

A Triangulated Evaluation of an Elective Advanced Reading Course at a Turkish University Context

Hasan Savas¹ & Ahmet Erdost Yastibas²

Abstract

Advanced Reading course is an elective course that students completing their education at English language preparation department of a Turkish university can choose. Though it has its own curriculum in which the main goal, objectives, assessment system, and students' requirements for the course are mentioned clearly, what the students, instructors, and the coordinator thought about the course was not known. Therefore, the present study aimed to reveal the evaluative attitudes of the students, instructors, and the coordinator separately toward the course. 33 students, 3 instructors having taught the course and one coordinator participated the study. In order to collect data, an adapted questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were used with the students while the instructors who taught the course were required to write cover letters and semi-structured interview was made with the coordinator. The questionnaire was analyzed descriptively while the student interviews, instructor cover letters, and coordinator interview were content analyzed. Triangulation was applied to test the reliability and validity of the study. The results of the study indicate that the stakeholders had positive attitudes towards the course in terms of achieving the goal and objectives, the materials used, assessment system, and communication with each other. However, the assessment system, materials, and the focus of the course may need some changes to make the course more effective.

Keywords: Advanced reading, English language teaching, course evaluation

1. Introduction

In order to engage students within the producing world of English language, School of Foreign Languages (SFL), Zirve University provides elective English courses to students following the completion of English language preparatory department. Students take elective classes such as advanced writing and advanced reading apart from their faculty classes. For the last two years, SFL has been giving the classes. Although much time is spent on the curriculum design, no study has been conducted to evaluate the programs, yet. Evaluation constitutes one of the fundamental bases of language learning and teaching. It can be seen as a nature of the area. As testing and evaluation are in every person's life, almost every step that we take in our educational life is evaluated. Evaluation, similarly as testing and assessment, may be counted as a need because every ongoing process needs to be evaluated whether it is going through the desired way or not. On this perspective, evaluation should not just be seen as a simple reflecting and monitoring tool, but also as an indication of the ongoing learning process. One benefit that we get as a consequence of evaluations may be that we re-construct our program if the findings are problematic. Re-construction may be under the light of clarifying our objectives, re-designing our syllabus, choosing a textbook, and specifying assessment criteria, materials, and our teaching methods in the program. Suchman (1967) somehow defines practice of evaluation as "the achievement of a chain of objectives" (p. 55) and as "understanding of all three factors (program, objectives, and intervening process) is essential to the conduct of evaluative research" (p. 177). Researchers see it as a need to reflect on their own studies, objectives, materials, and educational methodologies.

¹School of Foreign Languages, Gediz University, İzmir/Turkey. Email:hasan.savas@gediz.edu.tr

²School of Foreign Languages, Zirve University, Gaziantep/Turkey.Email:ahmet.yastibas@zirve.edu.tr

Of the aim of the selective classes, preparing students to be able to write and read academic articles/books and helping them communicate in a foreign language efficiently as they study in their own faculty classes may be counted. SFL designs the classes as having three class hours a week through a full semester. Most of the time, except the midterm and final examination week, the classes continue for 12 weeks.

1.1 Advanced Reading Course

As the subject of this study is 'advanced reading' course, an evaluation period of the course was taken into consideration. In aim to find out the strengths and the weaknesses of the course and to examine the methodology and the syllabus, a product-based evaluation method was followed. Advanced Reading Course is an elective course. The students who graduate from the English language preparation department, continue their education at the faculties, and are second, third, or fourth graders can choose and register it. It is a three-hour course. It lasts for 14 weeks. The first week of the course is spared for introducing the course to the students in terms of its goal, objectives, assessment system, students' responsibilities, absence policy, and how the course is taught. Midterm and final exams are made in the eighth and fourteenth weeks successively. The information about the course is detailed and elaborated below in terms of its goal, objectives, students' responsibilities, and assessment system, which are the focuses of the present study.

1.1.1 The Goal of the Course

The goal of the course is that students will be able to learn and integrate academic reading skills with other lectures at their departments in order to improve their understanding and comprehension of different reading materials that are prepared at different levels of English proficiency.

1.1.2 The Objectives of the Course

According to the course, students will be able to achieve the following objectives at the end of the course.

1. Identifying main ideas and topics of a given reading text in English,
2. Creating cause and effect relationships between things mentioned in the reading text,
3. Making inference(s) from the reading text,
4. Finding specific information about something by scanning,
5. Finding out major and supporting points of the reading text,
6. Summarizing the reading text,
7. Making interpretation about a diagram,
8. Paraphrasing,
9. Understanding what a word refers to.

1.1.3 The Assessment System of the Course

The course's assessment system is composed of midterm exam, final exam, and teacher evaluation. In terms of the percentages of the assessment tools, 40% of the total grade of the students comes from midterm exam, another 40% of the total grade is given from final exam, and 20% is from classroom participation. Below is the information about the content of midterm exam, final exam, and classroom participation.

1. **Midterm:** % 50 percent of midterm questions are going to be asked from the reading passages studied in class while % 50 percent of them are going to be about a different reading passage.
2. **Final:** % 50 percent of final questions are going to be asked from the reading passages studied in class while % 50 percent of them are going to be about a different reading passage.
3. **Classroom participation:** Classroom participation grade is a kind of teacher evaluation grade. Its main components are absence, homework, and classroom activities.

1.1.4 Students' Responsibilities

Students are given a handout about the content of the course in the first week. Their responsibilities are listed as DO's and DON'Ts of the course in the handout.

Dos

1. Each student must participate the classroom activities actively.
2. Each student must read the passage(s) before coming to class and be ready to discuss.
3. Each student must bring the lecture materials to the classroom.

DON'Ts

1. Each student must attend the classes regularly. A student has a right not to come to class for 12 hours, which is equal to four weeks. If he/she does not come to class for more than 12 hours, he/she fails.

1.2 The Aim of the Study

The present study aims to find out what the students think about Advanced Reading Course in terms of reading skills, materials, techniques, assessment, and communication with the teacher. Secondly, it plans to reveal what the instructors having taught or teaching the course and the coordinator think about the course in terms of reading skills, materials, techniques, assessment, and communication.

Therefore, the present study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the evaluative attitudes of the students about the advanced reading course?
2. What are the evaluative attitudes of the instructors and the course coordinator about the advanced reading course?

2. Review of Literature

In order to obtain information about the pre-while-post process of language programs, application of evaluative studies are of great importance. According to Zohrabi (2011), "Evaluation is a process of inquiry in which data are gathered through different instruments and from different sources" (p. 141). Brown (1995) clarifies evaluation as systematic collection and analysis of relevant to promote improvement to a particular program with site-specific and clearly focused examination (p. 218). Implementation of evaluation studies can provide benefits to understanding and improving language teaching practices and programs (Norris, 2009, p. 7). Evaluation is usually made to provide the insiders of an educational program constructive feedback and to show them ways to make necessary changes in the program if needed. Campbell, Howard, Kent, King, Lens and Stam (as cited in Coombe & Hubley, 2003) discuss the purpose of evaluation in their study and state, "the purpose of evaluation is to validate and measure specific outcomes for the program, faculty, and students" (p. 186). According to Weir and Roberts (1994), the purpose of evaluation is to collect information systematically in order to indicate the worth or merit of a program or project and to inform decision makers (p. 4). Coşkun and Daloğlu (2010) take it revealing the program aspects that need to be improved and maintained from the perspective of both teachers and students (p. 28). Evaluations could be made to what extent the program is functioning properly and fulfilling the language needs of the insiders. They are important aspects in the field regarding this issue, as well. Researchers also emphasize necessity of evaluation studies. The importance of evaluating programs and reflecting on the findings are seen as factors that are not to be neglected. Conducting evaluation methods such as interviews, observations, or journals are seen as participative and systematic. They are "...an integral part of curriculum planning and implementation" (Rea-Dickins, 1994, p. 72).

Evaluations are, on the other hand, context-specific most of the time as they provide detailed examination and feedback to the context (environment) that they are employed at. Whether they may work successfully in other educational environments (contexts) or not is questionable. On this Coşkun and Daloğlu (2010) suggest, "It is also important to note that as evaluation is an issue under the influence of its socio cultural context, the same evaluation might yield different results in different places" (p. 39). Zohrabi (2011) draws attention to the uniqueness of institutions and to their demands with their own particular approaches, methods, and techniques of teaching and learning (p. 148).

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

33 faculty students and four English language instructors from Zirve University participated the present study. 20 students were female while the rest were male. They were second, third, or fourth graders at different faculties. 25 out of 33 students joined the questionnaire while the rest were interviewed. The instructors who taught the course at the previous semester or during the study participated in the interviews. The coordinator of the elective courses unit also attended the study as an interviewee. The instructors were all full-time lecturers and two of them held an MA degree in English language teaching.

3.2 Instruments

During the study, one questionnaire adapted from Tunç (2011) was used in order to assess students' evaluation. The adapted questionnaire was consisted of 28 closed-ended items and five subscales including reading skills, materials, techniques, assessment, and communication. Each subscale was used to assess different aspects of the course. Reading skills part covers the questions from 1 to 6 and is a four-point Likert scale: very sufficient (4), sufficient (3), a little sufficient (2), and not sufficient (1). Materials part includes the questions from 7 to 11 and is a four-point Likert scale: very sufficient (4), sufficient (3), a little sufficient (2), and not sufficient (1). The part about techniques is related to the questions from 12 to 19 and is a five-point Likert scale: always (5), often (4), sometimes (3), seldom (2), and never (1). Assessment part involves the questions 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24. It is a four-point Likert scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The part, communication is related to the questions 25, 26, 26, 27, and 28. It is a four-point Likert scale: strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The course instructor administered the questionnaire to students after a class time period when it was one week left to the end of the semester. In that way, students could have a better understanding of the course and provide more detailed evaluative answers and opinions.

Secondly, a semi-structured interview was held with eight students who did not join the questionnaire. The interview consisted of four questions and was administrated with the students in class time. The questions were about the attitudes of the students towards the course, the aims of the course and whether they find materials and curriculum sufficient or not, the students' ideas about the assessment system, and the positive and negative aspects of the course in terms of language skills. Third, three instructors were asked to write a cover letter about the course. They were asked to write their observations, experiences, and feelings about the following points: the attitudes of them towards the course, the aims of the course and whether they find materials and curriculum sufficient or not, their ideas about the assessment system, and the positive and negative aspects of the course in terms of language skills. Finally, the coordinator was interviewed about the course. The interview was semi-structured and included four questions. The interview questions were about the attitudes of the coordinator towards the course, the aims of the course and whether she found materials and curriculum sufficient or not, her ideas about the assessment system, and the positive and negative aspects of the course in terms of language skills.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

First, a legal permission from the university was taken to carry out the research. The questionnaire was adapted. Then 25 students were informed about the aim of the study and asked whether they wanted to join the research or not. All of them mentioned that they would like to participate, so the questionnaire was administered to them in class under the control of another instructor who was not one of the researchers and all of the participants did not know. Then, a semi-structured interview was prepared with the participation of the course instructors. It consisted of four questions and was made with eight students under the control of another instructor who was not a researcher, did not administer the questionnaire, and eight students did not know in another class time. Those eight students did not take the questionnaire. They were also asked whether they wanted to participate the research or not after they were informed about the aim of the research and interview. They all agreed to join the research. In addition, they wrote their answers to the interview questions because those eight students told that they would feel less stressed and give more details if they wrote their answers. Third, the researchers wanted three instructors who taught the course in previous term and during the study to write a cover letter based on the semi-structured instructions given to them. Finally, the researchers made a face-to-face, four-question, and semi-structured interview with the coordinator.

The questionnaire was analyzed by using frequencies and percentages. This analysis was made with SPSS version 20 for MAC. The student interviews, instructor cover letters, and coordinator interview were content analyzed according to the questions in the interviews and instructions in the cover letters. In order to make a qualitative evaluation valid and reliable, triangulation and the participation of another researcher in data analysis can be used (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the qualitative data of the study were triangulated with each other. The researchers made their content analysis separately and compared their analysis to validate the research. Also, the qualitative results of the study were used to triangulate with the findings of the quantitative analysis. The present study employs mixed methods research design. Creswell (2012) states that a mixed method research includes qualitative and quantitative research and methods to collect and analyze data in a study because it aims to understand a research problem. Accordingly, this study has two research questions and each of them requires a different research method. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are used in the first question, but the second question uses qualitative research in data collection and analysis.

4. Findings

4.1 The Attitudes of the Students about the Course

This part is related to the first research question. In order to answer the question, a questionnaire was made, and an interview was carried out. The questionnaire was analyzed by using frequencies and percentages while the interviews were content analyzed. The findings explain the quantitative analysis first and then qualitative analyses.

4.1.1 The Descriptive Analysis of the Questionnaire

Table 1 shows that most of the students ($f=18$, 72%) who took the course believe that they can understand the main idea of a reading passage in item 1. The result of item 2 indicates that more than half of the students (80%) can use scanning and skimming strategies while reading. In item 3, 68% of the students think that they can answer the questions correctly. As it is understood in Table 1, most of the students can distinguish opinions from facts ($f=17$, 68%) in item 4. In item 5, 52% of the students believe that they can find implied ideas in a reading passage. According to the result of item 6, 64% of the students can guess the meaning of unknown words by using the clues in a reading passage.

Table 1: The Frequencies and Percentages of the Items in the Reading Skills Part of the Questionnaire

Items	Very Sufficient		Sufficient		A Little Sufficient		Not Sufficient	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	7	28	11	44	7	28	0	0
2	6	24	14	56	4	16	1	4
3	1	4	16	64	7	28	1	4
4	3	12	14	56	5	20	3	12
5	2	8	11	44	11	44	1	4
6	6	24	10	40	8	32	1	4

As it is found out in Table 2, more than half of the students think that reading passages used in the classroom are sufficient ($f=21$, 84%) in item 7. The result of item 8 shows that 68% of the students find writing materials used in the course sufficient. In item 9, 68% of the students think that materials related to grammar are sufficient. According to Table 2, 15 out of 25 students believe that the course includes enough audio-visual materials aiming to improve speaking skills in item 10. According to more than half of the students ($f=18$, 72%), the course uses reading, writing, listening, and speaking materials related to everyday topics in item 11.

Table 2: The Frequencies and Percentages of the items in the Materials part of the Questionnaire

Items	Very Sufficient		Sufficient		A Little Sufficient		Not Sufficient	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
7	10	40	11	44	3	12	1	4
8	3	12	14	56	7	28	1	4
9	3	12	14	56	5	20	3	12
10	8	32	7	28	8	32	2	8
11	7	28	11	44	6	24	1	4

Table 3 indicates the frequencies and percentages of techniques used in the classroom according to the students. According to the students, the most commonly used techniques in class are students' asking questions and answering questions (100%) in items 12 and 17. Teacher's lecturing (96%), pair work (88%), discussion (88%), and group work (84%) in items 15, 16, 18, and 14 follow the most common techniques used in class. The least commonly used ones are role-play (54%) and student's making presentations (58%) in items 13 and 19.

Table 3: The Frequencies and Percentages of the items in the Techniques part of the Questionnaire

Items	Always		Often		Sometimes		Seldom		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
12	8	32	8	32	9	36	0	0	0	0
13	2	8	5	20	6	24	8	32	4	16
14	5	20	5	20	11	44	3	12	1	4
15	11	44	8	32	5	20	0	0	1	4
16	4	16	9	36	9	36	2	8	1	4
17	12	48	9	36	4	16	0	0	0	0
18	5	20	6	24	11	44	2	8	1	4
19	3	12	6	24	5	20	2	8	9	36

As Table 4 shows, 84% of the students think that the exams made in the course cover the content of the course in item 20. The result of item 21 reveals that almost all of the students (f=23, 92%) believe midterm and quizzes help them learn better. According to 68% of the students, the difficulty levels of the exams made in the classroom are consistent to each other in item 22. In item 23, 76% of the students consider teacher evaluation (class report) as a good way to assess their in-class performance. In addition, nearly all of the students (f=23, 92%) think that the number of the exams made in the course is sufficient.

Table 4: The Frequencies and Percentages of the items in the Assessment part of the Questionnaire

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
20	10	40	11	44	4	16	0	0
21	7	28	16	64	1	4	1	4
22	5	20	12	48	7	28	1	4
23	14	56	5	20	4	16	2	8
24	13	52	10	40	2	8	0	0

According to Table 5, 88% of the students mention that they can easily communicate with their teacher whenever they want in item 25. In item 26, almost all of the students state that they can easily ask a question to their teacher when they want to ask (f=23, 92%). 23 out of 25 students mention that they can express their opinions about the course without hesitation in item 27. The result of item 28 indicates that 84% of the students believe that their opinions are taken into consideration when classroom activities are organized.

Table 5: The Frequencies and Percentages of the items in the Communication with the Teacher part of the Questionnaire

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
25	10	40	12	48	1	4	2	8
26	12	48	11	44	1	4	1	4
27	12	48	11	44	1	4	1	4
28	8	32	13	52	3	12	1	4

4.1.2 The Content Analysis of Students' Interviews

The student interview includes four questions in Turkish because the students mentioned that they could elaborate and express their opinions about the course better if the questions were in Turkish. The first question is about the attitudes of the students towards the course, and the second question is about the aims of the course and whether they find materials and curriculum sufficient or not. Also, the third question asks for the students' ideas about the assessment system, and the fourth one is related to the positive and negative aspects of the course in terms of language skills. Eight students were interviewed. The content analysis of the interviews was made according to the questions asked in order. As the students' answers are in Turkish, the excerpts taken from the students' interviews were translated to English by the researchers, and the researchers' translations were shown with [].

1. Six out of eight students mentioned that they found the course useful. According to the students, the course was beneficial for them and it was a well-prepared lesson. They also could easily communicate and interact with the teacher whenever they wanted to ask a question. Because of these things, the course made learning permanent. To illustrate:

Student 2: Geldigimiçin is man olduğumtekbirdersolmadi. Hocamızcanayakın, materyallergayeti. [I have never regret attending to the course. Our teacher is very friendly, and the materials are good.]

Student 3: En sevdiğimders. Katıl may ikendimaçımdamfaydalıbulduğumders. [I like this course a lot. I find attending to the course beneficial.],

On the other hand, the rest stated that the course was not beneficial for them because one of them said he/she did not study and the other said he had to come to class since he/she did not want to fail in class because of absence. The following excerpts explain the situation.

Student 1: Bu dersiyds'yehazırlanmakiçinaldımfakatyeterikadarçalışmadığımiçinbirfaydasınıgöremedim. [I chose this course in order to prepare for the Foreign Language Exam, but I did not study enough, so it was not beneficial for me.]

Student 8: Açıkçasöylemekgerekirsedevamsılıktankalmaktankorktugumiçingeliyorum...[To be honest, I come to the class as I am afraid of failing because of absence.]

2. All of the students found the materials and curriculum sufficient for the course. They mentioned that the texts studied in class were interesting and informative. According to them, this course aims:
- to improve their reading comprehension in English,
 - to teach new vocabulary items to them,
 - to teach them how to pronounce the new words,
 - to teach English,
 - to enable them to review what they learned at prep school.

The statements of the students taken from the interview support the analysis.

Student 3: Amaçlarıokumayı, telaffuzlarıdogruyapmayı, kelimeöğretmek. Materyalvemüfred at benceyeterli. [Its aims are to teach reading, to teach correct pronunciation, and to teach vocabulary.]

Student 4: Amacıingilizceöğretmek. Dersmateryal leri yeterli. [Its aim is to teach English. The course materials are sufficient.]

3. Six out of eight students stated that the assessment system of the course was well organizedand fair. According to them, the assessment system was student-friendly. It is because the assessment system was not complicated, and the way the questions were prepared in the exams made them study and learn better. Therefore, they mentioned that they liked the assessment system. The following sayings from the students' interviews illustrate them.

Student 2: Geçmişeyönelik dersişerikle rindenveöğrendikle rimizden sına vatabitutulmak, öğrencinin öğrenipöğren medigini test etmekiçin en iyisanstır. Sınavlar tam tadında, not sistemi de yeterinceadil. [Asking questions from the things studied in class and being tested from them are the best way to test whether a student has learned or not. Exams are good, and the grading system is fair enough.]

Student 6: Notlandırmasistemikes in likle öğrencileriçinavantajlı. [The grading system is certainly beneficial for the students.]

Student 7: Bencederslerarasındanotl and ırmasistimi en güzelderstir. Sınavlardaa yınderece de güzel. [For me, it has the best grading system among the courses. Similarly, the exams are good.]

On the other hand, the rest mentioned that the assessment system is not good. According to them, it is based on absence to some extent and is complicated, which makes them stressed.

Student 1: Devamsızlıkhak kind abiraznot landır may apılıyor... Devamsızlık konusundabiraz yumusak davranılsadahaiyi olur. [Absence is graded to some extent... [The assessment system] will be good if [the teacher] is more tolerant about the absence.]

Student 8: Fazlakarısıık. Vize-Final yeterli olurdu. Öğrenciy is treses ok may agereky ok. [[The assessment system] is very complicated. Midterm and final would be good [for the assessment.] There is no need to stress the students.]

4. According to the most of the students, the course has positive effects on their improving language skills. They claimed the course is beneficial in terms of teaching vocabulary, how to pronounce the words correctly, and grammar. Also, some of them suggested using activities to practice speaking and reading the passage aloud to practice pronunciation. To illustrate:

Student 2: Grammar ve vocabulary açısından fazlaegitici. Biraz da kon us may ayönelikpratiklerolursa, ders 4/4 lükbirhalagelir. [[The course] is very educational in terms of grammar and vocabulary. If there are more activities to practice speaking, the course will become [perfect].]

Student 3: Kelimeleri dogrutele ffuzetmeyiöğretiyor... Parçalarsesliokutulsad a haiyi olabilir. Çünküeksikli klerisöyleyip o eksikliklerig iderebilirsiniz. [[The course] teaches how to pronounce the words correctly... Reading the passage aloud can be good because you [the teacher] can find out the weaknesses and compensate them.]

Student 4: Dilbeceril erinigelistir meyönün de güzel. [[The course] is good in terms of improving language skills.]

4.2 The Attitudes of the Instructors about the Course

This part is related to the second research question. In order to answer the question, three instructors were asked to write content letters because all of them taught the course, so they could observe the course including the students in class, the materials used, and the curriculum followed. Then the coordinator was interviewed because she did not teach the course, but she had several meetings with the instructors about the course during the education years. She supervised the instructors. Thus, she was interviewed to share her conclusions that she made after the meetings. The cover letters were analyzed first, and then the interview was analyzed. Therefore, this part starts with the analysis of the cover letters and ends with the analysis of the interview.

4.2.1 The Content Analysis of the Cover Letters

Three instructors who taught Advanced Reading Course were asked to write cover letters to evaluate the course. This evaluation was made in terms of the course curriculum, course materials, course assessment system, and the improvement in language skills. Their cover letters were content analyzed, and the analysis was explained according to the course curriculum, course materials, course assessment system, and the improvement in language skills in order.

1. The attitudes of the three of the instructors towards the course are positive. They thought that its content and aims were suitable and beneficial for the students who studied at their departments. Also, the course was good to teach English because it helped the students to improve their comprehension skills and learn new words and vocabulary structures by using them in the sentences.
2. The instructors mentioned that the course is elective, and the students who attend to the course are from different departments including political sciences, engineering, economics, and business management. They also stated that the levels of the students vary a lot although they have completed their prep school education. Therefore, the curriculum includes many reading passages from different disciplines and sequences them as pre-intermediate, intermediate, and post-intermediate reading passages, so they made the students more interested in the class. As a result, they claimed that the course materials were connected to the curriculum; therefore, the materials and curriculum helped the students to achieve the aims of the course. They pointed out that the materials required the students to read the passages and do the activities about them, so the students could improve their skimming, scanning, and comprehension skills. However, one of the teachers offered to add supplementary materials to enrich the content of the course and provide more practice.

3. Two of the instructors thought that the assessment system used in the course was good to determine whether the students achieved the course aims or not. They stated that the exams included some questions from the passages studied in class; therefore, the students needed to study the reading passages and vocabulary before the exams and this stemmed in their improving reading skills. On the other hand, one of the teachers stated that it is not possible to measure some of the reading skills.
Consequently, the grading system should be changed. Instead of the present grading system, another grading criteria which aims to measure some reading skills while the students are doing in-class activities should be added to the system.
4. All of the instructors thought that the course helped the students improve their reading skills because the students studied new vocabulary items, how to pronounce the words correctly, and also answered reading comprehension questions. Yet, one of the instructors mentioned that the course did not contribute to the students in terms of listening, speaking, and writing because it only focused on reading and ignored other skills. In addition, another instructor wrote about a cultural issue. According to him, the students who took the course did not like reading; therefore, this increased the workload of the teachers because they tried to make their classes more interesting for the students. Besides, he claimed that if the teacher cannot achieve it, the students may get bored and be uninterested.

4.2.2 The Content Analysis of the Interview Made with the Coordinator

An interview was made with the coordinator of Academic English Unit of the school. It was made in order to find out what the coordinator thought about the course. It also aimed to extend the circle of stakeholders and make the research more comprehensive. The interview was analyzed in the order of the attitudes of the coordinator towards the course, and the ideas of the coordinator about the course materials and curriculum, assessment system, and the positive and negative aspects of the course in terms of improving language skills.

1. The coordinator thought that the course is necessary for the students because it aims to improve their academic reading and critical thinking skills.
2. According to the coordinator, the curriculum clearly states the aims of the course. The materials seem to have been chosen in order to achieve the aims. Also, as the course is elective, many students from different departments register the course. Their levels and interests vary a lot. Therefore, the reading passages are sequenced from the easiest to the most difficult, and they are about different topics that are related to different disciplines.
3. The coordinator said that half of the questions in the midterm and final exams are prepared from the reading passages studied in class. Therefore, the connection between the exams and the curriculum is established.
Also, classroom participation gives the chance of evaluating the students for their participation in classroom activities.
4. The coordinator mentioned that the course influences the students positively because it improves their reading skills and enhances their cognitive skills.

5. Discussions and Conclusion

Evaluative studies provide information about the pre-while-post processes. According to Zohrabi (2011), data should be collected through different instruments and from different sources while a course is being evaluated because Brown (1995) pointed out that to evaluate is a systematic collection and analysis of relevant data since it aims to improve a particular program through site-specific and openly concentrated examination. As Brown (1995) stated, the present study was carried out in a specific site (Zirve University), and its main focus was on a particular course program (Advanced Reading). As Zohrabi (2011) emphasizes, the data were collected through the questionnaire, interviews, and cover letters, and each of the instruments were used with different participants (the students, instructors, and coordinator). Therefore, the present study provides a comprehensive analysis of the course that can be used to understand what works and what does not work in the course.

According to Norris (2009), evaluation studies can help understand and improve language teaching practices and programs. Accordingly, the present study provides this in the perspectives of the students, instructors, and coordinator. The descriptive analysis of the questionnaire clearly shows that most of the students who attended the course evaluated it positively.

Most half of them mentioned that the course improved their reading skills including finding the main idea of a passage, understanding the implied ideas, guessing the meanings of unknown words from the context, differing facts from opinions, answering questions about reading passages, scanning, and skimming. The findings of the study also show that most of the students found the materials used in the course sufficient and the assessment system used in the course was organized in a good way because according to them it was related to the classroom studies, assessed their in-class performance, helped them learn better, and included enough number of exams whose difficulty levels were similar. In terms of communication with the instructor, the findings indicated that most of the students could express their opinions in class and while classroom activities are organized, and communicate with and ask the instructor questions easily. The quantitative findings are supported by the content analysis of the students' interviews. In the perspective of the instructors, the course enabled the students to achieve the goal and objectives of the course. Also, the reading passages chosen were related to different disciplines, which made the course interesting for the students because they studied different disciplines at their faculties. While two instructors thought the course included enough materials, the other suggested adding supplementary materials. Two instructors mentioned that the assessment system used in the course was suitable to the goal and objectives of the course, yet the other thought some reading skills could not be assessed through written exams; therefore, the assessment system should include another criteria to assess and evaluate such skills while the students do in-class activities. The instructors agreed that the course improved the students' reading skills, but two of the instructors pointed out two issues about the course. The first one is that the course ignored writing, listening, and speaking skills while the second one is related to a cultural issue. The cultural issue is related to the unwillingness of the students to read, which leads to work overload for the instructors because they have to make the course interesting and attractive for the students if they want to achieve the course goal and objectives.

In the perspective of the coordinator, the course enabled the students to improve their reading by achieving the goal and objectives of the course, included enough materials to teach and practice in class, and owned a good assessment system to check whether the students learned or not. Campbell, Howard, Kent, King, Lens and Stam (as cited in Coombe & Huble, 2003) stress out that evaluation is used for the validation and measurement of specific outcomes for the program, faculty, and students. The evaluation of the course Advanced Reading shows that it can achieve its goal and objectives and improve the students' reading skills. Also, an evaluation can be used to find out the program aspects that needed to be improved and maintained by taking the perspective of the students and teachers into account (Çoşkun & Daloğlu, 2010). The evaluation of the course indicates that the reading passages and other materials used in the course should continue to be used and supplemented with other materials. The assessment system used should also be maintained by extending the grading criteria. The course can improve the reading skills of the students, but it should also focus on listening, writing, and speaking activities and be engaging and interesting for the students. The instructors should follow the same classroom management style because the descriptive analysis of the part related to the communication with the teacher reveals most of the students had positive attitudes towards it. To conclude, the present study took the thoughts, experiences, and feelings of several members of stakeholders of the Advanced Reading course into consideration in order to evaluate the course. The results show that the stakeholders had positive attitudes towards the course in terms of achieving the goal and objectives, the materials used, assessment system, and communication with each other. However, the assessment system, materials, and the focus of the course may need some changes to make the course more effective.

References

- Coskun, A., & Daloglu, A. (2010). Evaluating an English language teacher education program through Peacock's Model. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 35(6).
- Coombe, C. A., & Hubley N. J. (2003). *Assessment Practices: Case Studies in TESOL Practice Series*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California, the United States of America: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Finch, A. (2005). Program evaluation through attitude change. *Studies in English Education*. 10(1), 45-68.
- Jones, S. (2009). A retrospective evaluation of a ELT coursebook for a Korean university conversation course. *MA TESOL/TEFL*, 3.
- Keltner, A. (1996). English language training program self-review: A tool for program improvement. Adapted from: Sacramento, CA: The Staff Development Institute. 353, 100-297.
- Norris, J. M. (2009). Understanding and improving language education through program evaluation: Introduction to the special issue. *Language Teaching Research*, 13(1), 7-13.
- Rea-Dickins, P. (1994). Evaluation and English language teaching. *Language Teaching*. 27(2), 71-91.
- Suchman, E. A. (1967). *Evaluative Research: Principles and Practice in Public Service and Social Action Programs*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Tunç, F. (2010). Evaluation of an English language teaching program at a public university using CIPP model. A Master's Thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University.
- Weir, C., & Roberts, J. (1994). *Evaluation in ELT*. Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Williams, M. (1989). A Developmental view of classroom observations. *English language Teaching Journal*. 43(2), 85-91.
- Zohrabi, M. (2011). An evaluation of classroom activities and exercises in ELT classroom for general purposes course. *English Language Teaching: Canadian Center of Science and Education*, 4(1), 141-151.