

Teaching English Language Journal

ISSN: 2538-5488 – E-ISSN: 2538-547X – <http://tel.journal.org>

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Please cite this paper as follows:

Hilali, A., Zanzoun, M., Ouzzine A., & El Alami, A. (2025). Evaluating the effectiveness of teacher recruitment exams in upholding professional teaching standards. *Teaching English Language, 19*(2), 317-351. <https://doi.org/10.22132/tel.2025.479992.1697>

Research Paper

**Evaluating the Effectiveness of Teacher
Recruitment Exams in Upholding Professional
Teaching Standards**

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Abstract

Admission criteria are essential to select candidates who are qualified to be effective teachers and those who are not. However, there are strengths and weaknesses in the criteria utilized to select prospective teachers for education programs. The primary objective of this study is to assess the validity, reliability, and credibility of the Moroccan EFL secondary teacher recruitment test. Data was collected between March and July 2024 using a questionnaire among EFL teacher trainees in three Moroccan regional centers for education and training professions. This study's findings show that many 2023 English language teacher applicants were dissatisfied with the entrance oral tests they were required to take. More than a third of the participants confirmed that they disagreed with the educational sciences exam's

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procedure. A number of respondents confirmed that they did not agree that the exam adequately assessed the candidate's English language proficiency. Some respondents expressed disapproval with the way the English language didactics and the oral exam procedures were administered. The content analysis of the findings and the official regulations and circulars unveil the need for standardizing the examinations for better credibility, reliability and validity.

Keywords: Recruitment exam, professional teaching standards, EFL teacher trainees, credibility, reliability, validity.

Received: September 23, 2024

Accepted: October 18, 2025



1. Introduction

The primary aim of teacher training centers and programs is to select and train would-be proficient educators for elementary and secondary schools (Lewis et al., 1999). The admission processes for these programs aim to select the best candidates (Turner-Bisset, 2001). Admission criteria are essential to select candidates who are qualified to be effective teachers and those who are not (DeLuca, 2012). However, there are strengths and weaknesses in the criteria utilized to select prospective teachers for education programs (Casey & Childs, 2007). In Morocco, basic training is the first responsibility undertaken by the regional centers for education and training professions, alongside educational scientific research and continuing education. It is the first step towards selecting and qualifying teaching staff and other personnel.

First, the teaching entrance exam is open for candidates who hold at least a bachelor of arts or an equivalent degree. Second, only those who scored high enough in the written exam are eligible to take the orals. The recruitment exam for English teachers in Morocco includes written, technical, and oral tests. The written exams that have been administered throughout the

recent three years comprise three EFL related components. According to the official reference framework, the exam aims to assess candidates' knowledge in the subject (English language), in pedagogy and didactics, and in educational sciences. The whole-time span allotted to answer the exams' questions is eight hours. Importantly, the multiple-choice questions are built around short scenarios or situations that trigger test-takers' knowledge in how English (as a foreign language) is taught. Moreover, its different sections mainly examine knowledge about different teaching approaches, methods, teaching skills and techniques. The audio-lingual method, the communicative approach, the physical response method, the grammar-translation method, project-based learning are the point in cases. Equally complex concepts related to the teaching/learning are checked such as scaffolding, active learner, reflective learner, phonics approach, bottom-up/top-down approaches, etc. (National Center for Evaluation and Examination, 2023).

The specific number of teachers required for recruitment is selected among individuals who perform very well in written tests. According to the regulations established by the Ministry of Education, Pre-schooling, and Sports, when there are fewer than ten vacant spots, the admission criteria for oral exams is determined by multiplying the required positions by three. Conversely, when the number of posts is limited to 10 to 20, the number of positions being competed for is doubled. If the number of contested positions exceeds 20, the acceptance threshold is determined by multiplying the number of contested positions by 1.5, as stated by the National Center for Evaluation and Examination in 2023. This implies that only two-thirds of the candidates who participate in the oral examinations are accepted into the induction phase at the training centers (National Center for Evaluation and Examinations, 2023). The center has the capacity to provide a comprehensive guide for the preparation, organization, procedures, and processes of the

entrance examinations for regional education and training institutions to recruit teaching staff and specialized professionals for the 2023 session.

The oral exam, likewise, takes 2 hours and aims to assess examinees' communicative, methodological and cognitive abilities and competences. To do so, candidates are given a scenario or situation to reflect on and contextualise within EFL learning and teaching process. Furthermore, they are provided with official programs, educational directives and approved textbooks. After 1 hour, they are required to deliver a presentation of 20 minutes in front of the jury. The latter is made up of ELT supervisors who, themselves, prepare the already described "pedagogical scenarios and the problem situations" abiding by the exam regulating texts. It's worth noting that it is mandatory for members of the oral examination committees to hold a coordination meeting at each regional training center before conducting the exams, during the period between 21 and 23 December 2023. The meeting agenda is often arranged as follows: 1. Examine the oral examination guide; 2. Deliberate on strategies for preparing testing scenarios; 3. Acquaint examinees with the drip network and engage them in discourse on it; 4. Facilitate a simulation of a virtual oral interview to ensure that committee members possess a cohesive comprehension of the assessment criteria and the application of the corresponding score scales for each criterion. Later, the committee members individually score each element of the grid without prior discussion of the ratings (National Center for Evaluation and Examinations, 2023).

This paper will elucidate the process of induction tests for English language teachers in Morocco. The main aim of this study is to substantiate the significance of cultivating a culture of standardization in the initial phases of teachers' education. The survey utilized a questionnaire administered to English Language Teacher Trainees across three educational and training

institutes in Morocco. The primary questions to be examined in this paper essentially relate to the validity, reliability, and credibility of the Moroccan EFL teacher recruitment test, articulated as follows:

1. What efforts have Moroccan education authorities made to assure the continued validity and reliability of the EFL teacher recruitment exam, and what problems remain in sustaining the exam's efficacy as a tool for selecting competent language educators?

2. To what extent does the current Moroccan EFL teacher recruitment exam evaluate the wide set of abilities and competencies necessary for effective English language teaching in a variety of classroom settings?

3. How do Moroccan EFL teacher trainees perceive the validity, credibility, and overall reliability regarding the administration and scoring of the Moroccan EFL teacher recruitment test?

2. Literature Review

Several countries continue to place a high value on the necessity of having competent instructors as a guarantee of high-quality education (Falk & Darling-Hammond, 2010). Admission criteria are essential to select candidates who are qualified to be proficient teachers (DeLuca, 2012) and continuous professional development has a positive influence on instructors' instructional strategies and students' academic achievements (Meher, 2012; Ravhuhali et al., 2015, Hilali et al., 2024). In this regard, recruitment competitions for English teachers are very important, given that this language is the first foreign language in Morocco, as well as in many regions around the world (Bouziane & Saoudi, 2021). The entry of competent and qualified educators into the teaching profession is greatly enhanced by standardized

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teacher recruiting (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). These exams evaluate applicants' subject matter, pedagogical, and professional competence; they are often administered worldwide (Schlechty & Vance, 1983). To determine if a prospective teacher is qualified, the United States uses the Praxis exams (Educational Testing Service, 2021). Not only do these tests measure how well teachers are doing in the classroom, but they also help in predicting how well teachers will do in the future (Darling-Hammond, 2000). A recent study indicated that teacher preparation courses should be completely reviewed and updated to include a self-awareness component (Zohrabi & Paydar, 2025). Another study recommended that integrating ICT (Information and Communication Technology) into project-based learning is effective in improving instructional design for pre-service teachers (Tristiana et al., 2024).

A principal benefit of standardized recruiting is its capacity to equalize opportunities by employing the same criteria for all candidates, irrespective of their background or educational institution (Boyd et al., 2009). This homogeneity ensures a constant standard of teacher quality across all locations and institutions. Critics contend that standardized assessments frequently do not reflect the intricate abilities essential for effective teaching, including creativity, cultural competency, and classroom management (Gitomer & Bell, 2013). Consequently, several experts promote a more comprehensive methodology that incorporates classroom observations and interviews in conjunction with standardized evaluations (*Cohen & Goldhaber, 2016*).

Education specialists, like Darling-Hammond (2000, 2015) and Koretz (2008), recommend a more holistic methodology for teacher assessment and recruiting. Darling-Hammond has underscored the necessity of integrating classroom observations, interviews, and portfolio evaluations with

standardized examinations to provide a comprehensive understanding of teaching proficiency (Darling-Hammond, 2015). Koretz has expressed apprehensions over the excessive dependence on standardized examinations, proposing that a wider array of evaluations is essential to encompass the comprehensive skill set required for teachers to thrive in heterogeneous classrooms (Koretz, 2008).

Notwithstanding its constraints, standardized teacher recruitment is a crucial component of several educational systems. Research indicates that educators who excel in these assessments frequently find more success in enhancing student performance, particularly in high-need sectors (Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010). It is essential to equilibrate standardized testing with alternative evaluation methods to guarantee that educators are comprehensive and adept at addressing varied classroom requirements. The current discourse emphasizes the necessity of enhancing teacher recruiting procedures to meet the changing requirements of education. It is currently necessary to reshape teacher training to suit the requirements of modern education, such as preparing pre-service English teachers for online teaching after graduation (Erdem, 2024), and incorporating computer-assisted language learning (Dashtestani & Mohamadi, 2023) and local and international cultural elements in ELT syllabi to facilitate learners' integration of diverse cultural experiences (Mollahosseini et al., 2023; Monfared & Najjar Baghseyah, 2024).

3. Material and Methodology

3.1 Survey participants

The study was carried out in the regional centers for education and vocational training in Beni Mellal-khenifra, Casablanca-Settat, and Meknes. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire instrument among English language

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teacher trainees in the three institutes. A total of 129 *EFL trainees* participated in the pilot survey. A description of the two samples is provided in Table 1. Females' representation is strikingly exceeding males with respectively a percentage of 56.59% of females and only 43.341% of males. 36.72% of reviewees' age ranged between 21 and 23 years, 39.84% of participants' age ranged between 24 and 26 years, and 23.44% of reviewees' age ranged between 27 and 30 years. No trainee exceeds the age of 30, as that is the upper limit for candidates. The majority of the English language teacher trainees (90.70%) hold a BA, while only 9.30% have an MA. A significant proportion of the EFL trainees (86.05%) have obtained their university degrees from faculties of literature and human sciences, 11.63% from colleges of education, and just 2.32% from other technical institutions.

Table 1.
Overview of interviewees

	Number	Percent %
Gender (129 responses)		
Male	56	43.41
Female	73	56.59
Total	129	100
Age (128 responses)		
21-23	47	36.72
24-26	51	39.84
27-30	30	23.44
Highest Educational Degree Obtained (129 responses)		
BA	117	90.70
MA	12	9.30
Others	00	00
Graduate University (129 responses)		
Faculties of letters and human sciences	111	86.05
Higher Normal Schools	15	11.63
Others	3	2.32

3.2 Data collection and analysis

Data on the English language teachers 'induction oral examinations were collected between March and July 2024 using a questionnaire among EFL teacher trainees in three Moroccan regional centers for education and training

professions: Beni Mellal-khenifra, Casablanca-Settat, and Meknes. The observation grid employed in oral exams by jurors around the nation was assessed in accordance with the professional teaching standards agenda. In this study, 37 variables were selected to evaluate EFL teacher trainees' induction oral examinations (Table 2). These variables were grouped into four subscales: Exam on Educational Sciences (9 variables), Exam on English Language Proficiency (9 variables), Exam on Didactics of Teaching English (9 variables), and Oral exam (10 variables). EFL teachers' responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale: 1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, and 5. Strongly agree.

The first category, "Exam on Educational Sciences," consists of nine items that specifically address themes related to educational science. The second category, "Exam on English Language Proficiency," comprises an equal number of questions. The third category, "Exam on Didactics of Teaching English," is comprised of nine questions. The fourth category, "Oral exam," includes 10 questions that specifically pertain to the oral examination procedure employed for teacher recruitment.

Table 2.

EFL teacher trainees' perceptions and attitudes regarding the credibility, reliability, and validity of the most recent teacher entry exam: Reliability (α -Cronbach), Means, and Standard Deviations (SD). The adoption of this statistical test is meant to cross-check the credibility, validity, and reliability between sections of each respondent's answers.

Exam on Educational Sciences ($\alpha = 0.98$)	Mean	SD
Credibility:		
1. I believe that educational science exam questions are unbiased	3,19	1,01
2. I find the educational sciences test instructions clear and fair.	3,05	1,01
3. I find the process of conducting and scoring the educational sciences exam transparent.	3,29	0,80
Reliability:		
4. The grading method for educational sciences exams is reliable.	3,19	0,88
5. I am confident that the educational sciences test accurately assesses my knowledge.	2,86	1,18
6. The educational sciences exam effectively addressed key subjects and areas of study.	2,96	1,05
Validity:		
7. The educational sciences test accurately measures my knowledge and skills in this field.	2,81	1,09
8. The educational sciences test matches well with the curriculum and	3,01	1,06

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learning objectives of my teacher training program.

9. I am convinced that the educational sciences test accurately assesses my proficiency in this domain.	2,71	1,05
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Exam on English Language Proficiency ($\alpha = 0.98$)

Credibility

1. I believe that exam questions about English language proficiency are unbiased.	3,79	0,81
2. How satisfied are you with the clarity and fairness of the directions for the English language proficiency exam?	3,90	0,79
3. I find the process of conducting and scoring the English language competency exam transparent.	3,67	0,77

Reliability:

4. The grading system used for the English language proficiency exam is reliable.	3,71	0,76
5. I believe the English language proficiency exam is a trustworthy way to measure my English skills.	3,26	1,15
6. The English language competency exam effectively covers important themes and language skills.	3,82	0,84

Validity:

7. I believe the English language proficiency exam adequately measured my English language skills.	3,48	1,02
8. The English language competency assessment matches well with the language learning objectives of my teacher training program.	3,60	0,74
9. I am convinced that the English language proficiency exam accurately assesses my skills.	3,28	1,02

Exam on Didactics of Teaching English ($\alpha = 0.98$)

Credibility:

1. I believe that test questions on EFL didactics are unbiased.	3,85	0,83
2. How satisfied are you with the clarity and fairness of the instructions provided for the didactics of teaching English (EFL) exams?	4,05	0,73
3. I find the process of conducting and marking the teaching English (EFL) exam transparent.	3,78	0,81

Reliability:

4. I think the marking process for English examinations is reliable.	3,82	0,75
5. I believe the didactics of teaching English test is a reliable measure of my teaching knowledge.	3,58	1,03
6. I believe that the didactics of teaching English (EFL) exam adequately covered the relevant topics and teaching methodologies.	3,95	0,78

Validity:

7. The didactics of teaching English test adequately measure my knowledge and skills in teaching English.	3,54	1,01
8. The English test corresponds with my teacher training program's techniques and objectives.	3,83	0,74
9. I believe the didactics of teaching English test is a credible measure of my skills in teaching English.	3,40	1,05

Oral exam ($\alpha = 0.98$)

Experience and Preparation:

1. I am well prepared for the tasks and questions of the oral exam.	3,32	0,74
2. I felt adequately prepared to respond to the topics covered in the oral exam.	3,71	0,84

Clarity and Fairness:

3. The oral exam instructions were clear and understandable.	4,12	0,82
4. I believe the oral exam was done fairly and without bias.	3,99	0,90

Confidence and Performance:

5. I felt confident in my abilities to communicate my knowledge throughout the oral exam.	4,13	0,73
6. I believe my performance accurately reflected my comprehension of the oral exam requirements.	3,77	0,80

Assessing Knowledge and Skills:

7. The oral test adequately measures my comprehension of essential principles and ideas in educational sciences and targeted teaching skills.	3,69	0,88
8. I was able to exhibit my abilities, knowledge, and capabilities throughout the oral examination.	3,59	0,94

Alignment with Curriculum Learning Objectives and official regulatory guidelines

9. I think the topics covered in the oral exam were aligned with the curriculum and learning objectives of my teacher-training program.	3,91	0,69
10. The oral exam adequately assesses my proficiency in the areas specified in the recruitment exam official guidelines.	3,80	0,73

4. Results

The results are determined according to George and Mallery (2003) about Cronbach's Alpha value interpretation ($> .9$ = Excellent, $> .8$ = Good, $> .7$ = Acceptable, $> .6$ = Questionable, $> .5$ = Poor, and $< .5$ = Unacceptable). The analysis of the EFL teacher trainees' perceptions and attitudes regarding the credibility, reliability, and validity of the most recent teacher recruitment test subscales revealed excellent levels of reliability on the four categories (Table 2).

To succinctly explain the three assessment-related concepts, it can be asserted that credibility refers to the process of demonstrating that the findings of qualitative investigations are considered trustworthy from the perspective of the study participant. It "involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are believable from the perspective of the participant in the research" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). According to Cronbach, reliability refers to the degree to which test scores remain constant when measured repeatedly and are not affected by mistakes. It simply refers to the degree of consistency and stability in test scores over several administrations

or under different settings. "It is the extent to which test scores are consistent across repeated measurements and free from errors" (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The concept of validity does not pertain to the test itself, but rather to the inferences drawn from the results obtained on the exam. Validity refers to the correctness and appropriateness of conclusions and judgments based on test results. It "is not a property of the test itself but rather the interpretations made from test scores" (Messick, 1989, p. 13).

4.1 Exam on Educational Sciences

Frequencies of responses are available in Table 3. Accordingly, responses related to credibility showed that 43.4% of the respondents expressed agreement or strong agreement with the notion that the educational science test questions are unbiased, while 31% remained neutral, and 25.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Among the total respondents, 41.1% agree or strongly agree that the educational sciences test instructions are clear and fair. On the other hand, 20.9% remained neutral, while 38% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the clarity and fairness of the instructions. 42.6% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the procedure of administering and scoring the educational sciences test is transparent. 41.9% of respondents are indifferent, while 15.6% disagree or strongly disagree.

The findings on reliability indicate that 43.4% of the participants express agreement or strong agreement with the notion that the grading system for educational sciences exams is reliable. Meanwhile, 34.9% remain neutral, and 21.7% express disagreement or strong disagreement. 38.8% of the participants express agreement or strong agreement with their confidence in the accuracy of the educational sciences test in evaluating their knowledge. 14% remain neutral, while 47.3% disagree or strongly disagree. 35.6% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the educational sciences test

adequately covered important subjects and fields of study, while 25.6% remain neutral and 38.8% disagree or strongly disagree.

When it comes to the educational sciences test, 34.9% of people think it evaluates their knowledge and abilities well; 17.8% are unsure; and 47.3% are in complete disagreement. The educational sciences exam is well-aligned with the course material and learning outcomes of teacher preparation programs, according to 39.6% of respondents (27.1% are unsure) and 33.3% (strongly disagree). Only 28.7% are certain that the educational sciences exam fairly measures their competence in this area; 23.3% are unsure; and 48.0% are adamantly opposed.

4.2 Exam on English Language Proficiency

Results showed that 74.4% of respondents agree or strongly agree about the credibility of the English language proficiency exam's questions, 19.4% are indifferent, and 6.2% disagree or strongly disagree. Of those who took the English language competency test, 57.2% are happy with the directions' clarity and fairness, 20.2% are unsure, and 4.7% are not satisfied at all. 65.9% of trainees think the English language competency exam's administration and scoring procedures are open and honest, while 26.4% are unsure, and 7.8% are strongly opposed.

The reliability results for the English language proficiency exam indicated that 69% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the grading system is reliable, 24% are indifferent, and 7% disagree or strongly disagree. 49.6 % of those who took the survey think the English language proficiency test is an accurate indicator of how well they can communicate in English; 20.9% are unsure; and 29.5% strongly disagree. In terms of whether the exam adequately assesses key concepts and linguistic abilities, 77.5% are in agreement or strongly in agreement, 13.2% are unsure, and 9.4% are in strong disagreement.

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When asked about the validity of the English language proficiency test, 62% of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed that it was an accurate evaluation of their English language abilities; 18.6% were unsure; and 19.4% opposed. While 61.3% of participants think the English language proficiency test is a good fit for their teacher preparation program's language learning goals, 30.2% are unsure, and 8.5% are adamantly opposed. 51.2 % are certain that the English language proficiency test fairly measures their abilities; 23.3 % are unsure; and 25.6 % are adamantly opposed.

4.3 Exam on Didactics of Teaching English

Test questions on EFL didactics are unbiased, according to 79.8% of the respondents who either agree or strongly agree; 12.4% are indifferent; and 7.7% disagree or strongly disagree, all of which pertain to credibility. The instructions supplied for the didactics of teaching English (EFL) tests are clear and fair, according to 84.5% of respondents; 12.4% are unsure, and 3.1% strongly disagree. The majority of respondents (67.5%) believe that the procedure of administering and grading English as a Foreign Language (EFL) exam is transparent, 27.9% are unsure, and 4.7% disagree.

The dependability results revealed that 71.3% of the participants think that the English test marking method is reliable, 24.8% are unsure, and 3.9% are in significant disagreement. The following percentages of respondents: 65.1% think the didactics of teaching English exam is a good indicator of their mastery of the subject, 14.7% are unsure, and 20.1% are in strong disagreement. Of those who took the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) exam, 80.6% said they agreed or strongly agreed that the material was well-covered, 14% were unsure, and 5.5% were adamantly opposed. 63.6% of respondents affirmed the validity of the English teaching exam in assessing their knowledge and abilities, 18.6% remained neutral, and 17.9% expressed disagreement. Of those who took the survey, 72.1% strongly or somewhat

agree that the English exam is in line with the methods and goals of their teacher preparation program, while 23.3% are unsure and 4.7% are firmly opposed. Of those who took the didactics of teaching English test, 55.8% said they agree or strongly agree that it is a valid indicator of their competence as EFL educators, 20.9% were unsure, and 23.3% were vehemently against it.

4.4 Oral exam

Responses related to the experience and preparation for the oral exam showed that 39.5% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they were well prepared for the tasks and questions of the oral exam, 51.9% are neutral, and 8.5% disagree or strongly disagree. 70.5% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they felt adequately prepared to respond to the topics covered in the oral exam, 19.4% are neutral and 10.1% disagree or strongly disagree.

When asked about the clarity and fairness of the oral test instructions, 86.9% of respondents said they were clear and understandable, 7% were unsure, and 6.2% were against. Of those who took the oral test, 80.6% think it was administered fairly and without bias, 12.4% are unsure, and 7% are strongly opposed.

Responses related to the confidence and performance showed that 86.8% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they felt confident in their abilities to communicate their knowledge throughout the oral exam, 9.3% are neutral, and 3.9% disagree or strongly disagree. 75.2% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that they believe their performance accurately reflected their comprehension of the oral exam requirements, 15.5% are neutral and 9.3% disagree or strongly disagree.

The results regarding the evaluation of knowledge and abilities revealed that 69% of the participants feel that the oral exam sufficiently gauges their understanding of fundamental concepts and ideas in educational sciences and

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focused teaching abilities, while 19.4% are agnostic and 11.7% disagree or strongly disagree. Of those who took the oral test, 65.1% are in agreement or strongly in agreement that they demonstrated their skills, knowledge, and abilities; 19.4% are unsure; and 15.5% are in strong disagreement.

Results showed that 81.4% of the respondents are in agreement or strongly in agreement that the subjects covered in the oral exam were in line with the curriculum and learning objectives of their teacher-training program. 14% are indifferent, and 4.7% are in disagreement or strong disagreement. The majority of respondents (79.1%) believe that the oral test accurately measures their knowledge and skills in the areas indicated in the official standards for the recruitment exam. A small percentage (13.2%) are unsure, and 7.8% are in austere disagreement.

Table 3.

Frequencies of responses for each item of the EFL teacher trainees' perceptions and attitudes regarding the credibility, reliability, and validity of the most recent teacher recruitment tests: 1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, and 5. Strongly agree.

Exam on Educational Sciences	1	2	3	4	5
Credibility:					
1. I believe that educational science exam questions are unbiased	5.4	20.2	31	37.2	6.2
2. I find the educational sciences test instructions clear and fair.	3.1	34.9	20.9	36.4	4.7
3. I find the process of conducting, and scoring the educational sciences exam transparent.	1.6	14	41.9	39.5	3.1
Reliability :					
4. The grading method for educational sciences exams is reliable.	3.1	18.6	34.9	41.1	2.3
5. I am confident that the educational sciences test accurately assesses my knowledge.	11.6	35.7	14	32.6	6.2
6. The educational sciences exam effectively addressed key subjects and areas of study.	6.2	32.6	25.6	30.2	5.4
Validity :					
7. The educational sciences test accurately measures my knowledge and skills in this field.	10.1	37.2	17.8	31.8	3.1
8. The educational sciences test matches well with the curriculum and learning objectives of my teacher training program.	9.3	24	27.1	35.7	3.9

9. I am convinced that the educational sciences test accurately assesses my proficiency in this domain.	11.6	36.4	23.3	26.4	2.3
Exam on English Language Proficiency					
Credibility:					
1. I believe that exam questions about English language proficiency are unbiased.	2.3	3.9	19.4	61.2	13.2
2. How satisfied are you with the clarity and fairness of the directions for the English language proficiency exam?	0.8	3.9	20.2	55	2.2
3. I find the process of conducting, and scoring the English language competency exam transparent.	0.8	7	26.4	56.6	9.3
Reliability:					
4. The grading system used for the English language proficiency exam is reliable.	0.8	6.2	24	58.9	10.1
5. I believe the English language proficiency exam is a trustworthy way to measure my English skills.	7	22.5	20.9	37.2	12.4
6. The English language competency exam effectively covers important themes and language skills.	1.6	7.8	13.2	62	15.5
Validity:					
7. I believe the English language proficiency exam adequately measured my English language skills.	4.7	14.7	18.6	51.9	10.1
8. The English language competency assessment matches well with the language learning objectives of my teacher training program.	0	8.5	30.2	54.3	7
9. I am convinced that the English language proficiency exam accurately assesses my skills.	4.7	20.9	23.3	44.2	7
Exam on Didactics of Teaching English					
Credibility:					
1. I believe that test questions on EFL didactics are unbiased.	2.3	5.4	12.4	64.3	15.5
2. How satisfied are you with the clarity and fairness of the instructions provided for the didactics of teaching English (EFL) exams?	0.8	2.3	12.4	60.5	24
3. I find the process of conducting, and marking the teaching English (EFL) exam transparent.	1.6	3.1	27.9	51.2	16.3
Reliability:					
4. I think the marking process for English examinations is reliable.	0.8	3.1	24.8	55.8	15.5
5. I believe the didactics of teaching English test is a reliable measure of my teaching knowledge.	2.3	17.8	14.7	49.6	15.5
6. I believe that the didactics of teaching English (EFL) exam adequately covered the relevant topics and teaching methodologies.	0.8	4.7	14	59.7	20.9
Validity:					
7. The didactics of teaching English test adequately measure my knowledge and skills in teaching English.	3.9	14	18.6	51.2	12.4
8. The English test corresponds with my teacher training program's techniques and objectives.	0	4.7	23.3	56.6	15.5
9. I believe the didactics of teaching English test is a credible measure of my skills in teaching English.	3.9	19.4	20.9	44.2	11.6
Oral exam					
Experience and Preparation:					

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1. I am well prepared for the tasks and questions of the oral exam.	2.3	6.2	51.9	36.4	3.1
2. I felt adequately prepared to respond to the topics covered in the oral exam.	1.6	8.5	19.4	58.9	11.6
Clarity and Fairness:					
3. The oral exam instructions were clear and understandable.	0.8	5.4	7	54.3	32.6
4 I believe the oral exam was done fairly and without bias.	2.3	4.7	12.4	52.7	27.9
Confidence and Performance:					
5. I felt confident in my abilities to communicate my knowledge throughout the oral exam.	0	3.9	9.3	56.6	30.2
6. I believe my performance accurately reflected my comprehension of the oral exam requirements.	0.8	8.5	15.5	63.6	11.6
Assessing Knowledge and Skills:					
7. The oral test adequately measures my comprehension of essential principles and ideas in educational sciences and targeted teaching skills.	1.6	10.1	19.4	55.8	13.2
8. I was able to exhibit my abilities, knowledge, and capabilities throughout the oral examination.	2.3	13.2	19.4	53.5	11.6
Alignment with Curriculum Learning Objectives and official regulatory guidelines					
9. I think the topics covered in the oral exam were aligned with the curriculum and learning objectives of my teacher-training program.	0	4.7	14	66.7	14.7
10. The oral exam adequately assesses my proficiency in the areas specified in the recruitment exam official guidelines.	0.8	7	13.2	69.8	9.3

5. Discussion

This study's findings corroborate previous research showing that many 2023 English language teacher applicants in three studied Moroccan regional centers for education and training professions were dissatisfied with the entrance oral tests they were required to take. When asked about the educational sciences exam's procedure, 35.07 % of participants said they disagreed or strongly disagreed. The procedure of the English proficiency test is something with which 13.12% of respondents strongly or somewhat disagree with the organizational proceedings of the English proficiency exam. 10.10% of test takers expressed disapproval or significant disagreement with the way the English language didactics exam was administered. When asked about the oral exam procedure, 9.41% said they disagreed or strongly disagreed. Many of the questioned teacher trainees have

verified that the exam's criteria, methodology, and substance were inadequate, despite the fact that they are currently enrolled in English teacher preparation programs and have passed the written and oral tests. From this perspective, it is, then, deemed necessary to reconsider these organizational measures in view of professional teaching standards. It is a fact that the professionalization of the teaching job entails, among other decisive measures, an induction plan (Lortie, 1975). With a critical eye to the “How” and “Why” exams are designed, organized and administered the way they are, it becomes pivotal to investigate the area of improvements and establish examining quality vis-à-vis a strict adoption of professional teaching standards agenda.

The National Center for Evaluation and Examinations' official recommendations (National Center for Evaluation and Examinations, 2023) state that six fundamental obstacles have been identified by past experiences with teacher training centers: 1. Variation in the administration of oral examinations by distinct specialized committees; 2. The need to increase instructional support during oral exams, particularly in terms of preparing, passing, and discussing issues; 3. Difficulty in providing fairness and equal opportunity for applicants at different phases of oral tests; 4. The need for better transparency on committee members' involvement throughout the discussion with the candidates, which decreases disparities in judging the applicants' performance; 5. Clear differences in ranking according to the standards adopted in measuring the performance of the candidates, and 6. No educational contractual framework is in place with applicants to specify potential exam topics for the oral examinations. Despite the seriousness of these challenges that confirm the degree of inadequacies in teachers' recruitment exam procedural and organizational depth, the solutions suggested by policymakers remain surficial and inconsistent. In 2023, the

committee designing the recommendations specified the solutions in the following six measures: 1. Consolidating perspectives among several specialized committees in the administration of oral examinations; 2. Enhancing the educational framework for the examination stages, namely for the preparation, evaluation, and discussion of cases; 3. Guaranteeing fairness and equitable opportunities for applicants throughout all stages of the oral examination across the academies' diverse committees; 4. Formulating visions for the topics that will be central to the candidates' discussions; 5. Implementing standardized criteria for oral examinations; and 6. Establishing a transparent pedagogical contractual framework with the candidates. If we consider barrier 5 and recommendation 5 above, we noticeably see the one-to-one relation only in how they are formulated. Including the concepts of Standards in both is not impacting the way exams are taken and administered. This is only a case in point of the situation being discussed. A fundamental condition for standards to be utilised is, first, to be mapped, designed, implemented, and evaluated. These phases include consultation and communication as pillars in the industry of standardizing the profession.

One of the obvious remarks to make about these actions is that they need practicality for their implementation. Measuring these goals' effectiveness is debatable regarding their generalization and vagueness. They don't target the specificity of each context and discipline. Principle 5 accentuates the adoption of unifying standards for examining candidates. When the purpose of setting the desired standards is clear and justifiable to respond to the ambiguous difficulties described beforehand, the type of standards needed, their design and utility is still not detailed. In the literature review of this study, professional teaching standards are described as tightly interwoven in accordance with the particular purposes, context, and career stages that characterise each educational system. They provide "criteria to evaluate

(teacher) education programs and measure learning outcomes, offer guidance for policy decisions, and serve as a self-reflection framework for students, teachers, principals, and teacher educators” (Ceulemans, 2017, p.3). It is neither contradictory nor undoable to envisage a Moroccan Framework of professional teaching standards to be employed at this early stage of the profession. Considering the challenges facing the jury responsible for the oral exams on one hand, and the complexity of the mission on the other hand, it becomes imperative to establish a set of professional teaching standards to evaluate the skills and competencies of teacher candidates. Jury members within the same committee are considering the professional performances from different perspectives, let alone at the national level. The grids, designed by the National Center for Evaluation and Examinations (2023), are ambiguous and insufficient to provide a unifying platform for evaluators to rely on in their assessment processes. Even when grids include 20 indicators and descriptors, they are not sufficiently detailed to catch the different candidates’ profiles.

Table 4.

The grid adopted in evaluating teacher candidates’ oral performance.

Domain1: Presentation and delivery of the mini-lesson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Determine the section's position within the study program. 2.Determine the materials necessary for the mini-lesson. 3.Creating and tailoring the passage to its intended purpose. 4.The consistency of cognitive content. 5.Idea clarity and consistency. 6.Gradation and harmony in the presentation of the passage's components. 7.Adopting a suitable and consistent procedure with a specific approach. 8.Dedication to educational programs and policies. 9.Time management in presenting the mini-lesson. 10.Suitable evocation of didactic rhomboids. 11.Appropriate use of instructional aids. 12.Presentation of the section's outcome.
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Domain2: Communication abilities	13.The precision with which the speech was delivered. 14.Reasoning and persuasion skills. 15.The capacity to listen and interact positively. 16. The written and verbal integrity of the language or languages of instruction. 17.Nonverbal communication (body language, facial expressions, etc.).
Domain3: Readiness to practice the teaching profession	18. Dressing. 19. Commission. 20. The candidate's dynamics inside the action space.

Establishing colleges of education to train prospective teachers is a longstanding policy in Morocco. However, the recent establishment of Higher Schools of Education and Training in several regions of the kingdom is a significant initiative aimed at the professionalization of teaching. Considering the elements in the grid, and the three written exams lead to two fundamental questions that can be formulated as: 1. What does each of these indicators assess in candidates' profiles? 2. Based on these descriptors, can we presume that these tests are credible, reliable and valid?

The grid (Table 4) consists of three main domains: Presentation and delivery of the mini-lesson, Communication abilities, and Readiness to practice the teaching profession. The first dominant one, in terms of volume and weight, consists of 12 indicators whereas the second one includes only 5 assessing criteria. The last, but not least, is made up of only 3 interrelated descriptors. The marking scale allots 4 points for each of the 20 criteria. The following table catches the main abovementioned elements. Following the grading grid, 48 points are devoted to the first domain that investigates the candidate's instructional practices. This fact seems to contradict with the course of studies that most of examinees have been exposed to. Now, is evaluating candidates' teaching skills before the induction stage a plausible decision? This question resonates logical enough if we consider the training period they receive at the regional centers for education and training (Regional Centers for Education and Training, 2023) and which opens

horizons for them to develop their professional identity. The twelve criteria engrossed in domain 1 turn out to be decisive in the success or failure of examinees who are not, unfortunately, prepared yet to meet these professional demands. Unlike Morocco, in other countries such as Germany, potential teachers set for recruitment exams only after they receive an initial education at a teacher's college or university.

Having said that, it is also important to discuss the weight given to each of the domains that make up the essence of the grid. Much emphasis is given to assessing candidates' potential teaching abilities and competencies. This sounds unjustifiable at this early stage, knowing that most of them have little or no experience with the teaching profession. Moreover, the grid designers have adopted the one method fits all" technique to evaluate the test takers of all branches and subjects. Logically enough, from a pedagogical point of view, setting specific indicators and descriptors for the particular domains of each discipline sounds more feasible and effective. The fact of conveying the same grid according to teaching cycles rather than disciplines increases vagueness and diversification in grading examinees' performances. The need, then, is for a consistent, well-structured, and purposeful frame to apply nationwide. The frame constitutes a set of standards that depict lucidly and meticulously the qualities of teacher candidates before they are enrolled in the induction stage. Examinees are to be evaluated against common standards that are applicable by all juries at all regional academies. Practically, the impediments that assessors have faced in the past should provide a reliable ground to start the journey of the one thousand miles. This time, the primary purpose is to design a working plan that addresses each of the challenges separately in an attempt to find effective solutions. The suggested six recommendations or goals do not provide an effective and robust testing, assessment, and moderation system to measure candidates. A policy mapped

by exam designers can collaborate to plan a strategy that enables assessors to measure candidates against the same criteria. To achieve this, the criteria that must be met to enter the teaching profession must be defined.

Contrary to the common culture spreading within our schools, educational standards which identify clear and precise expectations for all beginner teachers are ruling in the UK, Australia, Canada, Ghana, etc. They institutionalize a policy linking official funding and judgments about quality. These Standards, therefore, provided institutions with clear professional expectations that were required to be embedded within all courses (Howard & Johnson, 2004). In this context, we may refer to Danielson's Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument (Danielson, 2013), in which he delimits the main teaching responsibilities that promote students' learning. To put it simply, these standards describe "what teachers should know and be able to do in the exercise of their profession" (Danielson, 2013, p.6). It is indicated in the oral exam guidelines that the general context for conducting these tests aims to determine the extent to which the candidates are professionally prepared to carry out the tasks entrusted to them within the scope of their specialization. They, too, are meant to measure their cognitive, communication, and pedagogical skills according to the requirements and specializations under consideration, as well as their ability to develop them in the future. However, it has never shown "how" to achieve these goals. Another time, the recommendations are vague and fail to be precise. Hence, they cannot be deemed as a consistent enabling strategy that pave the way for juries to unify their assessment visions and practice.

ELT supervisors in Morocco expressed their perspectives on the quality of tests and test takers' performance in 2023, just a few days after the exams were held. Two primary points have stood out in online conversations on social media sites and forums. One emphasized the common opinion on the

low profile of examinees in terms of their understanding of both the subject matter substance and the reciprocal methodology. The second argument is linked to the evaluation grids, which were regarded as experimented instruments developed on a scientific approach. It is worth noting that one of the primary foci of this research is how pre-service and in-service teachers are assessed in the Moroccan educational system. The architectures of EFL Moroccan teachers' recruitment exams, written and oral, entail the development of consistent, clear specifications that state meticulously not only the main objectives, but also all sub-objectives, which can be assessed using observable and measurable indicators. The latter make up the essence of the domains that skeleton the content of exams, including the adapted grid. Nevertheless, investigating the aforementioned 6 general problems, stated in the guidelines, along with their reciprocal suggested recommendations, results in inconsistency and impracticality. The grid accurately illustrates the existing obstacles in creating trustworthy and valid examinations, as well as the primary objectives to be attained; nevertheless, but it does not delineate meticulously the concepts of the "know," "know how," and "know how to do." The implementation of a grid that truly encompasses solid professional standards requires training of both assessors and test takers. Professional standards can serve as an effective alternative instrument for enhanced evaluation, provided their formulation is grounded in a defined vision, a particular goal, and core principles. Bodies of teaching standards, when architected appropriately and communicated aptly to the interested parties, can serve as a common ground that unifies the vision, purposes, and paths. In this vein, it has been noted that the agenda of setting professional teaching standards may differ according to the context and purposes. Still, thanks to their practicality and pliability, standards can ensure the validity and credibility of exams, a prerequisite for unbiased assessment.

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Another corollary issue, but with a larger scope, is to what extent the grid criteria match professional teaching standards used at the induction stage in various nations throughout the world. The purpose of raising this issue is to check the plausibility of prioritizing the teaching knowledge, pedagogy content, and teaching practices and skills on language proficiency, language awareness, and readiness for the profession. Results of the study of Khalili et al. (2024) showed differences between the factors that predicted native and non-native teachers' immunity, and that there are internal and external variables that influence this immunity. Is there a rationale behind this decision, knowing that there is a (compulsory) phase of induction as a transition between initial teacher education and professional life in Morocco? Generally, Moroccan candidates who prepare for tests fall into two types. The first graduates from schools and faculties that provide Initial Teacher Education (ENS), which eligible students access immediately after their baccalaureate, but only after selection and completing oral tests. The second category belongs to those who have enrolled in open-access faculties where courses are centered around general English. The fact, then, of exposing both groups to the same exams stymies the credibility of the examinations. It also violates the rules and principles of equity that are proclaimed by the official guidelines and enacted in the constitution. The Ministry of Education, Pre-schooling, and Sports (2011), the Strategic Vision (2015-2030) and the Road Map (2022-2026) have all accentuated and granted parity, equitableness and even-handedness for all Moroccans at schools and in exams (Higher Council for Education, Training, and Scientific Research, 2015, 2022).

For the sake of comparison, we provide a broad overview of the prerequisites for entering the teaching profession in 10 nations. We must keep in mind that precise standards may fluctuate within countries depending on regions or states. The required qualifications include mainly; 1. a

Bachelor's degree (Morocco, United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan, South Africa, India and China or rarely Master's degree (Germany and Sweden) in education or a related field, 2. completion of a teacher preparation program, and 3. some other qualifications such as a state-specific licensure or certification, qualified teacher status, etc. (United States: TEACH.org, 2024; United Kingdom: Teaching Regulation Agency, 2018; Canada: Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2021; Australia: AITSL, 2019; Japan: MEXT, 2022; South Africa: South African Council for Educators, 2021; India: National Council for Teacher Education, 2014; China: Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2020; Germany: Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, 2020; Sweden: Swedish National Agency for Education, 2021) A shared prerequisite is that the completion of a teacher's degree or training program is essential for qualifying in the ten nations. Nonetheless, a Bachelor's degree in education does not ensure employment eligibility in two European nations (Sweden and Germany) that require elevated standards, shown in a Master's degree in education or a related discipline. While some nations necessitate national degrees, others require success in state-specific tests or a Provincial/territorial teaching certification (USA, Canada, and Australia). The most fundamental remark is that in all countries, akin to Morocco, teachers are obligated to adhere to a professional trajectory.

The call for the establishment of professional teaching standards at this point corresponds to an already existent international trend toward the professionalization of the teaching profession. First, in Australia, the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL, 2022) is a major player in setting professional teaching standards. AITSL provides assistance not just for basic teacher education but also for early career teacher induction and professional advancement. Second, in the United Kingdom

(UK), regulatory authorities such as the Department for Education and the Teaching Regulation Agency (Teaching Regulation Agency, 2018) set professional standards for teachers. These standards encompass the induction phase for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Furthermore, while education standards in the United States differ by state, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 2020) is a well-known institution dedicated to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Some states have embraced the NBPTS criteria, and induction programs frequently adhere to them. Similarly, in New Zealand, the Education Council establishes standards for the teaching profession (Education Council of New Zealand, 2019). These criteria apply to all instructors, including those in the induction phase.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In Morocco, the debate on the set of criteria and standards to consider in the selection of newly recruited teachers is becoming a serious issue even inside the ministry galleries and corridors. The Ministry of National Education, Pre-schooling, and Sports is now convinced than ever that the profession faces more serious demands and increasing challenges in recruiting potentially effective teachers. Besides, the government has also inaugurated a new policy concerning the selection and entry of teachers with contracts and delegating the responsibility of their training and appointment to the 12 regional academies inside the kingdom (National Center for Evaluation and Examination, 2023).

Applying professional teaching standards at this early stage will benefit the Moroccan educational system immensely. There is a widespread impulse that their usage is rationalized in each of the aforementioned nations and globally. Adopting professional teaching standards at the induction level, for example, sought to improve the quality of teacher preparation and contribute

to the continuous professional development of early career educators in Australia. Similarly, its implementation at the induction stage in the United Kingdom encourages the successful integration of new teachers into the school system and a culture of continual development. Equally, their establishment for early career educators in the USA seeks to foster a sense of professional identity, guide professional growth, and ultimately improve the overall quality of teaching. Commitment to professional teaching standards at the induction stage in New Zealand ensures that starting teachers receive the essential support and direction, enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom.

Based on the results of this study and the comparison with international experiences and studies, we recommend: 1. Create and execute assessment policies in Morocco that align with ministerial aims and tertiary studies at all Human Sciences and Letters faculties; 2. Develop high-quality national curriculum examinations and assessments; 3. Create standards for assessing teacher candidates who meet national assessment requirements; 4. Implement and maintain an engagement strategy for in-service teachers who do not engage in professional development or /and joint professional development; 5. Set and maintain test standards, including marking guidelines; and 6. Produce a national framework of professional teaching standards for instructors' recruitment, accreditation, registration, and promotions.

The Moroccan Ministry of Education, Pre-schooling and Sports' incorporation of a technical second stage for evaluating applicants who have successfully completed the written examinations appears to be a rational move. In conjunction with the oral examinations, it seeks to assess candidates' cognitive abilities, presenting skills, and psychological and emotional preparedness for entering the teaching profession. Subsequent to the 2023 decision, examinees are evaluated using situations that incorporate

their quick input inside a multiple-choice framework. Nevertheless, items must be meticulously designed to evaluate examinees against factors concerning elements that significantly influence instructing effectiveness, as delineated in pertinent work by Hiver (2014) and Hiver and Dörnyei (2017). These elements constitute the fundamental context of what is referred to as "Teacher Immunity" (Khalili et al, 2024). TI emphasizes the significance of affective factors, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence in enhancing language effective immune system or exacerbating their autoimmune disorders, which adversely impact their psychological well-being.

Acknowledgement

We thank all EFL teacher trainees in regional centers for education and training professions of BeniMellal-khenifra, Casablanca-Settat and Fes-Meknes who participated in the reviews. We would like to acknowledge the ELT supervisors of the Academy of Education and Training of BeniMellal-Khenifra, Casablanca-Settat and Fes-Meknes who participated or helped to conduct this study.

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