

## STAKEHOLDERS' EXPECTATIONS AND DEMANDS FROM TESOL GRADUATES IN THE XXI CENTURY

Ashim A.A., Ayazbay T.A., Tursynbaeva M.B.

*Suleyman Demirel University, Kaskelen, e-mail: ashimaltynay@gmail.com, torgyn.ayazbai@gmail.com, tursynbayeva.mb@gmail.com*

As English language expands across the world, quality English teachers are increasingly needed. The model of the good English teacher is still in the process of formulation because the requirements for target language teaching changes time by time. Nowadays, most fresh TESOL graduates are not acknowledged about expectations and demands that are expected by stakeholders. This study attempted to identify stakeholders', specifically school vice principals, in-service teachers and school children, expectations and demands of TESOL graduates in the 21st century. As well, practicing English language teachers' perceptions about stakeholders' expectations and demands were investigated. A written interview and survey were used to discover stakeholders' perception regarding the personal and professional characteristics that English language teachers need to obtain. Overall, four vice principals and 15 in-service teachers were interviewed, whereas 84 students participated in an online survey. The qualitative method was used in order to collect in-depth information from participants via written interview and survey tools. According to the results, the remarkable findings were that most of the stakeholders expect from teachers to have minimum three years of work experience and school administration mostly seek candidates who have IELTS, TESOL and CELTA certificates, as well the letters of recommendation are required. As a result, the study may aid to improve the quality of teacher preparation courses, specifically it will bring benefit for administration to develop the proper curriculum for future graduates.

**Keywords:** TESOL, EFL, ESL, fresh graduates, stakeholders, in-service teachers

The popularity and relevance of the English language is enormous. Despite the fact that English is not an official language in many countries, the majority of people around the world apply it in various spheres such as economics, international relations and education. Thus, it proves the significance of this language in the global arena including Kazakhstan, where English is taught as a compulsory course in many schools, vocational schools and universities. Learning a target language is considered as a key to success for the local population. In order to meet the learner's desires, they are in need of competent TESOL professionals. TESOL stands for teaching English to speakers of other languages that provides the base for teachers to educate in both non-native English countries and within English speaking countries [1]. However, it is noticeable that the following program might be challenging as it includes different paths of teaching English. The demand for high-quality education in the world produced increases in the standards of TESOL teachers. Even though the program TESOL was established merely three decades ago, scholars who hold graduate and undergraduate degrees in this major are increasing rapidly. Before considering what is expected and demanded from TESOL graduates, the meaning of "TESOL professional" should be determined. It is defined as the one who is aware of recent developments by attending different conferences, reading journals and associating with professionals in the English Language Teaching field [2].

The term stakeholder has been established in society for some time now. However, there are still some people who are not able to under-

stand the genuine meaning of this term. According to Hawrysz and Maj, stakeholders are the individuals who are related to an organization to the point when they might succeed or fail as a result of the organization's performance [3]. In the following study they will be principal and vice principals. Considering the fact that the performance of the school depends on the employees, in the face of teacher graduates, it is important for them to have their employees meet their demands and expectations [4].

By the growth of the number of different types of schools and language centers, the stakeholder's expectations and demands are becoming higher. There are several qualifications that are required from English language teachers (IELTS, TOEFL or CELTA certification), including the organization of extracurricular activities and intercultural experience [5]. Specifically, the first one constitutes coordination of social student clubs for the purpose of entertainment and personal growth. For instance, TESOL teachers may organize "Spelling Bee" contests, debate tournaments and drama clubs. Sometimes, a few international schools publish their monthly magazines whose editorial responsibilities are in the hands of English Language Teachers [6]. While intercultural experience in contemporary handbooks are considered as the fifth skill that ought to be taught along with speaking, writing, listening and reading. Thus, it involves communication and cooperation with multicultural groups with either work experience abroad.

### Research objectives

The main objective of this research is to investigate stakeholders' expectations and

demands from TESOL graduates in the 21st century. Moreover, the paper will collect data about practicing English language teachers' opinion and knowledge regarding the stakeholders' requirements.

The findings of the research paper will provide a better understanding of the after university career path for prospective English language teachers in private educational organizations and state schools in Kazakhstan. The data and results collected from the research will be helpful for TESOL graduates to be aware of what is expected from them while applying for a job. As the study may aid to improve the quality of teacher preparation courses, specifically it will bring benefit for administration to develop the proper curriculum for future graduates. Despite the fact that the educational system is improving over time, there is a constant need to adapt the traits of teachers in line with Kazakhstani standards.

### Methodology

The main aim of this mixed research, qualitative and quantitative, was to identify demands and expectations of stakeholders towards practicing TESOL teachers. Since the quantitative study attempted to identify expectations and demands from TESOL graduates, therefore, the data was collected among school children. The format of the survey included both open ended and close ended questions. The numerical data coded and grouped in accordance with frequency of responses.

Primary data was collected through the written interview and through an online survey. Basically, there are two main categories of stakeholders: vice principals and pupils. For the first type a written interview was conducted that included questions regarding the headhunting process as well as teaching approaches they apply. The second type of stakeholders, pupils, responded to the survey in order to identify main qualities which they expect from their teachers. Most of the questions concern the teacher's ability to manage the lesson, establish a warm atmosphere and improve students' intercultural competence. The last category of participants were practicing teachers who work in different educational organizations. In the same manner with vice principals, teachers received interview questions via Word documents and assigned three days to fulfill them.

The participants of the written interview were four vice principals from various educational organizations, including both male and female with different cultural backgrounds. Distinctive factor that can contribute to research is

the length of residence in a vice principal position, as following interviewees range from one to twenty years of experience in school management. As well, the level of obtained higher education is moderately the same, only one participant has a master's degree while other three vice principals have bachelor's degrees. The next category of participants are the school students who are the main part of the quantitative part of the study. Overall, there are 84 students both from public and private schools. Based on the demographic information 49 students are between the age of 15-18, and 34 students are at 11-14 years, whereas only one respondent is between 6-10 years old. Specifically, they have different first languages, and English language proficiency level is derived from elementary to upper intermediate levels. Furthermore, the practicing teachers' total sum is 15, including 13 female and two male teachers, age variation is between 20-50 years but most of them are around 20-30. English language is considered as their second and third language.

### Findings and Analysis

Findings are organized by dividing the responses of participants to vice-principals, in-service teachers and school students. Responses of the vice-principals focus on various aspects such as the recruitment process and essential skills that they look for from teachers. In the same vein to ensure data triangulation, answers of teachers were compared to the vice-principals.

Majority of the stakeholders (75%) stated that during the recruitment process, it is obligatory that candidates' should have a minimum 3 years of work experience in the related area. Another 25% of them believe that teaching experience is not required and language proficiency is needed. Furthermore, the 25% mentioned that in order to gain some experience at least seven years required, undoubtedly, it may differ from person to person. However, in comparison to stakeholders the majority of teachers (67%) responded as it was not required, while the rest of the interviewees (33.3%) were in need to have it, but with a different number of years of experience. Teachers were asked to have an experience with the length of three, two and one years. Exception was used for the teacher who obtained a master's degree level. This participant was not required to have teaching experience. Considering the requirements of GPA and transcript 75% of the participants responded that GPA is not being asked and it is not considered as a main criteria of successful recruitment. Moreover, they claim

that the GPA is not an indicator of competency in the teaching field, as the profession directly relates to behaviour and personal characteristics. Meanwhile, 25 % said that it is necessary during the selection process.

Another question was connected with the types of qualifications and language proficiency certificates that are necessary for teachers to get a job (IELTS, TOEFL, TKT, CELTA, DELTA, TESOL, etc.). In this question, the answers slightly differ from each other since 25 % of the stakeholders stated that IELTS/TOEFL and TKT qualifications and language proficiency certificates are required, whereas another 25 % claimed that TESOL, IELTS and TKT results are necessary. The other 25 % noted that TEFL and TESOL certificates are essential to start teaching English as a Foreign Language. Furthermore, CELTA, DELTA and other qualifications should be acquired so that one may go deeper in further training. The last 25 % highlighted that the only diploma (university degree) is needed. On the other hand, the IELTS certificate was one of the most popular certificates to be asked among teachers, as 60 % were in need of it. Whereas, TKT and CELTA certificates took second place, being asked by 13 % stakeholders. The rest 33 % were not obligated to provide any of these certificates.

In case of approaches and methodologies that are expected from a candidate to teach English (PBL, CLT, CLIL, etc.) answers differ entirely, hence 25 % of the respondents stated that teachers can apply various methodologies according to their characters and abilities. Furthermore, if teachers are successful at classroom management and achieve good communication with the students and accomplish what the goal of the lesson it is not significant what methodology they apply while teaching. Meanwhile, another 25 % of the participants mentioned that prospective teachers should apply different approaches such as the “Direct Method”, “Total Physical Response”, “Communicative Language Teaching” and “Task-based Language Learning” approaches and methodologies. But the other 25 % stated that candidates should mostly practice CLIL methodology in teaching English Language. The last 25 % of the stakeholders mentioned that teachers should teach according to the new taught module, however, the explanation of the statement is not provided in the answer. Despite that, 60 % of teachers answered that they were required to present a lesson to prove their proficiency. The criteria for all teachers were mainly to make it understandable for students

and creative. The remaining 40 % of teachers were not asked to present any type of lesson.

Finally, all of the stakeholders agreed that basic ICT skills are necessary, specifically the knowledge of Microsoft Word, Powerpoint and Excel programs. Moreover, one of them highlighted that prospective teachers should be able to create engaging videos on different topics. Regarding Emotional Intelligence (EI) 75 % of the stakeholders considered EI as a crucial aspect in the candidate selection process. Among them, one participant claims that they observe a candidate during the internship program. However, another 25 % mentioned that she/he does not consider this criterion, but in the near future it is quite possible. Vice principals of educational organizations shared with their insights on the preferable skills of the candidates and the procedure of recruiting the teaching staff.

Accordingly, 75 % of the respondents consider the recommendation letter as an important criterion that should be presented during the selection process, as it provides reliable information about candidates' professional and personal characteristics to some extent. On the contrary, 25 % of stakeholders assert that the recommendation letter is not required. While considering personal qualities, the ability to develop relationships with their students and parents is highlighted as the most important feature that teachers should have. Following that, personal characteristics as a responsibility, patience, empathy and kindness are required. Considering professional characteristics, knowledge of learners, dedication to teaching and engaging students in learning are recognized as significant aspects. Moreover, 75 % of the stakeholders claimed that intercultural experience is essential as it fosters intercultural learning referring to practical knowledge (attitudes, skills) of the differences and similarities between cultures. Besides, one suggests that internship programs such as the AIESEC program would be a big experience for a candidate. Despite this, 25 % of the participants believe that intercultural experience is not much needed. Majority of vice-principals noted that 75 % of the participants said that candidates search by themselves for a position. However, 25 % mentioned that they look for prospective teachers via websites and acquaintances.

Following section provides the responses of the in-service English language teachers for the interviews and survey. TESOL teachers commented on the personal qualities and skills required while applying for a job. There were various answers to the question about personal

qualities and skills. Nevertheless, being “communicative (40%), hard-working (20%) responsible (26.6%)” were the prevailing ones. Moreover, these qualities were less mentioned: open-mindedness, leadership, empathy, flexibility, diligence, being easy-going and sociable (13.4%). Considering the social and extracurricular activities 87% of teachers were obliged to arrange an activity with the attendance of students. Most of the activities had to be related to English language. After school activities like debates (40%) were prevailing among teachers. There were also activities which were not required to be conducted in English such as sport activities, city excursions that were aimed for teachers to get along with students. While 13% of teachers were not obliged to conduct extracurricular activities.

In relation to the interview the main challenges faced by the novice teachers were:

- balancing diverse learning needs
- mismatch of lesson plan and its implementation
- assessment
- application of active learning (organizing group work, engaging with material)
- performance pressure from school administrators
- time management
- adapting to each learner’s psychological characteristics

Additionally, QAC claimed, “I wish I was more relaxed and less of a worrier because I used to spend my free time at night or the weekends preparing and thinking about my work and it was toxic. It is essential that teachers also know how to separate work and personal life”.

There are four open ended questions those asked school children regarding their perception of English language teachers where students listed essential personal and professional qualities which TESOL teachers need to have. Professional Qualities: engaging into the lesson, speaks only English, should speak English like a native, good time-management skills, does not put too much pressure on students. In contrast, personal qualities: patience, building rapport, sense of humour, discipline, a man of integrity.

### Conclusion

The primary purpose of this thesis was to identify expectations and demands of stakeholders from TESOL graduates in the 21st century. The first research question concerned the demands that vice principals of different educational organizations require from TESOL

graduates, therefore professional and personal characteristics of English language teachers are going to be discussed. Then, according to the second research question, expectations and demands of stakeholders were considered from the English language teachers perspectives.

Remarkably, some of the stakeholders and teachers stated that certificates such as TKT, TESOL, CELTA and TEFL should be acquired by the time candidates apply for a job position. However, fresh graduates may not have a clear view and understanding about these qualifications as during the university studies they are not provided. As well, the high price of those certificates could cause issues in their accessibility. Other results indicated that while considering professional characteristics, almost all of the stakeholders require recommendation letters from candidates during the selection process. It is considered as an essential criterion as it provides reliable information about candidates’ professional and personal characteristics to some extent. Another quality that is demanded from all of the stakeholders is an intercultural experience, as it fosters intercultural learning referring to practical knowledge (attitudes, skills) of the differences and similarities between cultures. Furthermore, according to a stakeholders questionnaire, the majority of the vice principals claim that three years of work experience is asked from a candidate. However, it complicates the employment process for the TESOL graduates because after the graduation they did not obtain any certified teaching experience, except for the short term internships. While considering personal qualities, the ability to develop relationships with their students and parents is highlighted as the most important feature that teachers should have. It clearly demonstrates that the ability to control emotions (EI) is one of the necessary skills that teachers should obtain, as all stakeholders agreed that it is a crucial aspect in one’s personality.

According to the answers given by the practicing teachers, the importance of the IELTS certificate while being hired can be witnessed. The majority of participants, who participated in the questionnaire, admitted that the possession of this international certificate is vital to demonstrate one’s language proficiency to the administration of the educational organisation you are applying for. It demonstrates that the stakeholders of today’s society find the IELTS certificate reliable while choosing a proper candidate for a position. Another essential aspect that needs to be considered for a teacher while requesting for a job position is

to make sure they have qualities such as being communicative, responsible and having EI ability. With the help of the written interview it was discovered that qualities mentioned above were the most required ones. Finally, in-service teachers recommend that in order to keep the passion in your profession there should be a clear balance between work and personal life. As if the teacher does not follow it, they might be exhausted in a short time span.

In order to reach the data triangulation school students' responses were used. According to questionnaire results, the majority of students seek good teaching skills and a high level of English language fluency in their teachers. In addition to this, pupils prefer teachers speaking only in the target language during the lesson. Considering the personal qualities, the majority of students expect patience and ability to establish warm relationships from their educators. Along with integrity, students appreciate when tutors are considerate and entertaining.

In conclusion, it can be noticed that the results' indications of the stakeholders and teachers do not correlate partially in means of the requirements that stakeholder demand and teachers' answers according to these criteria. It might be the result of the fact that only from four educational organizations both stakeholders and teachers could be interviewed. However, ten other teachers' stakeholders were unavailable to contact.

According to results, the first half of the stakeholders require an IELTS certificate but the demands may vary annually. Analyzing teachers' responses, most of them stated that the IELTS was required while applying for a job, meanwhile a few of them claimed that it was not necessary. While considering personal characteristics, it was evident that students and stakeholders mostly seek EI(emotional intel-

ligence) ability from TESOL teachers, specifically in questionnaire school children several times noted that their teachers lack empathy and patience. For the future studies, special care should be taken to ensure that respondents give complete and accurate information about each question. This could be accomplished by accurate and expanded explanation of the research purposes and the background information.

If the favorable conditions are provided, it would be perfect to have sessions with stakeholders, teachers and students several times in order to increase the validity and reliability scale. Considering the problem of inability to contact stakeholders, to fix this obstacle, the help from local authorities and university administration could be requested.

### References

1. Liyanage I., Walker T., Parlo Singh. TESOL professional Standards in the "Asian Century": Dilemmas facing Australian TESOL Teacher Education. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. 2014. vol. 35. no. 4. P. 485–497. DOI: 10.1080/02188791.2013.876388. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02188791.2013.876388>.
2. Lorimer C., Schulte J. Reimagining TESOL Professionalism: The Graduate Student Perspective. *The CATESOL Journal*. 2012. vol. 23. no. 1. P. 31–44. Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1112031>.
3. Hawrysz L., Maj J. Identification of Stakeholders of Public Interest Organizations. *Sustainability*. 2017. vol. 9. P. 1–13. DOI: 10.3390/su9091609. Retrieved from: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/9/9/1609>.
4. Roundy, L. What is the stakeholder in Education?- Definition & Examples [Video file]. 2016. Retrieved from: <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-a-stakeholder-in-education-definition-examples.html>.
5. Bailey C.L., Tanner M.W., Henrichsen L.E., Dewey D.P. The Knowledge, Experience, Skills, and Characteristics TESOL Employers Seek in Job Candidates. 2013. *TESOL Journal*. vol. 4. no. 4. P. 772–784. DOI: 10.1002/tesj.110. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/tesj.110>.
6. Pringle B., Lyons J., Booker K. Perceptions of Teacher Expectations by African American. *The Journal of Negro Education*. 2010. vol. 79. no. 1. P. 33–40. Retrieved from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25676107>.