

Dissemination of A proposed English Preparatory Class Model for The Black Sea Region Countries Through Internet

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INTRODUCTION

Owing to enormous and unprecedented expansion in technological, scientific and economic activities in the past few decades the demand for learning at least one foreign language has occurred. Moreover, new developments in Educational Psychology have given rise to an increasing emphasis on importance of learners' needs, interests, motivation, relevance of what and how they are learning (the British Council International Seminar on Teaching English for Specific Purposes, 1996). Similarly, today just like most methodologists and language experts, Fredericks (1996:1) assumes that language training programs should provide optimal learning opportunities for all students through recognition of and provision for each individual's unique patterns of growth and development. The needs of the students in the same geographical region may have lots of common sights, and the success of one implementation should be shared with the neighboring countries to disseminate the success for a more fruitful world. This is one of the obligations to achieve the objectives of a true globalization process. Internet is the best tool to achieve such an objective.

The students of engineering faculties are in need of learning both general and specific English in order to catch up with the latest technological and scientific developments. Waters (1977:41,42) states that a program based on specific English involves two main facets: 1. Adding an 'overlay' of the English particularly associated with the study of science; 2. Teaching communicative skills in this English and in the stock of general English already acquired." Tinkham (1981:134-136) broadens the limits of the purposes to teach Specific English and gives a situational example for the reason to design a general English course as a base for specific studies in English as follows: "During the mid-1970s the American government sold a large number of helicopters to Iran. American companies were contracted to teach Iranians to fly and maintain these helicopters. This technical training was conducted in English and required that Iranian students first learn sufficient English to receive the specific training. Hence, it is safe to infer that the learners of English who are interested in a specific field of study needs to be provided with General English until they are able to comprehend specific subjects in English.

Some countries in the world are particularly in need of training qualified technical persons owing to their geographical, political and socio-cultural features. Black Sea Region countries such as Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Ukraine and Romania are some particular examples to such countries. In Turkey, Engineering Faculties of most universities such as Middle East Technical University, Bilkent University, Istanbul Technical University, and Gazi University provide their education in the medium of English in their Engineering Faculties. Therefore these universities provide their students with one-academic year obligatory Preparatory Class training, which is based on mainly English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and partially English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The students who fulfil the requirements to pass the preparatory class are allowed to carry on their education in their main departments.

PROBLEM

In this study it is aimed to find out;

1. how the system works in an English preparatory class in Turkey,

2. what the difference is between the students' level of English before and after the sample model is implemented,
3. what sort of EFL and ESP materials are used during the preparatory class period,
4. whether one-year English preparatory class process is effective enough to enable the students to follow the English-medium courses in their main departments.

PURPOSE

In this study, a sample English preparatory class model is introduced. This sample model was designed for the students at Gazi University Faculty of Engineering and Architecture in 1996-1997 academic year (about 32 weeks). This study aims to be of service to the colleagues who are responsible for preparing an EFL or ESP programme for English-medium Engineering Faculties in the Black Sea region countries through internet.

A TYPICAL ENGLISH PREPARATORY CLASS SYSTEM IN TURKEY

The Structure of the Administrative Affairs

The structure of the English Preparatory Class Department of Gazi University Faculty of Engineering and Architecture in 1996-1997 academic year was made up of a coordinator, two vice-coordinators, lecturers, a technician and a secretary. The responsibilities of each agent are as in the following:

COORDINATOR

a- is responsible for designing, improving and coordinating the EFL and ESP programmes in all stages i.e. registration, administration, correspondence, lectures, collecting data, testing, and so on,

b- organizes meetings, interviews with the lecturers and the students, and makes observations for the improvement and evaluation of the programmes,

c- arranges social activities with native speakers and other experienced lecturers or consultants to contribute to the teachers' professional skills in the classrooms.

VICE-COORDINATORS

1-Vice-coordinator of Administrative Affairs

a- helps the coordinator with the registration affairs,

b- keeps in touch with the departments of the Faculty in terms of providing examination rooms and invigilators for the mid-term, make-up or final exams, and the like.

2- Vice-coordinator of Testing Affairs

a- prepares the test drafts and is responsible for the controlling of the printing and publishing affairs as well as the delivery of the tests,

b- collects the results of the exams and evaluates the data gathered related to the programme

LECTURERS

a- teach the classes and help the Coordinator and the Vice-Coordinators to improve the programme and thus to achieve the expected and desired objectives,

b- are responsible for checking the exam papers and informing the Testing-office of the results,

c- give feedback about the flow of the programme in the classrooms at the weekly meetings.

TECHNICIAN

is responsible for having the test papers and handouts published and for the delivery of them, as well.

SECRETARY

does the office works, types the quiz papers, handouts and formal documents (proficiency exams, mid-terms and achievement tests).

Studies of the Preparatory Class Staff

Pre-Studies

- a- The coordinator and the vice-coordinator prepare the flow of the new programme in accordance with the next academic calendar,
- b- The coordinator and some of the lecturers keep in touch with publishers to provide the materials for the students and the lecturers. The lecturers receive free specimens of the materials,
- c- The technician and some of the lecturers control the conditions of the classrooms and the equipment needed during the academic year,
- d- The coordinator, vice-coordinators and the technician coordinate the preparation of the proficiency examination ,
- e- The coordinator, vice coordinator and some volunteer lecturers design a short term course programme to prepare the new students for the proficiency (exemption/placement) exam.

On-Studies

- a- The coordinator coordinate the administration and assessment of the Proficiency (exemption/placement) test and consequently, establishes the preparatory classes with the staff,
- b- The coordinator and the vice-coordinators control the official works such as filling student cards, absenteeism tables, student lists, office&classroom labels, as well as delivery of cassettes, cassette players and teacher's manuals,
- c- The coordinator and the vice-coordinators arrange the services concerning the delivery of coursebooks to the students,
- d- The coordinator arranges and coordinates weekly meetings to observe the flow of the programme and develops strategies for the following week ,
- e- The coordinator coordinates the mid-term exam preparations with the lecturers assigned, vice-coordinators and the technician,
- f- The coordinator and the vice-coordinators arrange the frequency and the content of the quizzes for each week,
- g- The coordinator, vice-coordinator and the lecturer assigned organise the social activities such as invitation of native speakers, organization of seminars, conversation club activities, picnics, etc.,
- h- The coordinator, vice-coordinator and the secretary arrange the official correspondence between the Preparatory Class Department and the Dean or the other departments of the Faculty ,
- i- The coordinator, the vice-coordinators, lecturers and the technician coordinate the achievement test procedure.

Post-Studies

- a- The coordinator evaluates the result of the programme, checking the average table, interviewing the lecturers and the students,

b- The coordinator notes the essential points to improve the next year's programme,

c- The coordinator organises a meeting to welcome the new ideas and suggestions of the vice-coordinators and the lecturers about the next year's programme,

d- The coordinator and the vice-coordinator form the groups of lecturers to develop new materials for the next year if necessary,

e- The coordinator, vice-coordinators and the lecturers prepare a summer course programme for the students who have failed in the final exam or have to take the make-up examination.

POSTSCRIPT

a- Every Friday a staff meeting is held,

b- Quizzes are given and checked by the class instructors,

c- Mid-terms are given and checked by another class-instructor,

d- Every mid-term a group of lecturers are assigned to check and print the questions,

e- All the classes have to follow the same programme within a particular period,

f- Groups have different class hours in the second term as shown in the following:

	<u>Group A</u>	<u>Group B</u>	<u>Group C</u>
Term 1:	4 hrs/day	4 hrs/day	4 hrs/day
Term 2:	X	4 hrs/day	6 hrs/day- 4hrs.Basic Eng. - 2 hrs.Read.& Writ.

g- Each term the class-lecturers are shifted, and Writing and Reading courses are also given by another instructor. Therefore, each student has the opportunity to take a course from 3 different teachers in two terms,

h- If a lecturer cannot come to class for any reasons, the students are delivered to other classes in groups of two or three to follow the course as they all follow the same syllabus within a given particular time (in all classrooms 3 spare chairs are available and the student body in each class is about 22),

i- Homework from the supplementary materials is either checked in the classroom or given to the students again as a quiz paper,

j- In the programme homework and quizzes are as significant as the lectures. In other words, the support of the extensive studies are very important for the success of the Preparatory Class Programme as the time is limited with 32 weeks in two terms.

MATERIALS USED IN THE SAMPLE PREPARATORY CLASS MODEL

The materials of the Preparatory Class Programme in 1996-1997 academic year were given according to the English level of each group as in the following;

GROUP A (Upper-Intermediate)

1. Longman First Certificate.....Longman
2. Paragraph PowerG.M.Rooks
3. Reading and Thinking in English 3.....Oxford U.P.
4. Reading and Thinking in English 4.....Oxford U.P.
5. A Course in Basic Scientific English.....J.R.Ewer,G.Latorre
6. Reader at Work 2 (Supplementary).....M.E.T.U.
7. Grammar Supplementary Materials and Exercises.....M.E.T.U.

GROUP B (Pre-Intermediate)

1. Language in Use Pre-Intermediate.....Cambridge U.P.
2. Language in Use-Intermediate..... Cambridge U.P.
3. Focus on First CertificateLongman
4. Readings for Prep Class Students of Engineering...H.Mirici
5. Write Ideas.....M.Glendingning
6. Two Days in Summer (Video)..... Longman
7. A Glossary Booklet for Focus on First Certificate.H.Mirici
8. Reader at Work I (Supplementary).....M.E.T.U.
9. Supplementary Listening Exercise..... .M.E.T.U.
- 10.Grammar Supplementary Materials and Exercises.....M.E.T.U.
- 11.Supplementary Writing Exercises.....M.E.T.U.
- 12.Exercise Book for Focus on First Certificate.....M.E.T.U.
- 13.Stage Books (Extensive Reading Materials).....Oxford U.P.

GROUP C (Beginners)

1. Take 1Longman
2. Language in Use Pre-Intermediate.....Cambridge U.P.
3. Language in Use-Intermediate.....Cambridge U.P.
4. Focus on First CertificateLongman
5. Readings for Prep Class Students of Engineering....H.Mirici
6. Write Ideas.....M.Glendingning
7. Two Days in Summer (Video).....Longman
8. A Glossary Booklet for Focus on First Certificate.....H.Mirici
9. Reader at Work I (Supplementary).....M.E.T.U.
10. Supplementary Listening Exercise.....M.E.T.U.
- 11.Grammar Supplementary Materials and Exercises.M.E.T.U.
- 12.Supplementary Writing Exercises.....M.E.T.U.
- 13.Exercise Book for Focus on First Certificate.....M.E.T.U.
- 14.Stage Books (Extensive Reading Materials)..... Oxford U.P.

A SAMPLE WEEKLY SYLLABUS

The following syllabus was prepared by making use of several materials according to the purpose of the course. They all aimed to satisfy the needs of the students on the same teaching point with different respects. For instance, Unit One of the coursebook Focus on First Certificate aimed at teaching some vocabulary and phrasal verbs besides the grammatical structure "Relative Pronouns". Similarly, Unit One of the coursebook Write Ideas provided the learners with various writing activities related to "Relative Pronouns" through different writing exercises. Naturally, the supplementaries of these coursebooks, Exercise Book for Focus on First Certificate and Supplementary Writing Exercises supplied activities focusing on "Relative Pronouns" and the vocabulary sets in the unit. Moreover, in Supplementary Listening Exercises and Grammar Supplementary Materials and Exercises the same structure and vocabulary sets were emphasized by means of listening and grammar exercises. Moreover, Readings for Prep Class Students of Engineering provided the students with some authentic texts introducing various specific vocabulary related to Mathematics, Science and Physics, which were the main subjects in the Freshman classes. It is possible to see how the materials were used within 30 class hours allocated for a week's period of time (See Table 1).

Table 1. A Sample Weekly Syllabus

TERM	MONTH	WEEK	BASIC ENG.	WRITING	LISTENING	GRAMMAR	READING
II	JAN.	II	(14hrs) <u>F.F.C.</u> UNIT 1	(6 hrs) <u>W.I.</u> UNIT 1 <u>S.W.E.</u> Pp.65-68	(1 hr.) <u>S.L.E.</u> TEXT 48	(5 hrs) <u>G.S.M.E.</u> Pp.155-62 <u>E.B.F.F.C.</u> UNIT 1A	(4 hrs) <u>R.P.C.E.</u> Change of State

F.F.C. (Focus on First Certificate), W.I. (Write Ideas), S.L.E. (Supplementary Listening Exercise), G.S.M.E. (Grammar Supplementary Materials and Exercises), R.P.C.E. (Readings for Prep Class Students of Engineering).

As can be seen in this sample syllabus the English Preparatory Class students of the Engineering Faculty were given enough room to learn and practice every teaching point via various materials focusing on different language skills.

SOME FIGURES CONCERNING THE SAMPLE PROGRAMME

The student body of the sample programme was 430 students altogether. There were 14 C Groups and 2 B Groups. The programme lasted 32 weeks in two terms. In the system, 16 teachers including the coordinator and the vice coordinators, a technician and a secretary served. During the programme, 1 proficiency exam, 1 final exam, 48 quizzes, 8 mid-terms were administered to evaluate the students' success.

After the programme was implemented, the proficiency exam results (given at the beginning of the academic year) of some randomly selected students were compared with the results of the same test at the end of the academic year (as the post test) (See Table 2).

Table 2. The Result of the t-Test Related to the Students' Success Before and After the Sample Programme Was Implemented

Variables	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	2-tailed	Sig. t
Var. 1 pre-test	32	32,75	15,59		
Var. 2 post-test	32	76,87	9,93	,000	-15,09

As can be seen in the table above, at the alpha level of significance 0,01, there was a significant difference between the students' success on behalf of the post-test.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is safe to say that the Preparatory Class Programme of Engineering and Architecture Faculty of Gazi University in 1996-1997 academic year, introduced as a sample model in this study, provided the students with various EFL materials emphasizing different language skills and an ESP material compiled with various authentic texts containing vocabulary sets of Mathematics and Science in order to enable them to follow the courses in English in their main departments. And, when the result of the Pre and Post Tests are examined, it can be seen that there is a significant difference between the students' English level at the beginning and at the end of the programme on behalf of the sample programme. Therefore it is safe to claim that although the teaching/learning period is limited with 32 weeks, the English Preparatory Class process is successful enough to enable the students to follow English-medium courses in their main departments. In short, it can be suggested that the Black Sea Region countries such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Ukraine and Romania take this preparatory class programme as a model for the EFL and ESP training in their universities.

On the other hand, it should always be remembered that nothing is perfect. So each colleague who wants to apply this sample model can rearrange it according to the realities of his/her institution, teachers, students and the other factors affecting their own curriculum. Furthermore, it should be remembered that those who discover new facts about the educational implementations in their system can share their ideas with other colleagues in other countries through internet just as it is done in this study.

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