

Assessing the College English Preparation Program: A CIPP-Based Evaluation at Islamic Azad University

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Abstract

The evaluation and assessment of English language preparation programs play a crucial role in determining their effectiveness and functionality. Thus, to address the effectiveness of the English preparation program in higher education, this study aims to examine the English language preparation program at Islamic Azad University, West Tehran Branch, using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model. Employing a descriptive research design concerning the quantitative approach, the study utilized the translated version of Kuzu (2020) Likert scale instrument with 28 items to collect data from 73 college students (aged 19–40). The obtained numerical data were processed using SPSS and analyzed descriptively by measures of central tendency and dispersion. The results show that students critically assessed various aspects of the college English preparation program, including content, needs analysis, level adaptation, and classroom atmosphere. However, they demonstrated negative views regarding the program's support regarding their oral skills, classroom interactions, and rehearsals. Conversely, technology integration in the classrooms was positively evaluated. Finally, this study has significant implications for developers of EFL programs and materials, heads of EFL departments, and administrators seeking solutions to enhance the effectiveness of college English preparation programs.

1. INTRODUCTION

Program evaluation is a valuable tool for assessing a program's applicability and determining whether it effectively meets expectations and goals. Rallis and Bolland (2004) describe program evaluation as a system designed to assess a program's functionality, relevance, and value for decision-makers and stakeholders. The study of English as an international language has played a significant role in the educational systems of non-English-speaking countries for many years. As a result, evaluating English language programs has become a priority within language and education systems. With this in mind, the Iranian national curriculum – an established guideline outlining the required protocols for teaching – has made considerable efforts to facilitate foreign language instruction within educational programs.

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Although English is one of the most important foreign languages taught in Iranian educational institutions, it is not explicitly mentioned in the national curriculum. Nevertheless, English is covered extensively in higher education, particularly at the undergraduate level in Iranian universities. This focus aligns with the primary objective of incorporating English language education into Iran's national curriculum, which aims to equip high school students with the ability to read technical texts in higher education, and enable university students to comprehend English effectively, given its status as the language of science. However, foreign language instruction at the high school level primarily emphasizes Arabic (Tajeddin & Chamani, 2020), the language of the Quran and Islamic civilization. Additionally, English classes in Iranian high schools are limited to only two to three hours per week over six years of junior-senior high school.

In light of program evaluations in Iran, there are numerous studies that have critically examined the evaluation of foreign language learning programs in high schools and language institutes. For example, Alizadeh (2018) investigated the perceptions of language learners and found satisfactory results for an ELT course offered by a language center. He reported that the resources provided were sufficient for students' reading, writing, listening comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary development. However, he also noted a lack of collaboration between staff and language learners. Nevertheless, the study clearly highlighted the effectiveness of English Language Teaching (ELT) methods and materials. Meanwhile, in their critical review of Foreign Language Education Policy (FLEP) in Iran, Tajeddin and Chamani (2020) emphasized that there is no well-designed criterion for determining the duration of English language instruction or the number of lessons per week in high schools.

Considering this perspective, English language programs offered in Iranian high schools and language institutes have been extensively documented in related research papers. Such studies have provided detailed analyses of curriculum structures, instructional methodologies and goals, and overall program effectiveness at these levels. For instance, Jafari and Shahrokhi (2016) utilizing the CIPP framework, assessed the grammar program at the second-grade high school. They established critical aspects of the program under evaluation from both students' and instructors' viewpoints. Hence, the grammar teaching methods, timing, and scoring were intensely criticized. Also, a study by Rezaei (2016) evaluated the impact of the Tehran high school program by the CIPP model through teachers' and students' perspectives. It showed the program's fairly satisfactory results regarding the learning environment, teaching methods, and objectives of the program, yet there were some important caveats to consider.

Despite extensive research on English program evaluations conducted at both high school and higher education levels, ambiguities remain – particularly regarding college English preparation programs. These uncertainties pertain to the program's effectiveness and its operational quality from the perspective of its learners. In this regard, the significance of evaluating college English preparation programs, especially the extent to which their effectiveness contributes meaningfully to learner outcomes, continues to be a salient aspect in research. To address this research gap, the present study seeks to systematically evaluate the college English preparation program using the CIPP evaluation model at Islamic Azad University in Iran. This framework allows for a systematic assessment of its four key dimensions – Context, Input, Process, and Product – offering a holistic understanding of the program's impacts on learners. Thus, this study would contribute to the identification of the program's strengths and weaknesses through students' viewpoints, offering practical insights for enhancing its overall performance. To put it another way, this study aims to examine whether the English preparation program aligns with students' academic needs and also pave the way for more an in-depth and analytical approach to English preparation program evaluations to foster its growth and development within higher education.

Therefore, this study endeavors to provide well-supported explanations for the following key research questions:

1. How complementary is the content of the English preparation program for undergraduate students in terms of their needs and language proficiency?
2. How appropriate are the context, materials, and textbooks used in the English preparation program for Iranian students?
3. How successful is the English preparation program in terms of students' language proficiency?
4. How satisfactory is the outcome of the English preparation program for the students' future needs?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The CIPP model

Among various models of curriculum evaluation, the CIPP model, developed by [Stufflebeam \(1971\)](#) and his team, provides a systematic approach to examining curricula based on the strategies, materials, and approaches implemented by programs. In other words, it serves a "comprehensive framework for the formative and summative assessment of programs, personnel, products, institutions, and systems". The CIPP model is an acronym that stands for Context, Input, Process, and Product. It was originally designed to provide a structured foundation for evaluating the full scope of educational services and processes.

The CIPP-based program evaluation

With regard to the evaluation of English programs in educational settings, the CIPP model constitutes a highly effective framework for facilitating comprehensive program evaluations within the existing literature. As an example, [Sopha and Nanni \(2019\)](#) argued that the CIPP model possesses flexible and inclusive dimensions, making it applicable within the TESOL context. Similarly, [Agustina and Mukhtaruddin \(2019\)](#) emphasized that the CIPP model is a functional framework that ensures program goals and objectives are effectively met. To further engage with the practical body of the literature, [Ulum \(2016\)](#) conducted an evaluation of an EFL program for high schools using the CIPP model and identified several deficiencies. His findings revealed that the textbooks were impractical, the duration of the courses was inefficient, and the complexity of the tests was misaligned with program expectations. Additionally, [Ebtesam and Foster \(2019\)](#) assessed the English language program in terms of its validation and relevance using the CIPP model. Their findings highlighted several shortcomings, including issues related to program assessments, material resources, language proficiency, and instruction. However, [Erdogan and Mede \(2021\)](#) evaluation of the English language preparation program with the CIPP model in Turkey indicated satisfaction with the integrated materials, methodology, and assessment components. Yet, their study revealed a lack of emphasis on speaking and listening skills, rendering the program insufficient in this regard. Another study, examining translation programs in Iran, England, and Turkey through the lens of the CIPP model, identified a notable distinction between Islamic Azad University in Iran and its international counterparts. [Ranjbar et al. \(2022\)](#) confirmed that Islamic Azad University of Iran struggled to maintain a balance between translation students' needs and interests by incorporating relevant professional experiences into their programs. In Pakistan, however, [Akhtar et al. \(2024\)](#) conducted CIPP-based research evaluating English courses designed for students majoring in fields other than English. Their findings

underscored the pressing need to enhance teaching methods and instructional materials to align more closely with real-world conditions. They stressed the importance of using more authentic course materials. Furthermore, [Temiz and Başal \(2023\)](#) examined the English preparation program and reported a generally positive attitude toward its optional nature. Their study, relying on the CIPP model, highlighted the necessity of equipping program settings with enhanced facilities such as libraries and laboratories to support more effective learning experiences.

To delve into the Iranian context, a substantial number of studies on different aspects of English program evaluation across high school and university contexts have been conducted using the CIPP evaluation model. To provide empirical support, [Ranjbar and Rahimi \(2021\)](#) investigated the quality of interpretation courses using the CIPP model at Islamic Azad University. Accordingly, the insufficiency of the course books concerning their old contents, the unsatisfactory teaching methods, and poor evaluation were highlighted to a great extent. Furthermore, the learning environment failed to sufficiently respond to learners' needs. At higher-educational levels, program evaluation studies have likewise yielded valuable insights in Iran. At the master's level, TEFL graduates reported a notable lack of satisfaction with their program's overall performance, primarily due to insufficient attention to their needs and the lack of professional instructors ([Aliakbari & Ghoreyshi, 2013](#)). More specifically, with regard to the CIPP model, another program evaluation in TEFL concerned the substantial need for MA students for the revision of the program ([Foroozandeh et al., 2008](#)).

Building upon previous studies, extensive research has explored various aspects of English program evaluation across different educational levels. However, the evaluation of English programs—particularly college-level English preparation courses—remains an area requiring further investigation and critical inquiry. To address this gap, the present study employs the CIPP evaluation model to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the college English preparation program from the students' perspectives at Islamic Azad University in Iran.

3. METHOD

Research design

To ensure the collection of rigorous data within a well-structured framework and precise measurement parameters, this study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive research design. Descriptive research is particularly valuable for researchers as it enables them to analyze and explain the current state of a phenomenon. Among the various types of descriptive research methodologies, the survey method is widely recognized as one of the most effective techniques for gathering empirical data, as it is directly linked to structured surveys. In this study, a survey-based approach employing a questionnaire was adopted, specifically utilizing the translated version of the survey instrument developed by [Kuzu \(2020\)](#) in his master's thesis. This carefully structured survey method allowed for direct engagement with participants and facilitated the extraction of detailed insights into their perspectives. The design of the questionnaire was strategically aligned with the study's objectives, as it required direct and targeted questions to capture participants' views regarding the topic under investigation.

Participants

In line with the purpose of this study, the target population consisted of undergraduate students. Accordingly, the sample comprised 73 Iranian students between the ages of 19 and 40, all of whom had completed the English preparation course and were currently enrolled in the Integrated English 2 course at their respective college. To ensure accessibility, participants were conveniently

selected from Islamic Azad University, West Tehran Branch, which was readily accessible to the researchers. All participants had at least one year of higher education at the undergraduate level and were in their second year of study or beyond. In addition, permission to participate in the study had been duly obtained from the individuals involved. Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of participants based on their gender, offering a clearer breakdown of their characteristics within the study.

Table 1: Participants’ Gender Characteristics

Gender	f	%
Female	53	72.6
Male	20	27.4
Total	73	100.0

Instrument

In the present study, a questionnaire utilizing a Likert scale, originally developed by Kuzu (2020) was employed, which was based on the CIPP model introduced by (Stufflebeam, 1971). This questionnaire was designed to evaluate the outcomes of the English preparation program at a foreign language school, comprising 28 items that assess various aspects of the program. The questionnaire systematically examined the four core components of the CIPP model – Context, Input, Process, and Product – with seven items dedicated to each dimension. The Likert scale used in the survey allowed participants to respond using a five-point format, which included "absolutely disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "absolutely agree", as mentioned by (Kuzu, 2020).Each response was numerically presented on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, ensuring precise measurement of participant perspectives. To accommodate the participants’ linguistic needs, the survey questions were translated into Farsi, their native language. This step was taken to account for potential limitations in their English proficiency, given that they had not previously studied English extensively. Then, the newly developed questionnaire went through the piloting process to guarantee its comprehension and practicality for the students. This process ensured that all of the participants fully comprehended the questions, thereby enhancing the reliability of their responses. Finally, an online Google Form was developed to streamline data collection. This form consisted of two primary sections: the first gathered demographic details of the participants – including their age, gender, field of study, and duration of study – while the second contained the 28 translated Likert-scale items designed to evaluate their perceptions of the English preparation program at Islamic Azad University, West Tehran Branch.

Validity and Reliability

Since the questionnaire items were translated into Farsi/Persian, it was essential to ensure content validity, followed by construct validity. To achieve this, the translated items underwent a rigorous validation process, beginning with cross-checking by two students specializing in Translation Studies. Additionally, the items were reviewed by an expert in Translation Studies, ensuring their accuracy and alignment with the intended meanings. To further verify the translation validity, the questionnaire underwent a back-translation process, where the translated items were translated back into English to confirm their accuracy. This step ensured that the final version retained its original meaning, minimizing any potential inconsistencies. The translated version was then double-checked by another expert in TEFL, providing an additional layer of validation before

finalizing the questionnaire for distribution. Following this, the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, a widely recognized statistical measure of internal consistency. The reliability estimation showed that all individual scores were above 0.60, with an overall Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.92, which is considered a highly acceptable measure of reliability. Table 2 illustrates the estimated values of Cronbach's Alpha, providing a detailed representation of the internal consistency across different sections of the questionnaire.

Table 2: Estimation of Cronbach's Alpha

Components of the CIPP Model	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Context	.72
Input	.72
Process	.76
Product	.84
Total	.92

Procedure

The data collection procedure took place during the fall of 2024. For this purpose, the pre-designed Google Form was distributed to students from various academic disciplines, excluding English majors, who enrolled in the Integrated English 2 online course. Before participating, and in line with ethical considerations, students were required to provide their consent, ensuring that all collected information would remain confidential throughout the study. As a result, 73 students (aged 19-40) successfully completed the questionnaire, and their responses were automatically recorded and securely stored on the online platform for analysis.

As Dörnyei (2007) highlights, descriptive statistics play a crucial role in facilitating data analysis, allowing researchers to summarize and interpret findings based on measures of central tendency. This approach provides a simplified yet comprehensive overview of the dataset, making it easier to identify patterns and trends. Consequently, the data collected through the questionnaire was systematically analyzed using SPSS, a widely recognized statistical tool. This numerical processing primarily focused on computing descriptive statistics, followed by an assessment of central tendency measures, including means, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. As part of this process, both the mean and standard deviation were precisely calculated, ensuring accuracy in data representation. Additionally, the numerical responses of participants were organized into tabulated formats, allowing for a detailed examination of the highest, lowest, and average mean values for each scale.

4. RESULTS

The standard approach for presenting the results of this study involves systematically organizing and describing the findings in a detailed manner. Therefore, the collected numerical data were thoroughly analyzed using SPSS, where the mean and standard deviation were calculated for each participant. The results are presented in the following tables for clarity and structured interpretation. Each table represents one of the four core scales of the CIPP model—Context, Input, Process, and Product—each containing seven items. The data in these tables are systematically arranged, showcasing percentages, frequencies, item means, and standard deviations to provide a comprehensive overview of the findings.

Context

The participants' views on the context can be found in Table 3. The maximum mean score for this section was 3.55, while the minimum mean score was 2.74, resulting in an average mean score of 3.31. It is worth noting that the tables presented below are elaborated and reported on the basis of the items included in Kuzu (2020) questionnaire.

Table 3: Participants' Views on Context

ITEMS	Absolutely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Absolutely Disagree	Total	M	SD
The content of the English preparatory program is up to date.	4 5.5%	43 58.9%	15 20.5%	11 15.1%	0 0%	73 100%	3.55*	.82
The English preparatory program is designed to improve basic English skills.	5 6.8%	40 54.8%	12 16.4%	16 21.9%	0 0%	73 100%	3.47	.91
The objectives of the English preparatory program are clear and straightforward.	7 9.6%	32 43.8%	21 28.8%	10 13.7%	3 4.1%	73 100%	3.41	.98
The content of the English preparatory program is in line with the program objectives.	2 2.7%	30 41.1%	24 32.9%	16 21.9%	1 1.4%	73 100%	3.22	.87
The objectives of the English preparatory program suitable for the students' levels.	12 16.4%	26 35.6%	16 21.9%	13 17.8%	6 8.2%	73 100%	3.34	1.19
Preparatory program courses take into account the students' needs and expectations.	2 2.7%	18 24.7%	19 26%	27 37%	7 9.6%	73 100%	2.74*	1.03
The courses in the English preparatory program are complementary to each other.	5 6.8%	37 50.7%	20 27.4%	7 9.6%	4 5.5%	73 100%	3.44	.96
							3.31 Average Mean	

As Table 3 shows, based on Kuzu (2020) questionnaire items related to the *Content* section of the CIPP model, 64.4% of the students (n=47) agreed that "the content of the English preparatory program is up to date" (n=4, 5.5% absolutely agreed; n=43, 58.9% agreed). However, 15.1% of the students (n=11) disagreed, while 20.5% of the participants (n=15) remained unbiased. The mean score for this item was the highest at 3.55, with a standard deviation of 0.82.

When asked whether "the English preparatory program is designed to improve basic English skills," 61.6% of participants (n=45) agreed with this statement (n=5, 6.8% absolutely agree; n=40, 54.8% agree). However, 21.9% of students (n=16) disagreed, with all expressing strong disagreement. Meanwhile, 16.4% of participants (n=12) remained neutral on this point. The mean score was 3.47, while the standard deviation was calculated at 0.91.

In addition, 53.4% of the students (n=39) agreed that "the goals of the English preparation program are clear and simple" (n=7, 9.6% absolutely agree; n=32, 43.8% agree), while 17.8% of the students (n=13) disagreed, with n=10 (13.7%) expressing disagreement and n=3 (4.1%)

absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 28.8% of them (n=21) took a neutral position. The mean value was 3.41 with the standard deviation recorded at 0.98.

Less than half of the participants (n=32, 43.8%) agreed that "*the content of the English preparatory program is consistent with the program objectives*" (n=2, 2.7% absolutely agreed; n=30, 41.1% agreed). Meanwhile, 23.3% (n=17) disagreed, with n=16 (21.9%) expressing disagreement and n=1 (1.4%) absolutely disagreeing. Also, 32.9% of participants (n=24) held a neutral position, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. The mean score for this item was 3.22, with a standard deviation of 0.87, reflecting the distribution of responses.

Thirty-eight students agreed that "*the objectives of the English preparatory program were appropriate for the students' level*" (n=12, 16.4% absolutely agreed; n=26, 35.6% agreed). However, 23.3% of participants (n=19) disagreed, with n=13 (17.8%) expressing disagreement and n=6 (8.2%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 16 students (21.9%) remained neutral on this statement. The mean score for this item was 3.34, with a standard deviation of 1.19, reflecting the distribution of responses.

A minority of students (n=20) agreed that "*the courses of the preparation program take into account the needs and expectations of the students*" (n=2, 2.7% absolutely agreed; n=18, 24.7% agreed). On the other hand, the majority of students (n=34, 46.6%) disagreed, with n=27 (37%) expressing disagreement and n=7 (9.6%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 26% of participants (n=19) remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. The mean score was the lowest at 2.74, with a standard deviation of 1.03, reflecting variability in participant responses.

57.5% of participants (n=42) agreed that "*the courses in the English preparatory program complement each other*" (n=5 absolutely agreed; n=37 agreed). However, 15.1% of participants (n=11) disagreed, with n=7 (9.6%) expressing disagreement and n=4 (5.5%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 27.4% of participants (n=20) remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean value for this item was 3.44, with a standard deviation of 0.96, providing insight into the distribution of responses.

Input

The participants' views on the input are presented in Table 4. The highest mean score recorded in this section was 3.71, while the lowest mean score was 2.96. Overall, the average mean score for this section was 3.22, reflecting the general trends in participant responses.

As outlined in the second section of Kuzu (2020) questionnaire concerning *Input*, thirty-three participants (45.2%) agreed that "*the classes are suitable for teaching English*" (n=3, 4.1% absolutely agreed; n=30 agreed). However, twenty-four participants (32.9%) disagreed, with n=17 (23.3%) expressing disagreement and n=7 (9.6%) absolutely disagreeing. Moreover, sixteen participants (21.9%) remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean score was recorded at 3.07, with a standard deviation of 1.10, reflecting the distribution of responses.

41.1% of participants (n=30) agreed with the statement "*I have the opportunity to express my thoughts in English in class*" (n=2, 2.7% absolutely agreed; n=28, 38.4% agreed). Meanwhile, 37% of participants (n=27) disagreed, with n=19 (26%) expressing disagreement and n=8 (11%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 21.9% of participants (n=16) remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean value for this item was 2.96, making it the lowest recorded score, while the standard deviation was calculated at 1.10, reflecting the distribution of responses.

Table 4: Participants' Views on Input

ITEMS	Absolutely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Absolutely Disagree	Total	M	SD
The classes are suitable for teaching English lessons.	3 4.1%	30 41.1%	16 21.9%	17 23.3%	7 9.6%	73 100%	3.07	1.10
I have the opportunity to express my thoughts in English in lessons.	2 2.7%	28 38.4%	16 21.9%	19 26%	8 11%	73 100%	2.96*	1.10
materials in the English preparatory program (textbook, additional copy, reading texts, PowerPoint presentations, videos) are interesting and sufficient.	5 6.8%	40 54.8%	8 11%	16 21.9%	4 5.5%	73 100%	3.36	1.07
The textbook used in the program is suitable for my level.	4 5.5%	32 43.8%	13 17.8%	19 26%	5 6.8%	73 100%	3.15	1.09
Homework and in-class activities (group work, group discussions, role play, etc.) given in the learning-teaching process improve my English skills.	5 6.8%	29 39.7%	20 27.4%	13 17.8%	6 8.2%	73 100%	3.19	1.08
The presentations we make in the lessons contribute to learning English.	3 4.1%	27 37%	24 32.9%	13 17.8%	6 8.2%	73 100%	3.11	1.02
The examples and exercises given by our teachers in the lessons make it easier to learn English.	9 12.3%	45 61.6%	10 13.7%	7 9.6%	2 2.7%	73 100%	3.71*	.90
							3.22 Average Mean	

A clear majority of participants (n=45, 57.5%) agreed that "the materials in the English preparatory program (textbooks, extra copies, reading texts, PowerPoint presentations, and videos) are interesting and sufficient" (n=5, 6.8% absolutely agreed; n=40, 54.8% agreed). However, 37% of participants (n=20) disagreed, with n=16 (21.9%) expressing disagreement and n=4 (5.5%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 11% of participants (n=8) remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean score for this item was 3.36, with a standard deviation of 1.07, reflecting the variability in responses. Similarly, 49.3% of students (n=36) agreed that "the textbook used in the program is appropriate for my level" (n=4, 5.5% absolutely agreed; n=32, 43.8% agreed). Meanwhile, 32.8% of participants (n=24) disagreed, with n=19 (26%) expressing disagreement and n=5 (6.8%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 17.8% of students (n=13) remained undecided, indicating no strong preference. The mean score for this item was 3.15, with a standard deviation of 1.09, providing insight into the distribution of responses.

The percentage of agreement with the statement "*Homework and in-class activities (group work, group discussions, role plays, etc.) given as part of the learning and teaching process improve my English language skills*" was 46.5% (n=34 total), including n=5 (6.8%) who absolutely agreed and n=29 (39.7%) who agreed. Meanwhile, 26% of participants (n=19) disagreed, with n=13 (17.8%) expressing disagreement and n=6 (8.2%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 27.4% of participants (n=20) remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean

score for this item was 3.19, with a standard deviation of 1.08, reflecting the distribution of responses.

41.1% of students (n=30) agreed that *"the presentations we do in class contribute to English learning"* (n=3, 4.1% absolutely agreed; n=27, 37% agreed). 26% of participants (n=19) disagreed, with n=13 (17.8%) expressing disagreement and n=6 (8.2%) absolutely disagreeing. Also, 32.9% of participants (n=24) remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean score for this item was 3.11, with a standard deviation of 1.02, reflecting the distribution of responses.

A considerable number of participants (n=54, 73.9%) agreed that *"the examples and exercises provided by our teachers in class make it easier to learn English"* (n=9, 12.3% absolutely agreed; n=45, 61.6% agreed). However, a minority of participants (n=9, 12.3%) disagreed, with n=7 (9.6%) expressing disagreement and n=2 (2.7%) absolutely disagreeing. Further, 13.7% of participants (n=10) remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean score for this item was 3.71, marking it as the highest recorded score, with a standard deviation of 0.90, reflecting the distribution of responses.

A considerable number of participants (n=54, 73.9%) agreed (n=9, 12.3% absolutely agreed; n=45, 61.6% agreed) that *"the examples and exercises our teachers give in class make it easier to learn English"*. However, a minority of them (n=9, 12.3%) disagreed (n=7, 9.6% disagreed; n=2, 2.7% absolutely disagreed). 13.7% of participants (n=10) remained impartial. The mean score was 3.71, which was the highest score. The standard deviation manifested as .90.

Process

The participants' views on this process are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Participants' Views on Process

ITEMS	Absolutely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Absolutely Disagree	Total	M	SD
The program allows me to actively participate in the lesson.	5 6.8%	35 47.9%	18 24.7%	10 13.7%	5 6.8%	73 100%	3.34	1.03
Subjects that are not understood during the program are repeated and supported with relevant exercises	5 6.8%	29 39.7%	17 23.3%	17 23.3%	5 6.8%	73 100%	3.16	1.08
The program places sufficient emphasis on listening skills.	4 5.5%	27 37%	18 24.7%	20 27.4%	4 5.5%	73 100%	3.10	1.04
The program places sufficient emphasis on speaking skills.	1 1.4%	24 32.9%	16 21.9%	27 37%	5 6.8%	73 100%	2.85	1.01
The program places sufficient emphasis on reading skills.	11 15.1%	40 54.8%	13 17.8%	8 11%	1 1.4%	73 100%	3.71*	.90
The program places sufficient emphasis on writing skills.	3 4.1%	23 31.5%	12 16.4%	28 38.4%	7 9.6%	73 100%	2.82*	1.11
The program places sufficient emphasis on grammar and vocabulary skills.	9 12.3%	43 58.9%	10 13.7%	10 13.7%	1 1.4%	73 100%	3.67	.91
							3.23 Average Mean	

The leading mean score for this part was 3.71. However, the lowest mean score was 2.82. The average mean score was 3.23.

In reference to the *Process* section in Kuzu (2020) questionnaire items, more than half of the students (n=40, 54.7%) agreed (n=5, 6.8% absolutely agreed; n=35, 47.9% agreed) that ‘the program allows me to actively participate in class.’ however, 20.5% of students (n=15) disagreed (n=10, 13.7% disagreed; n=5, 6.8% absolutely disagreed). 24.7% of them (n=18) remained neutral. The mean value of the items was 3.34 and the standard deviation was 1.03.

The number of students who agreed that *"topics that are not understood during the program are repeated and supported with appropriate exercises"* was 34 (n=34 total, 42.5%; n=5, 6.8% absolutely agree; n=29, 39.7% agree), while 30.1% disagreed (n=22 total; n=17, 23.3% disagree; n=5, 6.8% absolutely disagree). Others (n=17, 23.3%) took a neutral position. The mean value was 3.16 and the standard deviation was 1.08.

42.5% of students (n=31) agreed with the point (n=4, 5.5% absolutely agree; n=27, 37% agree) that *"the program places sufficient emphasis on listening comprehension"* 32.9% of students (n=24), however, disagreed (n=20, 27.4% disagreed; n=5, 5.5% absolutely disagreed). 24.7% of the students (n=18) agreed. The mean of the items was 3.10 and the standard deviation was 1.04.

25 students (34.3%) agreed that *"the program places sufficient emphasis on speaking skills"* (n=1, 1.4% absolutely agreed; n=24, 32.9% agreed). Meanwhile, 43.8% of participants (n=32) disagreed, with n=27 (37%) expressing disagreement and n=5 (6.8%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 24.7% of students remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean score for this item was 2.85, with a standard deviation of 1.01, reflecting the variability in responses.

A large majority of students (n=51, 69.9%) agreed (n=11, 15.1% absolutely agreed; n=40, 54.8% agreed) that *"the program places sufficient emphasis on reading skills"*. However, 12.4% of them (n=9) disagreed (n=8, 11% disagreed; n=1, 1.4% absolutely disagreed). 17.8% of the students (n=13) remained unbiased. The mean score was the highest at 3.71 and the standard displayed was .90.

35.6% of participants (n=26) agreed (n=3, 4.1% absolutely agreed; n=23, 31.5% agreed) that *"the program places sufficient emphasis on writing skills"*, while 48% of them (n=35) disagreed (n=28, 38.4% disagreed; n=7, 9.6% absolutely disagreed). 16.4% of the participants (n=12) took a neutral stance. The mean score was the lowest at 2.82 and the standard deviation was 1.11.

A large number of students (n=52, 71.2%) agreed that *"the program places sufficient emphasis on grammar and vocabulary knowledge"* (n=9, 12.3% absolutely agreed; n=43, 48.9% agreed). Meanwhile, only 15.1% of participants (n=11) disagreed, with n=10 (13.7%) expressing disagreement and n=1 (1.4%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 13.7% of students (n=10) remained undecided, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean score for this item was 3.67, with a standard deviation of 0.91, reflecting the distribution of responses.

Product

The participants’ views on the product are shown in Table 6. The highest mean score for this section was 3.60 and the lowest mean score was 2.75. The average mean score was 3.19. This part is derived from the last section of Kuzu (2020) questionnaire items concerning *Product* in the CIPP model.

Table 6: Participants' Views on Product

ITEMS	Absolutely Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Absolutely Disagree	Total	M	SD
The program has responded to my individual interests and needs so far.	1 1.4%	20 27.4%	19 26%	26 35.6%	7 9.6%	73 100%	2.75*	1.01
The skills I have gained in the language so far in the program are satisfactory.	2 2.7%	36 49.3%	15 20.5%	17 32.3%	3 4.1%	73 100%	3.23	.98
The program has provided a basis for my future English needs.	3 4.1%	23 31.5%	22 30.1%	18 24.7%	7 9.6%	73 100%	2.96	1.06
I have been able to adequately communicate with my instructors so far.	4 5.5%	33 45.2%	15 20.5%	12 16.4%	9 12.3%	73 100%	3.15	1.15
Assessment tools (visa, final, assignments, portfolio, etc.) are sufficient and appropriate.	9 12.3%	38 52.1%	13 17.8%	10 13.7%	3 4.1%	73 100%	3.55	1.01
Technology has been used sufficiently in the implementation of the preparatory program so far.	10 13.7%	37 50.7%	15 20.5%	9 12.3%	2 2.7%	73 100%	3.60*	.97
According to my observations, sufficient coordination and rapport between students, teachers, and administration have been ensured throughout the program.	4 5.5%	31 42.5%	15 20.5%	15 20.5%	8 11%	73 100%	3.11	1.14
							3.19 Average Mean	

A minority of students (n=21, 28.8%) agreed with the point *"the program has so far responded to my individual interests and needs"* (n=1, 1.4 absolutely agreed; n=20, 20.7 agreed) In contrast, 45.5% of students (n=33) disagreed (n=26, 35.6% disagreed; n=7, 9.6% absolutely disagreed). 26% of them (n=19) were neutral. The mean value of 2.75 was the lowest value and the standard deviation was 1.01.

52% of the students (n=38) agreed (n=2, 2.7% absolutely agreed; n=36, 49.3% agreed) that *"the skills I have acquired in the language in the program so far are satisfactory"*, while 36.4% of them (n=20) disagreed (n=17, 32.3% disagreed; n=3, 4.1% absolutely disagreed). Others (n=15, 20.5%) took a neutral position. The mean score for this item was 3.23. The standard deviation displayed .98.

26 participants (35.6%) agreed (n=3, 4.1% absolutely agreed; n=23, 31.5% agreed) that *"the program has provided a foundation for my future English needs"*, however 25 participants (34.3) disagreed (n=18, 24.7% disagreed; n=7, 9.6% absolutely disagreed). 22 participants (30.1%) remained unbiased. The mean score was 2.96 and the standard deviation was 1.06.

50.7% of participants (n=37) agreed that *"I have been able to communicate appropriately with my lecturers so far"* (n=4, 5.5% absolutely agreed; n=33, 45.2% agreed). Meanwhile, 28.7% of participants (n=21) disagreed, with n=12 (16.4%) expressing disagreement and n=9 (12.3%) absolutely disagreeing. Additionally, 20.5% of participants remained neutral, neither fully agreeing nor disagreeing. The mean score for this item was 3.15, with a standard deviation of 1.15, reflecting the distribution of responses.

64.4% of students (n=47) agreed (n=9, 12.3% absolutely agreed; n=38, 52.1% agreed) that *"the assessment tools (visa, final exam, assignments, portfolio, etc.) are sufficient and appropriate"*, while 17.8% of students (n=13) disagreed (n=10, 13.7% disagreed; n=3, 4.1%

absolutely disagreed). 13 students (17.8%) claimed fairness. The mean score was 3.55 and the standard deviation was 1.01.

In addition, 47 students (64.4%) agreed (n=10, 13.7% absolutely agree; n=37, 50.7% agree) that *"technology has been adequately used in the delivery of the preparation program to date"*, however, 15% of students (n=11) disagreed (n=9, 12.3% disagreed; n=2, 2.7% absolutely disagreed). Other students (n=15, 20.5%) took a neutral stance. The mean score for this item, which was the highest score, was 3.60. The standard deviation was .97.

Agreement with the item "from my observations, there was sufficient coordination and rapport between students, teachers, and administration throughout the program" was 48% (n=35 total; n=4, 5.5% absolutely agree; n=31, 42.5% agree). Meanwhile, 23 students (31.5%) disagreed (n=15, 20.5% disagreed; n=8, 11% absolutely disagreed). 15 students (20.5%) also remained distant. The mean score was 3.11. The standard deviation was 1.14.

5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to evaluate the performance and the practical value of the English preparation program for students adopted in Iranian universities using a CIPP-based approach to program evaluation. To achieve this goal, four research questions were formulated, focusing on the assessment of the four scales of the CIPP model within the context of the English language preparation program for college students. To conduct this evaluation, the researchers utilized the translated version of the questionnaire developed by Kuzu (2020) to gather data from a sample of Iranian students who had already completed the English preparation program and currently enrolled in the Integrated English 2 course. The collected data were statistically analyzed using SPSS, and the results were presented in tabular form, revealing critical insights into the effectiveness of the English preparation course in the college environment.

Regarding the primary research question—"How complementary is the content of the English preparation program for undergraduate students in terms of their needs and language proficiency?"—the responses provided valuable perspectives on the adequacy of the program's structure and objectives. The students supported the content of their English preparation course and agreed that the content was fairly up-to-date and consistent with their needs. This conflicts with what Ranjbar and Rahimi (2021) revealed regarding the content evaluation by the CIPP model. However, the proficiency-level adaptation was not considered in the course.

As for the second research question—"How appropriate are the context, materials, and textbooks incorporated into the English preparation program for Iranian students?"—responses indicated that the program was not effectively delivered in an appropriate environment. This aligns with the findings of Temiz and Başal (2023) on the evaluation of an optional preparation program. Given the program's reliance on online platforms, students lack access to the interactive atmosphere of a real classroom, which is crucial for language acquisition. Additionally, insufficient time is dedicated to oral skills, and students have limited opportunities to improve their speaking abilities through classroom negotiation. These findings support Bilasa and Taspinar (2020) perspectives on students' opinions regarding their language programs, reinforcing the necessity of a more interactive and communicative learning environment. The attractiveness of the textbooks and materials appeared to be relatively good, yet the difficulty level of the textbook was found to be below average for students. This finding aligns with the study conducted by (Ulum, 2016). On the other hand, the materials are designed to align with the standard language level of the students, supporting their comprehension and enhancing their language skills. Overall, the input of the English preparation program remains in a relatively satisfactory state.

The results of the third research question – "How successful is the English preparation program in terms of Iranian students' basic skills?" – revealed that students struggled to clarify unclear points and practice topics they found challenging. In particular, little emphasis was placed on listening and writing skills, leaving little to no room for speaking practice. This finding aligns with [Ebtesam and Foster \(2019\)](#) who criticized the lack of focus on oral skills, and is consistent with [Tunç \(2010\)](#)'s study, which observed that the program prioritizes grammar over students' communicative skills. Nevertheless, this study showed a strong emphasis on students' reading skills, highlighting the importance of vocabulary and language proficiency in fulfilling their need for substantive language development. Overall, the English preparation program was limited in addressing students' language skills, particularly listening and speaking, raising concerns about its effectiveness in fostering well-rounded communicative abilities.

Regarding the answer to the last research question—"How satisfactory is the outcome of the English preparation program for the future needs of Iranian students?"—findings indicate that the program failed to fully address students' interests and future needs, leading to significant dissatisfaction. This conclusion contrasts with the findings of [\(Yastıbaş & Kavgacı, 2020\)](#) but aligns with those of [\(Gültekin & Demirci, 2020\)](#). Despite these shortcomings, the program provided slight satisfaction in terms of language achievement throughout the course. Regarding the evaluation and use of online and offline teaching methods, students expressed positive opinions, particularly regarding the integration of a technology-oriented platform for English instruction. Generally, the outcome of the English preparation program was deemed relatively acceptable, though improvements are needed to enhance its relevance and effectiveness for students' long-term needs.

6. CONCLUSION

In evaluating the efficacy of the English preparation program from the perspective of students at Islamic Azad University, West Tehran Branch, the researchers applied the CIPP model, developed by [\(Stufflebeam, 1971\)](#). The findings revealed that the context of the English preparation program was inadequate in addressing students' aspirations, interests, and expectations. Additionally, the input of the program failed to meet students' needs, as the adaptability of textbooks was not fully considered, and the virtual classroom setting limited opportunities for students to engage in meaningful conversation in the target language. Regarding the process of the English preparation program, it was found that not all four basic language skills were adequately covered. The program primarily emphasized grammar and reading, leading to a neglect of students' oral communicative skills. However, the use of technology in English preparation classes was deemed appropriate and efficient, as the program was delivered through the university's online platform, facilitating accessibility and engagement.

In terms of strengths and shortcomings, this study highlights the importance of the English preparation program from the perspective of students in Iranian educational practice. It also provides valuable insights into the CIPP model of program evaluation, offering guidance for educational institutions and administrators in Iran. However, a major limitation of this study is that it relies solely on a quantitative research approach and descriptive design, which restricts the depth of analysis. Hence, incorporating a more robust research methodology could offer more nuanced descriptions of teachers' and students' perceptions of English language preparation programs, enabling richer data analysis. Another limitation is that the study was conducted at a single university, meaning the findings cannot be generalized to other private and public colleges and universities. Expanding the scope to multiple institutions could provide a broader perspective on the effectiveness of English preparation programs across different educational settings. With that

in mind, the study's methodological limitations in assessing participants' language proficiency due to the lack of access led to restricted and inconclusive results.

Additionally, future research could enhance the findings by incorporating a richer methodological framework with a larger population to ensure the nuanced results and the generalizability of the outcomes. Also, considering the perspectives of university faculty regarding the utility of the English preparation program would remarkably foster the development of novel viewpoints. Their recommendations for improvement at the undergraduate level could offer valuable input for optimizing curriculum design, instructional methods, and learning outcomes.

Finally, this study is highly valuable for developers of EFL programs and materials, heads of EFL departments, and administrators to critically view and refine the English programs in order to prevent their potential inadequacies in students' learning, concerning the program's four dimensions of context, input, process, and product.

Authors' Contribution:

Paniz Jarahi Dokooshkani contributed to writing and editing the manuscript. She collected and analyzed the data.

Hossein Karimi conceptualized the study, designed the methodology, and supervised it.

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