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**Unveiling the Importance of the Washback Effect in
Aligning Effective Teaching Techniques: An
Exploratory Study of EFL Teachers' and Students'
Perspectives at the University of Ain Temouchent**

*A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a
Master's Degree in Didactics and Applied Languages*

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Dedications

This dissertation would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of my parents to whom I am deeply grateful

To my beloved brothers, Walid, Imad and Ramzi , for their constant support and encouragement.

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to the memory of my two grandmothers, (Fafa) and (Zahia), whose love, prayers, and wisdom continue to inspire me.

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Abstract

Two prominent areas of education, "washback" and "curriculum alignment," are extensively explored separately but infrequently combined. The goal of the present research work is to comprehend the relationship between these two and look for any current connections between them. By outlining the empirical connections between the two domains under consideration, this work adds to the body of current literature in this area. This study investigates the interaction between washback and curriculum alignment with the aim of knowing how they assist in aligning effective teaching practices. A descriptive design was employed, and two questionnaires served as data instruments. The participants were five teachers and twenty-five students, selected to provide information on the interaction between assessment practice, curriculum alignment, and classroom instruction. The study points out areas of overlap between curriculum alignment and washback and indicates that such areas are useful in guiding practice and counteracting the negative influence of examination on learning. The study comes to the conclusion that a more comprehensive understanding of how an aligned educational system might lessen the detrimental effects of exams on classroom instruction can be obtained by examining curricular alignment and washback combined. Through such intersections, the study contributes to the existing evidence base in curriculum and assessment and suggests lines for further research on the combined contribution of washback and alignment towards effective teaching.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Learning is universally praised as the most powerful means of personal and societal advancement. Learning exists, in part, through instruction and assessment: two supporting elements that work together to ensure quality education. Assessment can not only assess students' ability and knowledge, but it can influence practice in classrooms. In teaching a foreign language, assessment and instruction are so merged that it is not possible to think of one without the other. Of all educators, teachers are most affected by tests and testing design and decisions make determinations about what gets taught and how it is taught. The washback effect is the powerful weapon that assessment has on teaching and learning. This effect is gaining more attention among educational researchers today.

The washback effect can be positive or negative: when tests are well constructed and appropriately matched with curriculum objectives, tests can provide positive washback to help encourage educators to engage in better teaching practices, keep students actively engaged in studying, and achieve worthwhile learning outcomes.

In educational systems, assessment serves both as an evaluative mechanism and as a means of control. The widely held perception that testing will result in educational enhancement often fuels reform initiatives. This constitutes the starting point of the present research work. Indeed, despite growing recognition of this phenomenon, empirical research in the Algerian EFL setting is scarce to date, particularly with regard to washback effects on teachers' decision-making at the classroom level and teaching behaviors. Such a void in the literature constitutes the general problematic of this research, which seeks to investigate the impact of assessment on teaching and learning processes within the EFL context.

Therefore, the current study seeks to achieve the following objectives: first, to determine the extent to which washback effect affects teachers' classroom practices; and

secondly, to determine how assessment affects the teaching methods employed by teachers in teaching English as a foreign language.

To achieve these objectives, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

Q1: To what extent does the washback effect influence EFL teachers' classroom decision-making and teaching behavior?

Q2: In what way does the washback effect influence the approaches taken in instruction by teachers?

For these questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:

In order to test these hypotheses, the researcher uses a descriptive exploratory research design. The sample population of this research is composed of five EFL teachers and twenty-five Master one students of Didactics and Applied Languages. Two research tools are employed: a teachers' questionnaire to analyze their practice in the classroom and pedagogical decisions, and a students' questionnaire to identify the way they perceive how assessment affects their learning.

The present dissertation consists of three main chapters: the initial chapter presents the theoretical aspect of testing, assessment, and the washback phenomenon. The second chapter presents the methodological processes like research design, instruments, and sample in addition to data analysis. The third chapter provides an interpretation of the main findings as well as suggestions and recommendations. Last but not least, the dissertation concludes with

recommendations and proposals to further improve teaching and learning, and assessment practice, in the Algerian EFL context.

Chapter One: Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

In language education, the connection between assessment and teaching has attracted considerable attention from researchers. A key concept within this area is the washback effect, which refers to how testing influences both teaching methods and student learning behaviors. This effect can be either beneficial or detrimental, depending on how closely assessments align effective instructional practices. This literature review explores assessment also known as the process of gathering information to understand what students know and can do. In addition, it tackles assessment and its types. Subsequently, the researcher highlights the washback effect with its types. Lastly, teaching techniques will be dealt with. At the end previous studies will be reviewed to show how washback can affect teaching positive or negative.

1.2. Assessment defined

Assessment is the systematic process of collecting, interpreting, and using information to understand and improve students' learning and achievement. According to Brown (2010:30) "Assessment is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. Whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously assesses an assessment of the student's performance."

Assessment is inherent in learning and teaching, and research has given various definitions to assessment. Assessment is an ongoing process in which the teachers do not consciously deliberate on judging the learners' answers, comments, or efforts in using new patterns of language, as noted by Brown (2010, p. 6). Black and Wiliam (1998, p. 2) then remind us of the assessment activity of teachers and students that provides feedback to inform and adapt teaching and learning. Nitko (2001, p. 3) brings attention to assessment in decision-making, where assessment is defined as an information-gathering process used in decision-

making regarding students, curriculum, and programs. Gronlund (2006, p. 5) confirms that assessment involves gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information to determine the extent to which instruction objectives' are achieved by learners. Similarly, Harlen (2007, p. 15) explains assessment as the collection, interpretation, and use of information on the responses of pupils to learning activities. Collectively, the definitions present that evaluation is an integral and continuous process that informs teaching, enables learning, and informs educational decisions.

Evaluation is an element of professional development and should be seen as more than a technical problem. Stufflebeam & Shinkfield (2007), in their book "Evaluation Theory, Models, and Applications" aim to help and inform teachers and their support staff about evaluation tasks.

These include assessment systems that are concerned with the planned use of evaluation findings. Performance-monitoring systems assess outcomes on a recurring basis to guide decision-making, experimentalist systems gauge the effect of new methods of education or innovation through controlled trials, and evaluation-accreditation systems ascertain whether programs or institutions have met stated standards for quality and recognition. But these systems, as Chelimsky (1997) notes, also suffer from severe challenges, such as the continuous creation of new evaluation models and the tendency to generate routine information aimed first and foremost for administrative use in day-to-day practice.

1.3. Importance of Assessment

Assessment plays a vital role in the teaching process and is significant in education. Teachers can categorize and grade their students, provide feedback, and adjust their lesson plans based on the results of appropriate assessment. Since assessment methods have been evolving, scientists and educators have recently shown an increased interest in the requirements of assessment procedures in the context of teaching foreign languages and the

learning process. In foreign language teaching and learning, assessment procedures should adhere to five fundamental principles: authenticity practicality, reliability, validity, and washback. Distinguishing the effects of assessment and reviewing any classroom-based issues between the teacher and the student are the primary benefits of the aforementioned principles. Assessment practices in foreign language instruction should be given importance and thought since they have an impact on both teachers and students.(Tosuncuoglu,2018)

It is well known in the field of education that there is a set of relationships, intended and unintended, positive and negative, between testing, teaching and learning. The earliest literature can possibly be traced back to Latham (1877) when he referred to an examination system as an “encroaching power,” and how it impacts parents, educators, authors of educational publications, and the public's perception of education, as well as how it shapes the prevailing perspective of life and work among young men.

1.4. Types of Assessments

Assessment can take different forms, each serving specific purpose in teaching and learning. Understanding the types of assessment helps teachers make informed instructional decisions and supports students’ learning effectively.

Evaluation in education encompasses assessing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning through both process and product analysis, with results reflected in behavioral changes.

1.4.1. Formative Vs. Summative Assessment

Formative assessment is the collection of evidence on learners' progress in ongoing instruction with a view to providing feedback that will help improve teaching and learning. Formative assessment may take the shape of quizzes, in-class discussions, assignment drafts,

Chapter One: Literature Review

or comments by teachers. Formative assessment, as an integral component of effective teaching, has existed for a considerable period. However, in the last twenty years, formal theories regarding this assessment type aimed at enhancing students' evolving understandings and encouraging them to take ownership of their learning have been developed in various countries (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Cowie & Bell, 1999; Sadler, 1989)

Summative evaluation, on the other hand, is taken at the end of a learning unit or course in order to evaluate what has been acquired by learners. It usually happens in the form of terminal tests, regular tests, or terminal projects.

In brief, formative assessment involves ongoing, informal and formal feedback during the learning process to help improve teaching and student performance, emphasizing qualitative insights. Summative evaluation occurs at the end of instructional periods to measure overall achievement, skills, and learning outcomes. In their book handbook on formative and summative of student Learning, Bloom, Hastings, and Madaus(1971) discuss how these evaluation techniques influence student behavior and teacher effectiveness, aiming to identify strengths and weaknesses in the current system and suggest improvements for better educational assessment practices.

Both formative and summative assessments are required components of a properly balanced testing regime since each provides distinct types of information about students' achievement. Formative testing promotes learning by identifying strengths and weaknesses in the process, while summative testing validates achievement at specific times. Complete reliance on one to the detriment of the other might distort the student progress image, so both must be employed effectively (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

1.4.2. Diagnostic Evaluation

Diagnostic evaluation is a type of assessment conducted before or at the beginning of instruction to identify students' prior knowledge, strengths, weaknesses, learning difficulties, and specific needs. Its purpose is not to grade students but to provide teachers with information that can guide instructional planning and ensure that teaching strategies are adapted to learners' levels.

There is currently a high need for testing tools that can produce more diagnostic and insightful results than are possible with standard tests. Two primary methods are distinguished in literature regarding diagnostic assessment: (a) deficit assessment, which emphasizes the student's shortcomings, and (b) error analysis, which focuses on the kind of mistakes the student makes. Leighton and Gierl (2007), in their text *Cognitive Diagnostic Assessment for Education: Theory and Applications*, discuss ongoing research on diagnostic assessment that integrates methods from artificial intelligence and cognitive psychology. They suggest that psychometric models available to date may need to be revisited and even new ones created to build useful diagnostic instruments. Furthermore, they note that the sequential and dynamic nature of diagnostic testing makes the conventional method of content specification in static taxonomies inappropriate. Finally, the authors note that the psychometric and content requirements of diagnostic testing actually necessitate computer-based test administration.

1.4.3. Placement Evaluation

In education, placement refers to the process of assigning students to a particular level, class, or program based on their existing knowledge, skills, or abilities. The main purpose of placement is to ensure that learners are grouped appropriately so that instruction matches their current level of proficiency and learning needs.

Evaluation of students in fieldwork is such an important process, and evaluation systems must be revised regularly as training programs evolve. In 1995, the University of Queensland occupational therapy program developed the Student Placement Evaluation Form through an action research process, creating a criterion-referenced evaluation tool to assess students' performance.

1.4.4. Norm-referenced Vs. Criterion-referenced Evaluation:

Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced testing are two various ways of measuring educational performance. Norm-referenced testing compares the performance of a single student with that of a norm group, generally peers. This is seen in percentile ranks which indicate an individual's standing relative to others (Popham, 2014). The SAT (college admission test measuring, reading, writing, and math skills) or IQ (test measuring general intelligence and cognitive ability) tests commonly apply this procedure to rank and choose students.

On the contrary, criterion-referenced tests measure a student's performance based on specific learning objectives or criteria. They state whether a student has acquired specific skills or content knowledge irrespective of the performance of others (Popham, 2014). Such information can be used to adjust instruction because it shows whether students attain mastery levels, as compared to their performance with respect to others.

Experiments have shown criterion-referenced scaling to also result in higher rater agreement than norm-referenced scaling (Cuhadar & Gelbal, 2021). Even research summarizing pass/fail judgments indicates enormous differences in results based on standard-setting (criterion-referenced) or norm-based cutoff selections (Lok, McNaught, & Young, 2015).

Although norm-referenced and criterion-referenced approaches have different purposes, other authors indicate that both can be used in conjunction with one another especially within the outcomes-based curricula¹. This allows for both comparative assessment and mastery-oriented measurements of students' performance.

1.4.5. Ipsative Evaluation

Ipsative evaluation is a type of assessment that measures a learner's progress by comparing their current performance with their own previous performance, rather than with the performance of other.(S)

Ipsative feedback is likely to be useful and may have extra motivational benefits because it is based on a comparison with the learner's prior performance and is connected to long-term improvement. Ipsative assessment is definitely worth more research because of the possible high rewards for students (hughes, 2011).

Knowing the essence of each type and when to use the exact type of assessment is crucial for teachers to achieve intended objectives. According to Berriet-Solliec, Labarthe, and Laurent (2014) all parties involved are encouraged to focus on selecting the most appropriate evaluation techniques to focus more on the caliber of the evidence generated and used throughout the evaluation process. To better handle this problem, a "theory of evidence for evaluation" is required. Their article emphasizes the need for a "theory of evidence or evaluation" the connections between the three primary objectives of evaluation: learning, measuring, and understanding and the different kinds of evidence that are generated, such as evidence of presence, difference-making, and mechanism employed in the assessment process.

¹ Outcomes –based curricula focus on designing courses and programs around the specific knowledge , skills and abilities that students are expected to achieve by the end of their learning.

1.5. The Washback Effect Definition

The washback effect refers to the influence that testing and examinations have on teaching and learning, either positively or negatively. According to Alderson and Wall (1993) “washback is the effect of testing on teaching and learning.” Assessment, accordingly, has a determinative role in instructional and learning priorities (McEwen, 1995a). "Washback" or "backwash" refers to the effect of testing on instructional practice (Alderson & Wall, 1993). Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman (1996) describe washback as the link between assessment and the learning process. Similarly, Gates (1995) defines it as the impact that testing has on both teaching and learning. Messick (1996) explains washback as the degree to which the use of a test prompts language teachers and learners to engage in practices they normally would not which can either support or hinder language acquisition. In essence, washback refers to how external assessments shape instructional and learning behaviors in language classrooms.

Tests can have significant consequences for students and teachers, impacting their self-esteem, reputation, and career progression. High-stakes tests, defined as those used to make immediate decisions, can lead to 'washback', where students and teachers do things they would not otherwise do. Alderson and Wall (1993) note that tests can influence teaching by encouraging educators to focus on specific syllabus content or question types believed to appear on the test.

Research here tends to address two fields: the influence of traditional large-scale multiple-choice tests, which have often been linked to negative consequences in terms of educational quality (Madaus & Kellaghan, 1992; Nolan, Haladyna, & Haas, 1992; Shepard, 1990), and the use of alternative assessment, such as performance-based tasks, to yield more beneficial results (Linn & Herman, 1997; Sanders & Horn, 1995). Ultimately, washback

demonstrates how assessment reshapes teaching and learning practice (Cheng, 1998a; Wall, 1999). This washback effect can be positive or negative, depending on whether it supports or hinders the achievement of educational objectives.

1.6. Types of Washback

Washback in the context of language testing and assessment refers to the effect that tests have on teaching and learning. There are two main types of washback: positive and negative.

1.6.1. Positive Washback

Positive washback occurs when testing promotes beneficial teaching practices and supports student learning. According to Messick (1996), washback represents a consequential aspect of construct validity, emphasizing the importance of aligning assessments with intended learning outcomes. Positive washback is often associated with authentic and direct assessments, which help reduce construct under-representation and construct-irrelevant difficulty. In applied linguistics, positive washback refers to the extent to which the use of a test encourages beneficial behaviors in language teachers and learners, promoting teaching practice and learning activities that effectively enhance language acquisition (Shohamy et al., 1996).

1.6.2. Negative Washback

Negative washback refers to instances where testing leads to harmful teaching strategies or restricts learning, often due to the pressure to 'teach to the test'. In other words, when a test's format or content is predicated on a limited definition of language proficiency, it is said to produce negative washback which limits the teaching and learning productivity.

The washback theory in language testing explains the impact that tests have on teaching practice, learning behaviour, and curriculum development. Though favorable

washback may be useful in promoting efficient learning and teaching approaches, unfavorable washback is discovered to occur when tests create practices that work against educational goals. Unfavorable washback usually manifests itself as narrowness in the curriculum, overemphasis on mechanical memorization, and test-orientated teaching (Canlı & Çakır, 2022; Zatouli, 2024).

Empirical findings indicate that when high-stakes tests are biased towards certain language skills, such as grammar or reading, teachers may be coerced to teach only these at the loss of other skills, such as speaking and listening (Canlı & Çakır, 2022).

1.7. Washback Effect and Teaching

Top-down reforms of education aimed at implementing change in teaching and learning via testing have tended to be driven by the expectation that testing might be a key for educational change (Noble & Smith, 1994a, 1994b; Alderson & Wall, 1993). These works take into account teachers' perceptions of some of the features of teaching discovered in a big-scale study of washback, namely how testing can affect certain areas of teaching and learning (Cheng, 1998a). In particular, it takes into account how teachers' perceptions are shaped by the introduction of a new test.

Spratt (2005) examines the role of teachers in determining types and intensity of washback from external exams and tests in English language teaching. It defines the term 'washback', identifies areas where it occurs, and examines intervening factors. The paper emphasizes that washback is not an automatic effect of exams and suggests ways to teach towards exams and promote positive washback.

Bahari (2021) explores the washback effects of e-portfolio assessments in a language teacher preparation course. Eighteen EFL teachers participated, and data was collected through interviews, observations, document analysis, and reflective journals. Results suggest

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that e-portfolio assessments generate positive effects on learning, such as building a community of practice, facilitating peer learning, and enhancing content knowledge. However, they also bring negative effects like learning anxiety and resistance to technology (Bahari,2021;Bahari et al.2023).

Although washback has been widely studied, particularly in connection with high-stakes international tests such as TOEFL and IELTS, its effects on language teachers and classroom practices have not been well addressed. Chan (2020) indicates that more research must be conducted to better understand how teachers can respond effectively to the impact of washback.

As far as Algeria is concerned, empirical studies provide fascinating perspectives on how assessment forms have effects on teaching practice via washback. Chaouki (2017) implemented an Alternative Testing Model at the secondary schools in Biskra and found that it generated positive washback, with greater learner-centered instruction, diversified materials, and improved attitudes towards teaching and learning. Comparatively, Mirza, Teymoori, and Mirza (2023) reported negative washback concerning the high-stakes Baccalaureate exam: teachers prioritized traditional, exam-focused methods at the expense of communicative skill development, linking this to incompatibility between the test and competency-oriented curriculum. In higher education, Cheriet and Ramdane (2023) reported that Continuous Assessment methods introduced under the LMD system may also produce adverse washback, as such assessments sometimes created practices that did not maximize effective EFL instruction. Overall, these studies illustrate that innovative assessment change can support positive pedagogic development but that high-stakes or non-aligned systems can reinforce limiting, exam-focused practices in Algeria.

1.8. Washback Effect and Curriculum Development

The washback effect refers to how tests influence teaching and learning practice, while curriculum development is the process of designing, and organizing methods to achieve learning goals.

The washback concept describes the impact that tests and exams have on teaching methods, learning habits, and even the curriculum itself. Scholars contend that this impact could be positive (when tests support curriculum objectives and encourage sound teaching) or negative when exams compel learners and teachers to concentrate narrowly on exam-oriented skills instead of more general educational objectives (Bailey, 1996; Green, 2007).

Washback could be witnessed on various levels. At the classroom level, instructors find themselves altering their teaching and students alter their learning habits around what is going to be tested. Instructors will draw attention to test-taking strategies more likely to be on the test, and students end up studying more for tests and less for learning (Cheng & Curtis, 2004). At the level of policy and curriculum, 'mass testing'² can inform how curricula are written, textbooks authored, and teaching systems structured in response to assessment needs (Shu, 2024).

Among the primary concerns in the literature is the need for alignment between instruction strategy, assessment, and goals of the curriculum. If tests are aligned with curriculum objectives, they can potentially yield positive washback and encourage meaningful instruction, as well as encourage learners to seek more in-depth learning (Alderson & Wall, 1993). However, if tests are poorly aligned with curriculum purposes, they may create

² "mass testing" refer to Large-scale tests, involving a lot of people or students at once.

"teaching to the test," which tends to inflate short-term scores at the cost of fostering the growth of higher-level skills and creativity (Cheng, 2005).

Because of this, washback consideration is of paramount importance during curriculum planning. Goodly planned tests not only measure learning outcomes but also guide the teaching behaviors in ways beneficial to the greater educational goal. Curriculum planners and policymakers need to ensure that assessment systems align with instructional goals rather than corrupting them, and therefore washback becomes a key component of long-term curriculum reform (Spratt, 2005; Shu, 2024). This area is the main concern of the present research work.

1.9. Previous Studies

In order to provide a systematic review, the existing washback and curriculum alignment research have been synthesized using the scoping review approach. Both curriculum alignment and washback studies examine classroom instruction, therefore, alignment studies may be a new direction for washback research if curriculum alignment yields the washback effect on instruction and learning in the classroom

Additionally, the phrase "assessment literacy" is not widely recognized in the world of education. This is regrettable since teachers' proficiency and understanding of assessment can significantly impact both their teaching and students' learning. It is unclear how a teacher's level of assessment literacy and the washback of this kind of evaluation relate to one another, particularly in the setting of higher education. Given this gap, different research papers made meticulous efforts to investigate key assessment literacy topics in connection to student learning, including the definition and significance of assessment literacy, assessment in higher education, and assessment procedures.

Chapter One: Literature Review

In Bailey's (1996, p. 259) words, "The impact of testing on teaching and learning is known as washback." Following the lead of this remark, one study by Soomro and Shah (2016) examined the impact of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exam on the English teachers in Pakistan. The researchers administered a 16-item Likert-scale questionnaire to high school English teachers to explore the washback impact in four domains: activity/time organization, methodology, classroom materials, and content selection. The results revealed that the SSC exam exerted a significant impact on the method choice of teachers, with the majority resorting to the Grammar–Translation Method (GTM) in the classroom.

Cheng (2005) examines the evolution of the washback effect over the past four decades, revealing its shift from negative connotations to positive pedagogical effects. His study highlights the impact of washback on language pedagogy and suggests re-engineering language assessment practices. The study uses a traditional narrative review with a Global South critical approach, highlighting the importance of aligning assessments with curriculum goals and improving teachers' assessment literacy. Finally, Cheng (2005) recommends designing assessments that measure learning and improve the educational process.

Syafrizal(2022) aimed to understand an eleventh-grade English lecturer's perceptions of online classroom testing for English language teaching and the washback of students' formative assessments. A case study involved 25 University students and semi-structured interviews. The results showed that the lecturer had positive perceptions of formative assessment understanding and strategies for follow-up actions. The washback of online classroom tests was dominated by positive feedback, with 60% of students feeling relaxed and 48% believing the lecturer reviewed all materials.

Ismail (2016) finds out which pronunciation instruction methods language instructors prefer (traditional or modern). It provides an overview of the global history and current trends

in teaching pronunciation, enumerates both conventional and contemporary methods, and attempts to identify the top three methods that language instructors like when instructing their pupils in pronunciation. Additionally, it looks into whether the three most popular pronunciation teaching methods and enrolling in a pronunciation course for a B.A. in education are related.

Another research presents the description about negative washback in Bangladesh secondary schools in order to examine the factors leading to a negative washback impact on the teaching and learning of English in secondary schools in Bangladesh. They interviewed twelve teachers and the results indicate that socio-political and contextual factors beyond the test could greatly influence washback. (Ali, Hamid, & Hardy, 2023).

Cheng (1997) is one of the scholars who studied the influence of exam reform on teaching and has been cited more than 50 times in the literature. She focused on the 1993 revision of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination in English and its purported aim of creating a positive washback effect: aligning better testing with teaching and improved classroom preparation. Based on interviews and classroom observations, her research found that secondary school teachers adapted their teaching in response to the reform. This study illustrates the strong linkage between assessment policy and teaching, revealing how large-scale examinations can impact classroom teaching.

In Morocco, Zatouli (2024) found that the structure of the Baccalaureate test encouraged an inflexible, memorization-based approach to teaching grammar at the loss of communicative and critical language practice opportunities. Similarly, Houda (2021) stated that EFL learners feel compelled to attend to test-specific knowledge to the detriment of more universal language ability and are subsequently affected by reduced motivation and learning depth.

The impact of washback is not limited to regular classroom settings. Khodamoradi, Maghsoudi, and Saidi (2021) reported that online formative tests administered amid the COVID-19 pandemic caused anxiety and excessive focus on exam preparation at the expense of serious learning from materials. Correspondingly, Al-Majd (2023) highlighted that web-based tests have limiting definitions of language ability, constraining teaching methods and pedagogical autonomy. In general, these studies highlight the importance of integrating assessment design and instruction to deter negative washback and support holistic language learning.

1.10. Conclusion

The present chapter constitutes the theoretical part of the work. It starts with defining assessment and its types. The literature shows that different types of evaluation and assessment play a key role in shaping teaching methods. Subsequently, the washback effect was defined with its types. The chapter has also collected and reviewed several relevant studies on the topic of washback. Moreover, the studies reviewed explain how different types of washback, whether positive or negative, affect both teachers' practices and students' learning. The coming chapter is the core of the work as it states the research methodology and data collection procedures in addition to data analysis.

**Chapter Two:
Research Design,
Data Collection and
Analysis**

Research Design, Data Collection Procedure and Data Analysis

2.1. Introduction

The Washback phenomenon plays a crucial role in shaping students' learning experiences and influencing teachers' instructional methods. In this context of aligning effective teaching techniques, understanding the scope of this effect is essential. This chapter examines the impact of the washback effect on both teachers and EFL learners. It begins by presenting the participants involved in the study, followed by a description of the research design and the instruments employed for data collection. The chapter then outlines the procedures for data analysis.

2.2. Research Design

Kothari (2004) describes research design as the organization of conditions under which data are to be collected and analysed to fulfill the research goals effectively. In the same vein, Creswell (2014) defines research design as the overall plan that guides decisions from theoretical suppositions to data collection procedures and analysis strategies. These descriptions pinpoint that a research design allows systematic, reliable, and uniform procedures to answer the research questions.

The research in the current paper is a mixed-methods study, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyze the washback impact on EFL learning and instruction. This research design is descriptive in its nature attempting to describe the current state of washback among learners and teachers. It is explanatory as well aiming to determine the underlying reasons for observed effects. The quantitative strand utilized a questionnaire that was filled by 25 students, and the qualitative strand involved questionnaire with 5 EFL teachers. The use of two questionnaire data provides triangulation that increases the validity and richness of the study findings.

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2.3. Description of Sample Population

Sample population refers to a smaller group of individuals, objects or events that are selected from large (called the target population) to take part in a research study. “A sample is a group of participants or elements taken from a larger population for the purpose of a study, representing the population so that conclusions can be drawn” (Creswell, 2014, p. 158), this definition highlights that a population represents the entire group that the researcher is interested in studying. However, it is often impractical to study the whole population, which makes it necessary to select a sample. For Creswell (2014, p. 158): ‘A population is the group of individuals who have the same characteristics’. The sample population under investigation in this research work consisted of twenty-five EFL students at Belhadj Bouchaib and five EFL teachers from the same university. The investigators have used in their research a simple random sampling as the participants were chosen randomly.

2.3.1. Teachers’ Profile

The sample of teachers in the present study has comprises five teachers from the University of Ain Temouchent, Belhadj Bouchaib. All teachers are female and they all hold a doctorate degree in different specialties in English. Their teaching experiences range from seven to thirty years. The following table presents teachers profiles:

Teachers	Specialty	Degree	Years of experiences
Teacher 01	ESP	MCA	30years
Teacher 02	Didactics	MCA	15years
Teacher 03	Culture	MCA	16 years
Teacher 04	Sociolinguistics	MCB	7years
Teacher 05	ESP	MCA	15years

Table 2.1. Teachers’ Profile

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2.3.2. Students' Profile

This study examines Master One students enrolled in the specialization of Didactics and Applied languages. The sample consists of twenty five students mixed between males and females. The exact number of males or females was not taken into consideration, as gender is not a significant variable in this research.

2.4. Data Collection and Research Instruments

This phase of the study presents data collection which is defined as “the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in a systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses , and evaluate outcomes.” (Creswell,2014. 160). A research instrument is a tool used to collect, measure, and analyze data related to the subject matter of a study.

The current research employed two research instruments to answer the different research questions and use mixed methods to collect data. Accordingly, two questionnaires were used: one was submitted to twenty five Master twenty-fives students, and the second to five EFL teachers.

2.4.1. The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a structured research instrument that consists of set of questions prepared to obtain information from respondents about specific issues related to study. It can include open-ended, closed-ended, or scaled questions; and it is particularly effective for gathering standardized data from a large number of participants in relatively short time. For this present study, two questionnaires have been employed in order to answer the research questions and examine the hypotheses: One was distributed to 25 Master One students at the English department, and the second was designated to five EFL teachers. The two questionnaires' comprehensive description is offered in what follows.

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2.4.1.1. Aim and Description of Students' Questionnaire

The primary aim of the students' questionnaire was to gather data regarding students' perceptions of examination and to examine how these assessments influence their learning strategies, motivation, and classroom participation. The collected responses will serve to identify and evaluate the extent to which the washback effect shapes and informs their overall learning experiences.

The questionnaire employed in this study was designed to investigate the washback effect of examinations on teaching practices and student's learning behaviors. It consisted of fourteen items, including ten multiple-choice questions and four open-ended questions. The multiple-choice items addressed key aspects such as students' feelings toward exams, the influence of exam preparation on learning, the frequency of studying beyond the exam syllabus, preferred feedback types, challenges faced during preparation and testing, and the opinions on exam formats and purposes. The open-ended questions invited participants to elaborate on their perspectives regarding the role of exams, teacher preparation strategies, exam design considerations, and post-exam feedback practices. This structure allowed for the collection of comprehensive data, also collecting their personal experiences and reflections, thereby ensuring a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

2.4.1.2. Aim and Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

A questionnaire consisting of ten questions was conducted with five teachers. In order to gain deeper insights into washback effect, each teacher was asked ten questions designed to explore their perceptions, experiences, and teaching practices in relation to examination.

The main aim of this questionnaire was to explore teachers' perception and experiences regarding the washback effect of examination on their teaching practices. Through this questionnaire, the researcher sought to gather in-depth insights into how

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assessments influence teachers' methods of instruction, classroom strategies, feedback practices, experiences and attitudes toward students' learning. The questionnaire was designed to collect data that complements the students' questionnaire results and helps build a clearer understanding of the scope and nature of the washback phenomenon from teachers' perspective.

This questionnaire was designed for university teachers to investigate the washback effect of examinations on teaching practices. It consists of both multiple-choice and open-ended questions, allowing for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The items explore key aspects such as teachers' preferred assessment methods, types of feedback provided, the extent to which exam results influences their teaching strategies, and their reflections on positive and negative washback experiences. In addition, the questionnaire seeks teachers' suggestions to how minimize negative washback and improve assessment practices, and provide comprehensive insights into the ways examinations shape teaching methods, classroom decisions, and overall instructional effectiveness.

2.5. Analysis of the Main Findings

To carry out this phase of the study, it is required to analyze the results of the collected data through the traced procedures in both qualitative and quantitative analyses. This step has been conducted for the sake of finding complementary results that aim to elucidate and unveil the importance of the washback effect in aligning effective teaching techniques.

2.5.1. Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

In this part of the research work, each question will be analyzed separately. The first rubric is an informative one about personal information and showed that the five teachers hold a doctorate degree in various specialties, in addition to their teaching experiences. The results indicate that the average teaching experience was approximately 17years, while both the

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median and mode were 15 years. This suggests that most participants have been in the profession for a considerable period which adds weight to their perspectives on the washback effect of examinations.

- Rubric two: Evaluates teaching practices and strategies related to assessment

Question02: what kind of assessment do you generally opt for in your classes?

-Formative -summative -both -other types (please specify)

The data presented here the type of assessment they generally opted for in their classes, all five participating teachers reported that they use both formative and summative assessment. This response indicates that the teachers recognize the importance of combining the two approaches , formative assessment ,which supports ongoing feedback and learning , and summative assessment which evaluates students 'performance at the end of a learning unit or course. The facts that all teachers reported using both suggests that their assessment practices are balanced, aiming both to monitor progress and to measure students' achievement.

Question03: what kind of feedback do you usually provide your students with?

- written - spoken -Both

The aim here was to exhibit which kind of feedback that is usually used by teachers in their classrooms. All the five participants stated that they rely on both written and spoken feedback. This shows that teachers try to combine the advantages of the two forms: the spoken feedback helps students understand mistakes quickly and receive encouragement in the classroom, while written feedback gives them a record they can review later to improve their work.

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Question04: Do you think that your students take feedback into consideration or they just focus on the grade?

The five teachers gave different answers. One stated that some students do take feedback into account; another teacher mentioned that it depends on the learner, as active students usually consider feedback while others ignore it. A third noted that students generally focus more on the grade. Another explained that it depends on each student, as both cases can occur. Overall, the responses indicate that while some students value feedback, many remain more grade-oriented, and the impact of feedback varies from one learner to another.

Question05: Do the assessment's results influence your teaching?

The aim of this question is to see if the teachers effect from the result of their students or not. Out of the five teachers surveyed, four indicted that assessment results influence their teaching, while one stated they do not. The majority highlighted that the results help them identify learners' weaknesses and provide remedial work, evaluate and improve their own teaching accordingly, and motivate students to enhance their performance. Several noted that low results prompt them to reconsider lesson content and adapt their teaching strategies, while others emphasized that assessments reveal students' knowledge assimilation and skill development, guiding whether to maintain or adjust instructional methods. All in all, most teachers view assessment outcomes as a formative tool for improving both teaching effectiveness and students' learning.

Question06: When preparing your student for exam, on what aspect do you generally focus?

-the points the students failed in in the test.

-Readdress new points.

-Both of them

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-others (please specify)

Out of the five teachers, four indicated that when preparing students for exams, they focus on both the points students previously failed and the introduction or reinforcement of new content. One teacher reported focusing solely on readdressing new points. These responses suggest that most teachers adopt a comprehensive approach, addressing students' weaknesses while also covering additional material to enhance overall understanding and readiness. The minority response indicates a more forward-looking strategy that prioritizes new content over remediation. Accordingly, the findings reflect a tendency among teachers to balance revision with new learning to better prepare students for assessment.

Question07: After exams, do you generally address the points where students failed or you just move on in the syllabus?

This question aims at consolidating the data gathered from the previous question. Among the five teachers, four teachers indicated the address students' weaknesses after exams, while one simply moves on with the syllabus. The approaches vary, some address gaps implicitly or during corrections, others explain how to improve. This shows most teachers value feedback and remediation, though methods differ.

Question08: How does a student's score affect you? How do you deal with it?

The aim of this question to see if student test result if it effect teachers, out of five teachers, three indicated that students' scores influence their teaching in various ways. Some use the results to evaluate their own effectiveness and determine if objectives are met while others reconsider lesson content and teaching methods when scores are low. One teacher stated that scores do not affect them directly, and another emphasized raising students' awareness about their academic performance. Hence, most teachers view students 'scores as

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feedback for improving instruction or supporting learners, though the degree and manner of influence vary.

Question09: can you provide example of how assessments impact teaching methods based on your experience?

The aim of this question is to investigate teachers' experiences with assessment practice influence their choice of teaching methods in the classroom. All five teachers indicated that assessments influence their teaching. One reflected on methods and adopted new ones to ensure progress. Another varied strategies by using visuals and interactive activities based on students' needs. A third simplified complex content by removing unnecessary details. A fourth emphasized that assessment results inform the efficiency of methods, techniques, and materials. The fifth confirmed adapting instruction according to assessment outcomes, noting that this may lead to better results. Therefore, assessments guide teachers in improving their approaches to support learning more effectively.

Rubric three: the washback effect

Question10: how do you define the washback effect, and how does it influence teaching and learning?

All five teachers provided definitions and examples of how washback influences teaching and learning. Several emphasized that it affects curriculum design and leads to adjustments in teaching methods and materials to match test formats and objectives. Others noted that class time often focuses more on exam strategies, question types, and time management. Some described washback as either positive or negative, depending on the alignment between tests and curriculum goals. One teacher highlighted that test scores reflect students' understanding and guide instructional decisions. Overall, the responses show that

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washback shapes both teaching practices and student learning behaviors, with its impact varying in scope and direction.

Question11: have you experienced a positive or negative washback effect throughout your teaching experience? Can you describe it?

The aim of this question is to explore whether teachers perceive the effect of washback as positive or negative in their teaching experience. Among the four teachers , two experienced both positive and negative washback , one reported only positive effect ,and one stated they have not experienced negative washback. Positive effects were linked to assessments that encouraged interactive activities, deeper learning, and motivated students, while negative effects occurred with grammar-focused exams or unmotivated learners.

Question12: how can teachers modify their teaching techniques to minimize negative washback effect?

The aim of this question is to identify strategies that teachers can adopted to reduce the negative washbak effect of assessment on teaching and learning. The five teachers suggested several ways to reduce negative washback. One emphasized adjusting content, methods, and timing, while another focused on lesson content and developing learners ‘competence. A third highlighted balancing exam preparation with meaningful communicative activities, and a fourth stressed using assessment feedback creatively through engaging tasks such as discussions and debates. The fifth recommended adapting teaching based on students ‘results and scores. All in all, teachers propose aligning exam preparation with authentic learning while responding to students’ needs.

Question13: what changes would you suggest to current assessment practices to better support effective teaching techniques?

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The aim of this question is to gather teachers' suggestion for changes or improvements in current assessment practices. Among the four teachers, three suggested changes to improve assessment practices. One recommended designing assessments that reflect real-life language use and communicative competence, another emphasized focusing on formative assessment, and third proposed giving students more opportunities for critical thinking and argumentation. The fourth teacher stated that she had no suggestions. Most teachers favor assessments that promote meaningful learning and students' engagement.

Question14: In your opinion, apart from washback effect, what are other key factors that contribute to effective teaching techniques?

The aim of this question is to explore teachers 'perspective on additional factors-apart from the washback effect- that influence the effectiveness of teaching techniques. Five teachers identified several factors, beyond washback, that can enhance teaching effectiveness. They mentioned teacher motivation, training and continuous professional development, along with learner – centered approaches and sensitivity to students' individual needs. Other suggestions included differentiated instruction, varied strategies to avoid routine, encouraging interaction and critical thinking, considering classroom conditions and curriculum design, and integrating ICT tools. This highlights that effective teaching depends on a mixture of pedagogical skills, inclusive practices, and supportive learning contexts.

2.5.2. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire:

In this part of the research work, each question will be analyzed separately based on the different rubrics. The students who took part in this study were 25 students of master one in Didactic and Applied language.

-Rubric one: Evaluates students' behaviors and actions due to exams.

How do you usually feel about exams?

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The first question is about students' feelings and opinions about exams and their influence on learning. The following figure shows the results obtained.

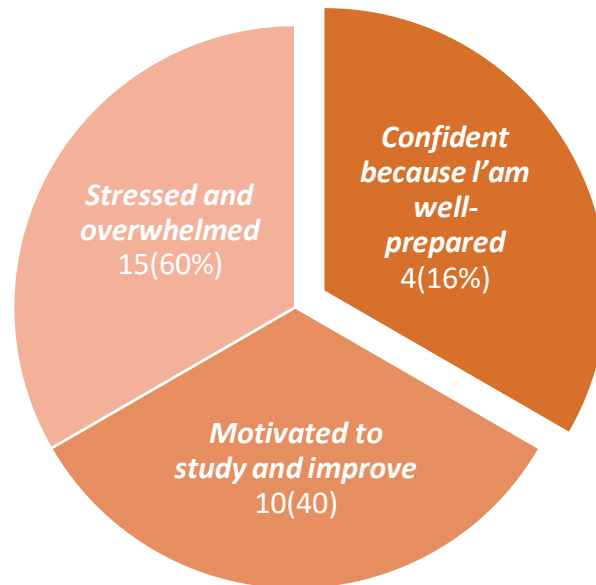


Figure 2.1. Students 'feeling about exams

-The majority (60%) feel stressed and overwhelmed, showing exams are a source of anxiety. Only 20% feel motivated indicating exams often create pressure rather than inspiration. While the remaining portion stated that they feel confident because they are well prepared.

Question02: when teachers focus on preparing for exams, how does it affect your learning ?

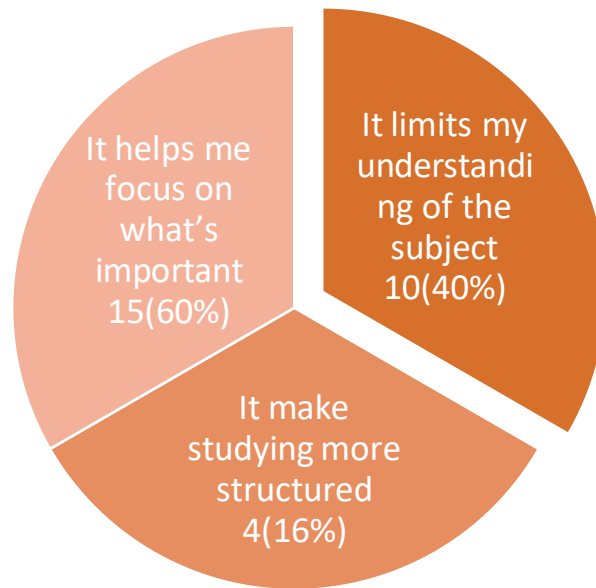


Figure 2.2 teachers focus on preparing from exams

Most students (60%) indicated that exam-focused teaching helps them concentrate on essential content, reflecting a positive washback effect. However, 16% felt that such focus restricts their understanding of the broader subject matter, while exam preparation can be beneficial for focus, it may also narrow the curriculum and limit deep learning opportunities.

Question03: How often do you study topics not directly related to exams?

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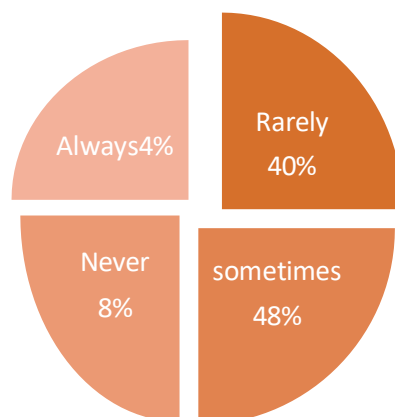


Figure 2.3: students' study topics not related directly to exam

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Only 4% of students reported always studying beyond the exam syllabus, with 48% doing so sometimes and 40% rarely. This suggests a strong exam-oriented learning approach, where assessments significantly shape students' study habits. Such behavior reflects a narrowing of learning scope due to washback, as students prioritize tested content over broader knowledge acquisition.

Question04: what kind of feedback after an exam is most helpful?

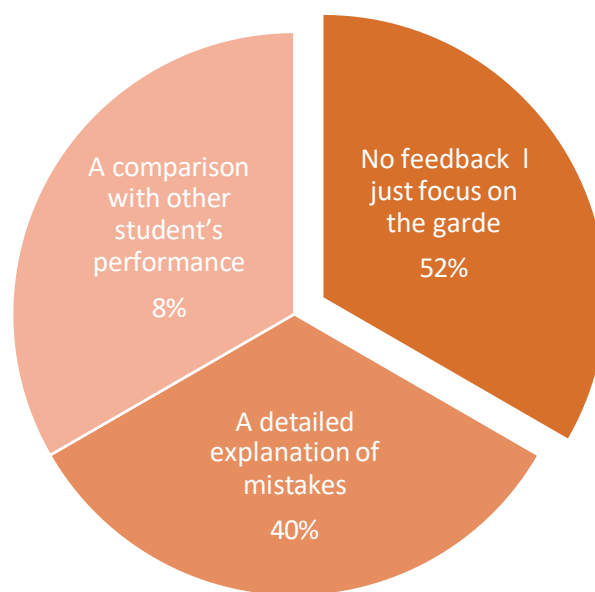


Figure 2.4 students' feedback after exam

Over half of the students (52%) reported receiving only grades without additional feedback, while 40% expressed a preference for detailed explanations of their mistakes. This finding suggests that current feedback practices are predominantly summative, with limited formative feedback provided.

Question05: what challenges do you face when preparing for exams?

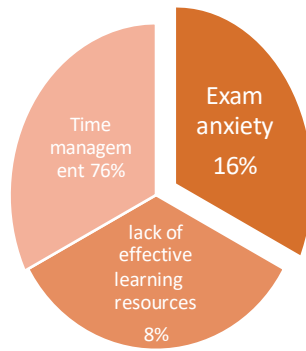


Figure 2.5 student's challenges when preparing for exams

Time management emerged as the dominant challenge, reported by 76% of students. Exam anxiety (16%) and lack of resources (8%) were also noted. This implies that interventions targeting time management and stress reduction could improve exam preparation and overall student performance.

Question 06: What kind of exams do you think help students learn better?

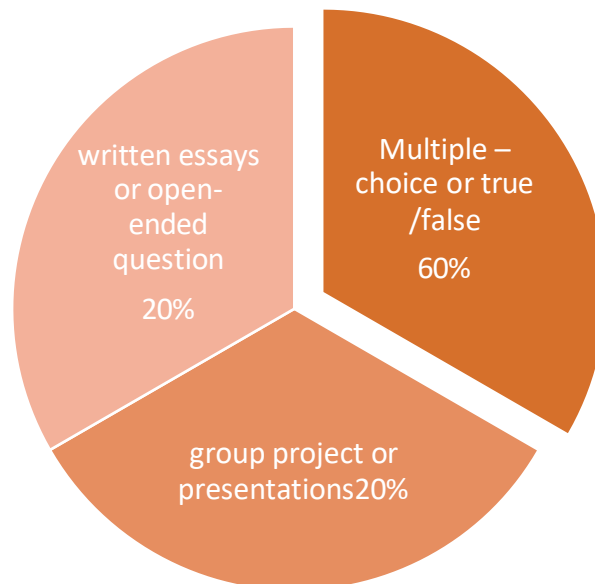


Figure 2.6 students' kind of exam they prefer

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The majority (60%) preferred objective tests such as multiple-choice and true/false questions, while 20% favored written essays and 20% valued project-based assessments. Although objective tests dominate, the presence of significant support for open-ended and authentic assessments suggests that students recognize the benefits of diverse evaluation methods that assess higher-order thinking skills.

Question07: when studying for exams, which method do you find most effective?

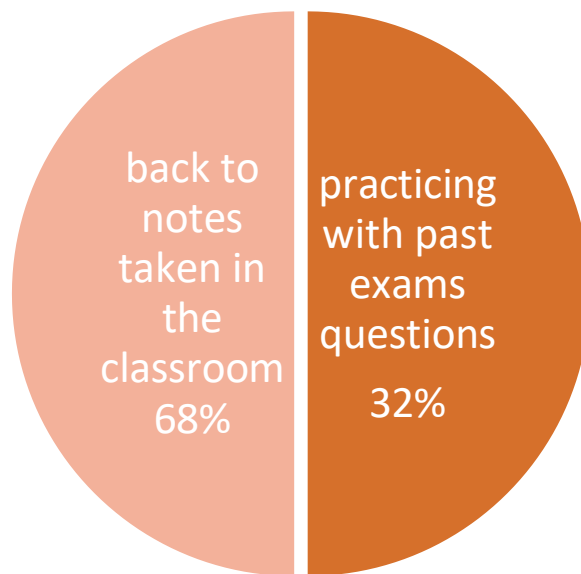


Figure 2.7 which methods student find better for revising

A Large proportion of students (68%) rely on reviewing notes, while 32% focus on post exam questions. This suggests that many students prefer memorization and direct review over practice –based approaches. such strategies indicate a tendency toward exam-focused preparation rather than exploring concepts beyond tested material.

Question08: what should be the main purpose of exams, in your opinion?

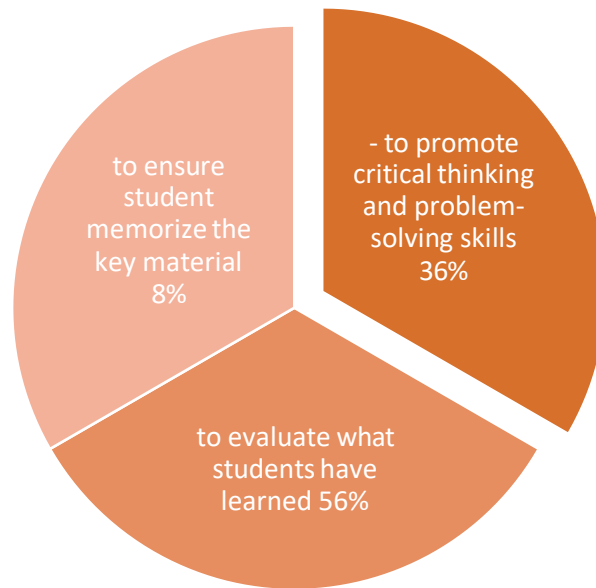


Figure2.8 the main purpose of exam

Most students (56%) perceive exams as tools for evaluating learning, while 36% believe they should promote critical thinking and problem-solving. Only 8% associated exams with memorization. These results suggest that while evaluation is the primary perceived function, there is also recognition of the potential for exams to enhance higher-order cognitive skills.

Question09: How should teachers design their lessons around exams?

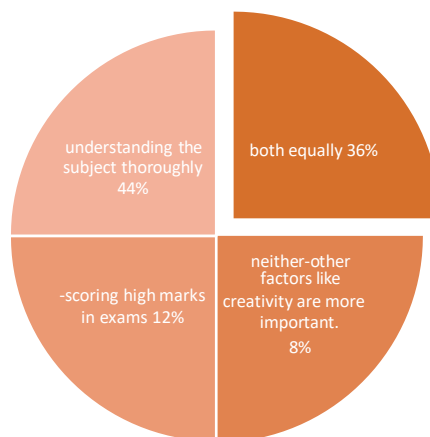


Figure2.9 the design of teachers' lessons according to students' opinion

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A significant proportion (44%) emphasized understanding the subject over exam scores, while 36% advocated for balancing both equally. Only 12% prioritized high scores. These findings indicate that students value meaningful learning and prefer instructional approaches that integrate exam preparation with broader understanding.

Question10: what do you find most challenging during exams?

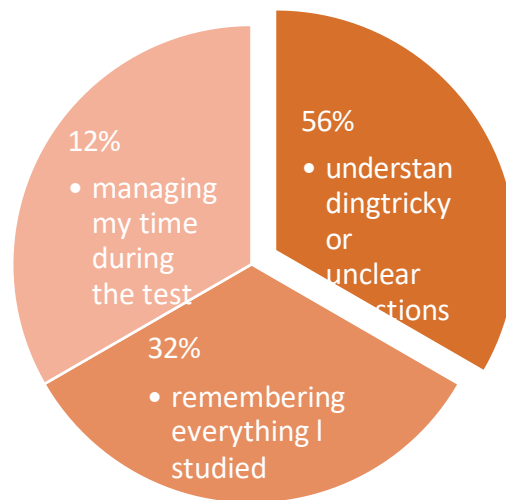


Figure2.10 the challenges face during exams

More than half (56%) reported difficulty understanding poorly worded or unclear questions, 32% struggled with memory retention, and 12% found time management challenging. These findings highlight the importance of clear exam design and fair assessment practices.

Question11: Do you agree exams should be used to evaluate the student only or have other aspects?

Based on the 25 responses, the majority of students expressed that exams should not be limited to evaluating students' knowledge or academic level only, but should serve multiple purposes. Many respondents emphasized that exams need to assess broader skills

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such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving rather than focusing solely on memorization. Several students also highlighted that exam results should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching methods and guide improvements in instruction. Others pointed out that exams can help students identify their weaknesses, learn from mistakes, and enhance their motivation to study. In contrast, a smaller number of students agreed that exams should primarily measure students' knowledge and level, the responses highlight a strong preference for a more comprehensive approach to exams, where assessment supports both teaching improvement and students' overall learning development rather than serving only as a grading tool.

Question12: what would you like teachers to focus on when preparing students for exam?

Based on the students' responses, it is evident that they expect teachers to go beyond simply covering the entire syllabus and instead focus on strategies that make exam preparation more effective and meaningful. Many students emphasized the need to prioritize key concepts and the most important points rather than trying to memorize all course content, as this helps them manage the heavy workload. Several participants also highlighted the importance of developing critical thinking, creativity, and application of knowledge instead of rote learning. Another recurring theme in the responses is the need for practical support, such as practicing with previous exams, receiving hints or guidance on likely exam topics, and understanding exam formats and strategies including time management. Additionally, students suggested that teachers should provide timely and constructive feedback, clarify difficulty areas, and create a supportive environment that reduces stress and encourages innovation thinking, overall the responses indicate that students value a balanced approach that combines conceptual understanding, exam techniques, and emotional support to better prepare them for assessment.

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Question13: on what aspect should teachers focus when designing exams?

The analysis of students' responses reveals that they expect exams to be closely aligned with the learning objectives and the material taught during the course. Many students stressed that assessments should evaluate the intended learning outcomes rather than include unrelated or excessively complex questions. A recurrent theme is the need for exams that assess higher-order thinking, such as critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving, rather than relying solely on memorization. Students also expressed a preference for variety and balance in exam formats, recommending a mix question types and level of difficulty to accommodate diverse learners and provide a fair opportunity for all to demonstrate their knowledge. Furthermore, clarity and fairness were frequently mentioned, with students calling for clearly worded questions that avoid ambiguity or unnecessary trickery. Another important aspect identified was inclusivity, which involves designing exams that match students' varying learning styles and ensuring the time allocated corresponds appropriately with the length and difficulty of the exam. Overall, students believe that well-structured and fair exams that focus on conceptual understanding, application of knowledge, and higher-level skills will better reflect their learning and provide a more meaningful assessment of their abilities.

Question14: Do your teachers re-address the point you have failed in during the exam or they just move on in the syllabus?

Students' responses reveal mixed experiences. Many stated that teachers often move on to new content without reviewing students' mistakes, which they felt left gaps in understanding. Others noted that some teachers do provide feedback by highlighting common errors or offering brief explanations, but this practice is inconsistent. Overall students emphasized that reviewing mistakes is essential for improving learning and preventing

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repeated errors , suggesting that exams should be used not only to assign grades but also as opportunities for remediation and growth.

2.6. Conclusion

The present chapter shed light on the research design and the methodological procedures followed in this study. It described the population, which included 25 Master one students of Didactics and Applied languages and five experienced EFL teachers at Belhadj Bouchaib University, and explained the instruments used to gather data, namely two questionnaires that combined quantitative and qualitative items. The procedures of data collection and analysis were also clarified to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. Overall, this methodological framework was established to investigate the washback effect of examinations on both students' learning and teachers' teaching practice. The obtained results will be interpreted in the coming chapter. In light of the results found, a number of suggestions and recommendations will be proposed on how to benefit from washback in order to foster more effective teaching and learning.

**Chapter Three:
Data Interpretation
and Suggestions**

3.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the interpretation of the main results presented in the previous chapter. It also outlines suggestions and recommendations that arise from the findings of this study. The purpose is to provide clearer understanding of the implications of the results and to propose practical measures that may enhance the teaching and learning. The chapter ends with the research limitations and ethical considerations.

3.2. Interpretation of the Main Results

This section concerns the discussion and explanation of the main findings obtained from the questionnaire of the teachers and the questionnaire of students on already discussed hypotheses. This section aims at testing the hypotheses for validity and whether they are being accepted or rejected.

Firstly, the aim of this study is to examine the impact of washback effect on EFL teachers' behavior and practices. Teachers' questionnaire findings show that the respondents are experienced teachers (Question 1), with years of service cited as 7, 15, 15, 16 and 30 years; the mean experience is approximately 17 years, while both median and mode are 15 years. This long experience gives their views on the washback effect of examinations credibility. For the decisions made for assessment, all five teachers reported that they apply formative and summative assessment (Question 2). This convergence tells us that teachers make a conscious effort to incorporate continuous feedback with the end-of-unit assessment to track progress as well as measure achievement simultaneously. As for giving feedback, All teachers agreed that they give written and oral feedback (Question 3), possibly demonstrating a desire to provide instant explanation and longer records to support progress. However, teachers also acknowledged that students respond differently to feedback: some react to remarks, while others only recognize the mark (Question 4). This divergence implies that, although teachers

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are investing in feedback, its pedagogical impact is moderated by students' grade-orientation—an early sign of washback affecting classroom practice.

In addition, the findings show that test outcomes directly impact instructional decision-making. Four out of five teachers indicated that test outcomes shape their instruction (Question 5). They apply results to diagnose faults, provide remedial work, and, if necessary, revisit lesson material and method. When preparing students for examinations, teachers tend to take an integrated approach: four of them consider where pupils weak-pointed as well as rehearsing new points once more (Question 6). After exams, the same pattern is observed, four teachers addressing weakness amongst pupils, and one carries on with the syllabus (Question 7). These trends confirm that testing acts as a formative tool; the lone dissenting practice specifies that remediation, though valued, is not necessarily standardized. For the collective effect of scores, three instructors reported that the outcomes of students cause them to evaluate their own proficiency, adjust goals, and adjust strategies; one instructor reported no direct impact, and another emphasized heightening students' consciousness (Question 8). All together, these responses affirm that washback is integrated by instructors as feedback upon their practice and prompts methodological modification.

Moreover, instructors provided concrete examples of the way in which assessment redefines their methods (Question 9). They described adopting new methods in order to advance, altering strategies with visuals and interactive activities according to learners' needs, simplifying complex content, and implementing outcomes to measure the effectiveness of methods, techniques, and materials. Their washback definitions (Question 10) agree on the idea that testing impacts planning for the curriculum and produces changes in methodologies and materials in order to match formats and aims; time will become directed into exam strategy, types of questions, and timing. Teachers especially noted washback as positive and negative depending on alignment between tests and curriculum aims. In practice, the

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experienced type of washback is hybrid: two of the four teachers who responded specifically to this question noted both positive and negative effects, one noted only positive effects, and one noted that they had not experienced negative washback (Question 11). Positive effects were linked with interactive tasks, increased learning, and motivation; negative effects arose when grammar-focussed exams or low motivation curbed pedagogy.

The same group of answers suggests ways of minimizing negative washback and maximizing teaching approaches. Teachers proposed changing content, method, and timing; balancing exam preparation with real communicative activity; using assessment feedback imaginatively through activities like discussion and debate; and changing teaching based on students' results (Question 12). When prompted to suggest changes to current assessment practice to better support effective teaching, the most common suggestions were for assessments founded on authentic language use and communicative ability, more emphasis on formative assessment, and more opportunities for critical thinking and argumentation (Question 13). Finally, teachers identified other key factors underpinning effective approaches beyond washback: motivation of teachers, pre-service training and in-service continuing development, student-centered approaches, sensitivity to students' individual needs, differentiated instruction, varied approaches to avoid routinization, promotion of interaction and critical thinking, emphasis on classroom environment and curriculum planning, and integration of ICT tools (Question 14). These suggestions collectively validate the hypothesis that washback impacts on teaching. The second hypothesis—is regarding the washback effect on teaching practices—is also supported: instructors' practices replicate test forms and foci (use of remedial focus and new content, scores concentration, and strategy practice), while students' experience and needs reflect the need for clearer feedback, fairer forms, and greater-order skills (Students' Questions 2–13). Generally, the findings show washback here to be massive and two-edged: it structures instruction in possibly beneficial ways but concurrently

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has the potential to constrain pedagogy to that which is tested. On this account, the research proposes strengthening the formative role of assessment, promising fairness and transparency of exam construction, and including communicative, authentic, and cognitively demanding tasks so that washback is targeted towards opening up rather than constricting EFL teaching and learning.

As regards the second strand, examining the way washback is actualized through learners' experience and thus indirectly supports or constrains teachers' practices, the questionnaire of students presents converging evidence. With regard to emotional responses towards exams, the most (60%) were stressed and overwhelmed, while 20% were motivated (Question 1), indicating dominance of negative washback in terms of emotion. When the teachers emphasize exam preparation, most students (60%) perceived that it causes them to be interested in the things that matter, although 16% thought it narrows their scope of knowledge about the subject (Question 2). This ambivalence shows that exam-oriented teaching can structure learning well but risks limiting the curriculum. Study habits are strongly exam-oriented: only 4% always study beyond the syllabus; 48% do so occasionally, and 40% rarely (Question 3). Assessment methods, as perceived by students, are chiefly summative: over half (52%) reported receiving only marks, whereas 40% demanded elaborate feedback on mistakes (Question 4). These views also conflict with partly reported provision of written and spoken feedback by teachers (Teachers' Question 3), an intention-experience mismatch that sustains a grade-oriented culture.

Time management (76%) was also the most common difficulty found by students, followed by test anxiety (16%) and lack of resources (8%) (Question 5), suggesting also that washback operates through workload and stress. Preferential test forms orient towards objective tests (60%), followed by 20% essays and 20% group projects or presentations (Question 6). Study habits are also more towards notes (68%) than practice through past

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exams questions (32%) (Question 7), reflecting a memorization orientation over performance-oriented practice. As for the main purpose of exams, 56% saw them as tools to measure learning, while 36% believed that they should develop critical thinking and problem-solving (Question 8). In planning lessons in relation to exams, students took into account learning the subject first (44%) or as compared to marks (36%), and only 12% took high marks first (Question 9). Under examination conditions, the most difficulty for the majority was vague or poorly phrased questions (56%), followed by memory recall (32%) and time management (12%) (Question 10). These reflect a desire for clearer exam construction and fair marking procedures. This would probably alter teachers' approaches in ways that reduce adverse washback.

Open-ended student answers also imply bigger purposes of assessment. The majority felt that tests had no right to limit themselves to measuring knowledge but also needed to examine critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities; direct teaching improvement; diagnose weakness areas; and increase motivation (Question 11). When asked what teachers should do when getting students ready for exams, students preferred prioritizing key ideas, rehearsing past or practice questions, receiving guidance on likely topics and types (including time constraints), and receiving on-time, constructive feedback within a safe, stress-free environment (Question 12). For the design of examinations, students called for alignment with learning objectives, assessment of higher-order thinking, variety and balance in formats and difficulty levels, clarity and fairness, accessibility to various learning styles, and relative timing suited to task demands (Question 13). Finally, when asked whether teachers re-cover errors or merely go on, students reported diverse experiences, with most noting that teachers simply go on without review of errors, while others observed brief corrective exercises; generally, they emphasized the need for remediation to prevent the repetition of errors (Question 14). Considered together, these perspectives lend support to the

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interpretation that the washback today is shaping teaching towards exam content and procedures, but the learners themselves are calling for additional formative, open, and cognitively profound assessment.

Based on the research findings and the above discussion, the initial hypothesis about the way washback affects EFL teachers is confirmed: teachers' actions, planning, habits of giving feedback, and decisions about methodology are measurably affected by testing pressures (Teachers' Questions 1–9), with positive (adjustment, , focus, motivation) and negative (range-restriction, grade-orientation) consequences. The second hypothesis which is regarding the washback effect on teaching practices is also supported: instructors' practices replicate test forms and focus (use of remedial focus and new content, scores concentration, and strategy practice), while students' experience and needs reflect the need for clearer feedback, fairer forms, and greater-order skills (Students' Questions 2–13). Generally, the findings show washback here to be massive and two-edged: it structures instruction in possibly beneficial ways but concurrently has the potential to constrain pedagogy to that which is tested. On this account, the research proposes strengthening the formative role of assessment, promising fairness and transparency of exam construction, and including communicative, authentic, and cognitively demanding tasks so that washback is targeted towards opening up rather than constricting EFL teaching and learning.

3.3. Suggestions and Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing findings, a number of insights spring into mind. Therefore, this section is devoted to some implications that ought to be taken into account by EFL teachers in particular and students in general in order to promote the influence of the washback.

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- ***Ensure Alignment between tests and learning objectives:***

Examination should be designed to reflect the intended curriculum outcomes. When assessments are directly linked to the knowledge and skills emphasized in the syllabus, they encourage both teachers and learners to concentrate on meaningful learning rather than on superficial test preparation.

- ***Integrate formative assessment practices:***

In addition to summative examinations, teachers should employ formative assessment methods such as quizzes, peer assessment, and classroom discussions. These approaches provide ongoing feedback and enable students to monitor their progress, thereby enhancing learning effectiveness.

- ***Adopt communicative and performance-based Tasks:***

Including oral presentations, debates , problem-solving activities , and project work in assessment fosters authentic language use and critical thinking . such techniques reduce overreliance on rote memorization and stimulate learners' creativity and engagement.

- ***Provide constructive and timely feedback:***

Teachers are encouraged to offer detailed feedback that highlights learners' strengths and areas for improvement. This practice helps students view examinations not merely as judgment tools, but as opportunities for growth and development.

- ***Offer training in test design for teachers:***

Professional development programs should focus on assessment literacy, enabling teachers to design reliable and valid tests. Well-prepared educators are more capable of constructing examinations that produce positive washback and reflect students' true abilities.

- ***Foster learner Autonomy:***

Encouraging students to self-assess, set personal learning goals, and engage in reflective practices enhances their responsibility for learning. By linking assessment to independent study strategies, learners become more motivated and self-directed.

- ***Balance high-stakes testing with creative practices:***

While standardized assessments remain necessary, they should be complemented by innovative methods such as portfolios, journals, and project-based learning. This balance minimizes test-related anxiety and promotes a more comprehensive view of learning.

- ***Strengthen collaboration among stakeholders:***

Effective communication and collaboration between curriculum designers, teachers, and examination boards are crucial. Joint efforts ensure that assessments promote desirable learning outcomes and minimize the risks of negative washback.

3.4. Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations. It was carried out with small group of teachers and students in one setting, the use of questionnaire only may limit the depth of findings. Moreover, some teachers didn't answer. Despite these limits, the study still provides useful insights into the topic.

3.5. Ethical considerations

In the present research work, all ethical guidelines were meticulously followed to safeguard participants' dignity and rights. The research complied with the ethical standards of the English Department at BELHADJBOUCHAIB University, emphasizing honesty, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Prior to data collection, participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, content, and procedures.

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All data were collected anonymously, with no personal details included to protect identities. Furthermore, every source was properly cited, and the findings were reported accurately without fabrication or manipulation.

3.6. Future perspectives

In the Future, more studies on the washback effect could examine how it influences teachers 'methods and students 'learning over a longer period. Researchers may also look at different types of assessment to find ways that reduce negative effects and encourage positive learning outcomes.

3.7. Conclusion

To conclude, the findings in this chapter confirm that washback has a strong influence on teachers 'practice and students 'learning. Additionally, as it can encourage motivation, adaptation of methods, and interactive learning, it may also create stress, narrow teaching to exam content, and reinforce grade-orientation. The suggestions and recommendations presented highlight the need for formative assessment, authentic tasks, constructive feedback, and collaboration to reduce negative effects and promote positive washback in EFL classrooms.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The relationship between testing, teaching, and learning has always been said to be at the center of the process of education. In this relationship, washback has been increasingly prominent for its effect on classroom practice as well as learner behavior. This is on the one hand. On the other hand, due to today's dynamic and complicated reality and the speed at which technology is developing, requests for adjustments in instruction at all educational levels are common outcomes. Alternative teaching techniques and processes must be used in conjunction with creative strategies that encourage active learning in order to improve students' academic achievement and teachers' performance at the tertiary level.

Accordingly, the present study sought to uncover the importance of washback in relation to effective teaching methodologies, particularly how tests impact not only the learning habits of students but also pedagogic practices of teachers in the EFL context.

This study was carried out at Belhadj Bouchaib University and relied on two main research tools: a questionnaire completed by 25 Master one students of Didactics and Applied Languages specialty, and a questionnaire completed by five experienced EFL teachers. The study consisted of three chapters: the first analyzed the theoretical foundations of washback phenomenon and the available research in the field, and the second described the research design, participants, instruments, and procedures. The third chapter was devoted to interpretation of the main results in addition to suggestions and recommendations. By this organization, the study aimed to explore the extent to which examinations produce positive or negative washback and how such an influence could be leveraged to bring about alignment towards more effective pedagogic practice.

The most important conclusions were that tests exert a strong influence on teacher pedagogical practice. Teachers adapt their teaching to fit examination requirements, placing

an undue focus on the matter taught in the tests and making an excessive use of narrow materials, a process resulting in "teaching to the test." This limits the encouragement of more generic communicative competencies and reduces the scope of class activities. At the students' level, tests exert a strong influence on learning strategies and motivation. Rather than studying with English as a tool of actual communication, students worry about grades, depend on past exam papers, and take private tuitions. While some positive washback was seen, such as giving structure and guidance to the students, the overall washback was seen to be largely negative.

From these findings, the research hypotheses were confirmed. Exams do have an effect on teaching and learning but typically in ways that counter long-term education goals. Taking this into consideration, a variety of proposals and suggestions was offered to maximize more useful washback and enable the alignment of effective teaching strategies. These include encouraging teachers' professional development with seminars and group work on teaching evaluation, providing students with constructive rather than grating feedback, making learning and teaching objectives more explicit, and incorporating more communicative content in test construction to increase their motivational value and relevance. Further, it was recommended that policy makers and teachers take into consideration students' psychological state and make efforts towards effective implementation of new, innovative testing procedures.

In spite of its discoveries, the present study also possessed some shortcomings. A number of participants were not properly made aware of the concept of washback and required explanation prior to their response, while others returned very limited or brief responses to open questions. These challenges restricted the degree of some of the data collected.

General Conclusion

Finally, the study has proven the vital role of the washback effect in the formation of teaching methodologies as well as learning strategies. If used positively, washback can prove to be a powerful tool to reorient testing in alignment with sound teaching practice and upgrade the quality of EFL instruction. If left unattended, negative washback can harm the learning process and the whole education system. Test innovation and assessment thus remains an open field for new research and development.

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Appendices

Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire submitted to gather data about the importance of the wash back effect in helping teachers to design innovative teaching techniques. First, here is a definition of the washback effect:

The washback effect refers to the influence that testing and assessment can have on teaching and learning process; it highlights how the nature of assessment can shape educational practices, curriculum design, and students' behavior. Essentially, when tests are introduced, they can encourage educators to modify their teaching methods to align with the test format.

Questions:

1_How long have you been teaching?

2. What kind of assessment do you generally opt for in your classes?

_Formative

_Summative

_both

_Other types (please specify)

3. What kind of feedback do you usually provide your students with?

Written

Spoken

Both

4. Do you think that your students take feedback into consideration or they just focus on the grade?

5. Do the assessment's results influence your teaching?

Yes

No

Others

If yes, can you explain how?

6. When preparing your student for exam, on what aspect do you generally focus?

The points the students failed in in the test

Readdress new points

Both of them

Others

7. After exams, do you generally address the points where students failed or you just move on in the syllabus?

8. How does a student's score affect you? How you deal with it ?

9. Can you provide example of how assessments impact teaching methods based on your experience?

10_How do you define the washback effect, and how does it influence teaching and learning?

11_Have you experienced a positive or negative washback effect throughout your teaching experience? Can you describe it?

12_How can teachers modify their teaching techniques to minimize negative washback effect?

13_What changes would you suggest to current assessment practices to better support effective teaching techniques?

14_In your opinion, apart from washback effect, what are other key factors that contribute to effective teaching techniques?

Students' questionnaire

This questionnaire aims to explore the impact of washback on teaching techniques .your responses will help us understand how testing influences teaching methods and classroom practices ,the following questionnaire aims on how assessments effect both teachers and learners , examining areas such as teaching strategies ,motivation, and learning outcomes. Your participation is voluntary ,and all responses will be kept confidential. please answer honestly based on your experiences . Thank you for your time and contribution .

1)-How do you usually feel about exams?

Motivated to study and improve

Stressed and overwhelmed

Confident because I'am well_prepared

Other feelings

2) *_when teachers focus on preparing for exams, how does it affect your learning ?*

It helps me focus on what's important.

It limits my understanding of the subject

It make studying more structured

3) *_How often do you study topics that are not directly related to exams?*

Always

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

4) *_What kind of feedback after an exam is most helpful to you ?*

A detailed explanation of mistakes

A comparison with other student's performance

No feedback _I just focus on the garde

5) *_What challenges do you face when preparing for exams?*

Time management

Exam anxiety

Lack of effective learning resources

6) *_What kind of exams do you think help student learn better?*

Multiple _choice or True/false

Written essays or open_ended question

Group project or presentations

7) *_ when studying for exams,which method do you find most effective ?*

back to notes taken in the classroom

Practicing with past exams questions

Other methods

8) *_What should be the main purpose of exams,in your opinion ?*

To evaluate what students have learned

To ensure student memorize the key material

To promote critical thinking and problem _solving skills

Others

9) *_How should teachers design their lessons around exams?*

Scoring high marks in exams

Understanding the subject thoroughly

Both equally

Neither _other factors like creativity are more important

10) *_What do you find most challenging during exams?*

Understanding tricky or unclear questions

Managing my time during the test

Remembering everything I studied

Others

11) *_Do you agree exams should be used only for evaluate the student or have other aspects ?*

12) *_What would you like teachers to focus on when preparing students for exam?*

13) *_On what aspect should teachers focus when designing exams*

14) *Do you teachers readdress the point you have failed in during the exam or they just move on in the syllabus ?*

Summary:

This dissertation addresses the importance of the washback effect in organizing effective instructional practices in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses. The most important aim is to reveal how assessment influences teachers' pedagogical decisions and the selection of instruction strategies. In order to resolve this issue, questionnaires were administered to teachers and students. The findings indicate that washback is central to deciding instructional approaches: it may encourage more communicative, learner-centered approaches when positive, but may also give rise to examination-oriented instruction when negative. The research concludes that considering the washback effect is central to achieving congruent alignment between learning objectives, instructional approaches, and assessment practice

Résumé:

Ce mémoire examine la fonction d'effet de washback dans le cadre de l'alignement des techniques d'enseignement lorsque ces dernières se veulent efficaces selon les enjeux formulés en anglais langue étrangère (EFL). Il fiabilise les manières dont les dispositifs d'évaluation influencent la manière dont les enseignants exercent leur pratique pédagogique et choisissent leurs actes pédagogiques. Grâce à des questionnaires envoyés à un groupe d'enseignants et d'apprenants, les résultats suggèrent que l'effet de washback a sa place dans l'orientation du matériel d'enseignement (pouvant être le cas de démarches plus communicatives, centrées sur l'apprenant si le washback est positif, ou en entier focalisé vers la réussite à l'examen si le washback est négatif) qui sera favorisé. En conclusion, l'effet de washback ne peut être ignoré en tant qu'élément à prendre en compte vers un alignement pédagogique objectif – qui recherche un lien entre les objectifs, les méthodes de l'enseignement et les pratiques d'entretien.

ملخص:

تتناول هذه الأطروحة أهمية تأثير الارتداد في تنظيم ممارسات تعليمية فعالة في دورات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL). ويتمثل الهدف الأهم في كشف كيفية تأثير التقييم على القرارات التربوية للمعلمين واختيار استراتيجيات التدريس. ولحل هذه المشكلة، وُجّهت استبيانات للمعلمين والطلاب. وتشير النتائج إلى أن تأثير الارتداد أساسي في تحديد مناهج التدريس: فقد يشجع على اتباع مناهج أكثر نواص الأ وتركيزا على المتعلم عندما يكون إيجابيا، ولكنه قد يؤدي أيضا إلى تدريس موجه نحو الامتحانات عندما يكون سلبيا. وبخلص البحث إلى أن مراعاة تأثير الارتداد أمر أساسي لتحقيق التوافق بين أهداف التعلم ومناهج التدريس وممارسات التقييم.