



THE WASHBACK OF THE ENGLISH NATIONAL EXAMINATION (ENE) FOR GRADES 9 AND 10 ON TEACHING PRACTICES IN ETHIOPIA: A CASE STUDY OF DEBRE MARKOS SECONDARY SCHOOLS



 Simachew Gashaye

Debre Markos University, Debre Markos, Ethiopia.

Email: simeneh2009@gmail.com Tel: +251 91 1373264



ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 9 January 2020

Revised: 17 February 2020

Accepted: 18 March 2020

Published: 15 April 2020

Keywords

Washback effects

Teaching domains

Mediating factors of washback effects

Features of washback effects

Form-related language content

Exam-oriented teaching.

The purpose of this study was to examine the washback effect from the Grades 9 and 10 English National Exam on teaching practices in Ethiopia. The study was conducted at secondary schools in Debre Markos, with 33 Grades 9 and 10 English language teachers participating. Data were collected from classroom observations, document analysis, questionnaire survey, and interviews and then analyzed by calculating mean percentages, performing multiple regression, and undertaking thematic analysis. The findings indicated that the washback effect from the national exam mainly influenced the teaching domains of lesson content, teaching methodology, choice of teaching materials, and classroom assessment to become exam-oriented and deviate from the learning objectives in the syllabi. Furthermore, it was discovered that the factors mediating this effect on teaching practices were students' learning attitudes to the exam, external pressure from other stakeholders, and the teachers' awareness of the content and form of the exam. Consequently, the exam exerted negative, strong, and overt washback effect on teaching practices.

Contribution/Originality: The purpose of this study was to examine the washback effect from the Grades 9 and 10 English National Exam on teaching practices in Ethiopia.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the main actors in the educational system, it is teachers who implement the designated syllabi, but they perform different roles in the teaching-learning process, as pointed out by various scholars (Makovec, 2018; Rindu & Ariyanti, 2017).

The primary role of teachers is instructing the learners to the required standards detailed in each subjects' syllabus. Simultaneously, teachers periodically assess learners' achievement of the learning outcomes to determine the level of their academic progress. The results may lead to providing remedial teaching alongside lessons to help those students needing more help. Assessment comprises not only classroom tests but also national and international exams; however, the latter are usually administered to evaluate a learner's attainment in a certain course of study or to predict a learner's capability for higher academic programs.

Teaching practice is affected by different factors, either positively or negatively, one of which is the recurring administration of national or international external exams. The effect of factors, such as these exams, on teaching-learning practices is referred to as "washback" (Wall & Alderson, 1993) sometimes used synonymously with the

term “backwash, and which is also applies to the practices of other stakeholders outside school. Although backwash was widely used previously (e.g., Biggs, 1995; Heaton, 1990; Hughes, 1989) washback is more common in the current literature, (e.g., Ghorbani, 2008; Green, 2007; Hawkey, 2006; Shih, 2007; Wall & Alderson, 1993; Yi-Ching, 2009). Hence, washback is used consistently throughout this study.

1.1. Domains of Washback Effect

Washback from exams affects different domains of teaching practice, from the preparation of lessons to classroom tests (Cheng, 2005; Ferman, 2004; Hawkey, 2006; Shih, 2007; Spratt, 2005).

Teachers’ perception of time budgeting is first affected by washback: Alderson and Hamp-Lyons (1996) and Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, and Ferman (1996) discovered that teachers allocate additional time to exam preparation rather than to teaching the syllabi. Once teachers know the subject content and form of the exam, they tend to focus on teaching the language skills expected to be assessed in the exam.

The teaching practice most commonly affected by washback was found to be lesson content (Cheng, 2005; Ferman, 2004; Hawkey, 2006; Shih, 2007; Wall & Alderson, 1993; Watanabe, 1996). Teachers will focus on those language skills that are more likely to be included in the forthcoming exam more than any of the others.

The selection of teaching materials is another domain of teaching practice affected; teachers tend to use the type of materials, such as past exam papers and commercially produced exam-oriented resources, that help their students prepare for the exam, often disregarding those and textbooks officially prepared or prescribed by the Ministry of Education or other concerned institutions (Alderson & Hamp-Lyons, 1996; Spratt, 2005).

Washback also affects teaching methodology, which will be geared toward exam-specific teaching, although there are different findings in this respect. Wall and Alderson (1993) and Cheng (1997) revealed that whereas lesson content was influenced by washback, the teaching methodology remained unchanged. In contrast, Shohamy et al. (1996) reported that teaching methodology became more exam-oriented and teacher-centered, with lesson content based on test simulation instead of developing students’ communication skills.

The final domain of teaching practice affected by washback is classroom test preparation: when the content and form of external exams deviate from the syllabi, classroom tests mirror those instead of the syllabi (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Shih, 2007; Shohamy et al., 1996). In this context, teachers tend to prepare mock-ups of previous exam papers and use commercially produced exam materials, often incongruent with textbook contents and other teacher-designed tests.

1.2. Mediating Factors of Washback Effect

The washback effect on teaching practice depends on several mediating factors, the most common being teachers’ awareness of the exams, learners’ demands, professionalism, teaching experience, the grade level taught, and external pressure (Ghorbani, 2008; Shohamy et al., 1996; Watanabe, 1996).

Teachers’ sense of professionalism is a major factor for washback: their primary concern of preparing students to perform better in exams stems from their belief that this will assure their status among both students and stakeholders. Consequently, experienced teachers who are aware of the exam’s content and format will tend to practice exam-specific teaching (Andrews, Fullilove, & Wong, 2002; Chen, 2002; Khanayah, 1990).

Learners and stakeholders may also demand that students are taught in a way to ensure their success in the forthcoming exams; Students interest in passing their exams especially affects teaching practices in the classroom. Chen (2002), Shih (2007) and Ghorbani (2008) contend that such demands from students, school administrators, and even parents for exam-specific teaching is difficult for teachers to ignore, particularly when their students are taking high-stake tests.

1.3. Features of Washback Effect

The washback effect *per se* is neutral; however, as described by scholars such as Andrews (1994) and Watanabe (1996) it is a complex educational phenomenon, due to different stakeholders being concerned with students' exam performance. Hence, the washback effect of exams is not defined in a single way but in terms of its direction in attaining the required learning outcome, its strength on influencing teaching practice, and its materialization in teaching practice.

The direction of the washback effect is described as either negative or positive. On one hand, when the exam encourages implementation of the designated syllabi, the washback effect is considered positive (Cheng & Curtis, 2004; Pearson, 1988); on the other, when the exam persuades teachers to deviate from the designated syllabi, the washback effect is regarded as negative.

In terms of the strength of influence, the effect can be either strong or weak. If strong, then the washback effect overrides their exam-specific teaching practice Watanabe (1996) whereas a weak washback effect is limited to only parts of both teachers' and students' practices (Manjarrés, 2005).

The materialization of the washback effect in teaching practices can be either overt or covert. When overt, the effect of the exam is reflected in every teaching activity: teaching practices are exam-specific—the language is taught through practicing with past exam papers; when covert, the effect of the exam is implicit in teaching practices (Bailey, 1996; Prodromou, 1995).

It has been noted that washback effects of exams is a relatively new concept in language research and little researched in terms of language testing (Bailey, 1996; Shih, 2007; Wenyuan, 2017; Yi-Ching, 2009). This was substantiated by Stoneman (2006), who strongly recommended that more research be undertaken to better understand the washback effects on teachers' and students' perceptions and practices in the classroom. Hence, this study aims to examine the washback effect from the English National Examination (ENE) on teaching practices in Ethiopia.

1.4. The Problem and its Context

In Ethiopia, the teaching of English was first introduced with the advent of modern education in 1935 (Dejene, 1990). Since then, it has been taught from Grade 1 to university and even used as the language of instruction from secondary school to higher learning institutions. In addition, English is the official language of some government and most non-government organizations, diplomacy, trade, and almost all financial institutions.

In accordance with the global trend in language teaching, Ethiopia currently employs communicative language teaching (CLT), the principles of which are followed for teacher training and teaching materials. In fact, Taylor (1998) observed that the current, as opposed to the older, English textbooks in Ethiopia were prepared with the CLT methodology.

The syllabi for Grades 9 and 10 stipulate that teachers should develop students' communication skills by teaching all the language skills as recommended. As Bailey (2002a) shows, the introduction to the Grade 9 English syllabus states:

Grade 9 English for Ethiopia focuses on the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills for communication in a wide variety of contexts, informal to formal. It also focuses on the understanding and application of English grammar rules, as well as the development of English vocabulary... (p. 8)

In addition, the introduction to the Grade 10 English syllabus states:

The main objective of Grade 10 English for Ethiopia, identical to Grade 9 English for Ethiopia, focuses on the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills for communication in a wide variety of contexts, informal to formal. It also focuses on the understanding and application of English grammar rules, as well as the development of English vocabulary... Bailey (2002b).

After completing Grade 10, students are entered for the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination, of which the ENE is one part.

Despite the considerable effort to promote the use of English for not only learners' proficiency in the language but also their academic success, there is dissatisfaction with secondary school students' poor performance in English language. In their study for the *Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap*, Tirussew et al. (2018) found that use of the English language use in schools was a serious problem. The cause could be that washback from the ENE affects language teaching practices, as demonstrated by previous studies (e.g., Simachew, 2012; Yasin, 2014) in which national exams led to teachers and students to become exam-oriented and deviate from attaining the language skills stipulated in the designated syllabi. This study differs in its research objectives, methodology, and setting, and examines the washback effect from the ENE on teaching practices in the Grades 9 and 10.

Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

- How does the exam affect teaching practice?
- Which teaching domains are more affected by from the exam?
- What are the mediating factors for washback to affect teaching practice?
- What type of washback effect does the exam exert on teaching practice?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design and Setting

A descriptive survey research design and mixed method research approach were adopted, and the study was conducted at the Nigus Tekle Haimanot, Ethio-Japan, and Menkorer, secondary schools in the town of Debre Markos, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia.

2.2. Study Participants

There were 33 English language teachers for Grades 9 and 10 across all the secondary schools, all of which, under the comprehensive sampling technique were included in the questionnaire survey. In addition, six teachers were selected for interview and three for classroom observation from Nigus Tekle Haimanot Secondary School.

2.3. Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using four instruments: classroom observation, document analysis, questionnaire survey, and interview.

A modified version of the Communicative Oriented Language Teaching (COLT) observation protocol was used for classroom observation (Fröhlich, Spada, & Allen, 1985), which concentrated on participant organization, lesson content, and student modality. Three teachers from the selected school were observed over a 42-minute period 3 times a week for 4 weeks, resulting in a total of 36 observations.

Through document analysis, the relationship between the content of the national exam and classroom tests over two years was assessed. As the Grades 9 and 10 textbooks were prepared with the CLT methodology, both the national exam and classroom tests were expected to be the same. This analysis revealed how the national exam reflected the content of the textbooks and affected teachers' preparation of classroom tests.

The questionnaire survey was employed to ascertain teachers' perceptions of the national exam's influence on the different teaching domains and identify the mediating factors that contributed to the exam's influence on teaching practices. The questionnaire was adapted from Chen (2002) and consisted of 51 items divided between 3 sections: the 2 items in the first section collected personal information; the second section comprised 32 items that each measured the effect of the national exam on the domain on a 5-point Likert scale; and the third section used the same method for 17 items concerning the mediating factors behind the exam's influence on teaching practices.

Finally, the interview instrument used open-ended questions to also determine the washback effect from the national exam on the teaching domains and the contributory mediating factors for teaching practices.

2.4. Data Collection Procedures

Guidelines for the collection of data were established to control for any contamination of that data. First, the classroom observation was conducted, then the questionnaire was administered, followed by the interviews, and finally the document analysis.

2.5. Data Analysis Techniques

Different techniques were used to analyze each set of data collected by the four instruments. The COLT observation data were interpreted with the mean percentage. For the questionnaire data, the mean was used to determine the teaching domains affected by the national exam, while multiple regression analysis identified the mediating factors for the washback effect on teaching practices. Once more, the mean percentage of the data from the document analysis enabled the distribution of language items in the different materials to be compared. Finally, the interview data were first systematically organized into note-based content summaries before being thematically analyzed.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Classroom Observation

First, the classroom observation data for each teacher were labeled as T1, T2, and T3, and the 12 observations conducted for each teacher were then analyzed in three parts: participant organization, lesson content, and student modality.

3.1.1. Participant Organization

The time devoted to each type of interaction was recorded: teacher to student/whole class (T \rightarrow S/C) and student to student/whole class (S \rightarrow S/C). The mean percentage was then calculated for the group and individual interactions, as shown in Table 1.

Table-1. Mean observed time of participant organization (see Appendix A).

Participant Organization (%)	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
T \rightarrow S/C	74.68	76.27	78.28
S \rightarrow S/C	7.24	8.11	11.58
Group	13.19	9.17	3.88
Individual	4.89	6.45	6.26
Total	100%	100%	100%

The T \rightarrow S/C interactions dominated the classroom, occupying 74.68%–78.28% of the total teaching time, while those in which students develop their communicative language skills, S \rightarrow S/C, received less time. Hence, teaching practices were teacher-centered, which deviates from the methods proposed in the syllabi.

3.1.2. Lesson Content

The second part calculated the time devoted to classroom management, teaching specific language areas, and broader topics is computed.

Table-2. Comparison of content practiced in three sections (see Appendix A).

Contents (%)	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
Procedure	9.12	7.92	6.27
Vocabulary form only	28.54	24.79	27.43
Pronunciation	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grammar form only	32.00	35.89	36.22
Spelling form only	0.00	0.00	0.00
Function only	7.82	8.91	9.47
Discourse only	9.87	8.84	7.89
Sociolinguistics only	6.89	6.92	6.77
Vocabulary form and discourse	0.00	0.00	0.00
Vocabulary and grammar forms	0.00	0.00	2.16
Broad	5.76	6.73	3.79
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 2 reveals that the majority of time was devoted to teaching language forms: the top priority was grammar, taking up a mean of 32%–41.36 % of classroom time, while 25%–29% was spent on vocabulary. Other content received much less attention: procedure, function, discourse, sociolinguistics, and broader topics; while the remainder was neglected altogether. Therefore, observations suggested that the washback effect from the national exam led to teachers focusing on language forms.

3.1.3. Student Modality

The third and final part calculated the time students spent listening, speaking, reading, writing, or using a combination of all the skills.

Table-3. Comparison of student modality in the three sections (see Appendix A).

Student modality (%)	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
Listening only	65.22	68.32	62.48
Speaking only	2.73	3.25	3.99
Reading only	2.73	4.66	6.68
Writing only	0.00	3.11	1.77
Others only	0.00	0.00	0.00
Listening and speaking	8.08	6.32	8.89
Listening and reading	5.95	3.34	3.68
Reading and writing	12.86	11.00	9.97
Speaking and reading	2.43	0.00	2.54
Listening, speaking, and writing	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	100%	100%	100%

As can be seen in Table 3, the students were observed listening to the explanations given by all three for over half of the time: specifically, 65.22%, 68.32%, and 62.48% for T1, T2, and T3, respectively. The student modality of listening only suggests that the washback effect again resulted in teacher-centered practices in which students became passive recipients.

Overall, analysis of the observation data revealed that both lesson content and teaching practices were exam-oriented instead of fulfilling the objectives stipulated in the syllabi.

3.2. Questionnaire Survey

The data collected by the questionnaire survey were analyzed in two parts: the teaching domains affected by the national exam and the mediating factors contributing to the effect on teaching practices. Table 4 presents the mean for those domains affected by the washback from the national exam.

Table-4. Mean influence of the exam on teachers' practice (see Appendix A).

No.	Domains of teachers' practices	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Time budgeting	4.35	0.32
2	Teaching materials selection	4.26	0.47
3	Classroom assessment	4.23	0.39
4	Lesson preparation	4.00	0.57
5	Content focus	4.40	0.62
6	Teaching methodology	4.10	0.59

Evidently, teachers perceived that all domains were affected. On the 5-point Likert scales, ranging from "Never" to "Very often," teachers believed the national exam influenced their teaching practices either "Often" or "Very often" in all domains (i.e., mean = 2.5, above average). The focus of the lesson content (mean = 4.40) was the most affected and time budgeting (mean = 4.35) the other highly affected domain of teaching practice. It can thus be inferred that every teaching domain is influenced by washback from the national exam.

The multiple regression analysis results for the factors mediating the washback effect from the national exam on teaching practices were presented in Table 5.

Table-5. Regression coefficients of factors influencing teachers' practice.

No.	Independent Variables	Beta weight (β)	Sig.
1	Teaching experience	0.47	0.695
2	Grade level taught	-0.051	0.623
3	Perceived professionalism	-0.102	0.349
4	Perceived students' learning attitudes	0.378	0.002
5	Perceived external pressure	0.112	0.343
6	Perceived importance of the exam	0.072	0.524
7	Perceived awareness of the exam	0.401	0.001

Note: $P < 0.005$

The three factors that contributed most to promoting exam-oriented teaching practices were awareness of the national exam ($\beta = 40.1\%$), students' learning attitude ($\beta = 37.8\%$), and external pressure ($\beta = 11.2\%$). Very little was contributed by the other factors, with the next most influential, perceived importance of the national exam, on exam-oriented teaching practices only contributing 7.2%.

3.3. Document Analysis

As Taylor (1998) and Bailey (2002a,b) stated, textbooks were prepared using CLT methodology. The listening, speaking, reading, and writing language skills, represented in grammar and vocabulary lessons, were included to develop students' communication skills.

The contents of two years' of Grades 9 and 10 classroom tests and the ENE were analyzed and compared to determine the extent to which the language skills were covered in each. The mean percentage of the distribution of the language skills across the exam and tests are shown in Tables 6 and 7.

Table-6. Summary of national exam content analysis (see Appendix B).

No.	Language skills	No. of items	Percent	Remark
1	Reading	43	26.87	
2	Listening	0	0	
3	Speaking	11	6.87	Dialogue completion
4	Writing	17	10.63	Sentence-level mechanics and syntax, word completion
5	Vocabulary	29	18.13	
6	Grammar	60	37.50	
	Total	160	100%	

Language skills were not equitably represented in the national exam: grammar (60 items, 37.5%) and reading (43 items, 26.9%) received the greatest attention, while others were de-emphasized. Moreover, aspects of the speaking and writing skills were not assessed, being simple form-related items, as indicated in Table 6, listening skills were not included. Hence, the national exam tended to misrepresent language skills.

Table-7. Summary of Grades 9 and 10 classroom test content analysis (see Appendix B).

No.	Language skills	No. of items	Percent	Remark
1	Reading	22	14.66	
2	Listening	0	0	
3	Speaking	13	8.67	Dialogue completion
4	Writing	13	8.67	Sentence-level mechanics and syntax, word completion
5	Vocabulary	13	8.67	
6	Grammar	89	59.33	
	Total	150	100%	

Similarly, language skills were not proportionally reflected in the Grades 9 and 10 classroom tests of Grades 9 and 10: grammar (89 items, 59.3%) and reading (22 items, 14.7%) were emphasized the most, but while three of the other skills were treated equally, albeit with less importance, listening was again omitted. Thus, the classroom tests were highly oriented toward grammar.

When comparing the contents of the national exam and classroom test, a similar distribution pattern for language skills became evident: the highest proportion of items assessed grammar followed by reading in both. Consequently, the national exam deviated from the communicative syllabi, as it focused on form-related aspects of language, resulting to a washback effect that classroom tests followed the example of the national exam instead of the syllabi.

3.4. Interviews

The teachers' interviews were analyzed in two parts: to examine first the washback effect of the national exam on teaching practices and second the mediating factors enabling that effect.

The washback effect on teaching practices was determined by teachers' time budgeting for different language skills, their choice of teaching materials, and the focus of their classroom assessments. In the main, interviewees focused on exam-related language skills: grammar and reading, particularly vocabulary. Teacher 1 (T1) stated: "I am mostly teaching mostly grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary, because the exam [content of the national exam] includes these skills most of the time," indicating that the national exam tends to restrict teaching to form-related aspects of language skills. Likewise, interviewees revealed that their classroom tests concentrated on grammar and reading comprehension, in which vocabulary was a major part. In addition, interviewees reported that they used commercially produced teaching materials and past exam papers in their lessons. Teacher 3 (T3) stated:

As far as possible, my teaching is exam-oriented; therefore, I refer to exam-oriented materials. For instance, I use English Grammar in Use: Intermediate. When I choose materials, I consider their relevance in preparing students for the national exam. In the scheduled class, I use the textbook, whereas during tutorial classes, I use these materials for notes and exercises. (T3, translated from Amharic)

This response indicated that rather than the prescribed textbooks, teachers preferred to use commercially produced teaching materials that were better with helping to prepare students for the national exam: the teachers even arranged tutorial classes in which they used commercially produced books to further prepare students. This implied that teachers did not fully rely on the textbooks prepared by the Ministry of Education, which were intended to develop students' communication skills through learning all the language skills.

When discussing the use of past exam papers, Teacher 5 (T5) stated:

At the beginning of this academic year, I brought the 2010 E.C. [2018] national exam paper to the class and told them which skills were covered and in what proportions in the exam. I think it was this course of action and primary objective, to pass the exam, that made them more alert in these parts of the lesson. This is because they expect such lesson content to reappear in the exam. (T5, translated from Amharic)

This revealed how teachers not only used past exam papers in the classroom but also told their students the exam contents, resulting in students disregarding the contents of the syllabi.

Generally, then, teaching practices were exam-oriented. As such, the method of teaching language according to the designated syllabi was affected by the washback from the national exam.

Finally, the factors that mediated the washback effect teachers were identified from the teachers' responses. Most of the interviewees stated that they did not really feel under pressure from their students' parents; however, all agreed that their students exerted more pressure for exam-specific lessons. T2 described this imposition as follows:

There is imposition on my teaching practice, especially from students. At the beginning of the academic year, even before they collected their textbooks, the students asked me to teach them the skills assessed in the exam. I feel this pressure greatly. In addition, I know the exam content very well and discuss what we should teach with my colleagues. (T2, translated from Amharic)

As can be seen, teachers were influenced by students and other teachers in deciding what to teach and what to omit from the textbook. One interviewee reported that even the school supervisor urged students to be prepared for the exam. Furthermore, the teachers themselves preferred their students to achieve good grades in the national exam; therefore, the teachers' own interests impelled exam-oriented teaching practices.

Although this pressure stemmed from both students' learning attitudes and teachers' interests, the interviewees felt the pressure from their students was strongest. Teachers seemed to be driven to teaching practices oriented toward the national exam instead of the designated syllabi.

In conclusion, the interview analysis revealed that teaching and practices and assessments were limited to certain language skills that students would be expected to know in the exam.

4. DISCUSSION

The results were organized and discussed to answer the research questions. In response to the question of how the national exam influenced teaching practices, the results from all four analyses indicated that the washback effect on teaching practices was lessons becoming exam-oriented. In other words, there was a tendency among teachers to work toward student success in the exam rather than achievement of the required learning outcomes stipulated in the syllabi, whereby students were expected to practice all the language skills to develop their communicative competence. This finding agrees with Cheng (2005) and Spratt (2005), who demonstrated that teaching practices were directed toward an "exam syllabus" away from the designated syllabi, which actually promote student learning.

In terms of the question about which teaching domains were most influenced by the national exam, the data analyses revealed that the lesson content, teaching methodology, choice of teaching materials, time budgeting, and classroom tests were mainly affected: form-related aspects of language skills (i.e., grammar, vocabulary, language techniques in writing, and dialogue completion) as opposed to the topics and objectives in the Grades 9 and 10 syllabi were taught and tested. According to the COLT data analysis, even the teaching methodology was significantly affected: classroom practices became teacher-centered, whereas the syllabi expected teachers to employ pair and group work. As a result, speaking, listening, and writing skills were basically neglected, indicating that the washback effect from the exam limited student learning to form-related aspects of instead of communicative competence in English, which was also noted by Wall and Alderson (1993).

With regard to the question about the mediating factors that contributed to the washback effect on teaching practices, the analyses of the data from the questionnaire survey and interviews indicated that the teachers' awareness of the exam ($\beta = 40.1\%$) and students' learning attitudes ($\beta = 37.8\%$) were the most influential. In other words, both teachers' knowledge of the exam's form and content and students' interest in its contents led to exam-oriented classroom practices. This study therefore supports Shohamy et al.'s (1996) findings on the influence of teachers' knowledge of the exam, as well as those of Chen (2002) on the influence from students' attitudes.

Finally, in answer to the question of the type of washback effect on teaching practices, all the data analyses showed it to be negative, strong, and overt. As the exam caused teachers to deviate from the designated syllabi, there was a negative washback effect; due to all the teaching domains being influenced, a strong washback effect was experienced; and finally, as teaching practice obviously exam-oriented, the washback effect was overt.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the washback effect from the Grades 9 and 10 ENE on teaching practices, and the results indicated that implementation of the designated syllabi was affected in a negative, strong, and overt manner. The reason for these findings was that teachers were dedicated to preparing their students for the national exam, the content and form of which deviated from that of the syllabi.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Acknowledgement: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

REFERENCES

- Alderson, J. C., & Hamp-Lyons, L. (1996). TOEFL preparation courses: A study of washback. *Language Testing*, 13(3), 280-297. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553229601300304>.
- Alderson, J. C., & Wall, D. (1993). Does washback exist? *Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 115-129. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/14.2.115>.
- Andrews, S. (1994). The washback effect of examinations: Its impact upon curriculum innovation in English language teaching. *Curriculum Forum*, 4(1), 44-58.
- Andrews, S., Fullilove, J., & Wong, Y. (2002). Targeting washback—a case-study. *System*, 30(2), 207-223. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0346-251x\(02\)00005-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0346-251x(02)00005-2).
- Bailey, D. (2002a). *English for Ethiopia: Teachers guide grade 9*. England: Pearson Edinburgh Gate.
- Bailey, D. (2002b). *English for Ethiopia: Teachers guide grade 10*. England: Pearson Edinburgh Gate.
- Bailey, K. M. (1996). Working for washback: A review of the washback concept in language testing. *Language Testing*, 13(3), 257-279. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553229601300303>.
- Biggs, J. (1995). Assumptions underlying new approaches to educational assessment. *Curriculum Forum*, 4(2), 1-22.
- Chen, L. (2002). *Taiwanese junior high school English teachers' Perceptions of the washback effect of the basic competence test in English*. PhD Thesis Ohio, The Ohio State University.
- Cheng, L. (2005). *Changing language teaching through language testing: A Washback study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cheng, L. (1997). How does washback influence teaching? Implications for Hong Kong. *Language and Education*, 11(1), 38-54. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500789708666717>.
- Cheng, L., & Curtis, A. (2004). *Washback or backwash: A review of the impact of testing on teaching and learning, Washback in language testing: Research contexts and methods*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Dejene, L. (1990). *Achievement, washback and proficiency in school leaving examination: A case of innovation in an Ethiopian setting*. Ph.D. Thesis, Lancaster University of Lancaster, Department of Linguistics and Modern English Language.
- Ferman, I. (2004). The washback of an EFL national oral test to teaching and learning'. In L. Cheng, Y. Watanabe & A. Curtis (Eds.), *Washback in language testing: research contexts and methods* (pp. 191-210). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Fröhlich, M., Spada, N., & Allen, P. (1985). Differences in the communicative orientation of L2 classrooms. *Tesol Quarterly*, 19(1), 27-57. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586771>.
- Ghorbani, M. (2008). The washback effect of the university entrance examination on Iranian English teachers' curricular planning and instruction. *The Iranian EFL Journal*, 2, 60-87.
- Green, A. (2007). *IELTS in context*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hawkey, R. (2006). *Impact theory and practice: Studies of the IELTS test and Progetto Lingue 2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heaton, J. (1990). *Classroom testing*. London: Longman.
- Hughes, A. (1989). *Testing for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Khanayah, T. (1990). *Examinations as instruments for educational change: Investigating the washback effect of the Nepalese English exams*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Makovec, D. (2018). The teacher's role and professional development. *International Journal of Cognitive Research in Science, Engineering and Education*, 6(2), 33-45.
- Manjarrés, N. B. (2005). Washback of the foreign language test of the state examinations in Colombia: A case study. *Journal of Second Language Acquisition and Teaching*, 12, 1-19.
- Pearson, I. (1988). Tests as levers of change'. In D. Chamberlain & R. Baumgartner (Eds.), *ESP in the classroom practice and evaluation* (pp. 98-107). London: Modern English Publications.
- Prodromou, L. (1995). The backwash effect: from Testing to teaching. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 49(1), 13-25.
- Rindu, I., & Ariyanti, A. (2017). Teacher's role in managing the class during teaching and learning process. *Script Journal: Journal of Linguistic and English Teaching*, 2(1), 83-100. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.24903/sj.v2i1.77>.
- Shih, C.-M. (2007). A new washback model of students' learning. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 64(1), 135-161. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.64.1.135>.
- Shohamy, E., Donitsa-Schmidt, S., & Ferman, I. (1996). Test impact revisited: Washback effect over time. *Language Testing*, 13(3), 298-317. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553229601300305>.
- Simachew, G. a. (2012). *Washback of the University entrance English exam (UEEE) on teachers' and students' practices: The case of preparatory schools in Amhara National Regional State*. Ph.D Thesis, Unpublished, Addis Ababa University.
- Spratt, M. (2005). Washback and the classroom: The implications for teaching and learning of studies of washback from exams. *Language Teaching Research*, 9(1), 5-29. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1191/1362168805lr152oa>.
- Stoneman, B. (2006). *The impact of an exit English test on Hong Kong Undergraduates: A study investigating the effects of test status on students' test preparation behaviours*. Ph. D Dissertation, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
- Taylor, R. (1998). *English for Ethiopian grade 11: Students' Book I*. Addis Ababa: Educational Materials Production and Distribution Agency.
- Tirussew, T., A., A., Jeilu, O., Tassew, W., Aklilu, D., & Berhannu, A. (2018). Ethiopian education development roadmap (2018-30), An integrated Executive Summary, Addis Ababa, Education Strategic Center.
- Wall, D. (1997). Impact and washback in language testing. *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, 7, 291-302. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-4489-2_26.
- Wall, D., & Alderson, J. C. (1993). Examining washback: The Sri Lankan impact study. *Language Testing*, 10(1), 41-69. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553229301000103>.
- Watanabe, Y. (1996). Does grammar translation come from the entrance examination? Preliminary findings from classroom-based research. *Language Testing*, 13(3), 318-333. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553229601300306>.
- Wenyuan, Z. (2017). The washback effect of CET spoken English test upon college English teaching. *Canadian Social Science*, 13(1), 62-68.
- Yasin, H. (2014). *The washback effect of Ethiopian general secondary education certificate English examination (Egsecee) on teachers' teaching practices: The Case of Jajura Senior Secondary School, Hadiya Zone, SNNPR*. Un Publish MA Thesis, Haramaya University.

Yi-Ching, P. (2009). A review of washback and its pedagogical implications. *VNU Journal of Science, Foreign Languages*, 25(4), 257-263.

Appendix A. COLT summary: mean results.

Teacher 1

A) Participant organization

Participant Organization (%)	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	Avg.
TC S/C	60	75	90	75	85	82.5	72.5	45	67.5	85	60	67.5	74.68
SC S/C									32.5			20	7.24
Group	15	25		12.5			15	25			10	12.5	13.19
Individual	25		10	12.5	15	17.5	12.5	30		15	30		4.89
Total													100%

B) Lesson content

Content (%)	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	Avg.
Procedure	12.5	10	5	2.5	2.5	5	5	7.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	5	9.12
Vocabulary form only	67.5	90					45					67.5	28.54
Pronunciation													0.00
Grammar form only				97.5	65		50		37.5	97.5	67.5	25	32.00
Spelling form only													0.00
Function only					32.5	45					17.5		7.82
Discourse only			50			35		30	25				9.87
Sociolinguistics													6.89
Vocabulary form & discourse													0.00
Vocabulary & grammar forms													0.00
Others (comprehension, mechanics, dialogue)	20		45			15		62.5	35		12.5	7.5	5.76
Total													100%

C) Student modality

Student modality (%)	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	Avg.
Listening only	25	75	90	30	85	82.5	72.5	30	67.5	25	15	67.5	55.41
Speaking only									25		25	32.5	6.88
Reading only	50												4.16
Writing only				55									4.58
Others only													0.00
Listening & speaking													
Listening & reading			30			17.5				20	45		9.38
Reading & writing													9.38
Speaking & reading	25			15	15		27.5	30		65	15		16.88
Listening, speaking, & writing		25							7.5				2.71
Total													100%

Teacher 2

A) Participant organization

Participant Organization (%)	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	Avg.
T C S/C	90	52.5	37.5	40	75	70	45	62.5	75	92.5	87.5	52.5	76.27
S C S/C		7.5	32.5										8.11
Group			30	60			55	25				47.5	9.17
Individual	10				25				22.5	7.5	12.5		6.45
Total													100%

B) Lesson content

Content (%)	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	Avg.
Procedure		5	12.5	5	12.5	12.5	5		12.5	10	5	5	7.08
Vocabulary form only		90			50					90	95		27.08
Pronunciation													0.00
Grammar form only	85		62.5	82.5		87.5	55	100				95	47.29
Spelling form only													0.00
Function only		5	25						25				4.58
Discourse only				12.5	17.5		25		37.5				7.71
Sociolinguistics	15												1.25
Vocabulary form & discourse													0.00
Vocabulary & grammar forms													0.00
Others (comprehension, mechanics, dialogue)					20		15		25				5.00
Total													100%

C) Student modality

Student modality (%)	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	Avg.
Listening only	75	50	37.5	82.5	50	37.5	25	37.5	82.5	50	72.5	70	55.8368.32
Speaking only			37.5	17.5					17.5				6.043.25
Reading only		32.5	7.5			12.5							4.384.66
Writing only					25		25			25		12.5	7.2911
Others only		17.5			22.5		17.5						4.7900
Listening & speaking													
Listening & reading	22.7		17.5			25							5.43
Reading & writing													
Speaking & reading	12.5					25	50	12.5					8.330.00
Listening, speaking, & writing					25					25	27.5	17.5	7.920.00
Total													100%

Teacher 3

A) Participant organization

Participant Organization (%)	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	Avg.
TC OS/C	82.5	70	77.5	80	50	60	100	82.5	80	87.5		87.5	78.28
SC OS/C				25					20				11.58
Group		7.5			12.5	12.5		17.5		12.5	17.5	12.5	3.88
Individual	17.5	12.5	22.5	12.5		17.5	7.5						6.0426
Total													100%

B) Lesson content

Content (%)	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	Avg.
Procedure	2.5	7.5	5	12.5	2.5	5	5	2.5	5	7.5	5	2.5	5.20 8.73
Vocabulary form only		22.5		87.5		95	20			85	77.5		32.3
Pronunciation													0.00
Grammar form only	97.5	70	67.5		37.5		75	85	17.5			82.5	44.3740.68
Spelling form only													0.00
Function only			27.5		12.5			12.5	77.5			15	12.0810.23
Discourse only					32.5								2.7189
Sociolinguistics													
Vocabulary form & discourse													0.00
Vocabulary & grammar forms													
Others (comprehension, mechanics, dialogue)					15					7.5	17.5		3.333.79
Total													100%

C) Student modality

Student modality	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10	D11	D12	Avg.
Listening only	87.5	70	67.5	37.5	45	60		85	75	87.5	52.5	87.5	58.75
Speaking only													
Reading only				37.5		30					40		8.96
Writing only	12.5		22.5										2.927
Others only													
Listening & speaking													
Listening & reading	12.5			22.5			22.5		12.5	22.5			
Reading & writing													
Speaking & reading		22.5	10	25			62.5	15		12.5		12.5	13.33
Listening, speaking, & writing		7.5			42.5	10			25		17.5		8.5400
Total													100%

Appendix B. Content summary of national exam and classroom tests.**Summary of National Exam**

No.	Skill	Number of items in Year		Remark about nature of items
		2017	2018	
1	Speaking	5	6	Dialogue completion items
2	Listening	0	0	
3	Reading	24	19	
4	Writing	8	9	word order , mechanics, controlled writing tasks (e.g. letter writing)
5	Vocabulary	13	16	
6	Grammar	30	30	
	Total Number of items	80	80	

Summary of Grade 9 teacher made test

No.	Skill	Number of items in Year		Remark about nature of items
		2017	2018	
1	Speaking	0	3	Dialogue completion items
2	Listening	0	0	
3	Reading	4	6	
4	Writing	0	4	word completion items and controlled writing
5	Vocabulary	6	0	
6	Grammar	20	27	
	Total Number of items	30	40	

Grade 10 Teacher made test

No.	Skill	Number of items in Year		Remark about nature of items
		2017	2018	
1	Speaking	5	5	Dialogue completion items
2	Listening	0	0	
3	Reading	7	5	
4	Writing	5	4	Mechanics and-word rearrangement
5	Vocabulary	3	4	
6	Grammar	20	22	
	Total Number of items	40	40	

Views and opinions expressed in this article are the views and opinions of the author(s), International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability etc. caused in relation to/arising out of the use of the content.