

# Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Testing Methods in English Conversation Classes

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## 1. Introduction

Under the influence of globalization, English has become one of the primary concerns in Korean Education. Koreans have realized the need for more English speaking people as it has become one of the essential communication tools in the highly competitive world market. Thus various English teaching methods/approaches and new English curriculum have been suggested to improve students English ability.

However, English teaching in Korea has still produced unsatisfactory results. After having studied hard for six or ten years, students English levels were far below expectations. They could not hold even a simple conversation in English after graduation from secondary schools and colleges/universities. Korean educators realized that the failure of English teaching in Korea mainly resulted from unimproved English Examinations.

Testing and teaching are so closely interrelated to each other that it is virtually impossible to separate one from the other (Heaton, 1975). Baker (1989) pointed out that:

*"by changing the exam which the students must pass at the end of their courses one may influence course content and methodology more effectively than by issuing ministerial directives to administrators and teachers"*

Korean educators began to make efforts to develop English examinations to provide beneficial<sup>1)</sup>backwash effects into Korean classrooms. As a result of

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1) backwash is defined as the effect of testing on teaching and learning, and it can be

Korean educators efforts, more advanced English tests are constructed and they attempt to assess communicative ability effectively and bring beneficial effects into Korean classrooms. However, the tests seemed to fail not only to assess communicative ability properly but also to have some of the beneficial backwash effects that the examiners intended. Korean English tests mainly seem to assess only students reading and listening skills but not speaking and writing skills even though examiners insist that they test them in indirect ways. Those tests seem not to encourage students to improve students speaking and writing abilities. That is, they cannot bring much beneficial effects to students.

It has been recognized that the first thing we have to do is to employ more direct tests of speaking which would give beneficial effects to classrooms. This was confirmed by the findings of the questionnaires about the backwash effects in Korean secondary schools. There are, however, several difficulties in seeking to introduce such tests. The first difficulty is the cost of time and money. The second is the need for a large number of trained examiners and administrators. For example, in the face-to-face oral interview, numerous classrooms and facilities would be necessary, and a great deal of time would also be spent on interviewing individual students. In particular, in the situation where a large number of students have to take an exam in a short time, there would be much more difficulties in testing speaking skills adequately.

It would be certainly difficult to administer such an impractical test even if the test has high validity and reliability. However, what is certain is that we can not just leave our test as it is, with all its problems. Furthermore, direct speaking tests are indispensable in assessing communicative ability which we intended to measure and cannot be ignored. Thus, it is necessary to keep trying to find more time and cost effective direct tests of speaking which can overcome the obstacles that prevent implementation.

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harmful or beneficial. Hughes(1989) stated that; *It is true that there may be occasions when teaching is good and appropriate and testing is not; we are then likely to suffer from harmful backwash. But equally there may be occasions when teaching is poor or inappropriate and when testing is able to exert a beneficial influence. Testing should be supportive of good teaching where necessary, exert a corrective influence on bad teaching(Hughes,1989,testing for language teachers).*

For the reasons stated above, I believe that a Computerized Oral Test (see the appendix), which may allow teachers to administer an oral test in a shorter time and with less effort, is worth being investigated.

In this study I attempt to investigate Korean teachers' and students' perceptions and attitudes to their oral testing methods in an English conversation class. For the study, questionnaires and qualitative interviews were conducted.

Through the study of Korean teachers and students perceptions of oral testing methods the following questions will be investigated: (1) What testing methods do teachers use in English conversation classes? (2) How do teachers and students feel and think about their testing methods? (3) How do teachers and students perceive and think about COT? (the description of COT will be given)

The findings would be useful to endorse a further study of COT in Korean circumstances and also serve as a useful and practical catalyst for reflection on teaching and assessing.

## 2. Research methods

To investigate teachers and students perceptions and attitudes to testing methods in English conversation classes, survey research will be used in the study. It is probably the most widely used research type in educational research and used to measure attitudes, opinions, or achievements-any number of variables in natural settings (Wiersma, 2000). I believe that it will be the most appropriate research type to collect answers from a large number of teachers and students. This will be done using a set of carefully designed questions about their opinions and attitudes of different forms of oral test (Fraenkel&Wallen, 1993).

Questionnaires, which are commonly used in survey research, will be used for the study. The use of paper-and pencil questionnaires has definite advantages over interviews. Questionnaires require less time, are less expensive, and permit collection of data from a much larger sample such as a sample including a large number of students' and teachers' perceptions about the oral tests they



are currently using. Also the respondents can control the data-collection process: they can fill out the questionnaires at their convenience, answer the items in any order, take more time one sitting to complete it, skip questions, or give unique responses (Gall et al, 1996).

Questionnaires, however, cannot probe deeply into respondents' opinions and feelings. There are often nonresponses and careless responses. Also, once questionnaires have been distributed, it is not possible to modify the items, even though they may be unclear to some respondents (Gall et al, 1996). To make up for those limitations of questionnaires and to further validate the questionnaires and understand the opinions and attitudes expressed about the different forms of oral testing, a qualitative approach using interviews will be used. By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches they will complement each other resulting in higher quality research.

Biddle&Anderson (1986) support this view:

*It is inappropriate to compare the relative efficacy of quantitative and qualitative research since each has different purpose; broadly these are the generation of insights on the one hand and the testing of hypotheses on the other. Although advocates for discovery (qualitative researchers) decry the arid tautologies of confirmationists (quantitative researchers), and the latter express disdain for the sloppy subjectivism of discovery research, the two perspectives have complementary goals. We need them both*

Qualitative interviews will be conducted for a small number of teachers and students after using questionnaires. The depth of understanding will be more readily obtained from interviews that permit probing of respondents' responses, exploring unplanned topics that arise, and obtaining clarification of participants' responses (Gay&Airasian, 2000). Qualitative interviews will be more free flowing and open than those of quantitative interviews. In spite of their disadvantages stated earlier, according to Gay&Airasian, they have a number of unique advantages.

Firstly, they can produce in-depth data not possible with questionnaires (Gay&Airasian, 2000). Secondly, they are most appropriate for asking questions that cannot effectively be structured into a multiple-choice format, such as questions of a personal nature or questions that call for lengthy responses.

Thirdly, they are flexible; interviewers can adapt the situation to each respondent. By establishing a good rapport and a trust relationship, interviewers can often obtain information that respondents would not reveal by any other data-collection methods. Fourth, they may result in more accurate and honest responses, since interviewers can explain and clarify both the purposes of the research and individual questions. Lastly, interviews allow follow-up on incomplete or vague responses by asking additional probing questions. Reasons for particular responses can also be determined.

The interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. Then the transcriptions will be analyzed for the purpose of writing a coherent narrative which will reflect in-depth study of teachers' and students' opinions and attitudes of oral tests. This qualitative interview will be also useful method to refine the questionnaires and to seek explanations to patterns identified through statistical analysis of quantitative information.

### **3. Research design**

In order to investigate the perceptions of Korean teachers and students on test methods in English conversation classes, questionnaires and qualitative interviews were conducted. For practical purposes, it was decided to pilot the questions using 5 people for questionnaires and 2 people for interviews, choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents. The results of the pilot study showed that there was an immediate need for some changes. Following their suggestions, some of the questions were modified. The design of questionnaires and interviews and the data collection process will be stated in this section.

#### **3.1 Questionnaires**

The aim of the questionnaires is to measure teachers' and students' perceptions and attitudes of testing methods in English conversation classes. The questionnaires for teachers and students contain three sections: (1) information about their classes and the test methods they use; (2) perceptions and attitudes of the test methods; (3) opinions of COT; (4) demographic



information.

In section 2 and 3 likert 5-point scales are used to collect data. They provide a statement that reflects a particular attitude or opinion. They have the advantage of convenience which makes this method suitable for this research. This convenience lies in obtaining, in a simple manner, the differences among respondents. To obtain a picture of the characteristics of teachers' and students' perceptions, attitudes or opinions to the questionnaire items and compare the differences between two groups, this method appears to be suitable.

### 3.2 Interviews

Standardized interviews, which all interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order, were prepared to validate the questionnaires and obtain the depth of understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions of and attitudes toward test methods. The interviews involve asking a few structured questions and then probing more deeply using open questions to get additional information. In this data collection method the same initial questions are first asked, but different probing questions are asked based on the respondents' answers.

Fraenkel&Wallen (1993) stated that standardized wording of questions might constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers. This interview type would, however, be appropriate for this specific research which needs to increase comparability of responses. Besides, it would be helpful to reduce interviewers' effects and bias.

### 3.3 Samples

The setting for the study was at Korean universities. The questionnaires were completed by 24 teachers and 171 students who have experienced an English conversation class; 71% students took an English conversation class when they were fresh persons. Most teachers have a master degree and 16 of whom have majored in TESOL/TEFL or English literature.

After the questionnaires 4 teachers and 6 students were interviewed to get in-depth information and understand their attitudes and opinions. Participants'

demographic information is briefly described below:

88 male and 81 female students from 7 classes in three universities: 63 fresh persons, 25 sophomore, 39 junior and 39 senior and 2 graduate students.

9 male and 15 female teachers from three universities: 13 Koreans  
and 11 foreigners

Interviewees: 3 Korean teachers and 1 foreign teacher  
2 fresh persons, 2 juniors, 1 junior and 1 senior

The sample was selected randomly from three Korean universities to achieve good population validity. According to Gall et al, population validity is the extent to which the results can be generalised from the sample to a larger group of individuals. This population validity can be achieved by selecting the sample randomly from the defined population to which researchers wish to generalise their results (Gall et al, 1996). Random samples can yield research data that can be generalized to a larger population within margins of error that can be determined by statistical formulas (Gall et al, 1996).

### 3.4 Procedure

After the pilot study some questions of questionnaires and interviews were revised, and the final forms were used for the data collection. Data was obtained by handing out questionnaires to 24 teachers and 171 students from three Korean universities and carrying out interviews of 4 teachers and 6 students.

Most questionnaires were directly distributed to teachers. To collect data from students, teachers were asked to give questionnaires to their students and data were collected quickly and easily. The time taken for filling in the form was approximately ten minutes. To encourage the teachers and the students to express their opinions as honestly as possible, an introductory letter conveying the aim of the questionnaires and assuring the confidentiality of information obtained through the questionnaires, was appended to each questionnaire sheet.

After the questionnaires, 4 teachers and 6 students were interviewed. The



teachers were mainly my colleagues and the students were selected randomly from their classes. All answers from them were recorded using a tape recorder and the confidentiality of information was assured. Each interview took approximately 15-20 minutes.

#### 4. Data analysis and interpretation

Data from the questionnaires analysed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and the interviews were transcribed and then analysed for the purpose of writing a coherent narrative which will reflect in-depth study of the students and the teachers.

The results from the questionnaires and the interviews are stated according to the research questions: (1) What testing methods do teachers use in English conversation classes? (2) How do teachers and students feel and think about their testing methods? (3) How do teachers and students perceive and think about COT?

##### (1) What testing methods do teachers use in English conversation classes?

Table 1(the number of student)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability 10-20	40	23.4	23.5	23.5
21-30	25	14.6	14.7	38.2
31-40	60	35.1	35.3	73.5
41-50	44	25.7	25.9	99.4
above51	1	.6	.6	100.0
Total	170	99.4	100.0	
unavailability	1	.6		
Total	171	100.0		

Table 1 shows that 35% of the classes have between 31-40 students, and 26% of the classes have between 41 and 50 students, but 24% of the classes have only between 10 and 20 students. It can be seen that the class size varies from 10 to 50 students.



Table 2(testing method)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability interview	54	31.6	32.0	32.0
pencil and paper	32	18.7	18.9	50.9
group project	25	14.6	14.8	65.7
role play	18	10.5	10.7	76.3
other method	3	1.8	1.8	78.1
a combined method including an interview	15	8.8	8.9	87.0
combined method excluding an interview	13	7.6	7.7	94.7
presentation	9	5.3	5.3	100.0
Total	169	98.8	100.0	
unavailability	2	1.2		
Total	171	100.0		

According to the data, the majority of both students (81%) and teachers (91%) think that a face-to-face interview or a combined method including a face-to-face interview is the most appropriate testing method as their exams. Table 2, however, shows that only 41% of the teachers used a face-to-face interview or a combined method including a face-to-face interview as their mid or final exams; the total was comprised of a face to face interview (32%) and a combined method including a face-to-face interview (9%).

Through the testing methods, 42% of the students thought that speaking or other skills including speaking improved the most. Following this was listening (32%), reading (12%), vocabulary and grammar (10%), and writing (4%).

Through a cross analysis of class size and testing methods it was found that the teachers who had more than 41 students in a class tended to avoid a face-to-face interview testing method. Only 32 % of them used a face-to-face interview or a combined method including an interview, and around 60% of them used a pencil and paper test, a group project or a presentation which could save time and efforts. Most students, who took a pencil and paper test or a combined method excluding a face-to-face interview (e.g. a pencil and paper test and a presentation or a project), answered that listening and vocabulary or reading skills were improved the most through the test methods.

In the open question asking the teachers the reason why the teachers didn't use the most proper test method they thought, a face-to-face interview, many teachers answered that it took too long because there were too many students in the class, and even some teachers answered that a pencil and paper test was a part of a school curriculum and they didn't have any choice. In the interview



one of the teachers answered:

*Why did you choose a pencil and paper test method?*

*- Because it was a part of a school curriculum. My school makes a pencil and paper test for the students in English conversation classes because of its practicality and reliability. All English conversation class teachers should take the test as their final exams.*

*What do you think about the test?*

*- I think it is not a good test method, but it is easy and we don't complain about it. We don't have to make the exams, and it is very convenient and easy to grade. Hmm...I, however, know that it is not a good test and can't encourage students to improve their speaking ability. Actually we all don't think we assess students' speaking ability through the pencil and paper test. But we just keep using it without complaining much because it is easy and convenient.*

To sum up, there were not many teachers (44%) using an interview method or a combined method including an interview. In addition, only 32% of the teachers who had a large class size, more than 40 students in the class, used an interview method even though both students (81%) and teachers (91%) perceived that an interview was the most appropriate testing method as their exams. The data above show that the impracticality of a face-to-face interview method, especially in a large classroom.

## (2) How do teachers and students feel and think about their testing methods?

Table 3 (students: the test was appropriate for assessing and encouraging us to improve our speaking ability)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability strongly agree	3	1.8	1.8	1.8
agree	70	40.9	41.4	43.2
neither agree nor disagree	56	32.7	33.1	76.3
disagree	30	17.5	17.8	94.1
strongly disagree	10	5.8	5.9	100.0
Total	169	98.8	100.0	
unavailability	2	1.2		
Total	171	100.0		

Table 4 (teachers: the testing method was the most appropriate for assessing and encouraging students to improve their speaking ability)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability strongly agree	2	8.3	8.3	8.3
agree	8	33.3	33.3	41.7
neither agree nor disagree	4	16.7	16.7	58.3
disagree	6	25.0	25.0	83.3
strongly disagree	40	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 and table 4 show that around 40% of the students and the teachers thought that their tests were appropriate for assessing students as their mid or final exams, but a fairly high percentage of the students, around 35%, answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the idea. The students seemed to be passive and didn't care much about their test methods. This was confirmed by two of the students interviewed.

*How do you feel and think about the test method?*

- *Well, I don't know. I don't care about it much. I am satisfied with the test method because the teacher gave me a good grade (laugh).*
- *I have never thought about the test method seriously. The teacher gave me a test and I just took it. Is it important?*

It can be also noticed that while only 24% of the students thought that the test methods were not appropriate; 18% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed, quite a large percentage, 42% of the teachers thought their test methods were not appropriate; 25% disagreed and 17% strongly disagreed. These data seem to indicate that the teachers have less positive perceptions about their test methods.

However, in table 5, surprisingly, 53% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that their testing methods should be changed for assessing them more properly. Only 14% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with that idea. According to a cross analysis, even 43% of the students, who took an interview or a combined method including an interview, also strongly agreed or agreed that their test methods should be changed for assessing them more properly; Only 18% of them strongly disagreed or disagreed. This may mean



that they think their teachers interviews were not good enough for assessing them properly although they thought an interview was the most appropriate testing method. Through the interviews it was confirmed.

Table 5 (students: the testing method should be changed for assessing us more properly)

	frequency	%	effective%	cumulative %
availability				
strongly agree	31	18.1	18.3	18.3
agree	59	34.5	34.9	53.3
neither agree nor disagree	56	32.7	33.1	86.4
disagree	21	12.3	12.4	98.8
strongly disagree	2	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	169	98.8	100.0	
unavailability	2	1.2		
Total	171	100.0		

In the interview with one of the students:

*Do you think the test method should be changed?*

*-Yes.*

*Why? You said you thought that a face-to-face interview was the most appropriate test method in an English conversation class and your teacher also used the test method.*

*- Yes, but I think I don't think we were assessed properly because we were just asked several questions in the interview. It took only 5 or 6 minutes.*

In the interview with one of the teachers:

*How long did the interview take for each student?*

*- Within 5 minutes, I guess. I don't remember well.*

*Don't you think it was too short time for assessing students?*

*- Yes, but there were too many students I should interview. I couldn't take any longer*

The answers transcribed above imply that the teachers are not spending enough time for assessing the students because they save time for the next student.

Table 6 (teachers: I chose the testing method since it was practical and easy)

		frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability	strongly agree	2	8.3	8.3	8.3
	agree	11	45.8	45.8	54.2
	neither agree nor disagree	4	16.7	16.7	70.8
	disagree	5	20.8	20.8	91.7
	strongly disagree	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 (teachers: we should look for practical testing methods for assessing students more properly)

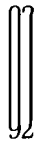
		frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability	strongly agree	4	16.7	16.7	16.7
	agree	10	41.7	41.7	58.3
	neither agree nor disagree	3	12.5	12.5	70.8
	disagree	3	12.5	12.5	83.3
	strongly disagree	4	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 shows that many teachers tend to choose practical and easy test methods as their mid/final exams. Like the students, table 7 shows that the teachers also think that their testing methods should be changed to more practical test methods for assessing students properly and effectively.

Around 70% of the teachers who used a face-to-face interview or a combined method including an interview strongly agreed or agreed with that idea. This may imply that many teachers, particularly the teachers using an interview method, felt that their test methods were not practical.

Through the findings above, it can be said that the students generally feel that their teachers test methods were appropriate. However, the students think their test methods should be changed to assess them more properly. It may mean that the students feel that the teachers testing methods themselves are generally appropriate, but they are not satisfied with the process.

On the other hand, many teachers have less positive perceptions about their test methods than the students, and they tend to choose practical and easy test methods. Many teachers, particularly the ones using an interview method, felt their test methods were not practical and they needed practical oral testing



methods for assessing students effectively.

### (3) How do teachers and students perceive and think about COT?

Around 63% of the teachers didn't know what COT was before reading the description of COT, but the findings show that their attitudes to COT are not negative.

Table 8 (teachers: I am likely to use COT as mid or final exams)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability agree	18	75.0	75.0	75.0
neither agree nor disagree	4	16.7	16.7	91.7
disagree	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 9 (students: I am likely to use COT as mid or final exams)

	frequency	%	effective%	cumulative%
availability strongly agree	26	15.2	15.4	15.4
agree	65	38.0	38.5	53.8
neither agree nor disagree	39	22.8	23.1	76.9
disagree	28	16.4	16.6	93.5
strongly disagree	11	6.4	6.5	100.0
Total	169	98.8	100.0	
unavailability	2	1.2		
Total	171	100.0		

Table 8 and table 9 show that 75% of the teachers agreed and 53% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that they would likely use COT as their mid or final exams if they could use it in school. Only 8% of the teachers and 23% of the students strongly disagreed or disagreed with it. The tables indicate that the teachers show much more positive attitudes toward COT than the students.

Table 10 (teachers: I would prefer COT to an interviews)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability agree	7	29.2	29.2	29.2
neither agree nor disagree	7	29.2	29.2	58.3
disagree	10	41.7	41.7	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 (students: I would prefer COT to an interviews)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability strongly agree	25	14.6	14.9	14.9
agree	51	29.8	30.4	45.2
neither agree nor disagree	30	17.5	17.9	63.1
disagree	46	26.9	27.4	90.5
strongly disagree	16	9.4	9.5	100.0
Total	168	98.2	100.0	
unavailability	3	1.8		
Total	171	100.0		

In the item asking teachers' and students' preferences COT to an interview, there was, however, a significant difference between the teachers' and the students' attitudes and perceptions. While 45% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that they would prefer COT to an interview method, only 29% of the teachers agreed that they would prefer COT to a face-to-face interview although in table 8 the teachers showed more positive attitudes to COT than the students. A quite high percentage of the teachers (46%) answered that they would not prefer COT to an interview method. In the interviews one of the teachers answered:

*Which would you prefer, an interview or COT?*

*- I would prefer an interview to COT.*

*Why?*

*- I guess that I would need more preparatory time for it and seems to be complex. Well, if I use it, I probably will give better answers to your questions.*

*But I think you also need some preparatory time to arrange questions before interviewing students.*

*- No, I don't need to prepare much for an interview. I directly interview with students without any preparation.*



The findings and the teachers' answers above seem to show that the teachers have generally positive perceptions of COT, but they guess they would not prefer it to an interview since it may be more complex and even need more preparatory time to use it as their exams. That was also confirmed through the item asking the practicality of COT.

Table 12 (teachers: COT would be more practical than an interview)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability agree	7	29.2	29.2	29.2
neither agree nor disagree	15	62.5	62.5	91.7
disagree	2	8.3	8.3	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 13 (teachers: COT can encourage students to improve students' speaking ability)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability agree	10	41.7	41.7	41.7
neither agree nor disagree	14	58.3	58.3	100.0
Total	24	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 (students: COT can encourage to improve students' speaking ability)

	frequency	%	effective %	cumulative %
availability strongly agree	23	13.5	13.6	13.6
agree	56	32.7	33.1	46.7
neither agree nor disagree	49	28.7	29.0	75.7
disagree	35	20.5	20.7	96.4
strongly disagree	6	3.5	3.6	100.0
Total	169	98.8	100.0	
unavailability	2	1.2		
Total	171	100.0		

As table 12 shows, over half of the teachers (63%) neither agreed nor disagreed that COT would be more practical than a face-to-face interview, and only 29% agreed with it. Table 13 and table 14 show that 42% of the teachers agreed and 47% of the students strongly agreed or agreed that COT could

encourage students to improve students' speaking ability. However, higher percentage of the teachers, 58% also neither agreed nor disagreed that COT could encourage students to improve their speaking ability. The main reason why many teachers answered neither agreed nor disagreed could be found in the interviews.

In the interviews two of the teachers gave similar answers below.

*- I cant answer because I have never experienced it yet. After experiencing it I would be able to know if it is more practical or it can encourage students to improve their speaking ability*

The findings indicate that both students and teachers seem to have generally positive attitudes to COT. A lot of teachers, however, think that they would not prefer COT to an interview method because COT might be more complex and need more preparatory time to use it as their exams. They seem to be reluctant to use it instead of an interview method. On the other hand, many students think they would prefer COT to an interview method; while 29% of the teachers agreed, 45% of the students strongly agreed or agreed. This data also seem to show that the students have some dissatisfaction with the process of teachers' face-to-face interviews.

The majority of teachers couldn't give clear answers to the questions related to COT because they haven't experienced it and couldn't understand what it really involved. Many students also didn't give answers to the questions; many of them answered neither agree nor disagree.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted to explore teachers' and students' perceptions and attitudes to test methods in English conversation classes. Data was analysed according to the three research questions.

Due to some limitations of this study, there is some doubt whether the findings are valid and reliable. In particular, the teachers' and the students' perceptions and attitudes toward COT couldn't be found very well through this research which had some time restriction and could not give the teachers and the students any opportunities to experience COT.

In spite of the limitations, the findings of this study were helpful to discover what teachers and students thought and perceived about their test methods in English conversation classes.

Most students and teachers perceive that an interview is the most appropriate test method for assessing speaking ability, but not many teachers were using an interview method as their mid or final exams.

There was a difference between the teachers' and the students' preferences of COT. Many teachers think that their testing methods were not appropriate for assessing and encouraging students to improve their speaking ability. The teachers had less positive perceptions about their test methods compared to the students; this might be because the students are passive or not critical about their teachers' test methods.

The teachers tend to choose more practical and easier testing methods as their exams, rather than the test method which is believed to be able to improve students' speaking ability the most. Many teachers felt that an interview was not a practical test method, and in particular the teachers having a large class size avoided an interview method.

The majority of both teachers and students agreed that their test methods should be changed for assessing them more properly. However, while many students think that they would prefer COT to an interview method and that it would be encourage them to improve their speaking ability; according to the data, they seem to have some dissatisfaction with their teachers' interviews, a lot of teachers think that they would prefer an interview to COT, although most of them answered that they were likely to use it as their exams. They seem to guess that COT would be more complex and need more preparatory time.

As it is mentioned earlier, both teachers and students haven't experienced COT and might not have given valid and real their perceptions and opinions to COT. There was a need to give an opportunity to experience COT to explore the teachers' and the students' real perceptions and opinions to COT. The findings of this study, however, indicate that it is desirable to look for a more practical and valid oral testing method for the students and the teachers, especially for the teachers with a large class size. If the teachers keep using inappropriate testing methods just because it is easy and quick, it would be

difficult to produce the students of good speaking ability which the highly competitive global market calls for.

A further research should be conducted to investigate whether COT is a practical and valid testing for assessing students effectively in the large classrooms or other places in which many students have to take an oral test in a short time; two of the Korean universities, Sook Myung and Kang Nam universities, have a great interest in COT and have already been studying it. A further study would be able to contribute to assist in improving the assessment for Korean students speaking ability, which is necessary, but the weakest of four English language skills.

### **Description of COT (Computerized Oral Testing)**

Computerized Oral Testing Software is a programme designed to test speaking proficiency and allows commenting on students oral performances. It comprises three separate modules:

1. A preparation module that allows the teacher to: determine the type of elicitation prompt (text, sound, picture, video, or a combination) and decide how much time is allowed for students to prepare and give a response.
2. An administration module that delivers tests and records students' response. It includes:
  - a. a sound check to make sure the recording feature of the computer is functioning properly.
  - b. performs a student's ID check.
  - c. presents test items to the student and terminates the test, filling the students' responses for written assessment by the teacher.
3. A test assessment module that:
  - a. shows a listing of the test-takers and their respective responses.
  - b. provides a notepad for the teacher to make comments and grade a performance while listening to each test-takers oral responses. These assessment notes and the grades assigned by the teacher can be printed or saved for a later time.

### **Advantages of COT**

1. Oral tests can be given and allow teachers to assess outside of
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class.

2. COT has administrative advantages and efficient scoring capabilities.
3. A variety of response elicitation prompts is possible (e.g. text, graphics, video, or a combination).
4. Tests and results can be easily and economically stored and retrieved.

#### **Limitations of COT**

1. Response elicitation information is restricted to the area of the computer screen.
2. For some examiners, taking a test on the computer may cause additional anxiety.
3. No interaction with the teacher while the test (eg. Requesting clarification as necessary, repairing instances of miscommunications and so forth)

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■요 약

## 영어회화수업에서의 시험방법에 대한 선생님과 학생들의 인식도 연구

주 미 진

본 논문에서는 선생님들과 학생들의 생활영어회화 교양 수업에서의 다양한 시험 방법에 대한 인식 조사를 하였으며, 또한 COT (Computerized Oral Testing)을 소개하여 직접 인터뷰 방식과 비교한 선생님들과 학생들의 반응 및 인식을 연구하였다.

자료 수집 방법으로 설문지와 질적 인터뷰 방법이 채택되었다. 한국에 있는 3 대학에서 생활영어 회화 수업을 하는 24명의 원어민 및 한국인 선생님들과 171 학생들을 선발하여 설문 조사를 실시하였고 그 중 4명의 선생님과 6명의 학생을 임의로 선택하여 질적 인터뷰를 행하였다.

연구 결과 대다수의 선생님들과 학생들은 생활 회화 시험 방법으로서 직접 인터뷰 방법이 가장 적합하다고 응답하였으나, 실질적으로 꽤 많은 선생님들이 선택하는 중간 또는 기말시험방법은 인터뷰 방식이 아닌 좀 더 실용적/경제적이면서도 채점하기에 편리한 시험 방법들을 통하여 학생들의 회화능력을 평가하고 있었다.

즉, 선생님들은 직접 인터뷰 방식이 학생들의 회화 능력을 향상시키고 평가하기에 가장 적절한 시험 방법이라 인식하고 있지만 직접 인터뷰 방식은 한국과 같은 40-50 또는 60 명의 학생들이 한 교실에서 공부해야 하는 교실 상황에서는 비실용적이라 여겨지고 있었으며 그의 대응으로 좀 더 실용적이며 손쉬운 발표형식이나 듣기 또는 과제 등으로 평가가 이루어지고 있음이 연구 결과 나타났다. 이러한 현상은 학생의 수가 많은 교실의 선생님들에게서 더욱 뚜렷이 나타났다. 선생님들과 학생들 모두 회화 능력을 좀 더 적절히 평가하고 또한 시험을 통해 학생들의 회화능력을 향상시킬 수 있기 위해서는 현 시험 방식이 바뀌어야 한다고 응답하였다.

직접 인터뷰시험 방식과 COT에 대한 선생님들과 학생들의 비교 반응 및 인식 조사에서는 많은 학생들이 직접 인터뷰 방식보다는 COT를 선호할 것이라는 결과와는 상반되게 선생님들은 직접 인터뷰 방식을 더 선호 할 것이라 응답하였다. 선생님들은 교실에서의 기계 사용을 꺼려하는 것이 선생님들과의 인터뷰에서 나타났다.

본 연구를 통하여 보다 한국적 교실 상황을 고려한 경제적 (practicality) 이면서도 타당한 (validity) 말하기 능력 평가 도구의 연구가 절실하며 그에 일환으로서 COT에 대한 좀 더 깊은 연구가 요구됨이 나타난다.

