

PERCEPTIONS of METU FRESHMAN STUDENTS on ENGLISH PROFICIENCY EXAM (EPE)

SFL RESEARCH STUDY

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outline

- purpose & research questions
- instruments & method
- sample
- results
- conclusion

purpose

- to examine student perceptions and experiences regarding various aspects of METU-EPE

research questions

- What are the perceptions of freshman students about EPE in terms of
 - difficulty level of components
 - factors underlying their success and/or failure
 - time allowed
 - length of each component
 - their belief in the validity of exam

- How do students prepare for EPE?
- Do freshman students experience problems in understanding the English-medium instruction in their departmental courses?



method and instrument

instrument: questionnaire (qualitative)

part A

demographic
background

part B

8

questions in total



7

open-ended

content analysis method

1

five-point likert scale

means & deviations

method: purposeful sampling

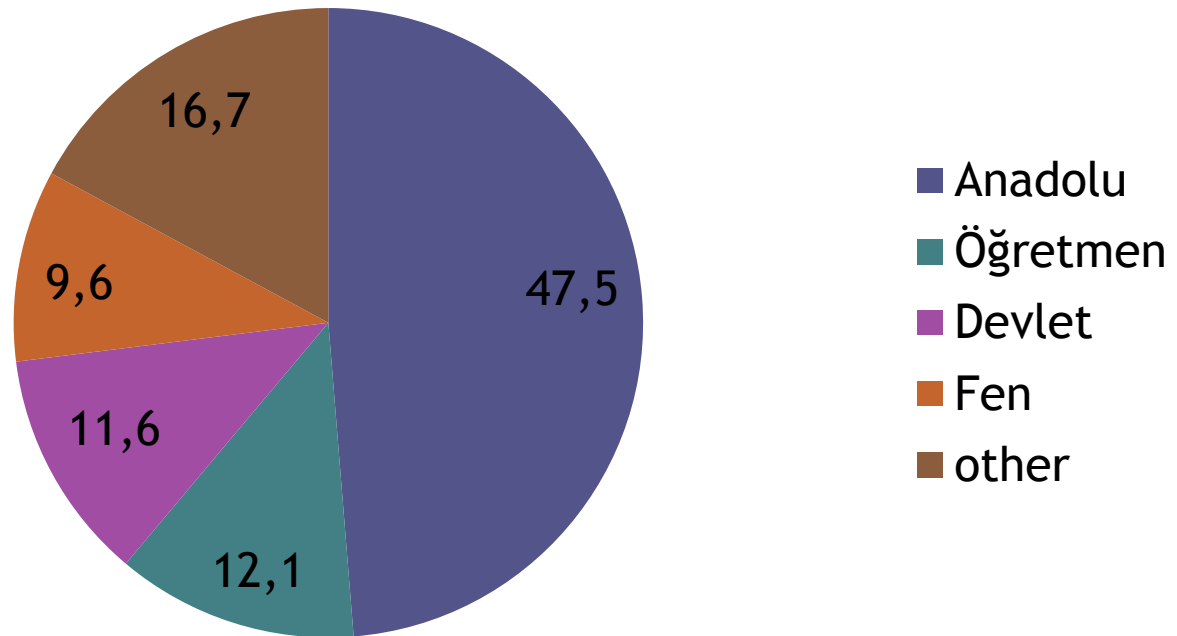
participants (N=205)

94.6 % attended DBE

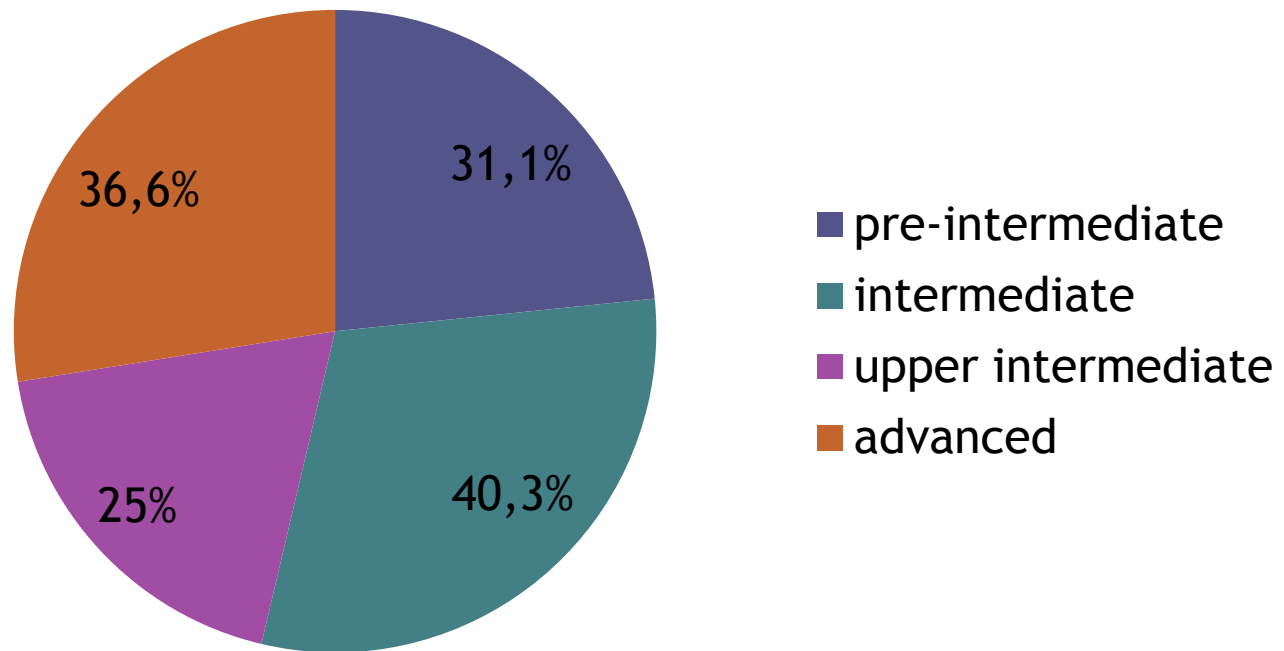
58% male 42% female

60% MF, 26.3% EA score type

High school background



Level of Proficiency at DBE second term



results

perceived level of difficulty of the EPE components

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
difficulty level of language use in EPE stage 1	203	1	5	3,18	,776
difficulty level of reading comprehension EPE stage 1	202	1	5	3,46	,915
difficulty level of multiple choice listening EPE stage 2	202	1	5	3,14	,952
difficulty level of listening-note-taking EPE stage 2	203	1	5	3,31	,947
difficulty level of short answer reading EPE stage 2	203	1	5	3,42	,889
difficulty level of paragraph writing EPE stage 2	203	1	5	3,39	,919

Success Rate of EPE takers

EPE Score (out of 100)	% (N) of Participants
59.5-65	47.3 (96)
65.5-70	24.1 (49)
70.5-75	17.2 (35)
75.5-80	6.4 (13)
80.5-85	4.9 (10)

factors that lead to success

(N= 189)

- **regular study (43)** : doing homework regularly, attendance, attendance being compulsory at DBE , listening to the instructor attentively, daily revision, etc.
- **goal-oriented study (48)**. reading comprehension books, books specifically designed for proficiency tests, online listening exercises, SAC, summer school course and material, **solving” multiple choice questions, “solving” previous EPE questions and “solving” reading.**
- **diligence and commitment of DBE teachers, (27)** some naming them in gratitude and some claiming that teacher factor is crucial but based on luck
- **parallelism between EPE and DBE instruction;** similar exercises were being done in class (8) (inconsistent).

- **solid background** -23 participants specified their high school background and strong foundation in English as being the sole factor
- **strength in a particular language skill/area**, i.e. “my grammar has always been good”
- **listening activities outside class (17)**, having watched many movies and/or TV series, played computer games, and listened to songs in English (17)
- **extensive reading activities (4)** such as reading books or other texts of their own choice
- **their own interest in the language and “good ear” for languages or their individual effort *only***
- **familiarity with/interest in the EPE topics (17)**

factors that lead to failure

(N=170)

1/ 4 holding themselves accountable (56)

1/ 4 holding EPE accountable (66)

**holding mismatch between EPE and DBE instruction
accountable (43)**

**pace of DBE instruction “ the first term was too slow and
the second was too busy”**

time allowed: sufficient

length of each component

reading

- enough no of Qs (68)
- texts too long / tiring (26)
- too few (10)

listening

- enough no of Qs (67)
- too many Qs (77)
- component itself too long --
SS lose concentration
- problems related to accent of
speaker and administration of
test

listening and note-taking:

- enough no of Qs (107)

Language use

- enough no of Qs (80)
- exceptional points of grammar or unnecessary details tested (10)
- too short / more questions (10)

Writing

- enough no of Qs (84)
- Response (Part A) redundant, distracting, unfamiliar (22)

methods and sources used by
test-takers

grammar and language use

- multiple choice Qs in grammar and/or reading books (43, 69)
- DBE & METU books (35)
- previous years Qs (16)
- summer school material (14)
- just attended (26)
- extensive reading (24)

listening

- TV-movies-series (50)
- self-study (37)
- SAC and other DBE facilities (37)
- only attended classes (21)

writing

- self-study or individual study followed by instructor feedback (59)
- DBE instruction (27)
- Summer School material
- no study (16)

sources




- Cesur Öztürk's books (55), Azar & other books available on market (32)
- DBE course books and class instruction (18)
- Worksheets, supplementary materials, Summer School materials (33)
- books recommended by DBE and METU Publications books (39),
- SAC (7)

Areas of difficulty
experienced in departments

	Engineering		Arts & Sciences		Education		Architecture		Economics & Administrative Sciences		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
yes	7	8.4	17	20.5	15	18.1	13	15.7	31	37.3	83	100
no	32	27.6	27	23.3	29	25	10	8.6	18	15.5	116	100
total	39	19.6	44	22.1	44	22.1	23	11.6	49	24.6	199	100

Whether EPE measures
students' level of proficiency
in English

(N= 198).

- partially  57.6%
- YES  20.7 %
- NO  21.7%

Reasons for partial agreement or disagreement

- no speaking component in EPE
- little or no speaking practice at all at DBE
(77 remarks)

Other remarks

Major areas of complaint

- Grammar is overemphasized.
- Instruction is not based on communication.
- Students' performance throughout the year is undervalued.
- The difficulty level of EPE exams vary across years.
- DBE instruction and departmental needs are wide apart.

In conclusion...