

**Analyzing Washback Effect of SEPPPO\* on Prospective English Teachers**

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**Abstract**

*Problem Statement:* High-stakes examinations are critical turning points in the professional careers of student-teachers. Little is known; however, about the degree to which these examinations affect the educational practices of the student-teachers and their approach to their program. The present study attempts to analyze the washback effect of SEPPPO, a national high-stakes examination, on prospective English teachers.

*Purpose of Study:* This paper reports on a research study in which washback effect of "The Selection Examination for Professional Posts in Public Organizations" (SEPPPO) in Turkey. The findings may illuminate the practice of the authorities who may make a possible modification in this examination in the future.

*Methods:* In a mix-method design, the data were obtained from 164 student-teachers following a private SEPPPO course. A survey was administered to the participants to reveal certain social and economic effects of getting prepared for the examination. The data

gathered in interview sessions were utilized to provide a crystal clear portrait of the prospective teachers' experiences about the examination.

*Findings and Results:* The results revealed that The Selection Examination for Professional Posts in Public Organizations (SEPPPO) exerts negative and harmful effects not only on these student-teachers but also on educational faculties and families.

*Conclusions and Recommendations:* The present study suggests that SEPPPO has serious and negative effects on teacher candidates, on families who financially support them and finally on teacher education programs. The greatest limitation of the examination seems to be the validity since it does not assess any competences critical for English teachers. Necessary measures should be taken so as to modify the examination with the goal of exerting a positive washback effect.

*Keywords:* Washback effect, Student-teachers, SEPPPO

## **Introduction**

Examinations play an important role not only in the life of learners but also in practices and careers of teachers and educators. The reason is clear: Examinations are still the major tool of assessment in schools, employment, and career development. Therefore, “What is assessed becomes what is valued, which becomes what is taught” (McEwen, 1995, p. 42). In applied linguistics, washback refers to the influence of language testing on teaching and learning (Aldersen & Wall, 1993). It is also known by other names, such as backwash (Biggs, 1995, 1996), measurement-driven instruction (Popham, 1987), test impact (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Baker, 1991) and curriculum alignment (Brown & Hudson, 1998, Shephard, 1990).

Over the last two decades, washback effect has become a focus of interest among practitioners and researchers in that a great deal of research reports the critical role of washback in educative practices. Research into washback effect reveals at least two major mainstreams of studies. First mainstream relates to traditional and high-stakes tests, results and consequences of which are considered to have had mostly negative influences on the quality of education (Cheng, Watanebe, & Curtis, 2004; Madaus, & Kelleghan, 1992; Nolen, Haladyna, & Haas, 1992; Shephard, 1990). Second mainstream includes attempts in which specific tests have been amended so as to exert a positive influence on teaching and learning (Linn & Herman, 1997; Sanders, & Horn, 1995).

Turkish educational system offers many different high-stakes tests to the students who are constantly preparing for a specific examination to possess a better education in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. There are also those who graduated from universities with various degrees, including certain post-graduate diplomas, and are still studying for yet another high-stakes examination to be employed. Hence, washback effect of particular examinations that are offered in the country at any level of education should be analyzed empirically so that further modifications in these examinations may be made more successfully. Inferring from the studies carried out in various parts of the world (eg. Cheng, 2005), one can claim that these large-scale examinations must also have various educational, economic and social consequences in Turkey. We know that certain modifications are made in these examinations regularly. However, the modifications on the high-stakes exams in Turkey have not been supported by any research studies which concentrate on possible positive and negative washback effects of these tests that are offered to millions of students and employees.

In this respect, this study was conducted to evaluate the washback effect of SEPPPO, a high-stakes test that teachers need to take to be employed in a professional post in public organizations. The relevant body of literature provides some studies which may help gain insight on how a high-stakes test for teachers may influence pre-service education of prospective teachers. Nevertheless, more research studies should be carried out to measure the impact of teacher certification tests such as Praxis (USA) or SEPPPO (Turkey). These and similar studies may also provide invaluable insights for those who aim at designing a standardized test for teachers. From a broader perspective, the results of such studies may be so influential that we may even need to make some critical modifications in our understanding of test validity.

To investigate the effects of SEPPPO, which does not only assess language competences, the literature on washback effect was referred in this study. The reason why washback literature was addressed has two major reasons. First and foremost, this literature has been growing quite rapidly over the last two decades; thus, it presents many studies conducted in different contexts and cultures, making it indispensable to address in a study investigating the effects of a national high-stakes test on a group of learners. Second, because this study focuses on student-teachers of English language teaching (ELT) departments and of related fields (English/American literature and English linguistics programs), it may be critical to carry out a research that refers to both applied linguistics literature and testing studies in general education. This may allow us to blend what has been done so far in terms of the effects of a test on teacher education, whether by applied linguistics or general education literature.

### **Dynamics of Washback**

Tests are designed to, and are supposed to evaluate what is taught in a formal educational context. They are also utilized to choose some individuals among others for a specific job or for promotion. Whether it is an achievement or a proficiency test, washback effect emerges the moment learners and teachers shape their behaviors in parallel with the nature of the test to be offered during learning and teaching process. It also emerges when these examinations begin to influence social and economic life in a society. “Public examinations influence the attitudes, behaviors, and motivation of teachers, learners and parents, and, because examinations often come at the end of a course” (Davies, 1985, p. 98). While Davies (1995) points out the backward direction of washback, Messick (1996) defines the bidirectional nature of the washback as “the extent to which a test influences language teachers and learners to do things they would not necessarily otherwise do that promote or inhibit language learning” (p. 241). Wall and Alderson (1993) claim that tests can influence the classroom practices both negatively and positively.

If tests have such an influence on the study skills and habits of learners, then a modification in certain aspects of a test may change the approach of test-takers to the learning context and content, and accordingly this modification may help the educators create a positive washback. According to Messick (1996), “For optimal positive washback there should be little, if any, difference between activities involved in learning the language and activities involved in preparing for the test” (pp. 241–242). However, creating a positive washback is not an easy task that has certain procedures and steps which can be applied where and when necessary. The complexity of washback effect lies in the unique nature and dynamics of each educational system and society in which hundreds of different variables

play a part in shaping the expectancies of the learners and in their learning choices. “A poor test may be associated with positive effects and a good test with negative effects because of other things that are done or not done...” (Messick, 1996, p. 242). Therefore, the attempts of designing tests to create a positive washback effect on both learners and teachers are challenged by so many factors operating in social, economic, cultural, and institutional strata of a specific educational system.

Generally, considered to be a mechanical system detached from the learning and teaching process, tests have always been criticized by learners and teachers for their negative influence on education. This negative influence or negative washback is defined as the undesirable effect of a particular test on learning and teaching (Alderson & Wall, 1993). On the other hand, Pearson (1998) proposes that washback effect of a test will be negative if it does not adopt the course outcomes and employed learning principles. Similarly, Alderson and Wall (1993) also hold that negative washback effect can be observed in circumstances in which both learners and teachers do not want to learn and teach. Therefore, in addition to the validity and reliability concerns of the test designers, it seems likely that washback studies will lead test designers to consider whether the tests exert beneficial or detrimental washback effects. The truth is that while we still have limited knowledge on the dynamics of washback effect, it is commonly accepted that any kind of test, good or bad, may result in positive or negative washback effects (Cheng et al., 2004). Here this fact leads us to a critical question: should we modify our understanding of good tests by including washback effect as a criterion?

Inevitably, any discussion on washback may lead researchers to validity studies. The relevant studies present a vast amount of discussion on the issue that whether the

consequences of a test is and should be an integral part of a test's validity. Messick (1989) originally introduced the term *consequential validity* to address this issue as a part of construct validity. It refers to "the social consequences of testing are part of a broader, unified concept of test validity" (Taylor, 2005, p. 154). Later, Shepard (1993, 1997) broadened the definition by arguing that positive/negative and intended/unintended consequences of a test should be carefully investigated to evaluate its validity. Such studies take the discussion to a level where the impact of a test is investigated in not only learning and teaching context but also in a broader socioeconomic view. From this point of view, considering washback effect as a criterion of an effective test is an integral part of designing a valid test.

### **The Selection and Placement Examination (SEPPPO)**

SEPPPO is a national high-stakes test that is offered to graduates of secondary and tertiary programs who want to be assigned to a post in governmental institutions. The exam is the only way of getting appointed to a teaching position in primary and secondary schools of Ministry of National Education (MNE). The reason why governmental institutions are highly preferred by teachers is that personal rights provided by the government are quite better than many private schools. The test-takers are vast in population: 2,408,379 in 2009 and 3,254,000 in 2010 for all the fields and increasing every year with both new-comers and unsuccessful testees (ÖSYM, 2010). The test includes four major parts called general knowledge, general abilities, educational sciences and A-Group. Candidate teachers need to take general knowledge and general abilities, each of which include 60 multiple-choice questions, and the educational science test which includes 120 multiple-choice questions on the major fields of educational sciences such as developmental psychology (10 questions),

educational psychology (25 questions), assessment and evaluation (15 questions), program development and learning (35 questions) and counseling (15 questions). General knowledge test offers questions on Turkish national history, Turkish geography, contemporary issues and citizenship. As for general abilities test, teacher candidates answer questions on Turkish language and mathematics.

In addition to English language teachers graduated from education faculties, graduates of linguistics, American and English literature departments can take the exam if they hold a teaching pedagogy certificate obtained from various universities. However, none of these teacher candidates are offered any questions on English language teaching (ELT) methodology, linguistics or on any other relevant field of applied linguistics. They also do not need to take any English test that measures English language skills and competences. This brings about serious validity problems and possible washback effects, the nature and consequences of which are the major discussions of this study.

The number of English teachers who took SEPPPPO in 2009 was 10,556, including graduates of linguistics (188), English literature and culture (3,321) and American literature (188) programs. Among 6,652 graduates of ELT departments, about 6,000 constituted the graduates of Anadolu University Open Education Faculty in 2010 (ÖSYM, 2010). These numbers increase every year as the number of graduates increase, and required test grades for appointment are also in an increase tendency. To illustrate, among 10,556 test takers, 1596 were employed by MNE in full status and 378 were appointed to teaching positions in a contract base, which provides weaker rights in terms of both salary and personal rights. What is more, French and German language teachers, who are hardly appointed to a post in MNE, can take SEPPPPO to be employed as an English teacher if they have attended a certificate

course in which they are given 40 credits (560 hours) of general English lessons. Although ELT graduates have a priority rank in appointment, they need to compete with thousands of rivals to become an English teacher in MNE schools. In other words, although ELT graduates start the race quite a head of other “qualified” English teachers, the number of test-takers and the hard struggle to obtain a high score in SEPPPO make it difficult for ELT graduates to excel in the test. This picture is a dark one for the student-teachers<sup>1</sup> of the ELT programs and may possibly affect their approach to the program, to professors and even to the teaching profession.

Over the last decade, SEPPPO has been getting harder and harder to achieve for teachers. This has created a million-dollar SEPPPO sector in which thousands of English teachers attend courses in private institutions from 4 months to 12 months in the last year of their ELT program and spend quite a lot of money for the courses, books and for other expenses. There are also those who begin to take courses in private institutions by their third year in English teacher education program. Considering all these variables that are influential in student teachers’ thinking and motivation, it is vital to investigate how SEPPPO affects the dispositions and actions of student-teachers of ELT programs. This study aims at providing a clear portrait of the washback effect of SEPPPO on student-teachers of ELT, linguistics and English/American literature programs.

## **Method**

### **Context**

The present study developed from our interest in examining the effects of SEPPPO on student-teachers’ education in pre-service English language teaching programs. The study

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “Student-teacher” and “Prospective teacher” were used interchangeably.

conducted in the capital city of Turkey, Ankara, with a group of senior student-teachers of ELT, linguistics and English/American literature programs of nine universities located in Ankara in the academic year 2009-2010.

Student-teachers of ELT departments in Turkey are offered an undergraduate program in which they take courses on academic English skills, educational sciences, ELT methodology that form the majority of the program, and on literature and linguistics. The programs also offer one-year practicum during which student teachers both observe and teach in primary and secondary schools and attend their typical courses in their program. Therefore, the fourth year offers a loaded schedule with practicum and other courses. These ELT programs are practice-oriented, constructivist, regularly updated and quite challenging.

The private institutions specialized on SEPPPO is the second school of teacher candidates as they approach to the end of their programs. These institutions offer various programs designed for the needs, expectations and budget of student-teachers. There are also many student-teachers who start a SEPPPO course during their third year at university.

### *Participants*

One hundred and sixty-four volunteers took part in the present study. Their age ranged between 22 and 25 years. All of the participants were full-time undergraduate senior students in ELT programs, Linguistics or in American/English language and literature programs of nine different universities in Ankara. Twenty-seven of the participants were students of foundation universities. These foundation universities require a tuition fee between 5000\$ and 12000\$. Also all of the participants were following a private SEPPPO course during their last year in their faculty program. The present study was carried out

during this phase, and the questionnaire and the interviews were conducted in these private courses.

The participants study in programs that are radically different from each other and pay significantly different amounts of fees to their universities. Therefore, attempts made carefully to ensure the homogeneity within the group in terms of demographic variables and motivations of the student-teachers. In this respect, the results of this study should be interpreted with caution. The participants were introduced about the aim and the content of this research study. They were provided with a consent form in which they are informed about their rights.

### **Research Objectives**

The aims of this research study were to:

- investigate the possible effects of SEPPPO on the undergraduate education of prospective teachers that study in ELT and related programs (English/American literature and English linguistics programs).
- identify specific issues and areas on which SEPPPO may have negative, neutral, and positive washback effect on the thinking and actions of prospective teachers of ELT and related departments (English/American literature and English linguistics programs).

### **Data Collection Instruments and Procedure**

This is a mix-method study. The quantitative (a survey) aspect of the research is based on a questionnaire which was used to identify prospective teachers' background and various demographic features. Another part of the questionnaire offers 10 likert scale items about the attitudes and ideas of student-teachers concerning SEPPPO. As for the qualitative

aspect of the research, an interview was conducted with the participants to investigate the effects of SEPPPO on prospective teachers' education in their programs.

The questionnaire (Appendix B) consisted of 25 items and five parts which elicited information concerning: (a) prospective teachers' various demographic features such as age, gender, program of study and whether they study in a state or foundation university, monthly income, money and time spent for SEPPPO; (b) their attitudes and beliefs concerning SEPPPO, i.e., whether they believe SEPPPO has some positive and negative effects on their undergraduate years; (c) their ideas about the content and validity of the SEPPPO, i.e., whether SEPPPO offers question items that relate to their teacher education program. The questionnaire (Alpha coefficient = .83) was filled out by the participants only once.

To explore in greater depth the effect of SEPPPO on prospective-teachers' approach and actions during their faculty years, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the set of questions presented in Appendix A. This process was completed in six months between December 2009 and May 2010. Interviewees were facilitated to explicate their opinions and conditions that may be shaped by the effect of SEPPPO in the light of their educational routine in their last year of their university education.

Interview questions aims at gathering data concerning: (a) the negative, neutral and positive impacts of SEPPPO; (b) perceptions of prospective teachers about SEPPPO-whether they believe that it is a valid and a fair examination that evaluates their knowledge and skills on teaching English; (c) specific examples on how taking an SEPPPO course effects their studies at university; (d) their approach to courses and assignments in their programs in terms of the content of SEPPPO; (e) and how they shape their last year for SEPPPO.

### **Analyzing the Data**

To answer the research questions mentioned above, the prospective teachers' responses to questionnaire items were analyzed statistically using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and percentage. For the data obtained in the interviews, coding was accomplished through constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 101-116), a process of repeated sifting through the data to discern similarities and patterns of reference in interview transcripts. Analyses of these similarities and patterns established an evolving coding system for the categories. This repetitive process continued until a sense of unity and saturation of understanding the data was achieved. Also an independent researcher who holds a Ph.D. on applied linguistics analyzed the data in terms of thematic coding and confirmed the reliability with a 88%. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The Survey**

The analysis of students responds to the questionnaire revealed that the participating students were quite a homogeneous group in terms of their cultural background and motivations. They were all native speakers of Turkish and highly motivated to become an English teacher in a state primary or secondary school. Table 1 below presents the demographic variables.

Table 1

*Demographic features of participating prospective teachers*

Age	22 years old	23 years old	24 years old	25 years old
F / %	47 / 29%	82 / 50%	30 / 18%	5 / 3%
Gender	Male	Female		
F / %	39 / 24%	125 / 76%		
Field of Study	ELT	Linguistics	Ame/Eng Lang&Lit	
F / %	98 / 60%	17 / 10%	49 / 30%	
Type of University	State	Foundation (Private)		
F / %	137 / 84%	27 / 16%		
Monthly income	Less than 250\$	Between 200\$ and 500\$	More than 500\$	
F / %	116 / 71%	33 / 20%	15 / 9%	

As Table 1 illustrates, 129 (79%) of the 164 student-teachers were in the age range between 22-23, and 35 (21%) in the age range 24-25. As for the gender, 125 (76%) were female and 39 (24%) were male. In terms of field of study, 98 (60%) of the participants study in ELT programs and the rest 66 (40%) study in either linguistics or literature departments. While 137 (84%) of the participating student-teachers study at a state university, 27 (16%) enrolled to a program at a foundation university, which may explain the difference in the monthly incomes. Only 48 (29%) of the student-teachers receive a monthly income more than 250 dollars, which indicates this group of university students can hardly find adequate money to survive in the expensive living standards in Ankara.

The student-teachers were also asked a question in which they provided the amount of time they spent in their undergraduate program courses and in SEPPPO courses (Table 2). Another questionnaire item was about the amount of time they spent for the assignments and homework in their program as well as for the weekly self-study for SEPPPO. The

participants reported that they spent around 20 hours weekly for the courses in their programs while they dedicated around 22 hours for SEPPPO courses per week. This weekly hours refer to the time they spend in the classroom, either at faculty or in the private course. However, the amount of time they spent for studying the program courses and preparing for SEPPPO differed radically. Findings showed that the participating student-teachers allocated 78% of their weekly study-time to prepare for the SEPPPO exam and the remainder 22% percent of study-time was allocated for the courses in their program. Table 2 also displays the differences between the student-teachers of state and foundation universities.

Table 2

*Time spent for SEPPPO and undergraduate programs*

Time spent (weekly)	State Uni. N=137 Min-Max	Foundation Uni. N=27 Min-Max	Mean (M) N=164
Time allocated for the program courses	18 - 24	18 - 22	20.5
Time allocated for SEPPPO courses	16 - 30	16 - 28	22.5
Time spent for the program assignments	23 %	21%	22%
Time spent for SEPPPO preparation	77 %	79 %	78%

As for the money spent for the SEPPPO (Table 3), the participants reported some interesting data in the questionnaire. The student-teachers of the state universities (N=137) noted that they spent around 35% of their monthly income to SEPPPO and to related expenses such as catering, transportation or course materials. Considering that only 9% of this group of students had an income more than 500\$ a month (Table 1), this percentage of SEPPPO expenses is quite a heavy burden for them. Table 3 below shows the SEPPPO expenses of the student-teachers in detail. Student-teachers reported that the "Tuition fees of SEPPPO courses" were covered by their families, but the rest of the expenses were covered

from their monthly pocket money. The economic status of the student-teachers of state and foundation universities was also found to be quite different.

Table 3

*Money spent for SEPPPO and related expenses*

Types of Expenses	State Universities N=137	Foundation Universities N=27
Tuition fee of SEPPPO courses (Annual fee)	500\$ to 1500\$	600\$ to 1500\$
Additional monthly expenses	Around 85\$	Around 190\$
Percentage SEPPPO in monthly income	35 %	20 %

In the questionnaire, 10 likert scale questions were devoted to gather data on attitudes and beliefs concerning SEPPPO and presented in Table 4 and 5. The first six questionnaire items focus on the attitudes of student-teachers towards the exam (Table 4), the rest four items offers statements on the content and validity of the SEPPPO (Table 5).

As presented in Table 4, student-teachers were in a general accord with the idea that SEPPPO does not contribute to their courses in their program (Item 1 and 2); also the program courses are not directly related with the test content (Item 3 and 8). For the item 3, only 21% of the participants noted that faculty courses contribute to SEPPPO exam. Our further data revealed that this group of student-teachers study at ELT programs where students took many courses on general educational sciences, the contents of which are parallel with the test items offered in educational science part of SEPPPO. A similar finding can be observed in item 10 (19%). However, for the items that relate to the type of washback effect, which are item 4 (94%), item 5 (95%) and item 6 (97%), the participants unanimously agreed that SEPPPO exerts negative effects on their pre-service education.

Table 4

*Student-teachers approach to SEPPPO - Attitudes*

Item	Questionnaire items measuring the attitudes and beliefs concerning SEPPPO	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree or Strongly Disagree (%)
1	SEPPPO helps me focus on my courses at faculty more effectively.	-	7	93
2	Preparing for SEPPPO exam contributes to my faculty courses.	4	17	79
3	The courses I took in my program at faculty help me to get prepared for SEPPPO.	21	6	73
4	SEPPPO test negatively influences my performance in my program at faculty.	94	6	-
5	SEPPPO test positively influences my performance in my program at faculty.	-	5	95
6	SEPPPO test has no influence on my performance in my program at faculty.	-	3	97

Table 5 below displays the ideas of student-teachers about the content and the structure of SEPPPO. The greatest agreement in the questionnaire was on item 7 to which participants responded that SEPPPO test was not a valid test (98%). A similar respond was given to item 9 (SEPPPO is a valid test that measures field knowledge of candidate teachers.) with a 93% of agreement. They also believed that the content of the test was not relevant with their academic education (item 8, 86%), and that the educational courses they took at their program have little or no contribution to SEPPPO preparation (item 10, 76%). Again 19% of the participants who agreed that educational courses in their programs contributed to SEPPPO test were mostly the student-teachers of the ELT programs. Nevertheless, this data

did not significantly change the general agreement on the idea that SEPPPO exerted negative washback effects.

Table 5

*Student-teachers approach to SEPPPO - Ideas*

Item	Questionnaire items measuring the ideas about the content and validity of the SEPPPO	Agree or Strongly Agree (%)	No Opinion (%)	Disagree or Strongly Disagree (%)
7	SEPPPO is an effective test that will measure me as an English teacher candidate.	-	2	98
8	Content of SEPPPO course is quite relevant with my faculty courses.	11	3	86
9	SEPPPO is a valid test that measures field knowledge of candidate teachers.	-	7	93
10	Courses on general education and teaching in my program at faculty contributes to my preparation for SEPPPO	19	5	76

**The Interview**

The initial analysis of the participants' responses to the interview questions indicated that participants composed quite a homogeneous group. The findings of the interview were strongly parallel with the questionnaire items. Once again the participants mentioned negative and detrimental washback effects of the exam. This strong parallelism in the qualitative and quantitative data also strengthens the validity/reliability of the questionnaire and the trustworthiness of the interview findings.

All the students-teacher unanimously believed that SEPPPO examination was not a valid test in that it did not simply measure their field knowledge and teaching skills. This was the major argument of all participants: *“The exam does not evaluate our teaching*

*competences.*" All the responses to the interview questions revealed that SEPPPO exerted negative washback effects, which were pointed out as the limitations of the test, as follows:

*-- "I almost spent all of my time on preparing this exam [SEPPPO] in my last year at university. Honestly speaking, school is of secondary importance."*

*--"SEPPPO simply offers no questions on English language teaching. I cannot believe this is possible. How are they going to distinguish good teachers from the ordinary ones?"*

*--" Probably, I will obtain a high honor degree at faculty, but it seems I won't be able to get appointed. This is discouraging and quite annoying."*

*--"We are somehow forced to make a choice between doing MA degree and getting prepared for SEPPPO. ... Well, you cannot achieve both in a year. SEPPPO therefore is nothing but a burden. "*

*--"I really don't have any time to get prepared for my practicum teaching and assignments. This is a continuous source of stress and guilt."*

This result was similar to the problems mentioned in the studies in which the negative influence of high-stakes tests were discussed (Alderson, & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Cheng et al., 2004). Here it is important to note that negative washback effect is not only defined as the effect of the test itself but also known as possible the consequence of methodology the teacher adopts; that is, quality of teaching and learning context (Madaus & Kellaghan, 1992; Nolan, Haladyna, & Haas, 1992; Shepard, 1990). However, the results of the interview showed that quality of teaching was not influential in exerting a negative washback effect in this study.

### Conclusion

In the present study, the results revealed that SEPPPO exerts negative and harmful washback effects on the student-teachers. These negative/harmful effects identified in this specific context were: 1) the quantity and quality of time they spent for their faculty program is affected negatively; 2) their limited income is mostly allocated for the SEPPPO expenses; 3) their motivation toward becoming a teacher and their program is affected negatively; 4) they don't think SEPPPO is a trustworthy test that distinguishes effective teachers, which demotivates them in many ways and 5) those aiming to be accepted to a graduate program have little or no time for getting prepared for the academic exams conducted by universities. These findings can be categorized under certain themes. In terms of educational effects, the participants believed the exam have some serious validity problems. As for the social effects, the findings showed that SEPPPO is a burden for both families and student-teachers, and even for teacher education programs owing to the fact that senior student-teachers find it hard to engage in courses and teaching practicum effectively. Therefore, the negative effects of the exam are experienced by many different social groups, individuals and institutions, which support the previous literature such as Spolsky (1995) and Cheng (2005).

Turkey is trying hard to join the EU, and the country is motivated to realize this half-century objective. In educational arena, MNE is in cooperation with critical the EU institutions such as Eurydice and has already implemented "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (CEFR), which manifests language teaching policy of the union. In this respect, foreign language teacher education stands at a very critical point for the country. If Turkey is to teach English with CEFR, then the teachers should be prepared and even should be selected to the Ministry posts accordingly. In this respect, yet another

negative washback effect of SEPPPO can be identified as an implicit and a macro variable. This implicit negative effect critically jeopardizes the sincere attempts of the institutions and individuals that work hard to establish the standards of the EU criteria (Eurydice 2008, 2009) and adapt the current practices in the EU to ensure the membership.

The future research into washback effect of SEPPPO or of similar high-stakes examinations in Turkey should also investigate the possible solutions or the necessary modifications to be made on these examinations so that a positive effect may be exerted in the following years. The national and international objectives of the country are quite clear. In order to achieve these objectives, such solution-oriented studies may look into invaluable data that were presented in Eurydice studies in which all applications of the EU countries are explicitly presented (Eurydice 2008, 2009). Surely these studies and many others carried out in different countries will provide the decision-makers with an academically tuned compass.

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**Appendix A: Interview Questions**

1. Can you share your opinions about the effectiveness of SEPPPO exam? For instance does it have any negative/positive/neutral effect on you?
2. How does preparing for SEPPPO effect you/your life/your routine/your school? Can you give some specific examples?
3. Does SEPPPO an effective exam that evaluate your knowledge and skills on teaching English?
4. How does SEPPPO affect your approach to courses and assignments in your program?
5. Would you like to talk about your experiences in the SEPPPO course?



(amount of money)

(amount of money)

extra expenses such as stationary, catering and transportation, I spent \_\_\_\_\_ monthly, which is an expense only for SEPPPO

(amount of money)

course. Excluding the tuition fee, the total expenses of SEPPPO course is \_\_\_\_\_% of my monthly income as a student.

(calculate an accurate percent)

**D. QUESTIONNAIRE ON SEPPPO** – Please respond to items. Numbers show degree of agreement: 1 = strongly disagree, 3 = No opinion and 5 = Strongly agree

1	SEPPPO helps me focus on my courses at faculty more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Preparing for SEPPPO exam contributes to my faculty courses.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The courses I took in my program at faculty help me to get prepared for SEPPPO.	1	2	3	4	5
4	SEPPPO test negatively influences my performance in my program at faculty	1	2	3	4	5
5	SEPPPO test positively influences my performance in my program at faculty.	1	2	3	4	5
6	SEPPPO test has no influence on my performance in my program at faculty.	1	2	3	4	5

7	SEPPPO is an effective test that will measure me as an English teacher candidate.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Content of SEPPPO course is quite relevant with my faculty courses.	1	2	3	4	5
9	SEPPPO is a valid test that measures field knowledge of candidate teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Courses on general education and teaching in my program at faculty contributes to my preparation for SEPPPO	1	2	3	4	5

**E. OTHER** (Dear participant, your ideas are important for us. Please do not hesitate to share any thing about your SEPPPO process. You may use the back of the page.)

## **KPDS'nin Öğretmen Adayları Üzerindeki Ket Vurma**

### **Etkisinin Analizi**

#### **Özet**

Hayati önemi olan sınavlar öğretmen adaylarının kariyerlerinde önemli dönüm noktalarıdır. Ne var ki, bu sınavların öğretmen adaylarının çalışmaları ve eğitim gördükleri programa karşı yaklaşımlarını ne derece etkilediği hakkında çok az bilgiye sahibiz. Sınavların öğrenme ve öğretme üzerindeki etkisi ket vurma etkisi olarak tanımlanmaktadır ve bu etki olumlu, olumsuz veya nötr olabilir. Bu makalede Türkiye’de uygulanan “Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı’nın” (KPSS) ket vurma etkisi karma yöntemin uygulandığı bir araştırmada değerlendirilmektedir. Özel KPSS kursuna devam eden 164 öğretmen adayından toplanan veriler bu sınavın sadece öğretmen adayları üzerinde değil aynı zamanda eğitim fakülteleri ve aileler üzerinde olumsuz ve zararlı etkileri olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular ileride bu sınavda düzenlemeler yapması olası yetkililerin çalışmalarını aydınlatabilir.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* Ket vurma etkisi, öğretmen adayları, KPSS