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EFL Teachers' Perspectives on the Objectively Scored Parts of the Advanced Level English School-Leaving Examination

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the perspectives of Hungarian secondary school English teachers on the objectively scored components, namely the reading, use of English, and listening test papers, of the advanced level English school-leaving examination. Five EFL teachers from different regions in Hungary were interviewed. Data were collected through both online and face-to-face interviews and subsequently analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. Most of the criticism or dissatisfaction expressed by the interviewees were directed towards the pictures accompanying each task, certain task types (e.g., the True, False, Not mentioned type in the reading papers or the Error correction type in the use of English paper), and the scoring keys. However, the participants held positive views on other specific aspects of the examination, such as the content of source texts, some of the task types in the reading paper, and the word formation task in the use of English paper. Additionally, the format and design of the test papers were mostly viewed positively. These insights can inform future improvements in English language assessment, both within the context of the school-leaving examination and beyond, as well as curriculum development to better align with the interests and needs of Hungarian high school educators and students.

Keywords: Hungarian EFL school-leaving examination, EFL teachers, objectively scored tests, task types

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In 2005, the current two-level school leaving examination system was introduced in Hungary. The original foreign language school-leaving examination had an intermediate level at A2/B1 and an advanced level test at B2 level as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2020). In 2017 the system was revised, and the intermediate level was changed from A2/B1 to B1 level only. However, the CEFR level of the advanced examinations did not change. The school leaving examination requirements are always based on the National Core Curriculum (NCC). A new NCC was introduced in 2020 (Hungarian Government, 2020) and many subjects saw changes to their school-leaving examinations; however, the foreign language examinations largely retained their existing format based on the exam requirements.

The school-leaving examination has five obligatory subjects: Hungarian, History, Mathematics, Foreign Language, and a compulsory elective subject. Thus, all secondary school leavers have to take a foreign language exam (Hungarian Government, 2021), and while they can choose from a variety of languages, English is one of the most popular choices, with 19,690 students taking the B2 level exam last year (Ministry of Education, 2022). In addition to being a popular choice, the English school leaving examination bears importance for those test takers who achieve a minimum of 60% on both the written and oral components of the advanced level test, since they can be issued a B2 level, nationally accredited language examination certificate. If they scored between 40 and 59%, they can still be awarded a B1 level certificate.

As a summative form of assessment, the school-leaving examination serves as the conclusion of secondary education in Hungary. The advanced level examination also serves as an entrance examination, as it is required for admission to English major tertiary education programmes in Hungary, such as the English or American Studies BA or the Undivided Teacher Training Master Programme. If a student applies for the English or American Studies BA, they must have a B2-level EFL secondary school-leav-

ing certificate. However, students applying for the Teacher of English as a Foreign Language majors only need to obtain a B2 level certificate if they choose a non-foreign language second major or a foreign language major for candidates who wish to teach minor languages (e.g., Slovenian or Japanese). If students choose to major in another major language (e.g., German, French, Dutch, Italian, or Spanish) besides English, having a B2 level school-leaving certificate from any of their two selected languages is sufficient.

As a high-stakes assessment tool with a number of stakeholder groups, the school-leaving examination needs to be thoroughly validated. While the discussion about test validation and test design is often directed at experts in the field (Vogt & Tsagari, 2022), it is important not to overlook the views of students and teachers in ongoing discussions on test design and validation.

Theoretical Background

Teachers' Role in the Hungarian Education System

As mentioned previously, teachers constitute one of the stakeholder groups involved in assessment. Not only do they create their own tests for classroom assessment, but they often prepare students for various tests using a range of resources, including sample tests or available past exams. In addition to these preparatory activities, teachers also act as raters or examiners in the evaluation process, be it a test administered in the classroom or the school-leaving examination.

In Hungary, students from 9th grade until 12th grade spend three to four hours a week learning their first foreign language and three hours learning their second foreign language (Hungarian Government, 2020). However, this is not entirely uniform; although each school is required to develop their pedagogical programme based on the NCC, they can modify these programmes to a certain extent. Any such local pedagogical programme needs to be approved by the head of the local institution.

According to Act CXC (Hungarian Government, 2011), teachers are obliged to impart knowledge objectively in a versatile and varied approach.

They are also responsible for planning and adapting the classroom activities to their group. Additionally, they must assess students' work in the form of grades or verbal feedback in accordance with the requirements of the pedagogical programme. Furthermore, teachers can be tasked with additional responsibilities such as preparing students for exams, organizing competitions, or holding facultative classes and study rooms, to name a few. Teachers are also required to take part in continuous trainings and administrative work. In the case of the school-leaving examinations, the head of the school assigns teachers to serve as examiners and raters (Hungarian Government, 1997).

Potentially Problematic Areas of the Objectively Scored Tests

Objectively scored tests are those in which items are corrected using a scoring key, for example, multiple choice tests or true/false/not stated in the text items (Coombe, 2018). In the case of the school-leaving examination, the reading, use of English, and listening test papers each have their own scoring key with one or a set of acceptable solutions, and raters must evaluate students' answers based on these scoring keys. The following sections present previous research in relation to the objectively scored components of the school-leaving examination which have highlighted some potential issues with these test papers.

Test specifications

Einhorn (2009) argued that the test specifications drafted for the new school-leaving examinations in Hungary were not operationalized in the assessment tasks. She also noted that many language teachers did not understand the specifications and used the actual assessment tasks to infer the newly set performance standards. A questionnaire study (Vigh, 2012) on secondary school teachers of English, German, French and Italian from all types of secondary schools investigated the washback effect of the new school-leaving examination system on learning and teaching processes. The findings showed that teachers preferred the new examination system and modified their lesson plans and instructional content accordingly but did not implement notable methodological changes.

Operational Assessment Tasks

Tankó and Andréka (2021) investigated the use of English (UoE) sub-tests of the advanced school-leaving examination. Their findings showed that the majority of items were below B2 level. Moreover, the scoring keys were found to be incomplete and contained improbable or faulty answers. They also observed the selection of erroneous input (e.g., incoherent and/or incorrectly punctuated texts) and noted modifications made to the original text titles which could potentially hinder comprehension. Moreover, the UoE sub-tests designed for the autumn examination sessions were often of lower quality and featured more technical problems. The authors concluded that unless the remaining parts of the examination counterbalanced the weaknesses of the UoE sub-test, the examinations whose UoE sub-tests were analyzed misrepresented the true language ability of the test takers, which has negative implications for the tertiary educational institutions making admission decisions based on these scores.

Another study by Tankó and Andréka (2022) revealed that the reading test papers only measure a narrow range of the intended construct, contain poorly designed task types, and focus mainly on literal comprehension with excessive focus on local comprehension. There is also inconsistency in the amount of reading text in each paper, and the task context generated by the reading task instructions, images, and titles contribute to construct-irrelevant difficulty. One-quarter of the test task items contained C1 and C2 level lexis, and the input texts were sometimes at a substantially lower CEFR level than intended, leading to construct-irrelevant easiness or difficulty resulting from excessively challenging test task items. The low cut score set for the paper exacerbates these problems, which negatively affect secondary school leavers who are potential English major students.

A study on the development process of listening tasks (Király, 2012) revealed that the tasks were not tested beforehand, and the same team of nine people produced entire exams each year, with two of them responsible for the listening tasks. Authentic materials were used but were heavily edited. Another problem concerned the scoring key: Teachers complained that it was often incomplete and ambiguous, and that they did not receive information about the new task formats.

These previous studies have identified several weaknesses regarding the English school-leaving examination, including incomplete scoring keys, erroneous input texts, poorly designed assessment tasks, and construct-irrelevant difficulties. Given that teachers use the test specifications, and the test papers themselves in their classroom instruction to prepare students for the school-leaving examination, it is important from a test development perspective to gain direct insight from these educators regarding their user experience. Thus, the present study aims to answer the following research question:

What kind of perspectives do high school English teachers hold on the objectively scored components of the advanced level English school-leaving examination?

Research Methods

To answer the research question above, an exploratory qualitative study was designed in the form of a semi-structured interview. In this section, the participants, the research instrument, the data collection, and the data analyses will be discussed.

Participants

In total, five high school English teachers from Budapest ($n = 3$), Miskolc ($n = 1$) and Zalaegerszeg ($n = 1$), were selected through purposive and convenience sampling (Dörnyei, 2007) and interviewed. At the time of data collection, they were teaching in five different high schools. The sample consisted of three female and two male participants, and their ages ranged between 38 and 62 ($M = 50.8$, $SD = 9.6$). The participants had an average of 28 years of teaching experience ($SD = 7.3$), and 24 years of experience teaching English in high schools ($SD = 5.7$) (Table 1). All of the participants have university degrees and hold not only regular classes but also facultative classes. Additionally, they have been carrying out examination duties as examiners and raters on the advanced level English school-leaving examinations.

Table 1*Information on the Five Participants*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Years of teaching English	Years of teaching English in a high school
Paul	male	44	25	19
Hannah	female	38	17	17
Jane	female	62	36	29
Emily	female	55	30	26
Anthony	male	55	32	29

Research Instrument

In order to better understand high school English teachers' perspectives on the objectively scored components of the advanced level English school leaving examination, a semi-structured interview guide was selected. This format allows the interviewer to direct the interview with pre-set questions while providing the interviewee with the chance to share anything during the interview that they deem relevant to the topic (Howitt, 2016). The interview guide consisted of three parts: The first part consisted of questions about the interviewee's background; the second part focused on beliefs and experiences regarding the foreign language school leaving examination with an emphasis on the advanced level English school leaving examination; the last section addressed the objectively scored parts of the examination.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through a combination of online and face-to-face interviews. For three participants, the interviews were conducted online due to geographical distance, while the remaining two participants were interviewed in person. During the interview the participants were handed or shown some test papers and scoring keys from the 2017-2022 period. Among the sample papers were some which contained potentially problematic tasks (Tankó & Andréka, 2021, 2022), but the participants were not informed about this to avoid influencing their opinions. The interviews

were conducted in the mother tongue of the participants (i.e., Hungarian) to ensure clear communication and understanding between the interviewer and interviewee. The interviews lasted an average of 60 minutes and were recorded using a microphone, the Dictaphone program on a laptop, and a smartphone. The recordings were made only after receiving consent from the participants and were transcribed verbatim after the interviews.

Data Analysis

Following transcription, the interviews were coded, and thematic content analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2014) was employed to identify recurring themes and underlying patterns in the data. Given that the study aimed to explore the attitudes of teachers towards the objectively scored test papers, the codes were classified as (a) positive, (b) neutral, and (c) critical attitudes, as well as (d) participants' suggestions.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and discussion of the interview analysis. The findings are organized according to the test paper constituents rather than the codes and themes for the sake of clarity. Thus, the results are presented in the following order: general information, format of the test papers, accompanying pictures, task instructions, task types, source texts, and scoring keys.

General Information

Overall, the preliminary guidelines at the beginning of each test did not attract substantial criticism, and were regarded as clear, simple, and comprehensible. The teachers shared the opinion that students generally fail to read these instructions independently, necessitating continuous reminders from the instructors during classroom practice. One interviewee stated that these instructions were too lengthy. A few respondents disagreed with the directive requiring that replies be limited to the appropriate box, claiming that it makes correcting the papers much harder because the question of accepting correct answers outside of these boxes (i.e., next to the box in cas-

es that the answer cannot fit due to earlier corrections) often arises during rater meetings and discussions with the examination board leader.

Format

The format of the school-leaving examination papers was generally regarded as acceptable, with participants deeming them to be clear, well organized, and easy to follow. The layout of the tasks and source texts was commended by the interviewees as it eliminated the need for test-takers to frequently switch pages. However, several concerns about the formatting were expressed. Many respondents regarded the excessive amount of paper used in the exam as a disadvantage. Furthermore, since the documents are tightly bound together, the addition of a 15-digit identifying number at the top of each page was seen as superfluous.

The hapless student needs to write down this eight- or twelve-digit ID code twenty-five times. I think the students get tired of it by the time they get through writing it, and it's pretty meaningless, because they're [the test sheets] strung together, so there's little to no chance of it falling apart in a way that it's irrecoverable. It's a waste of time and you have to be very careful not to mess up a number. (Jane)

Another important stylistic concern was mentioned regarding the listening papers and the lack of boxes in which raters could mark their correction.

Shame on them, even after 10-15 years they have not been able to add the extra one column that they put in all the others, as if we don't mention this to them every year. Seriously... it is always there, where you should write and what scores and ticks. And here you write as you like it and wherever. It's baffling, I know this is a very small thing, but we really hate it. We really hate it... here too! [points to the test paper] What am I supposed to do now? I administered everything so nicely so far and now... you get it. I really hate this. (Hannah)

While they mentioned that the reason for this is probably related to editing and printing, and that adding the boxes could possibly disrupt the page

layout, the question remains as to why the test editors cannot format the tasks in a way that would align with the other two test papers and include the spaces for corrections.

Pictures

Previous research (Tankó & Andréka, 2021, 2022) has shown that the pictures on the test papers were problematic for a number of reasons, such as their quality, relevancy and usefulness. When asked about the visual aids on the exam papers, the respondents shared the opinion that they are a welcome addition that can help to break up the monotony of the test, lower anxiety, and activate schemata. In general, however, the teachers agreed that students frequently ignore the visuals since they are generally not relevant to the subject matter of the exam, and that they often advise the students to ignore the pictures during practice unless the picture is of good quality and can effectively introduce the topic.

As mentioned previously, the quality of the visual aids was the primary concern. Three responders bemoaned the photographs' poor resolution, small size, and black and white colour scheme. Another interviewee, while acknowledging that the pictures are usually there to help the students, noted that they can also mislead them.

Well, I think it's good that they're trying to help the student visually to let them know what the text will be about. But it can be misleading... I've encountered problems like "but it was on the picture...". And so that's what we're talking about... that it comes with the exam routine that if it is reading comprehension then you cannot take any other source into consideration, only the reading task's source text. This is a very hard learning process. It's our job to teach students this exam English. (Paul)

Although suggestions were made for improving these visuals, such as enlarging them and adding colour, the teachers also acknowledged that doing so would be expensive and inefficient. Additionally, it was noted that the photographs could be removed entirely as they do not actually enhance the exam tasks.

Unnecessary. And a waste, I mean waste of ink. I mean, I know that they want to spice up the text a bit, and that's how it normally works, but it's a final exam, so they're not going there to play or to have fun, they want to pass an exam. I'm not sure that's the way to entertain students. I don't think anyone's going to look at it. (Anthony)

Task Instructions

The instructions for the test tasks were generally well-received. The majority of the instructors expressed satisfaction with the instructions, finding them understandable and straightforward. They emphasized the value of strategically using italicization and underlining to attract attention to crucial features and aid student comprehension. A few responders did point out that the instructions were overly lengthy and that students often skipped over reading them completely. In the context of the listening exam paper, this issue was seen to be especially significant. One suggested solution for this issue was the introduction of clearer instructions.

They're very long, very long and it's exactly because they're so damn long that the kid ignores them and you have to "beat it" into them that they should not, because there can be a moment when a new type of task comes up in the exam, which we didn't know about [...], it should be shorter, I understand that again it is there so that there is something to refer to, but the student loses attention, especially the one who has practiced it, because if we are going to work on it, he knows that yes, ABC and that's all he will start with, because he will read only that, although you do not really need to know more than that, but sometimes you do. (Paul)

The teachers agreed that having the instructions in English was beneficial and that it is not the fault of the exam papers if the students chose not to read them. Additionally, they mentioned that pupils frequently fail to pay attention to and follow instructions despite the fact that teachers review them together with the students in class and continually repeat them.

Task Types

The test specifications for each part of the exam list a wide range of task types that can be included; however, there are only a handful of them that are used each year, with an occasional outlier. For example, in the past six years (2017-2023) there has been an error correction task at the end of each use of English test paper (Educational Department, 2023a). Similarly, there has been a true, false, not stated type task present in the reading papers over the same period. When asked about the task types, the interviewees focused mostly on these typically occurring task types in each part of the exam and generally agreed that these tasks function as intended. However, they did not mention the task types that are present in the test specifications but are not or seldom used in the tests. Lastly, the school leaving examination was criticized for not being very realistic or reflecting real-life language use; nevertheless, the instructors also admitted that such a test would be challenging to standardize.

Reading

When asked about the task types in the reading paper, the interviewees shared mixed views. They generally viewed the reading tasks as the least problematic and most effective. Although several of them stated that students frequently struggle with this activity, all of the participants commented positively on the summary exercise. The true, false, and not stated task type was also mentioned as challenging. While true or false activities often do not pose major problems for students, their difficulty can increase when the Not stated choice is added to the possible answers. This is because students often read too deeply into the content or have different viewpoints from those of the test designers. As a result, they find it difficult to distinguish between incorrect and unmentioned facts.

What I think is a hateful thing, and they don't like it either, and I explain it very badly, is the true, false, not stated. That they shouldn't want to be smarter than the task. So that the not stated is really not stated because it is not in it, and that I should not think that it says this, and a statement

implies this because you can infer it. And they suffer greatly from this because they obviously read in a way that they want to infer underlying content. (Hannah)

Lastly, the sentence part matching task was mentioned as potentially problematic as many of its items may be solved by utilizing cohesive devices and grammatical understanding, suggesting that it may not only test reading but also use of English.

Use of English

This section of the test paper received the most criticism from the participants. The views of the participants reflected that this part is outdated, “ill willed” (Jane), should not exist as a separate section, and should be removed as a whole.

I would take it out completely as it is from the exam. Why? Well, because I think that part of language knowledge is that I use it, so I’m not sure that a student should know how to be analytical language users. Maybe he doesn’t even know his mother tongue like that. (Paul)

This is the most problematic task. On the one hand, because let’s say it’s past its time. At the same time, I understand why it should be included, since theoretically if someone wants to continue his studies in a direction where they need grammar stuff like English studies, American studies, translation, interpretation, then you need to have this knowledge [...]. (Anthony)

Nonetheless, some positive aspects of the tasks were also mentioned. For example, the word formation task was mentioned as one that is easy to understand, and students can prepare for.

But otherwise, I don’t mind that it’s included. I think they make the most of it because there are a lot of different tasks. Because it comes from the text. Because it actually highlights things really well that the student should be able to deduce from contextual cues. [...] And that I already know what kind of problems they have, so I can prepare them. (Hannah)

Nevertheless, the majority of their remarks were unfavorable. The teachers shared the opinion that expecting the students to know the language analytically at the B2 level might be too demanding, and that these tasks require knowledge that the test takers do not use consciously while using the language.

Professionally speaking, it is again very unnatural that children have to think about things that they don't think about at all when using spontaneous language. They don't use these things, so it makes them feel unsure. It is a malicious, not language teaching friendly view, this intentional misleading and trying to trick them. (Jane)

There were other issues that were task-specific, such as the word formation tasks being overly demanding while only awarding one point, or the error correction task being awkwardly edited with line breaks that do not make sense to the reader. One participant suggested including a sentence transformation task, as it would be a more realistic task and something students frequently use to express themselves.

Listening

Even though attitudes towards the exercises were mostly neutral, the listening tasks did not garner much appreciation. Similar issues to those described in the reading papers arose in regard to the true, false, not mentioned type task, and the two words missing exercises also drew criticism for being unfair to pupils and testing precise hearing rather than listening comprehension. One participant stated that "this is a parrot task. If we only accept the words said, we only have to repeat things, even though there are a few thousand other possibilities for the same thing" (Anthony).

As for listening tasks in which students have to complete sentences with important missing information, the participants expressed frustration regarding the vagueness of the task. It was stated that oftentimes the instructions do not specify the amount of words that could be written as the answer, which can cause problems for the students as they might place importance on the same things that the task makers do. Some rarely oc-

curing task types, such as the matching pictures based on the audio task, were claimed to require more than just listening comprehension, involving integrated skills.

Source Texts

Regarding the source texts provided for each task in the different sections, the participants were mostly satisfied. They found the texts to be sufficiently long, and it was expressed that even if they are a bit longer than what is typically seen in language tests at the B2 level, students still have enough time to read them. The majority of teachers tended to agree that the texts were either at B2, occasionally B2+, or C1 level, with the listening texts displaying the most variety. According to their observations, the subjects covered in these texts are not very stimulating or interesting to the students, but from the viewpoint of the teachers, the selection of the source texts has been improving over the past few years. Nonetheless, some interviewees stated that the content might not always be appropriate for 16-18-year-old students.

Other remarks concerning the source texts were student- and test-paper-specific. Each participant agreed that the length of the texts was appropriate for the reading and use of English tasks, but many of them also noted that students' attention spans are generally shorter these days, that they often find reading boring, and that they frequently fail to concentrate on, realize, or understand the content of what they are reading. This is particularly true for the use of English tasks, during which students frequently concentrate on the gaps and skim the texts. In case of the listening, most participants mentioned the presence of music before and after each task. Opinions about it were divided, with some participants believing it to be beneficial for reducing the students' stress levels and making the tasks friendlier, while others viewed it as unnecessary, distracting, or even stress-inducing during the exam, when the students are already high-strung and hyper-focused on completing the task in front of them.

They are always playing music. And it's so controversial. Because on the one hand it eases the tension, so there's a niceness to it. On the other hand, when

the child is on pins and needles and the task should come already, he has his whole brain, eyes and ears focused on the task, and then instead of playing the task, they start playing music instead. Which has a certain charm and kindness to it, actually. So it's quite controversial, is it good or not? (Jane)

The level of noise and other distractions in the audio, as well as the authenticity of the recordings, were two additional contentious aspects of the source texts. According to several participants, the audios are excessively sterile, and they expressed preference for the inclusion of more natural noises.

...there's no such thing as a sterile environment. You're talking in a restaurant, in a nursery, in a pub, wherever. So, it's not like someone is going to speak into the microphone nicely pronouncing things. So, really let's record a conversation at a football match with a microphone, so that the background noise just seeps through, so that the conversation can still be heard. Because that's what you'll encounter in real life. (Paul)

Others expressed appreciation for the variety of accents featured in the exercises and reported greater satisfaction with the recording quality. The fact that the recordings are segmented during their second playback was cited as another advantage of the recordings.

Scoring Keys

Generally, the interviewees found the scoring keys to be clear and easy to work with. However, they raised concerns in three specific areas: (1) the scoring of open-ended questions, (2) judging spelling mistakes, and (3) score calculation. All of the participants expressed some level of frustration regarding the correction of open-ended questions, as the scoring key often does not include all possible acceptable solutions. In such cases, a scoring key modification can be issued. Such alterations of the possible solutions do not only occur with tasks such as gap filling which can have two to three acceptable answers, but also in the case of true, false, not stated tasks as well, which raises concerns.

It's hard to follow beyond a point, but that many times even in the true, false, not stated task a correction comes, in the reading and also in the listening. The sloppiness is astounding in my opinion. They can't afford that, that there is a task, and the child has to clearly decide, and then the exam board finds out that they can't decide either... (Hannah)

Since the teachers are tasked with correcting a large volume of tests in a short amount of time, such constant modifications can be frustrating. This increases their workload, as they need to revisit already-corrected papers multiple times. Although the scoring manual states that spelling errors "will only be taken into account if they obscure the clarity of the answer," one of the participants observed that this might be problematic.

However, you have to communicate this clearly to the correcting teachers and we are often not able to decide. How many spelling mistakes can be there that would still leave the answer recognizable? If someone, let's say you, have already made 3 spelling mistakes. That's a big problem. Something goes wrong or by accident the letter o was left out, but if there is one more mistake then it is not recognizable and then the problem arises that for a teacher everything is recognizable. So, if the student writes only the vowels, it is still recognizable, because that is how we have been socialized as teachers. (Emily)

Thus, the decision about how many spelling mistakes can be accepted is ultimately determined by the scoring committee heads, whose strictness may vary: one might only accept two spelling mistakes, while another may permit three or more.

Lastly, many comments were directed at the score conversion table included in the scoring key and the discrepancy between test scores and exam scores. Students earn test scores in each task which are later on converted to exam scores that determine their final grade. As an example, in the 2023 May exam, the use of English section had 35 test points and 30 exam points (Educational Department, 2023a). Since there are more test points than exam points, some test points are converted to the same exam

points. For example, the test scores of those who earned 24 or 25 test points are converted to 21 exam points. This raises questions of equity, as achieving a lower test score (24 test points in the previous case) can result in the same exam score (21 exams points) as achieving a higher test score (e.g., 25 test points). Additionally, the interviewees noted that this conversion can be sometimes disorienting and more labor-intensive than a straightforward scoring system without the need of conversion.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the attitudes of Hungarian high school EFL teachers towards the objectively scored components of the advanced level English school-leaving examination. In order to achieve this, qualitative interviews were carried out with five high school EFL teachers. The teachers displayed positive attitudes towards the content of the source texts and certain task types, such as the summary task in the reading paper and the word formation task in the use of English paper. They were also largely satisfied or neutral towards the general information given at the beginning of each test paper, the task instructions, the length of the source texts, and the diversity of accents in the audio recordings as well as their quality. Additionally, the format and design of the test papers were mostly viewed as suitable and were even praised for their layout. Nevertheless, some found the test papers too lengthy and wasteful in their paper use, and the compulsory identification number on top of each page was also criticized as redundant.

Based on the interviews, the most critical aspects of the exams were the accompanying pictures, the task types, and the scoring key. The pictures accompanying the tasks were deemed useless by the participants, as their size, quality, color, and often their imagery were largely seen as unhelpful the students or even misleading. Although the interviewees understood the intended use of these pictures, based on their own perceptions and their experiences with students they viewed them as unnecessary. The task types that garnered the most comments were those featured in the use of English and listening paper. The reading paper was generally

found to be less problematic, although questions arose as to whether the matching tasks in the test measured reading or use of English skills. The listening task paper also received some criticism in regard to the sentence completion task type in which no word limit was given and the gap filling task, in which students need to write in two words that they heard. The former was thought to cause difficulties during rating, while the latter was questioned regarding its fairness and usefulness as a listening comprehension task. The least favored task paper was the use of English, which was viewed as outdated and requiring analytical skills that the teachers considered to exceed the B2 level. Most teachers suggested either removing it entirely or at least replacing it with different task types, such as sentence transformation. Lastly, three issues were mentioned concerning the scoring keys. The first was the difference between exam scores and test scores, as well as how they were calculated. This discrepancy was deemed troublesome, potentially inequitable, and perplexing, as teachers do not receive information or training on why the scores are calculated in this manner. The other two problems were the incomplete list of solutions and the frequent modifications to the keys. While the teachers acknowledged that it is likely impossible to include every possible and acceptable solution for the gap filling type tasks, they called for increased rigor in designing the scoring keys to reduce the number of modifications and the subsequent rescore of test papers. Moreover, these frequent alterations often affect the task types where the solution should be definite, such as the true, false, not stated task, which point towards broader problems in assessment design given that these tests are considered objective.

The results of this study should be viewed in the light of its limitations, which concern both the number of participants and the interview guide. Due to time constraints and availability, only five out of seven participants could be included in this study. In addition, although the participants were presented with some of the test papers and scoring keys during the interviews, they mostly had to rely on their memory.

For future research, it would be beneficial to interview more teachers to gain an even more nuanced picture of their perspectives. Additionally, the selection of sample tests used during the interviews could be revised

to better represent the positive and negative aspects of these test papers. Finally, research on the identified issues from the students' perspective could also prove valuable in the design of the advanced level English school-leaving examination.

Note: This study was conducted as a pilot study for the research project (K 142536) financed by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA).

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Appendix

Interjú protokoll

Az interjú célja, hogy többet megtudjunk az emelt szintű angol érettségi vizsga objektíven értékelt részeiről (Olvasásértés, Nyelvhelyesség, Hallásértés) a középiskolai angoltanárok tapasztalatai és véleménye segítségével. Fel fogok tenni néhány kérdést, és szeretném, ha a feladatokkal kapcsolatos, pl. tanórai felhasználásuk vagy az érettségi vizsga felkészítés során gyűjtött tapasztalatai alapján válaszolna rájuk. Kérem, gondolatait ossza meg nyíltan és őszintén, ugyanis azok segíteni fognak nekem a kutatási kérdéseim megválaszolásában, és a feladatfejlesztési munka minőségét javíthatják.

A kérdések nyílt végűek, és nincsenek helyes vagy helytelen válaszok. Bármikor abbahagyhatja az interjút, és nem kell válaszolnia olyan kérdésekre, amelyek kényelmetlenül érintik. Szeretném biztosítani Önt arról, hogy ez az interjú bizalmas, és az Ön személyazonossága névtelen marad, ezért nyugodtan válaszoljon a kérdésekre.

Az interjú körülbelül 40 percig fog tartani. Nagyra értékelem önkéntes részvételét a kutatásomban, és szeretném megköszönni, hogy időt szakított rám. Az adatok elemzése és a jobb adatminőség érdekében az Ön előzetes beleegyezésével az interjút rögzítem.

Dátum:

Interjúztató:

Formátum: Személyes / Online

Interjú kezdte:

Interjú vége:

Interjúkérdések:

A. Bevezető kérdések

Megerősítené, hogy nem bánja, ha az interjút rögzítem? / Beleegyezik, hogy az interjút rögzítsem?

1. Hány éves?
2. Milyen (tanári) végzettsége van?
3. Mióta tanít angol nyelvet?
 - Mióta tanít angol nyelvet középiskolában?
4. Tanít más tantárgyat is az angolon kívül?
 - Mióta tanítja ezt/ezeket a tantárgy(akat)?
5. Tanít angol fakultációs órákat?
 - Heti hányszor?
 - Melyik évfolyamoknak?
 - Mióta?
6. Szokott érettségiztetni?
 - Milyen szint(ek)en?
 - Mióta?
 - Mennyire ismeri az emelt szintű angol érettségi tartalmát és formátumát?
 - Érettségiztetés előtt hogyan frissíti ismereteit az emelt szintű angol érettségiről?

B. Érettségihez kapcsolódó kérdések: A következő részben az emelt szintű érettségivel kapcsolatban fogok feltenni pár kérdést.

7. Véleménye szerint melyek az angol emelt szintű érettségi vizsga erősségei és gyengéi?
 - Ön szerint ezek hogyan befolyásolhatják a diákok nyelvtanulásának kimenetelét, eredményességét?
8. Ön szerint, milyen a tesztel kapcsolatos nehézségekbe ütköznek a diákok az emelt szintű érettségi felkészülés közben? Ilyen esetekben mit tesz, hogy segítse a diákokat?

9. A nyelvtanári karriere során tapasztalt-e bármilyen változást vagy trendet a diákok hozzáállásában az emelt szintű angol érettségi vizsgához, különösképpen az elmúlt 4-5 év során?

Mesélne erről bővebben?

10. A nyelvtanári karriere során tapasztalt-e bármilyen változást vagy trendet a tanárok hozzáállásában az emelt szintű angol érettségi vizsgához, különösképpen az új két szintű érettségivel kapcsolatban?

Mesélne erről bővebben?

C: Az egyes részvizsgákhoz kapcsolódó kérdések: A következő részben az emelt szintű angol érettségivel, pontosabban az olvasott szöveg értése, nyelvhelyesség, és hallásértés feladatlapokkal kapcsolatban fogok feltenni pár kérdést.

11. Mi a véleménye az Olvasott szöveg értése feladatlapról?

a) Mit gondol a feladatlapon a vizsgázóknak adott tájékoztató információkról?

b) Mit gondol a feladatlap formátumáról/kinézetéről?

c) Mit gondol a feladat típusokról?

d) Mit gondol a feladatok instrukcióiról?

- Mennyire érthetőek az instrukciók a diákok számára?

- Tapasztalatai szerint hogyan használják a diákok az instrukciókat?

e) Mi a véleménye a feladathoz tartozó grafikákról?

- Ön szerint mi a szerepe a grafikáknak ebben a feladat típusban?

- Tapasztalatai szerint a diákok mennyire figyelnek oda a grafikákra?

Hogyan használják azokat?

- Hogyan lehetne az instrukciókon javítani, hogy a diákokat jobban segítsék?

- Van bármilyen egyéb instrukciókkal kapcsolatos észrevétele?

f) Mit gondol a feladat megoldásához elolvasandó szövegekről?

- Mi a véleménye a szövegek tartalmáról?

- Mi a véleménye a szövegek nehézségi szintjéről?

- Mi a véleménye a szövegek terjedelméről?

g) Milyen tapasztalatai vannak a javítási-értékelési útmutatóval kapcsolatban? Milyen az útmutatóval dolgozni?

- Mi segít?
- Mi okoz nehézségeket?
- Hogyan lehetne az útmutatót javítani, hogy az értékelő tanárok munkáját segítse?

12. Mi a véleménye az Nyelvhelyesség feladatlapról?

- a) Mit gondol a feladatlapon a vizsgázóknak adott tájékoztató információkról?
- b) Mit gondol a feladatlap formátumáról/kinézetéről?
- c) Mit gondol a feladat típusokról?
- d) Mit gondol a feladatok instrukcióiról?
 - Mennyire érthetőek az instrukciók a diákok számára?
 - Tapasztalatai szerint hogyan használják a diákok az instrukciókat?
- e) Mi a véleménye a feladathoz tartozó grafikákról?
 - Ön szerint mi a szerepe a grafikáknak ebben a feladat típusban?
 - Tapasztalatai szerint a diákok mennyire figyelnek oda a grafikákra? Hogyan használják azokat?
 - Hogyan lehetne az instrukciókon javítani, hogy a diákokat jobban segítsék?
 - Van bármilyen egyéb instrukciókkal kapcsolatos észrevétele?
- f) Mit gondol a feladat megoldásához elolvasandó szövegekről?
 - Mi a véleménye a szövegek tartalmáról?
 - Mi a véleménye a szövegek nehézségi szintjéről?
 - Mi a véleménye a szövegek terjedelméről?
- g) Milyen tapasztalatai vannak a javítási-értékelési útmutatóval kapcsolatban? Milyen az útmutatóval dolgozni?
 - Mi segít?
 - Mi okoz nehézségeket?
 - Hogyan lehetne az útmutatót javítani, hogy az értékelő tanárok munkáját segítse?

13. Mi a véleménye az Hallásértésértés feladatlapról?

- a) Mit gondol a feladatlapon a vizsgázóknak adott tájékoztató információkról?
- b) Mit gondol a feladatlap formátumáról/kinézetéről?
- c) Mit gondol a feladat típusokról?

- d) Mit gondol a feladatok instrukcióiról?
- Mennyire érthetőek az instrukciók a diákok számára?
 - Tapasztalatai szerint hogyan használják a diákok az instrukciókat?
- e) Mi a véleménye a feladathoz tartozó grafikákról?
- Ön szerint mi a szerepe a grafikáknak ebben a feladat típusban?
 - Tapasztalatai szerint a diákok mennyire figyelnek oda a grafikákra? Hogyan használják azokat?
 - Hogyan lehetne az instrukciókon javítani, hogy a diákokat jobban segítsék?
 - Van bármilyen egyéb instrukciókkal kapcsolatos észrevétele?
- f) Mit gondol a feladathoz tartozó hallott szövegekről?
- Mi a véleménye a szövegek tartalmáról?
 - Mi a véleménye a szövegek nehézségi szintjéről?
 - Mi a véleménye a szövegek terjedelméről?
 - Mit gondol a felvételek minőségéről?
 - Van bármilyen egyéb szövegekkel kapcsolatos észrevétele?
- g) Milyen tapasztalatai vannak a javítási-értékelési útmutatóval kapcsolatban? Milyen az útmutatóval dolgozni?
- Mi segít?
 - Mi okoz nehézségeket?
 - Hogyan lehetne az útmutatót javítani, hogy az értékelő tanárok munkáját segítse?

Van még valami, amit szeretne megemlíteni vagy kérdezni, mielőtt befejezzük az interjút? Köszönöm szépen, hogy részt vett a kutatásban. Ha érdeklik a kutatási eredményeink, elküldhetjük az Ön e-mail címére.