

Investigating Undergraduate Expectations and Perceptions Towards an English Language Teaching Program: A Survey Study

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Abstract: Understanding the major stakeholders' expectations and preferences in educational programs leads to academic excellence and betterment. The study aims to identify English Language Teaching (ELT) undergraduates' expectations and preferences toward English language teaching programs. To achieve the aim of the study, a survey study was conducted using a questionnaire distributed to 133 ELT undergraduates. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the collected data to explore the expectations held by participants. The results revealed that students possess various expectations. It was highlighted that failure to meet undergraduate expectations within the ELT program has a detrimental impact on the learning and teaching process. Undergraduates believed that both they and the university/lecturers are responsible for their success in managing their education stressing the value of collaboration between the major stakeholders in the program. They also prioritized having interactive and engaging classes. More importantly, some students did not intend to teach after graduation, causing a definite inconsistency between the purpose of pedagogical courses and students' personal choices. Undergraduates preferred to have entertaining, engaging, experienced, and knowledgeable lecturers in the ELT department, urging the stakeholders that it is of students' priority that lecturers perform at a high level of professionalism. It was emphasized that lecturers should use their first language (L1) when they face difficulties in deciphering complex content. Adequate changes in the program were suggested in times of struggle based on their expectations. Students found skill-based courses more helpful than pedagogical courses. Students preferred a combination of immersive, real-world practice over structured lessons in the ELT program.

Keywords: Undergraduates' Expectations, English Language Teaching, Program, Students Preferences

1. Background Information

Students' transition from school to university can be difficult leading to challenges faced by students, teachers, and academic staff in charge of teaching the freshmen. A study conducted by Lowe and Cook (2003) reports a significant amount of anxiety among first-year university students due to the transition from high school to university. Students generally have unrealistic expectations from universities, lecturers, as well as educational programs they have enrolled in. Scholars have revealed several reasons for this gap including students' level of academic preparedness (Hassel & Nathan, 2018). They concluded that students often arrive ill-prepared for studying at university. Furthermore, students' expectations change based on the major study.

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As Barzani and Mustafa (2022) claim, faculties of education around the world dedicate most of their effort and study programs to preparing effective teachers. However, students attend faculties of education with expectations that do not match with programs and lecturers' expectations. There are many English Language Teaching (ELT) programs in the region, which shows the popularity of the program in which learners are prepared to become English language teachers. The success of any student depends on a number of factors. One of the keys to completing university is related to holding realistic expectations. However, some students may not have realistic expectations. Hassel and Nathan (2018) presented a list of learner expectations related to teaching methodologies, teaching materials, the amount of time staff contact, and learning styles. Considering this, understanding the expectations and preferences can help prevent academic issues and aid stakeholders to better prepare and plan effectively and accordingly for the new and current cohort.

1. 2 Problem Statement

Learning the English language has become a priority for many students as, competence in the English language nowadays can open many doors for students. There are various factors that students consider to form a decision to join the ELT department. One common factor involves the idea that the department will merely improve their English language skills. Moreover, students hold unrealistic expectations that may not be met in the program as the program's major mission focuses on teacher preparation. This creates a gap between the major stakeholders and the program. Understanding the learners' expectations and preferences helps stakeholders to better plan the process of learning and teaching and avoid any inconsistencies that might hinder the smoothness of education.

1. 3 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What are the common expectations undergraduates hold of the ELT program?
- What are the learners' preferences and expectations of lecturers and courses in the ELT program?

1.4 Aim of the Research

The primary aim of the study is to investigate students' expectations and preferences towards the ELT program and lecturers. Examining common expectations and preferences held by undergraduates can help lecturers and decision-makers in the ELT program tailor the program to maximize learning and teaching effectiveness by considering the major objectives of the program as it is to adequately prepare teachers and consider the undergraduates' expectations into account.

1.5 The Study Significance

It is evident that expectations change over time and vary among the generations undertaking college. However, it is vividly noticed in the classrooms, that students have some expectations that completely mismatch with the ELT program and lecturers' expectations including the fact that the ELT program merely focuses on language skills and joining the program with no intention to be teachers. On the other hand, the ELT programs portray outcomes that focus on preparing students to be teachers. Examining and

understanding common undergraduates' expectations and preferences can help lecturers plan their lessons in a way that do not cause students demotivation as students hold various expectations like having interactive and engaging classes, using L1 to clarify complex concepts, and expecting individual support and additional help. The study provides researchers a thematic analysis of existing literature in the field. Despite what is mentioned, this research fills a gap in the literature as the study provides insights into the existing expectations towards the ELT program and lecturers. More importantly, results from the study provide a summary of the common expectations held by undergraduates towards the ELT program that can be beneficial to curriculum developers to take it into account and use it accordingly.

2. Literature Review

Students attend universities with different expectations leading to common mismatches between students' expectations, initial impressions of university life, and the courses they are enrolled in (Leesie, 2010). Students' expectations of higher education are affected by the type of university and the course they are undertaking, as they try to match their course to "their perceived strengths, interests, and personalities" (Byrne, et al., 2011). However, their expectations may affect their performance in university. Lobo and Gurney (2013) investigated the relationship between students' expectations and their regular attendance and attribution rate. They found out that expectations directly affect the students' active attendance and motivation to sustain. In a sense, meeting students' expectations has a big influence on students' performance and motivation throughout their studies.

Students' expectations change based on the major they undertake. Improving career opportunities is a common expectation among students. Balloo et al. (2015), in a study, investigated the factors that affect students' decision to attend university. They pointed out that the most important reason for attending university was to improve one's career prospects, with depending on the student's gender, age group, caring responsibilities, application method, fee status, and proficiency in English. Students from Western cultures are more likely to attend university for personal and professional development reasons (Phinney et al., 2006). In developmental contexts, the English language plays important roles in four fundamental areas: improving employability, promoting international mobility, providing more development opportunities, and serving as an imperial language in unusual situations (Coleman, 2011, as cited in Haque, 2014). Hence, students see the importance of English for professional purposes. Haque (2014) stated, "Many adult learners are now learning English as migrants to find suitable employment. Everyone is concerned about the importance of English and therefore they have certain expectations from any English language course" (p.56). He further adds that "students expected to learn the following skills/contents from their English language courses: reading, writing, speaking, listening, pronunciation, grammar, note taking, presentation skills for the job market" (p.60). Students have expectations to master English, as it's also highlighted (Haque, 2014) that students thought they would be fluent in reading, writing, speaking, and listening after completing English language courses, but they later discovered that they still lacked proficiency in all four language skills, and they expect that English Language courses will improve their pronunciation, which schools and colleges neglected the most. Haque also reported that students expect to be accurate in using grammar, and they felt pleased with the grammar exercises used in their classes. Students also care about presentation skills to use later in their professional lives. In his findings, he shows that a course entitled Public Speaking helped them to improve their presentation skills. Students have different expectations

regarding teaching-learning style. He also stated, "They expected to have an eclectic approach as teaching methodology, group work, friendly environment in the classroom, bilingual education, humor in the classroom and teaching of grammar before the teaching of literary courses" (p.60). Even though English language courses are expected to only be taught in English, some students still expect bilingual education when they have difficulties in understanding (Haque, 2014). However, as the new generation, Gen Z, is now in college, it is worth the effort and dedication to explore their expectations and preferences as there is a tendency for them to hold different expectations towards many aspects of life and education with a particular focus on the ELT program compared to the previous generations as the era has witnessed a bundle of changes including the advancement of technology and the fact that people are more global and different.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Design and Objectives

The aim of the study was to investigate undergraduate learners' expectations and preferences toward the English Language Teaching program. To achieve the goal of the study, the quantitative approach was followed to collect numerical data from the participants. A mixed-format survey was administered in classroom to the ELT undergraduates that included different question types to gather data for statistical analysis.

3.2. Participants and Setting

This study was conducted at Tishk International University in Erbil, Iraq, in the 2022-2023 academic year. The participants were from the faculty of education, English Language Teaching Department, from all four graders. 133 undergraduate learners took part in the survey.

3.3. Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data of the survey and identify the frequencies in each item based on the pre-determined themes, GraphPad Prism 8 was used. Tables and charts were generated to present the results using Microsoft Excel.

4. Findings

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate undergraduate expectations towards the ELT program. The purpose was to answer two main research questions: What are the common expectations undergraduates hold of the ELT program? What are the learners' preferences and expectations of lecturers and courses in the ELT program? To gather data from the students, a survey questionnaire was carried out in the ELT classrooms.

A survey was designed and conducted among 133 ELT students at the Faculty of Education, Tishk International University. The primary aim of designing the survey was to gather a large amount of data from participants. Moreover, the participants in the survey were selected based on convenience sampling. The survey contained five main domains including demographic questions and items related to general expectations. The primary aim of the domain was to get to know students' general expectations of the ELT

Department and the university overall. It was followed by items pertinent to the learners' expectations of lecturers. The domain was investigating the expectations that students held for Lecturers, in the ELT department. Another domain was related to students' opinions on the ELT program, and course nature that involved students' points of view on different courses including pedagogical courses and skill-based courses, were investigated. The following section discusses the findings:

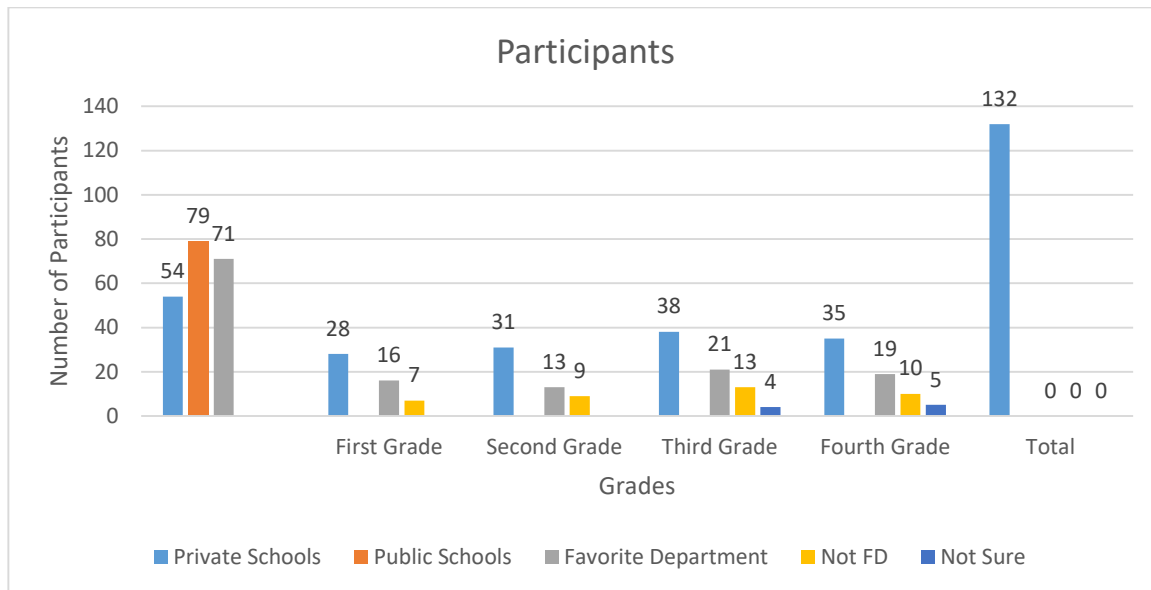


Figure 1: Background Information of the Participants

Students' backgrounds may affect what they anticipate from the department they enroll in. Figure 1 shows responses from the 133 participants to demographic questions. As can be seen, 28 participants were from first grade, 31 students from second grade, 38 students from third grade, and 35 students from fourth grade have graduated from private schools. 54 of the students surveyed have come from private high schools, as opposed to 79 ELT students who have come from public high schools. Many students choose their program without their will for different reasons. To investigate how many students prefer the ELT department, a question was asked. Among first-grade students, 16 of them stated that the ELT department is their favorite department. Seven of them did not find the ELT department as their favorite. 31 second-grade students defined the ELT department as their favorite. However, it is not a favorite department for nine second-grade students. Moreover, 21 students in third grade described the ELT department as their favorite, 13 of them did not see the ELT department as their preferred one, and 4 of them were not sure if it's their desired major they have enrolled in or not. Lastly, among fourth-grade students, 35 students enrolled in the ELT department because it was their favorite, 19 students did not identify it as their favorite, and 5 students were not sure about it. In total, out of 132 participants, 71 of the students described the ELT department as their favorite major. The analysis illustrates that there is a critical number of students 62 who join the department regardless of their preferences and choice.

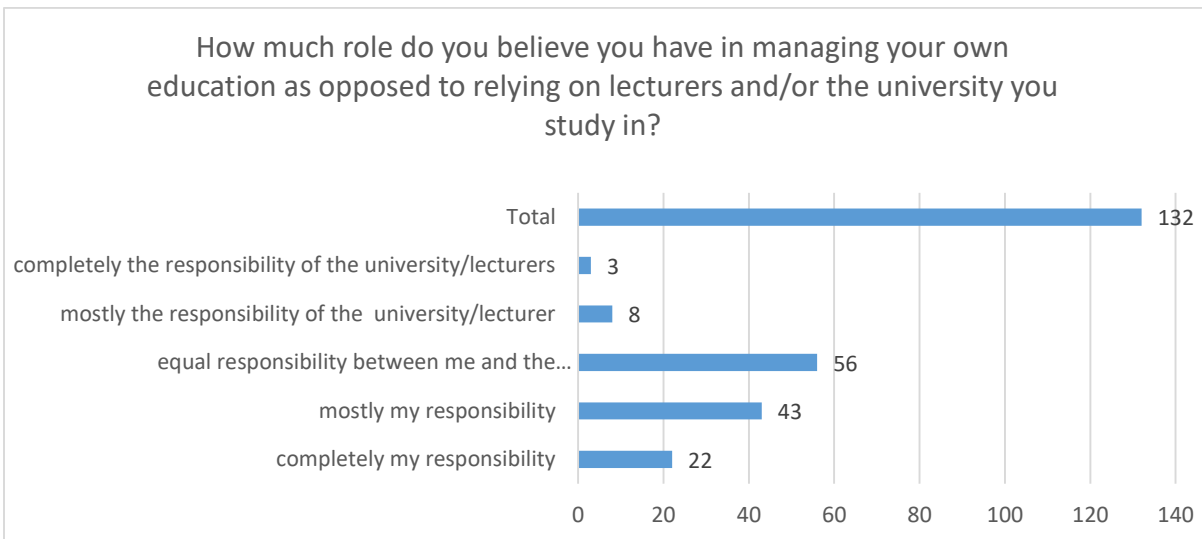


Figure 2: Role in Managing Learner Education

In Figure 2 students' beliefs are demonstrated in managing their own education. Among 133 participants, 22 students think that it is completely their own responsibility to manage and be successful in their university life, and not rely only on lecturers and the university. However, there are students (8 out of 133) who give most of the responsibility to the university/lecturers. On the other hand, 43 students in the whole ELT department think that it is mostly their responsibility, not the universities and lecturers'. It is worth mentioning that only three students thought that their education was completely university and lecturers' responsibility. It means that students take most of the responsibility for their learning, being successful in their courses, and managing their studies. Furthermore, 56 student participants consider it as an equal responsibility between them and the university/lecturers. To provide an efficient and collaborative learning environment, colleges and lecturers must acknowledge and take into account these varied viewpoints. Considering the abovementioned analysis, it is of priority that both stakeholders work in harmony to carry the special burden of responsibility in managing the expected education.

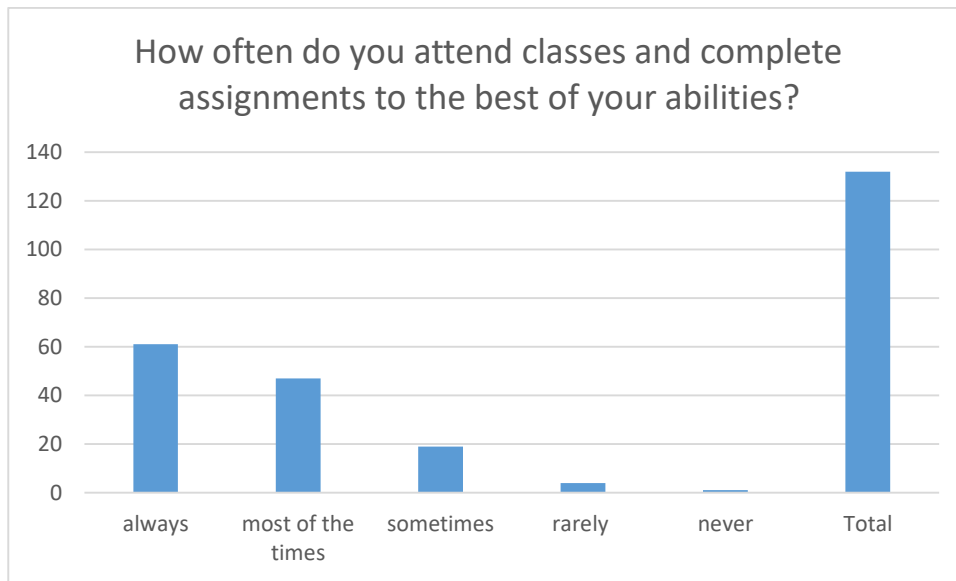


Figure 3: Attendance and Assignment Completion

One of the widely common expectations held by lecturers is that students should prioritize their studies. To see whether lecturers' expectations match with students' priorities, the abovementioned item was presented in the survey. Figure 3 shows the responses of doing assignments and attending classes by students. There are 61 out of 133 students in the department who think that they take full responsibility for always doing their assignments on time and attending classes. 47 students stated that most of the time they care about being present in the classroom and do their assignments to the best of their abilities. A total of 19 students admitted to attending classes and doing assignments to the best of their abilities sometimes showing that some of the students only sometimes complete tasks and assignments to the best of their abilities indicating having other priorities other than studying.

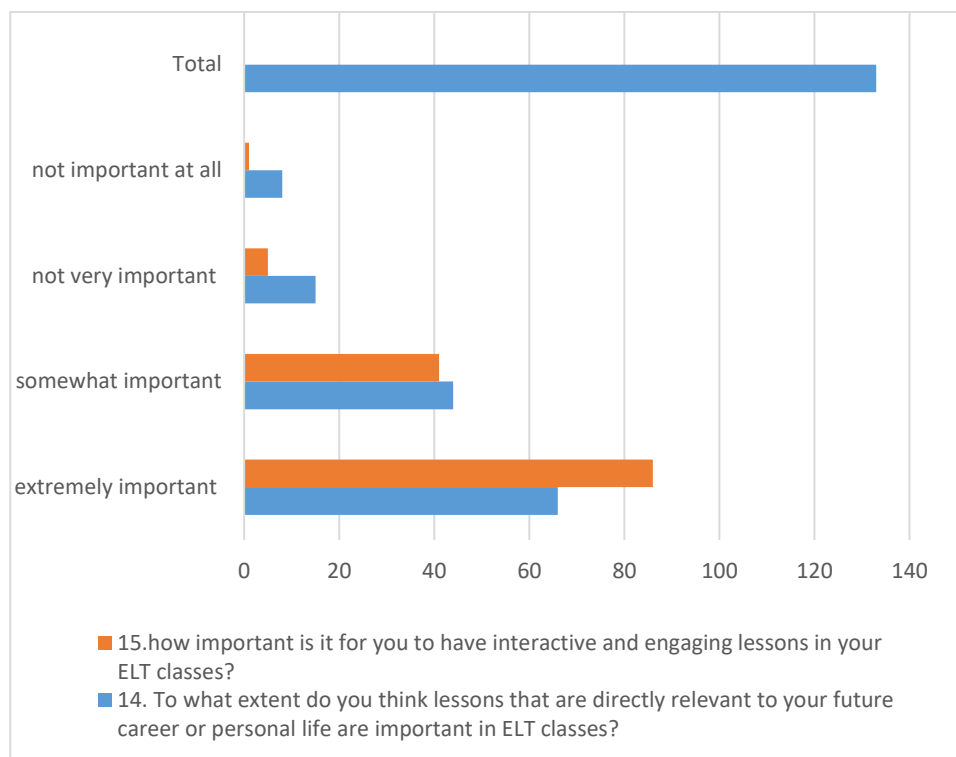


Figure 4: Expectations Toward the ELT Lessons

Having an engaging and interactive classroom is key to successful learning. When students are interested in the lesson, they are more willing to listen and learn. Figure 4 shows students' responses to the following item "How important is it for you to have interactive and engaging lessons in your ELT classes?" More than half of the participants, 86, students view having interactive and engaging lessons in ELT classes as extremely important. 41 of them believed that it was somewhat important. It is inevitable that guaranteeing interactive and engaging classes is not always possible due to the fact that there are concepts and topics that might require the students to go the extra mile and put effort into their learning. The second item in Figure 4 is "To what extent do you think lessons that are relevant to your future career or personal life are important in ELT classes?", besides having interactive and engaging classes, students find it important to have courses that are relevant to their future career or personal life. 66 students who are enrolled in the ELT department find having relevant courses to their future career and personal life extremely important. The issue is somewhat important to 41 students, and not very important to 15 students showing that there are students who might not have thought the whole process through as they may have other plans set for the future that may not be found in courses taken. The results mentioned above show that most of the students consider ELT courses particularly significant to their future careers, and they care about having interactive classes.

Table:1 General Expectations Towards ELT Program

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation
All my expectations are met in the ELT program	13.53	15.04	47.37	17.29	7.52	133	2.9	1.07
Failure of my expectations negatively affects my attitude toward the ELT program	16.54	25.56	37.59	16.54	3.76	133	2.6	1.05
I have no Intention to teach after graduation	35.34	15.79	18.80	12.78	18.05	133	2.6	1.51
I believe that ELT is merely for improving language skills	19.55	18.05	21.05	18.80	21.80	133	2.4	0.91

Table 1 illustrates the replies to four statements using the Likert scale about the ELT program from 1 being strongly agree to five being strongly disagree.

Accommodating students' expectations has a positive influence on students' learning experiences. The first item is "all my expectations are met in the ELT program". It is noticeable that most of the students responded with Neutral %47.37, indicating the fact that expectations are often met. The percentage of students who strongly agree was %13.53, and %15.04 Agree with the statement. The mean score for the statement is 2.903 which shows a moderate level of agreement. The standard deviation score is 1.075, which shows that most of the responses were somehow diverse.

As mentioned above, the failure of students' expectations can impact their academic life, which can lead to demotivation and discouragement. In the second statement, "Failure of my expectations negatively affects my attitude towards ELT program," Neutral received most of the responses which is %37.59. Then, %16.54 participants responded equally with Strongly Agree and Disagree. %25.56 participants Agreed with the statement. The mean

score of the second statement is 2.903, meanwhile, the standard deviation score is 1.059 illustrating a noticeable degree of variability. It demonstrates that there are students equally whose expectations affected their attitudes to the ELT program.

The ELT programs prepare students to be teachers. The students are expected to have the perception of teaching when they attend the ELT department, thus, an item in the survey discovered whether or not students have the intention to teach. In the third statement, “I have no intention to teach after graduation”, a noticeable trend occurred among the responses. Surprisingly, most of the students strongly agreed with the statement with a percentage of 35.34, indicating that the students do not intend to teach after graduation and yet take many courses preparing them to become teachers. A small percentage of participants %12.78 reported that they disagreed with the statement. %18.80 responded with Neutral, with fewer participants in Agree group %15.79 and more participants declared strongly Disagree group %21.80. The mean score is 2.627, with a high Standard Deviation of 1.51 demonstrating that the responses differed considerably. To conclude, a great number of participants do not have a teaching path in their plans. Further, there are also students who are uncertain about their intention to teach which affects the process of learning and teaching.

As previously stated, researchers hypothesized that there are students who enroll in the ELT department with the belief that the department will help them to merely master the English language. In the last statement, the mentioned hypothesis is examined. The majority of the participants answered with Strongly Disagree %21.80 followed by a Neutral %21.05, with the lowest percentage of Agree %18.05 and Disagree 18.80 groups. The Last item on the table is “I believe that ELT is merely for improving language skills”. The item shows various perceptions held by the participants with a considerable number, around 37% of the average from "Strongly Agree" and "Agree") believe that the ELT is merely for enhancing language skills. On the other hand, around 40 percent of the participants think the other way around. The mean score of the fourth statement is 2.447, with a higher standard deviation of 0.919 than the other statements, depicting a slight difference among the participants. As a result, there are both groups of students in the ELT department, those who believe that by attending the ELT department their English will improve, and the students who do not agree with the statement, anticipating more out of the department. There seems to be a misconception among the participants holding the belief that the ELT department is merely for improving language skills. Participants tend to ignore the fact that it is a teaching department as the name suggests. Another reason is that there are multiple English language departments offering courses with no major focus on teaching. Students may think that the ELT program is identical.

Table 2: Expectations Towards Lecturers

Statements	extremely important	somewhat important	not very important	not important at all	Mean	Standard Deviation
Item 17	79.70	16.54	3.01	0.75	1.25	0.54
Item 24	43.18	46.97	7.58	2.27	1.69	0.71

One of the domains of the survey investigates undergraduate learners' expectations of lecturers. Two items are indicated in Table 2. Item 17 "How important is it for you to have experienced and knowledgeable instructors in your ELT classes?" shows the importance of having qualified and competent lecturers as lecturers may also impact their attitude towards the ELT program and learning experience. Participants showed their responses by indicating from extremely important to not important at all. In item 17, the majority of the responses regarded having experienced and knowledgeable instructors as extremely important %79.70, followed by a smaller percentage in the Somewhat Important %16.54 category. The mean score of Item 17 is 1.25, showing positive responses overall with a low Standard Deviation of 0.54 which shows uniformity among responses. The low SD shows that most of the participants responded with extremely important and somewhat important. This indicates the importance of having experienced and knowledgeable ELT lecturers.

In that regard, Item 24, shows how important it is for students to have entertaining lecturers in their classes. As a result, the somewhat important %46.97 category received most of the responses, with a smaller percentage in the extremely important %43.18 category. The percentage of respondents in the not-very-important category is %7.58. The mean score for this item is 1.69, with a higher standard deviation, which is 0.71. These results show that there is consistency in the responses, it is extremely important and somewhat important for most of the students in the ELT department to have entertaining and engaging lecturers.

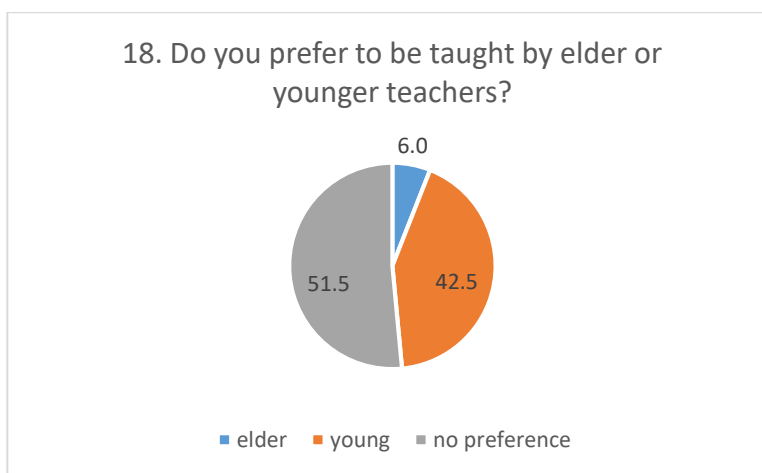


Figure 5: Item 18

It's noticeable that some students are more comfortable with teachers with a lesser age gap. Figure 5 illustrates students' preferences toward having lecturers regarding their age. Among 133 participants in the ELT department, %51.5 of the participants have no preferences regarding the issue. It shows that students are comfortable and can learn with both, elder and young lecturers. Contrary to that, %42.5 students prefer to be taught by young lecturers, which is still a great number of students among 133 participants. The result from Figure 4.5 shows that students' preferences vary from one student to another, by considering their own reasons. There could be different reasons for that including understanding and getting along. It is recommended that lecturers mitigate the effects of the age gap by studying the students' preferences to better know them.

Table 3: L1 Use in Class

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
19. I expect instructors to use L1 (Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish) when I struggle understanding something.	17.9	5.2	26.1	26.1	24.6	3.3	1.4

The majority of the participants are from Iraq and Kurdish. English language is a foreign language in the region therefore, the language sometimes adds more to hinder understanding in the class. In Table 3, students' expectation is illustrated regarding the use of L1 (Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkish) when they face difficulties in understanding something. The majority of the responses are in the Neutral %26.1 category, with the same result in the agree %26.1 category. With a smaller percentage of strongly agree %24.6. Moreover, %17.9 shows strong disagreement with this statement. The mean score is 3.3 demonstrating that students prefer code-switching when teaching complex notions and concepts to facilitate learning. The standard deviation of 1.4 suggests that responses are the most diverse.

Table 4: Items 20-22; Expectations Towards Lecturers

Statement	not at all	a little bit	moderately	quite a bit	completely	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item 20	6.77	18.05	21.05	21.80	32.33	3.55	1.29
Item 21	4.58	13.74	19.85	19.08	42.75	3.82	1.25
Item 22	4.55	16.67	23.48	24.24	31.06	3.61	1.22

In Table 4 the responses of 3 items are demonstrated, which are rated as (completely, quite a bit, moderately, a little bit, and not at all).

Since a large number of students have the expectation of learning English in the ELT program, some students might hope that their lecturers would assist them in improving their English language skills in the responses for Item 20. We can see that %32 of the participants completely expect instructors to help them master the English language. %42.85 have this expectation to a moderate level. The mean score is 3.55 which indicates that responses are between completely and quite a bit. The high standard deviation of 1.29 shows that there are some differences in the responses; some participants responded as if they completely expected lecturers to help them learn English. On the other hand, the rest of the participants don't have this expectation from lecturers.

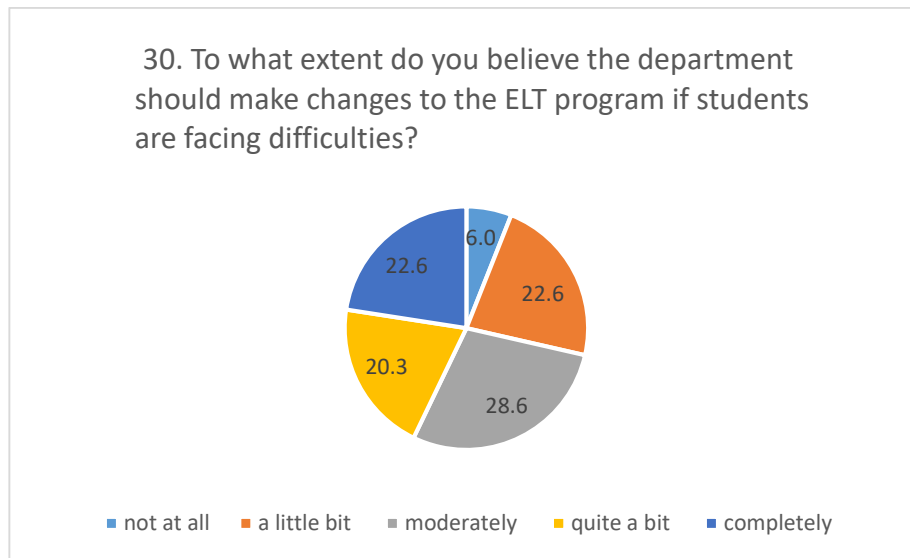
Additionally, lecturers' availability for the support needed outside the classroom might be another expectation that students hold of lecturers. Item 21. Participants with a percentage of %42.72 completely agree that lecturers should always be available for individual support. Meanwhile, %38.93 moderately agree with this sentence. The mean score for this statement is 3.82, which responses are closer to quite a bit and completely. The high standard deviation of 1.25 shows the contrast between the responses; indicating that some of them agree that lecturers should provide individual support, while others don't find the mentioned issue so important, and they do not agree.

In Item 22 "To what extent do you believe that your instructors will be able to provide additional support and resources if needed?", the majority of the participants, with a percentage of %31.6, completely agreed that lecturers should be able to provide additional support and resources when needed. As shown in the table, participants hold various views. The mean score is 3.61 suggesting that the responses are in the range of "quite a bit" and "completely". This indicates that participants generally assessed this item as having an average level of significance. The high standard deviation of 1.22 illustrates the diversity among responses, providing additional support and resources is important to most of the students. On the other hand, the rest of the participants show that they are less important.

Table 5: Lecturer Characteristics

Statement	29. in your opinion, which of the following qualities and characteristics are essential for a good English language teacher?
strong communication skills	15.15
knowledgeable in language and teaching methods	22.73
engaging and interactive teaching style	7.58
cultural sensitivity and adaptability	0.76
all of the above	53.79
Mean	3.55
Std. Deviation	1.65

Table 4.5. shows the characteristics and qualities of lecturers through the lens of learners. As can be seen in Table 5., four characteristics are mentioned, with all of the above categories receiving half of the participants', %53.79, responses. This indicates that they think all of the mentioned categories are essential for a good English Language teacher. Noticeably, %22.73 students prefer their lecturers to be knowledgeable in language and teaching methods. The mean score is 3.55. The high standard deviation of 1.65 shows the variation in responses. Although some students think having all of the qualities is essential, some students prefer to have some specific ones.



Students face difficulties when they don't meet their expectations. Similar difficulties can lead students to ask for Revise the changes in the ELT program such as excluding some courses and other changes that may be in the direction of their expectations. Figure 4.6 shows how much they think the ELT department should modify its program when such issues occur. %22.6 of the undergraduates expect the ELT department to completely make a change while %42.6 expects changes from the department to a smaller extent.

Table 6: Items 34-37; Expectations toward pedagogical courses.

Statements	not at all	a little bit	moderately	quite a bit	completely	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item 34	13.4	13.4	29.9	25.8	17.5	3.2	1.3
Item 36	10.5	23.8	23.8	20.0	21.9	3.2	1.3
Item 37	18.9	43.4	22.6	11.3	3.8	2.4	1.0

Table 6 shows more learners' expectations and beliefs of ELT's course nature through three statements that are presented about pedagogical courses. The responses are indicated from completely to not at all.

The language of pedagogical courses is more advanced than the skill courses students take to master the English language. Therefore, students expect the pedagogical courses to help them improve their English since it's more challenging. In statement 34 "My English has improved even by taking pedagogical courses (Introduction to Edu. TEFL courses...." The majority of the responses are in the moderate %29.9 category, followed by quite a bit %17.5 category. The mean score of Item 34 is 3.2, which stays between moderately and quite a bit, with a 1.3 standard deviation that shows responses somehow vary. In a sense, some participants believed their English language has improved by taking pedagogical courses, while others have the opposite opinion.

Statement 36 presents responses from students who didn't have the perception of teaching and have seen a change in their attitude towards the ELT program by taking the pedagogical courses. The results show that %47.6 of participants changed their perception of teaching positively. While only %21.9 completely changed their attitude toward teaching. The mean score of 3.2 shows that most of the responses are towards a little bit category and moderately. The standard deviation is 1.3, which shows the contrast in the answers.

Statement 37 investigates the benefits of pedagogical courses for students. %43.4 participants find pedagogical courses a little bit helpful followed by moderately %22.6. The mean score of this item is 2.4, which indicates that most of the responses are between a little bit and moderately, with a 1.0 standard deviation that illustrates that students' responses are moderately diverse. By analyzing the three mentioned items from Table 4.6., it's shown that most students find pedagogical courses useful and beneficial to a limited extent in the case of language learning, helpfulness, and perception of teaching.

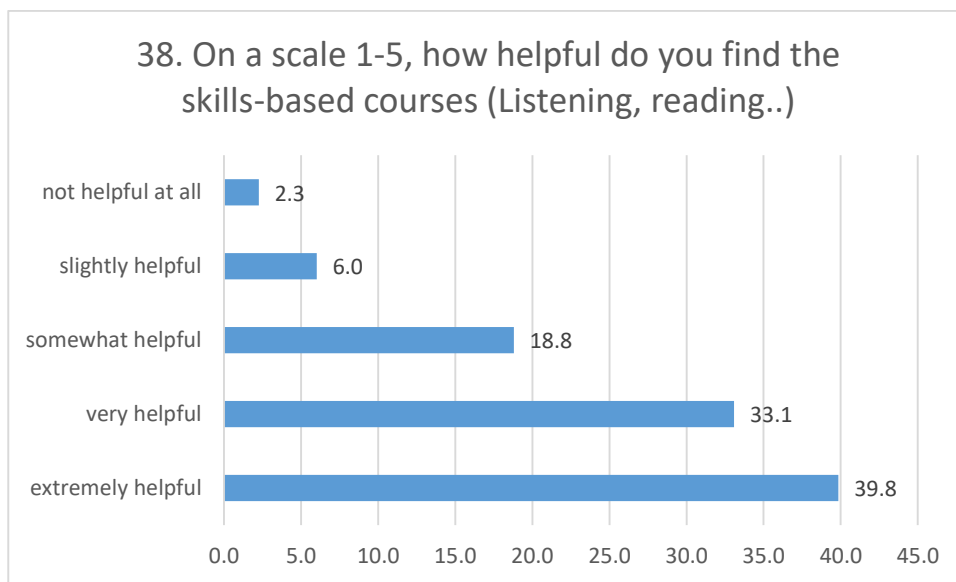


Figure 6: Preference of Skills-based Courses.

Students like studying skill-based courses since some of them seek to master English language skills. Thus, Figure 7 shows the results of Item 38 asking about the benefits of skill-based courses. %72 of the participants found skill-based courses extremely and very helpful as skill-based courses tend to be more interactive with fewer theoretical aspects to cover which ultimately makes such courses easy to complete. Another reason is that skill-based courses bring enormous joy and entertainment to the majority of the class and bring joy and entertainment to the class. Meanwhile, the rest of the participants fall between somewhat helpful and slightly helpful with a percentage of 24.

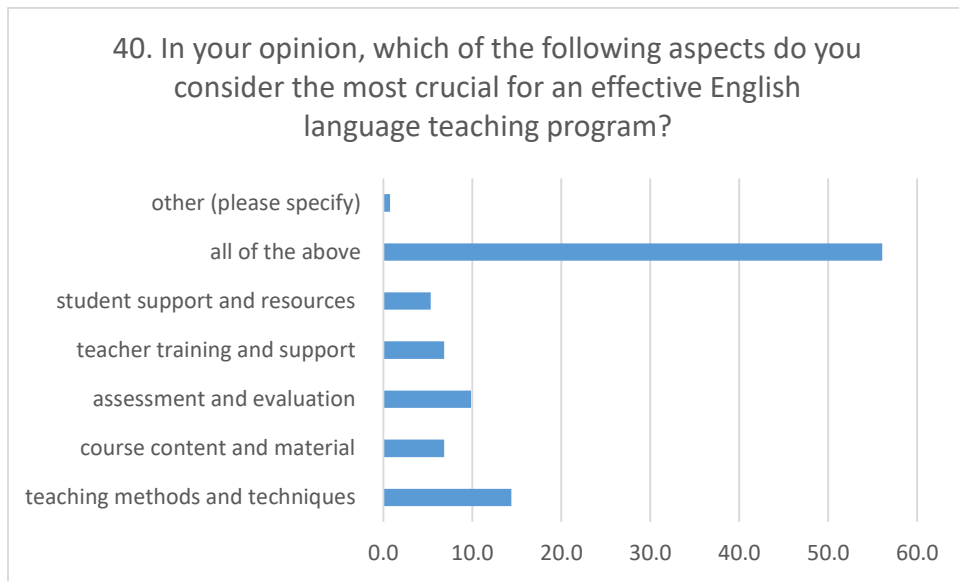


Figure 7: Preferred Aspects of ELT

As can be seen in Figure 8 students stated their ideal qualities for an effective English language teaching program. The qualities include student support and resources, teacher training and support, assessment and evaluation, course content and material, and teaching methods and techniques, with all of the above which the latter has received the majority of the responses %56, followed by a lower percentage of teaching methods and techniques %14.4 category. This shows that undergraduates consider the fact that mastering teaching methods and techniques can profoundly help them in their future careers. Another aspect that has received attention is assessment and evaluation implying the importance of assessment in a language program followed by course content and material as one of the crucial aspects of any course that aids the students in terms of gaining knowledge and mastering the core fundamentals of the program.

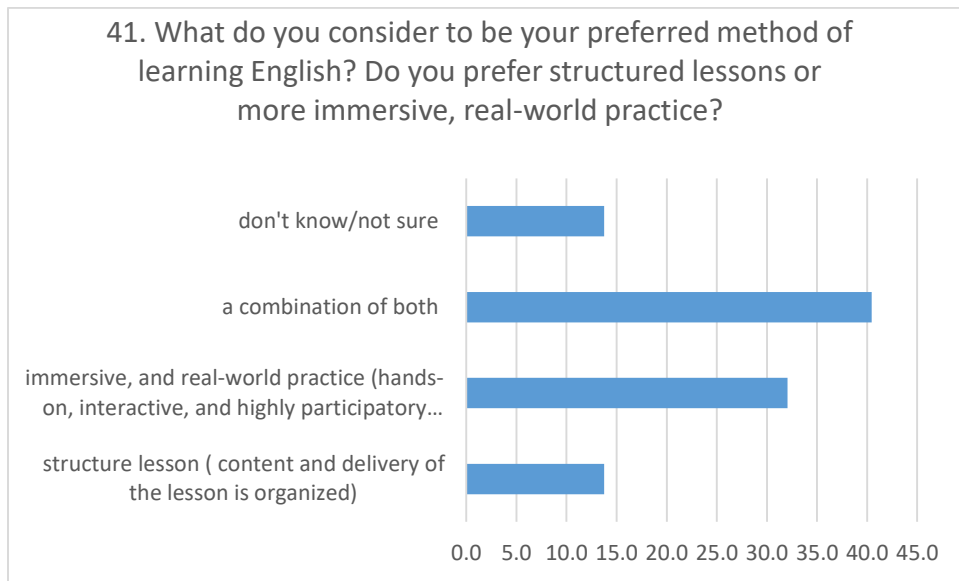


Figure 9: Preferred Method of Learning

Figure 9 states the most preferred methods of learning English by ELT students. The methods mentioned in Item 41 are immersive and real-world practice methods; learning by interacting with the real world such as movies, books, videos, etc., and structured lessons; the lessons that are being taught based on some lesson plans, and course books. The majority of the students %40.5 prefer a combination of both, with a smaller percentage in the immersive method %32.1 of the participants. The results reveal that students prefer to be taught through both methods of teaching. Structured lessons received the lowest compared to the others.

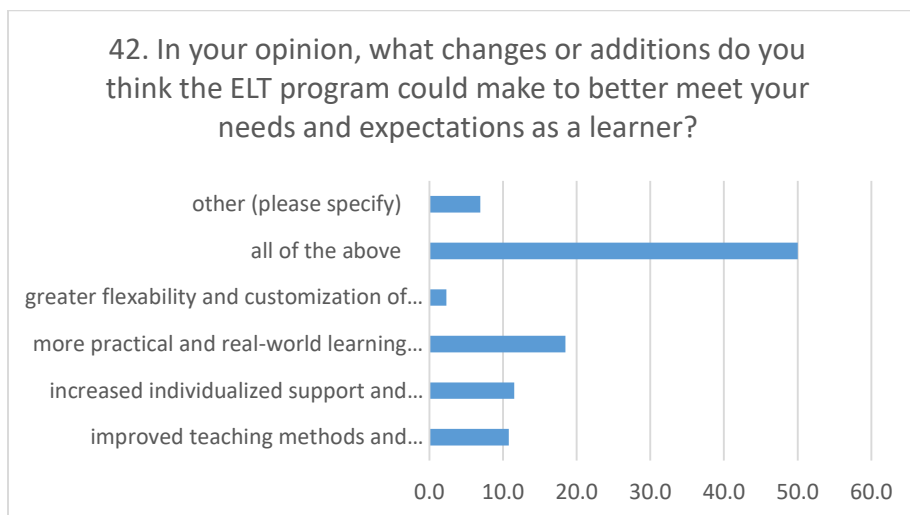


Figure 8: Changes Expected to the ELT Program

Figure 10 shows the changes and additions the ELT students desire to make to the program. Item 42 provides the following change options: Improved teaching methods, and materials, increased individualized support and attention, more practical and real-world learning opportunities, greater flexibility and customization of the program, and with all of the above and other options. %50.0 of the respondents prefer all of the above change options, implying that the program needs modifications in the aspects of teaching methods, individual support, practical learning and flexibility

5. Discussion

Studies have concluded that students join universities with various expectations that ultimately affect learners' experiences throughout a study program. Expectations and perceptions are key elements that affect learners' satisfaction, commitment, and motivation as concluded in a study by Lobo and Gurney (2013). These expectations vary based on the course, program, and the kind of university students enroll in. In the case of the present study's focus which is English Language Teaching (ELT) programs, undergraduate expectations are formed around professional development, mastering target language, and teaching approaches. The results of the study are in line with research studies conducted that highlight the significance of mastering the English language for career development as learners expect to master the language skills (Haque, 2014). More importantly, the participants of the study revealed a desire to be involved in various teaching and learning activities including interactive and collaborative. Students also expected L1 use in classes as they face difficulties.

The present study highlights the significant perceptions of the program, focusing on both challenging and positive strands of the program. One of the noticeable findings was the mismatch between the expectations and the student's experiences in the program. A notable finding is the potential dissonance between students' expectations and their actual experiences within the ELT department. The mismatch lies in the fact that a notable number of learners join the program even though, the program is not their first choice suggesting an urgency to consider the possibility of tailoring the program that align with the students' interests. This can be approached by providing courses that match their interest and aligns with the program outcomes. The changes can occur across the curriculum and/or the course content and delivery. It is evidently important for the stakeholders of any academic institution to have a mutual understanding and perceive academic growth as an endeavor that is shared in terms of responsibility. That is to emphasize the significance of collaboration between the involved stakeholders including learners and educators to maximize effectiveness as emphasized by Awasthy, et al. (2020). The findings of the study show that undergraduates prefer having engaging and interactive lessons along with a direct link between the courses taken and their prospective careers. However, it is inevitable that having interactive and engaging classes may not be always possible for certain lessons, but the necessity to conduct such classes remains a priority for lecturers and universities to consider.

The findings of the study underline the effects of meeting undergraduates' expectations in the program, concluding the fact unmet expectations have a detrimental influence on their academic success. Moreover, inconsistencies occur pertaining to the ultimate objective of the pedagogical courses contradicting the undergraduates' after-graduation plans, urging the necessity for modifications so that it mitigates the detrimental effects of the mismatch. Lecturers are recommended to understand the learners' expectations as major inconsistencies lead to class disengagement (Brown, 2009). Furthermore, undergraduates'

expectations were unveiled related to lecturers' traits, the medium language used for teaching, and the focus on learning the language as opposed to how-to-teach content provided via pedagogical courses. According to the findings of the study, undergraduates expect entertaining, engaging, experienced, and knowledgeable lecturers, expect L1 use on certain occasions, and receive additional support on a regular basis, suggesting that the department is urged to consider accommodation and modification in the program. They are the two key elements of inclusive education. The former refers to tailoring the content delivery or presentation with no change to the core learning outcomes, while the latter refers to making amendments to the program or learning objectives so that they are compatible with the personalized needs of the learner (MCGLYNN & KELLY, 2019).

To conclude, the previous studies and the findings of the study signify the importance of exploring and understanding the undergraduates' expectations of the program so that stakeholders involved can better plan according to the ever-evolving expectations and preferences held by undergraduates.

6. Conclusion

The study's primary aim was to delve into the multifaceted scope of undergraduate expectations in the context of the ELT program. To reach the goal of the study and gather data, a survey was distributed among the ELT students to all four grades at Tishk International University. The survey contained five main domains each investigating specific aspects including students' expectations of lecturers, the ELT program, course nature, and general expectations, with demographic questions. The findings presented below can be beneficial for the stakeholders of the ELT program to not only meet undergraduate expectations but also surpass the expectations to maximize the level of satisfaction and learning outcomes. The following are the concluding remarks of the study:

- The majority of the students in the ELT department describe the department as their choice. On the other hand, a considerable number of students do not find the ELT department to be their preferred choice resulting in a potential combination of unmet expectations and disappointment along the learning and teaching process.
- The majority of students came to the conclusion that both they and the university/lecturers are responsible for their success in managing their education stressing the value of collaboration between the major stakeholders in the program.
- Despite the undeniable fact that always having interactive and engaging classes cannot be met with certain lesson topics, it is of undergraduate priority to have engaging, interactive classes that are associated with their future careers and personal life.
- A great number of students stated that they always attend classes and complete their assignments to the best of their ability addressing the students' commitment to class even though students' capacity might be limited to certain academic pressures that other stakeholders should take into consideration.
- Failure to meet undergraduate expectations within the ELT program leaves a detrimental impact on the process of learning and teaching according to a considerable number of students. On the other hand, there are students whose expectations are met in the ELT program.
- A considerable number of students do not have the intention of teaching after graduation, causing a definite inconsistency between the purpose of pedagogical courses and students' personal choices.

- It is important for students to have entertaining, engaging, experienced, and knowledgeable lecturers in the ELT department, urging the stakeholders that it is of students' priority that lecturers perform at a high level of professionalism.
- Students' preferences vary for having young or elder lecturers. However, there is a significant number of students who prefer to be taught by young lecturers indicating the fact that there is a little gap between their ages that facilitates mutual understanding.
- Students in the ELT department mostly expect lecturers to use L1 (Kurdish, Arabic, Turkish) when they face difficulties in deciphering complex content. The English language is the confirmed medium of instruction in the ELT program that contradicts what learners prefer. Additionally, there are cases in which stakeholders do not share the same mother tongue making it possible to meet the preferred expectation.
- Most learners hope that lecturers will assist them in mastering the English language. However, the courses taught in the last two years of the ELT program emphasize teaching content rather than the language. Students failing to master the language by the first half of the program face tremendous language barriers.
- The vast majority of students expect lecturers to provide individual support, and additional recourses if needed.
- A great number of students expect the ELT lecturers to have the following qualities: strong communication skills, knowledge of the language and teaching methods, engaging and interactive teaching styles, and cultural sensitivity.
- Students believe that the department should moderately make changes in the program when they struggle based on their expectations.
- The majority of students believe that pedagogical courses are somewhat helpful and advantageous in terms of language learning, helpfulness, and perception of teaching.
- Students find skill-based courses more helpful than pedagogical courses.
- Students prefer a combination of immersive, real-world practice over structured lessons in the ELT program, urging the lecturers to gradually abandon structured lessons.

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