



**THE VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS OF ELT PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS ON
INTERVIEW FOR TEACHER SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT SYSTEM IN
TURKEY**

**İNGİLİZ DİLİ ÖĞRETİMİ ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARI'NIN TÜRKİYE'DE
ÖĞRETMEN SEÇME VE İSTİHDAM SİSTEMİNDE UYGULANAN MÜLAKAT
SINAVI ÜZERİNE GÖRÜŞ VE ÖNERİLERİ**

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Abstract: Teacher selection and recruitment system in recent years has become a highly concerned issue for the exam takers of The Selection Examination for Professional Posts in Public Organizations (henceforth KPSS) in Turkey. Ministry of National Education (henceforth MoNE) put into action some important steps for teacher selection and recruitment system. Among these steps, the most significant one is Interview which aims to assess prospective teachers' oral and representational skills. This study aims to reflect prospective English language teachers' views on Interview which is conducted after KPSS. The study reveals that almost all the participants argue that Interview is not objective evaluation method. Moreover, the participants are also of the opinion that Interview should be revised with respect to its content, committee members, duration allocated to each person and the announcement procedure of the results.

Keywords: Interview, KPSS, assessment, oral ability

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Introduction

Teacher education system of a country plays a crucial role to maintain an effective and qualified education. Furthermore, to maintain this qualified education system, teacher selection and recruitment process may be regarded as the foremost premises related to national education policies of many countries as well as Turkey. Teacher selection and recruitment program in Turkey is held by MoNE with the cooperation of Ministry of Finance (henceforward MoF), Higher Education Council (henceforward YOK) and Assessment, Selection, and Placement Centre (henceforward OSYM). Each institution has different roles on this selection and recruitment process; however, the first step of this cooperation starts with four-year education programs provided by YOK which sometimes run on five years with respect to the language proficiency requirements of the department (Kılıçkaya & Krajka, 2013).

Secondly, at the end of these education programs, for the identification and requisition of the vacant positions in public organizations, OSYM takes over the selection process of the senior students and the graduates throughout the country. Since it was first implemented by OSYM in 1999 under the name of Examination of Civil Servants (DMS), KPSS has been the major selection examination for the recruitment process of all types of professional posts. It assesses candidates' general knowledge and ability, general culture and educational sciences (this section is only for prospective teachers).

As the last step, MoNE sends a requisition to MoF for the yearly vacant positions needed at schools. These quotas, which are assigned to the MoNE in accordance with the number of teachers needed, are then distributed by the provincial directorates of national education starting from the educational institutions in the field of the sixth service (MEB, 2015). The number of these yearly vacant positions may sometimes cause disagreements between MoNE and MoF depending on the budget allocated to national education for MoNE. The prospective teachers are then assigned to the vacant positions according to their KPSS results.

However, the years 2013 and 2016 have been a turning point in Turkey for the examination system in selection and recruitment of prospective teachers. In 2013, a subject knowledge test was added into KPSS and with the announcement of MoNE in 2016, in addition to KPSS exams held by OSYM, an interview was put into action for teacher selection and recruitment (MoNE, 2016). As a result, this situation initiated the process of MoNE's intervention in the selection of prospective teachers apart from OSYM. This study aims to reflect prospective English language teachers' views on Interview and provides further suggestions on its implementation process.

Significance of the Study

The procedures and systems in teacher selection and recruitment may change with respect to different conditions; however, what never changes is that the teacher quality which has a vital role for a qualified education. As a further step, MoNE initiated a new system to assess and evaluate prospective teachers' oral abilities. In Turkish education system, when considered ELT prospective teachers, they have always been oppressed and blamed for failure in improving oral abilities of ELT students in all levels of education in MoNE. Therefore,

several seminars, courses and in-service training activities have been organized by MoNE for English language teachers with the aim of enhancing and boosting their oral representation and presentation abilities in their classes.

However, in some private schools, the selection process of teachers, especially for ELT teachers, is carried out by a committee established under the chairmanship of the school principal. This committee does not only apply a subject knowledge test but also an interview which assesses their oral proficiency (Başar & Akyol, 2011). As a result, Interviewing may have been put into action by MoNE due to elimination of the prospective teachers who are incompetent in oral presentation and representation abilities both. Thus, the findings of this research may shed light on the investigations which will be conducted on Interview and assessment of ELT prospective teachers' oral abilities.

Literature Review

KPSS is known as the selection examination for all types of professional posts in Turkey. This exam, which was firstly implemented in Selection Exam for Public Posts (DMS) format in 1999, was mostly for those who want to work under the title of ordinary posts in public office. Subsequently, the scope of this screening test, which was carried out in conjunction with the amendments made under the Public Personnel Act, was expanded to make it as a preliminary screening exam for teachers, ordinary officers, contracted personnel and career professions. Then it was held under the name of The Central Selection Exam for Public Posts (KMS) consisting of four sections with a total of 120 different scoring types.

Recent studies investigating KPSS have mostly centred upon the views of the prospective teachers with regard to KPSS, their anxiety level before the examination and its applicability (Tümekaya, Aybek & Çelik, 2007). This study focused on the levels of hopelessness and state-trait anxiety among prospective teachers before taking KPSS. This study revealed that the hopelessness and state-trait anxiety level of the participants differed with respect to their gender and ages. Furthermore, the participants who had had previous KPSS experience had a higher anxiety level when compared to participants with no KPSS experience. In another study, Gündoğdu, Çimen and Turan (2008) found that KPSS does not only cause anxiety but also it has a negative effect on their social, economic and psychological situations.

KPSS is also criticized for its incapability in assessing and evaluating prospective teachers' subject areas. The major criticism is that KPSS should contain elements which are related to the prospective teachers' teaching subjects and also be specified with respect to the age groups or school types (Kılıçkaya & Krajka, 2010). Yüksel (2004) also highlighted the significance of subject knowledge and teaching tests by making a comparison between KPSS and National Teacher Examination (NTE) of the USA. However, with the announcement of OSYM in 2012, teacher subject knowledge test was included in KPSS, and in 2013 the first exam was held. The subject knowledge test of ELT prospective teachers' contains 50 multiple choice questions which are basically divided into two sections, subject knowledge test and subject teaching test.

Table 1

The Sections and Percentages of Questions in Subject Knowledge Test in July (2013)

Subjects	Total percentage	Approximate Percentage	Number of the Questions
1-Subject Knowledge Test	80 %		40
a) Language Proficiency		50 %	25
b) Linguistics		16 %	8
c) Literature		14 %	7
2- Subject Teaching Test	20 %		10

Apart from subject knowledge and teaching tests in KPSS, MoNE initiated a new policy for teacher recruitment and selection system. With respect to this regulation, the prospective teachers are also to enrol Interview in which their oral and representation abilities are assessed (MEB, 2016). Interview consists of four basic sections which aim to measure their oral, communication, ICT and representation abilities and knowledge.

Table 2

The Sections and Percentages of Interview (2016).

Evaluation criteria of interview	Percentages of each section
1- The ability of summarizing, expressing and reasoning of a topic	25 %
2- Communication skills, self-confidence and persuasion ability	25 %
3- Openness to scientific and technological developments	25 %
4- Representation ability and training qualifications in front of the community	25 %

So far, however, there has been little discussion on whether Interview should be held with the aim of teacher selection and recruitment or not. And Eraslan (2004) in his study, superficially touched upon this issue. With respect to his research 53 % of the participants were of the opinion that an interview would be a subjective assessment tool for all KPSS takers. In contrast to all the studies conducted on KPSS, no research have been found which investigate the views and suggestions of ELT prospective teachers on Interview.

Methodology

The participants in this study were two hundred and eight senior ELT students from different universities and ELT KPSS takers who were also graduated from their universities throughout the country. They were randomly selected and of these participants 139 were female and 69

were male. As with the education status of the participants, 18 of them indicated that they were still senior students and 190 of them were graduated from their universities. The study was conducted using a survey model. The data were collected by conducting an online survey which aimed to reveal the participants' views on Interview. In the survey, there were 4 main sections with 8 sub-sections related to evaluation criteria of Interview and a last section which included the participants' own arguments about Interview. The participants indicated their agreement and disagreement on a 4-point Likert scale (1= I agree, 2= I do not agree, 3= I have no idea, 4= I totally agree). The quantitative data were analysed with a statistical software SPSS 22 for the purpose of revealing descriptive statistics about the participants' views on Interview. Through quantitative content analysis, the aim was to identify the participants' further suggestions on Interview. The research addresses the following two questions:

1. What are the views of prospective English language teachers on Interview?
2. What are their further suggestions on Interview?

Findings and Discussions

Table 3

Analysis of the content of Interview

Statements	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement/Disagreement
1. I am of the opinion that the questions are related to my field.	208	2,52	,810	Don't agree 94 %
2. I am of the opinion that the questions in the interview are appropriate to measure my interpretive ability.	208	2,58	,751	Don't agree 95,7 %

Table 3 reveals that the majority (%94) of the participants are of the opinion that the content of the Interview is not related to their ELT department subject area and the questions in Interview are inappropriate to measure their interpretive ability.

Table 4

Analysis of the Commission Members of the Interview

Statements	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement/Disagreement
1. I am of the opinion that the members of the commission are experts in their fields.	208	2,33	,933	Don't agree 97,1 %
2. I am of the opinion that the commission should have faculty members as well related to my field.	208	3,09	1,003	Don't agree 48,1 %

In the first statement of Table 4, the participants stated that the members of the commission weren't experts in ELT department. When compared with other statements of the survey, the second statement with a higher standard deviation (1,003) revealed that % 48 of the participants had negative attitudes towards the incorporation of faculty members in Interview; however, %40,1 of the participants claimed the vice versa.

Table 5

Analysis of the measurement and conclusion of the Interview

Statements	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement/Disagreement
1. I am of the opinion that the evaluation criteria of the interview should be announced in detail before the interview.	208	3,42	,919	Totally agree 70,2 %
2. I am of the opinion that the results of the interview (per points for each section) should be announced in detail.	208	3,59	,818	Totally agree 78,8 %

With respect to Table 5, the evaluation criteria of Interview were commented by the participants. According to the results of the first section %70, 2 of the participants demanded for the announcement of the evaluation criteria in detail before Interview. As for the announcement of the results, %78, 8 of them stated the importance of announcing per points for each section after it was implemented.

Table 6

Analysis of the Duration of the Interview

Statements	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agreement/Disagreement
1. I am of the opinion that the duration given for the questions of the interview is enough.	208	2,23	,919	Don't agree 94,2 %
2. I am of the opinion that the time allocated for each prospective teacher is equal.	208	2,36	,932	Don't agree 96,2 %

In this section the participants were asked to evaluate the duration of Interview and in general they asserted that the duration of Interview was not enough to evaluate their oral ability. Furthermore, % 96 of the participants indicated that the time allocated to each Interview takers was not equal.

5.5. Analysis of the participants' views on Interview

In this section, the participants were asked their own views on Interview apart from the previous sections of the survey. The most significant and shared proffer is the removal of Interview. The participants particularly stressed that Interview is a subjective assessment tool in the evaluation of their oral ability. One of the participants' view on this point is as follows:

Interview is not as an objective assessment tool as a valid exam for the selection of prospective teachers. I am of the opinion that it shouldn't be implemented in such situations. Because, for an exam taker, even one point may affect the result of his or her recruitment process.

The participants also recommended that ELT prospective teachers' Interview should be held in the target language not in their mother tongue. The following extract is an example of this proposition:

In Interview, instead of posing the questions about educational sciences and classroom management, each participant should be posed questions related to his or her field. To illustrate, we, as ELT prospective teachers, should be oriented questions in English. Consequently, this will be a logical way in selecting ELT prospective teachers who are competent in their fields.

Another important item stated by the participants is related to the committee members' attitudes towards the ELT prospective teachers during their oral examination.

The committee members shouldn't be in the effort of proving their ideas are the truest ones and behave as if they were the only authority on the subject matter. Instead, Interview should be held as an efficient conversation. Furthermore, there should be indulgent committee members those who are competent in ELT department.

As a last argument, almost all the participants adverted that Interview shouldn't be the standard of selecting and recruiting a teacher candidate as stated in the following extract.

I consider that characteristics of a person is much more important than its knowledge on the subject area; therefore I am strictly against Interview. However, if one's oral ability is to be assessed, this should be implemented by YOK after the university entrance exam. It is very nonsense to tell a person who graduated from education faculty that you are not competent enough to be a teacher.

Considering the views of the participants mentioned in the study, the following suggestions on the implementation processes of Interview can be put forward:

1. Since oral ability in the target language is a prerequisite for an EFL teacher, evaluating this ability should be included as an indispensable part of selection and recruitment process of EFL prospective teachers via Interview.
2. However, to implement an interview which provides objectivity is very important. The first step to increase its objectivity, MoNE should include questions related to EFL teachers' subject area. Furthermore, the topics included in Interview should be announced to the exam takers beforehand.
3. In order to implement Interview in the target language, MoNE should start cooperation with YOK for employing the academicians into Interview. With this cooperation, the applicability and reliability of Interview may satisfy ELT prospective teachers.

4. Another important factor that hikes up the anxiety level of prospective teachers is the limited time allocated to them. To assess ELT prospective teachers' oral ability in a limited time is not sufficient to achieve a convincing evaluation. This process should be extended to a longer period.
5. As a last suggestion, the evaluation criteria announced before Interview should be achieved by all EFL prospective teachers. Furthermore, in order to increase the objectivity of Interview, each EFL prospective teacher should learn their exam results in detail after the results are announced.

Conclusion

This study was carried out with the aim of revealing the views and suggestions of ELT prospective teachers on Interview for teacher selection and recruitment system in Turkey. The results of the study indicate that current Interview is an inefficacious evaluation method in measuring EFL prospective teachers' oral ability. Furthermore, it is an undeniable fact that oral ability in target language is a prerequisite for an ELT teacher. When considered this situation, assessing and evaluating an EFL prospective teachers' oral ability in their mother tongue sounds disturbing. The results of the present study proposes some key issues on the implementation of ELT prospective teachers' Interview. To illustrate, Interview should be implemented in the target language with the contribution of academicians at the universities. The implementation of the Interview in this way may change the prospective teachers' view with respect to its objectivity.

Another important point mentioned by the participants is that their anxiety about the implementation stages of Interview. This may be the result of the inadequacies on the conduction of Interview. As stated in the Section 5, by taking some precautions such as announcing the evaluation criteria in details after the results are announced and sending their detailed grading schemes to the exam takers will diminish their anxiety level. Although measuring ELT prospective teachers' oral ability via Interview is an important factor for selecting skilled and competent ones, there should be a range of measures for assessing oral abilities in a rational way. As a result, this study may contribute to the discussion of appropriate procedures or measures on the application of Interview.

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