers here*

*have prepared an activity book and we have published it. Now, we have made it permanent thanks to our teachers by creating a book from the new and practical activities in the lessons. Yes, I think our activities are very suitable” (Caner).*

Few of the instructors state that the activities are partially suitable for general English: *“Actually, they are not very unsuitable, but when I think of the activities, there will be many activities to be criticized among them. For example, some of the lab assignments are given as an assessment tool in order to use the facilities of the school” (Erdal).*

A few of the instructors state that the activities are partially suitable for departmental English: *“There is not a lesson for speaking practice, but we teach presentation skills within the scope of the lesson, which will definitely be useful in the department. The students learn presentation skills in English at each level, even in low levels in the first term of the prep school. It’s a skill that they can definitely use in their departments. Moreover, I think they are able to write an article, a paragraph or an essay about their departments when they are expected to do a research” (Nuri). “I cannot say that they are completely suitable. Because the students do not even use all the needs of general English in lessons. We teach them extracurricular English as well within the context of general English, but the students will not use a skill related to shopping for example in the courses of the departments” (Eyşan).*

On the other hand, more than half of the lecturers state that the activities are not suitable for departmental English: *“They are not compatible with the courses in the departments because the students take very different courses in their departments from different perspectives. It is impossible for us to prepare the students for the courses in each department (Metin). “Nothing is done about the department. Only the presentations made by the students can be useful in terms of presentation techniques in their departments and in their future professions” (Betül).*

As for the compliance of the activities implemented in the program with vocational English, nearly half of the lecturers think that they are partially compatible: *“Maybe it can be 50% because they learn general English. They will use it in their professions, but they may have to learn words, jargon and terminology of their fields in their departments” (Leyla). “They are sufficient in basic terminological sense. If we are talking about more specific areas such as the Electronics department, they cannot meet the objectives for vocational English” (Orhan).*

On the other hand, more than half of the lecturers think that the activities implemented in the program are not compatible with professional English: *“We do not have any preparation for vocational English here. For that reason, they are not compatible” (Metin). “I think they don’t comply with professional English and I also think it shouldn’t” (Caner).*

More than half of the instructors think that the number of assessment-evaluation processes is appropriate: *“It is compatible and feasible at the same time. We conduct a short quiz every week to cover the unit the students study that week” (Orhan). “I think it is compatible. After all, we use the same basic learning outcomes in all of them. Our exams are prepared according to the learning outcomes and the materials in that level, so it is compatible and convenient” (Eyşan).* Few of the lecturers think that the number of the assessment-

evaluation processes is not appropriate: *“I do not think there is a big problem in terms of content, but I have a doubt about the fact that everything is not always covered in terms of number, frequency, and duration. For example, we do a writing exam two or three times a year and the number and the type of questions we can ask are limited. Therefore, we don’t have a chance to measure all the skills”* (Ali). Some other instructors mention the washback effect of the assessment-evaluation processes: *“In fact, we do a lot of tests, so there are a lot of elements in the system that the student does in return for a grade ... I am not so sure of how much the evaluation elements affect the education in the classroom. I mean, we do 8 short quizzes here and there is a result of each quiz. When the result of this short exam shows low grades, do we have a chance to revise the subjects? Are we able to study the missing parts in an extra lesson? I don’t know, but if the goal is to catch up the syllabus, everyone is doing their best, but in this sense, I don’t think the evaluation elements produce the correct washback effect”* (Caner).

Most of the instructors think that the assessment-evaluation processes are appropriate in terms of duration: *“I think there are not many problems in terms of duration because the total duration will probably not exceed 8-10 course hours and this does not sound like too much”* (Erdal). *“In fact, they seem appropriate both in terms of number and duration, but the students do not care about especially some evaluations. The students doing their tasks at lower levels are very few. They just take the short quizzes without a purpose. Therefore, it is not possible to say whether the evaluation criterion for these low levels is compatible or not”* (Betül).

Most of the instructors think that the assessment-evaluation processes are appropriate in terms of content: *“I can say that it is compatible in terms of content because the exams are prepared by the exam unit. They say that the exams are suitable for the objectives and that they are written in line with the objectives. I can say that we pay attention to the objectives when we prepare the short quizzes”* (Ali). *“As all the exams and other assessment elements are prepared in line with the objectives, I think they are of course appropriate”* (Erdal).

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

The study aims to evaluate whether the objectives of the preparatory school are appropriate for low-level students’ expectations of general English, departmental English and vocational English in the light of data about the instructional system of the program obtained from the students and the instructors. In accordance with this purpose, the data were collected through observations, a student questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

The data obtained from the observation stage indicate that the school provides the students with detailed information about the program such as mission, vision, aims, expectations and outcomes of the school. It is also found that the book and online materials are compatible with the GSE outcomes. The observations show that the units in the school work in coordination with one another and all decisions are taken in accordance with the GSE outcomes. It is seen that quizzes, mid-terms, and tasks are prepared according to a table of specifications which directly represents the GSE outcomes.

The data obtained from the questionnaire with the students show that they have positive opinions about the program and that the program meets their general English expectations. It can be concluded that the program has positive results for this sampling group in terms of the data obtained in the questionnaire. However, when the students' achievement scores and the findings of the observations are taken into consideration, the findings of the questionnaire alone are found not to reflect the real situation of this group of students. For this reason, in order to determine the factors affecting the achievement in this sampling group, the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews with the students and the instructors are also used. The results of the findings obtained from the observation, questionnaire and semi-structured interviews are as follows:

Both the students and the instructors think that the program meets the aim of general English. This finding seems to comply with the aims stated in the student handbook and staff handbook. According to the handbook of the school (Staff Handbook, 2019), the aims of the School of Foreign Languages are to provide the students with a foreign language education by using the latest approaches in language teaching and contemporary technological developments, to help the students gain language skills and strategies required for studies in their departments, to ensure that students use all the skills they have gained in their real life, to raise awareness about different faculties and to develop students' vision and to create an effective learning and teaching environment in the school. However, it is seen that most of the students and some of the instructors have additional aims for departmental and vocational English which the program does not contain. Since the wording of the aims mentioned in the student handbook and staff handbook is not clear enough to indicate which language skills and strategies can be required for studies in the departments, the students and the instructors might be confused. This finding which reflects the uncertainty of the aims shows similarity with the findings of Özkanal and Hakan's study (2010) and Özdoruk's study (2016). In these studies students think that the prep school should have aims of departmental and vocational English as well as general English.

Although the students are informed about the objectives in many ways, the objectives are not regarded clear and understandable because they are in English. On the other hand, the instructors, who find the objectives clear and understandable, state that they are not clear and understandable for the students. This finding shows that participants do not take the aims and the objectives as seriously as the evaluators do because the aims and objectives are generally interpreted by students for their particular setting and the ideal formulation of objectives fails to be accurate and relevant (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). The fact that program objectives are not stated clearly and understandably is indicated to create some problems for the participants of the program (Tunç, 2010). The fact that the students cannot find the objectives clear and understandable despite much information indicates a problem area. This can be explained by the students' demotivation. Since these low-level students in the study are generally demotivated, it can be concluded that these students cannot understand the objectives because of their poor language competence as the objectives are stated in

English. It is important that the objectives be user friendly and be readily incorporated by teachers and students into their day to day practice and experience (Harden, 2002). Similarly, Ediger (2006) supports that each objective should be stated understandably for teachers and students to understand what has to be achieved at the end of the program. Both the students and the instructors say that the content complies with the objectives and that the program is encouraging to learn English. These findings show similarity with the ones found by Özdoruk (2016) and Öner and Mede (2015). Although the content is accepted to be compatible with the objectives, it is not found to be interesting for the students. The students think that their expectations are not taken into consideration when choosing materials, whereas the instructors think that the students' expectations are taken into consideration.

Both the students and the instructors think that the program is sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary. However, listening is found to be improving less than the other skills. This finding is compatible with the findings of other studies in literature (Öner and Mede, 2015; Özdoruk, 2016; Tunç, 2010). Both the students and the instructors say the program is suitable for general English but not suitable for departmental English. However, while the students think that the program is suitable for vocational English, the instructors think that the program is not suitable for vocational English. Most of the students suggest some skills and strategies for their departments such as education for departments, speaking for the department, manual skills for the department, technical terms, speaking and writing skills, speaking to foreigners and having education with the students of the same department. Similarly, education for the department, education for the vocation, business skills, presentation skills, elective courses of the departments, and speaking for the vocation are suggested for the requirements of the vocational English. On the other hand, most of the instructors think that it is impossible to include skills and strategies for the departmental and vocational English. However, a few of the instructors think it is necessary to include reading and writing, statistical data analysis, notetaking, listening, 21. Century skills and fine skills for the departmental English and speaking and writing, academic reading, academic text analysis, 21. Century skills and fine skills for vocational English.

A review of literature indicates that there have been discussions for decades about arranging the content according to academic and vocational needs. Teahen (1996) discusses the reasons, difficulties and suggestions of arranging the content according to academic and vocational needs and suggests that content arrangement works should be followed with pilot studies and the resulting experiences should be shared among the stakeholders. It is suggested in literature that students should be involved in the decision-making process and that more enjoyable and game-like activities should be included in the program (Aygün, 2017). In a study conducted in Turkey, Inan et al. (2012) stresses the importance of determining the academic English expectations by taking the opinions of the instructors of different departments. As shown in these studies in literature, it is possible to design the content of the program according to the stakeholders' needs and



expectations. Similarly, Gerede (2005) indicated the importance of planning, application and evaluation stages of the content of the program according to students' needs.

Most of the students and the instructors think that the materials and the books are suitable for general English, but they are not suitable for departmental and vocational English. This finding complies with the findings of Özkanal and Hakan (2010) and Özdoruk (2016). Because the books and the material packs are prepared in accordance with the GSE outcomes, it is quite normal that they are compatible with the GSE outcomes. However, because there are not many outcomes for departmental and vocational English in the GSE for D and C level, the students state that their expectations for departmental and vocational English are not met in the books and packs.

Both the students and the instructors think that the activities used in the program are suitable for general English, but they are not suitable for departmental and vocational English. This finding is also compatible with the findings of Özkanal and Hakan (2010) and Özdoruk (2016).

The students also state that the assessment and evaluation processes used in the program are suitable for the objectives of the program in terms of number, duration and content. While this finding complies with that of Tunç's study (2010), it does not comply with the finding of the studies conducted by Tekin (2015) and Özdoruk (2016). Because all of the components of the program are arranged according to GSE outcomes, the fact that the assessment and evaluation processes comply with the outcomes is an expected result. Moreover, the outcomes are taken into consideration as a table of specifications in the stages of preparation, typing and checking for all of the exams, assignments and tasks, the number, duration and content of the assessment and evaluation processes become compatible with the objectives of the program.

#### **4.1 Recommendations**

The aims of the preparatory school should be rewritten clearly and understandably and all of the participants should be informed about the aims and objectives of the program. It is also important that the aims and the objectives be stated in Turkish so that low level students can easily understand them. The content of the program should be redesigned according to the students' needs and expectations. Similarly, course materials should be supported by interesting materials and activities. In order for the students to be exposed to the target language, extra activities and exercises should be used for listening and speaking. In addition, low level students should have more speaking practices with native speakers. Moreover, all of the stakeholders of the program such as students having taken prep-school education in the previous years, academicians at the departments giving their lessons in English should also be consulted for their ideas about creating contents for departmental English and vocational English.

#### **Notes**

1. This article is a part of a PhD thesis of Osmangazi University.
2. All the names used in this article are pseudonyms.

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